

WHO AM I ? WHO AM I ? WHO AM I ?



I AM THE SOUL !

Discourses by Dr. Tarulatabai Mahasatiji

For Personal and Private Use Only

M.A. Ph.D.

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Jain Education International

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Silent delineation . . .

a desolate mountainous region
... a quiet, lonely, deep cave
... pristine atmosphere ... a
Sadhaka in introspection ...
engrossed in search of the Self
... a pious and healthy mind in
a pious and healthy body ...
solitude on the inside and
outside chosen with the intent
of dissolving the ego ...
adopting meditation ... the
noble thoughts invoked with
the long and incessant silent,
lonely devoted pursuit
throwing up the question,
'Who am I?' ... a profound
silence within, resulting from
the deep contemplation over
this question ... the silent
image-like *Sadhaka's* heart
responding with the reply,
'I am the Soul'.

I am the Soul !

an English rendering
of the original
Gujarati discourses
based on

Srimad Rajachandra's
‘Atmasiddhi Shastra’

by **Dr. Tarulatabai Mahasatiji** M.A.,Ph.D.

Volume 1

I am the Soul

by **Dr. Tarulatabai Mahasatiji** M.A., Ph.D.

an English rendering of originally Gujarati discourses,
based on **Srimad Rajachandra's 'Atmasiddhi Shastra'**
collectively published as 'હે આત્મા હું'

Published by:

Sri Gujarati Svetamber

Sthanakwasi Jain Association

78/79, Ritherdon Road, Purushwalkam, Chennai 600 007

in association with

Research Foundation for Jainology

"Sugan House" 18, Ramanuja Iyer Street, Sowcarpet, Chennai 600 079

First English edition

© Publishers

Price :

Rs. 400/- per set, in India

US \$ 30.00 per set, outside India

Available from the Publishers, and also from :

Sri Gunvantray M. Barvalia,

601, Smeet Apartment, Upashraya Lane,

Ghatkopar (E), Mumbai 400 077

Ms. Varshaben Shah

A-23, Vardhaman Nagar, Ground Floor

Narsinha Lane, Malad (West), Mumbai 400 064

Translation, typesetting, design and printing by:

IMPRINTS

51, First Main, Tata Silk Farm,

Basavanagudi, Bangalore 560 004

email : imprints51@hotmail.com

Tel: +91-80-676 5443 / 676 0251

Preface

The Jain way of life demands an assiduous walk on the path of austerity. The fundamental principles, although presented with sufficient logic by the *Tirthankar Prabhu*, and carried down in the oral tradition by the *Shrutakevalis*, to be later reduced to writing in the form of *Agams*, appear to bewilder the layman at the outset.

The path of austerity needs to be traversed in proper guidance from Sages – a *Guru*, a *Sadguru*. In spite of Jainism having prevailed strongly upon the southern parts of our country in the early centuries of the first millennium, towards the end of the eleventh century A. D., its influence had begun to show signs or erosion. The rise of other faiths, in particular the rise of certain militant off-shoots of Hinduism, combined with a widespread withdrawal by the people from the Jain path, led to a steady decline in the following. This was primarily owing to the rampant ritualistic and oppressive approach of the preachers and custodians of *dharma* in those times. Moreover, the visits of ascetics in the Jain order had become rare and as such the followers were left with no recourse to personal guidance. So much so that despite being Jains in their faith and following, the people merged with the other communities, losing their identity.

Yet the fact remains that the contribution of Jainism to literature and culture in the southern parts of our country is even today acknowledged as the richest.

Migrant Jains who came in and settled in the south from various parts of the country contributed to the resurgence of the awareness of this faith here, in the last century. However, the visits by ascetics of the Jain order were few and far between. Rarer were the occasions, when any nuns of the Jain order would travel this way.

In this light, the *vihar* from the year 1979, of *Pujya Lalitabai Mahasatiji* and her disciple nuns, of the order established by *Pujya Pranalji Maharaj* of the Sthanakwasi Jain sect, was definitely a boon for the Jain community in the south. Between 1979 and 1988 before again becoming north-bound, the *Sangha* had conducted *Chaturmas* observances in Chennai, Tirupur, Bangalore, and Hyderabad, thereby generating a great awareness among the Jains in this region.

The highlight of this *vihar* – the travel on foot – in the south, was the *Chaturmas* at Chennai in 1986. *Pujya Dr. Tarulatabai Mahasatiji*, the senior-most disciple of *Pujya Lalitabai Mahasatiji*, had agreed to deliver the *Chaturmas* Discourses. She chose the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' as the topic and what followed was a golden chapter in the recent history of Jain literature.

The inspiration drawn from such illustrious personalities was instrumental in getting *Sri Gujarati Swetamber Sthanakwasi Jain Association*, Chennai to publish the discourses in the form of a three-volume set. The immense popularity of the publication and its repeat prints inspired the Association to set up the *Research Foundation in Jainology*, in which led to the establishment of the Department of Jainology at Madras University.

The present English translation is a culmination of the Association's joint effort with the Foundation, to make Jain literature available in a universally used linguistic medium. It is hoped that the publication will prove useful to readers and scholars across the world as a window to the world of Jain tenets.

Acknowledgements

Tirthankar Prabhu Mahaveer sat in *Samosaran* after attaining *Kevaljnana*. The noble beings of the universe then were able to glean from his omniscience by receiving the sermons. However, it is said that the *Prabhu* did not use the medium of voice at all. His sermons were in the form of thoughts radiating from his enlightened Self; in response to queries placed before him by the *Ganadharas*. The noble beings in *Samosaran* were able to receive those thoughts as if they were addressed to them respectively.

It is said that those pure thoughts emanating from *Bhagawan Mahaveer* continue to reverberate in the atmosphere even to date. Attempts are being made by scientists to trap those vibrations and convert them to the medium of sound so that we could benefit from it.

That effort becomes necessary because mankind in those days did not use the medium of magnetic recording tapes. Knowledge was received and passed on by the *Shrutakevalis*.

Had it not been for the *Shrutakevalis*, we would not have received *Prabhu Mahaveer's* knowledge at all. There were sages over the ages and then there was **Srimad Rajachandraji**. Srimadji had probably been able to tune himself as a fine receiver of those resonant thoughts from the *Prabhu*, and was kind enough to compose them for us as '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*'.

We are fortunate to have been equipped in this age to get a magnetic recording of the lucid commentary on this *Atmasiddhi Shastra* presented over a period of four months by the revered **Dr. Tarulatabai Mahasatiji**. We are grateful to the technicians and the organisers involved in successfully making a recording of the daily discourses of Mahasatiji.

That was the take-off point for the production in book form of the now famous ‘હું આત્મા છું’ trilogy. The original ‘*Atmasiddhi Shastra*’ being in Gujarati, the commentary in Gujarati was received very well by the audience, proven by the book entering its third reprint now.

We are grateful to **Shri Tejbahadur Singh Rajput** for the immediate and lucid translation into Hindi published in 1988. The same trilogy in Hindi is now entering its second edition. *Sri Gujarati Swetamber Sthanakwasi Jain Association*, Chennai had been associated with the production of the Gujarati and Hindi versions of the trilogy.

The Association wishes to particularly acknowledge the efforts put in by **Shri Ajitbhai S. Bardiya** and his family from Jaisingpur, Maharashtra who were closely involved with the project. It was through Shri Ajitbhai’s good offices that the Association was able to obtain the three priceless pieces of art, which appear on the jackets of the three volumes. The three water color renderings done by the famous **Shri P. Sardar** of Kolhapur, almost look ethereal and possibly also convey the essence of the three volumes of text.

It was not as if the need to present this valuable work in English was not felt in those early years after the original was published. However, as the Jain tenets put it, things take their own due course and it took us over a decade to ultimately make the dream a reality.

So here we are again, this time presenting the first English rendering of revered Dr. Tarulatabai Mahasatiji’s ‘હું આત્મા છું’ discourses.

Many hands have contributed to the final outcome of this English rendering. The project began with inputs from **Prof. Dr. Rameshbhai Sunderji Betai**, L. D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad. These were followed up with contributions from

Shri Hukmichandji Chellani, I.A.S., of Chennai who with the assistance of **Dr. Poornima** and **Dr. Varsha**, both research scholars at the Madras University Department of Jainology, gave the project a concrete shape.

Lastly, we are indebted to **Shri Ramnikbhai Savla**, Mumbai – Deolali, who had been lending his expertise and time to scrutinise, evaluate and rectify the final version. His deep study of the Jain principles and particularly of Srimadji's literature has been of great assistance to the Association.

The Association takes this opportunity to thank one and all who have, over the years supported this project and made it possible for us to bring it to a reality.

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About us

Shri Gujarati Swetamber Sthanakwasi Jain Association was established in 1975 with an aim of bringing together all Gujarati Sthanakwasi Jains and to invite Gujarati Sthanakwasi Jain *Sadhus* and *Sadhvis* to southern India, so that the community could benefit from the sermons and preachings of *Bhagawan* Mahaveer rendered in Gujarati - its mother tongue.

The Association had for its objectives, the propagation of Jainism, keeping alive its Jain traditions, promoting religious and philosophical publications, conducting periodical lectures, creating facilities for the *vihar* of the saints, performing *vaiyavach* (providing the *Sadhus* and *Sadhvis* with their permissible food, clothing, shelter, medical care etc.).

The first major step was the *Diksha Mahotsava* of **Sadhvi Shwetabai Mahasatiji**. The first publication was the collection of Gujarati discourses 'हुं आत्मा कुं', rendered by **Sadhvi Tarulatabai Mahasatiji**, followed by its Hindi translation. This was followed up by **Sadhvi Prankunwarbai Mahasatiji**.

The Association has grown from strength to strength and has perhaps the largest *Upashraya* with arrangements to render religious, social, and medical service to public at large.

We aspire and hope to be able to serve the society in various ways.

Rasiklal C. Badani

President

Shri Gujarati Swetamber
Sthanakwasi Jain Association

Chennai

October 31, 2000

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Research Foundation for Jainology

The Research Foundation for Jainology was established in the year 1982 aiming to foster awareness of Jaina Philosophy and tenets in the mind of public viz. development of body, enrichment of mind, sublimation of emotions, character building and illumination of the spirit within.

The Foundation is a *scientific and industrial research organisation*, recognised by the Government of India, Ministry of Science and Technology, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, New Delhi.

Subsequently the Foundation established in the year 1988, a full fledged Department of Jainology in the Madras University having post graduate and research courses upto Ph. D. level.

The Foundation has published several valued publications in Tamil, Hindi and Gujarati. These have been well received by students, teachers and scholars alike.

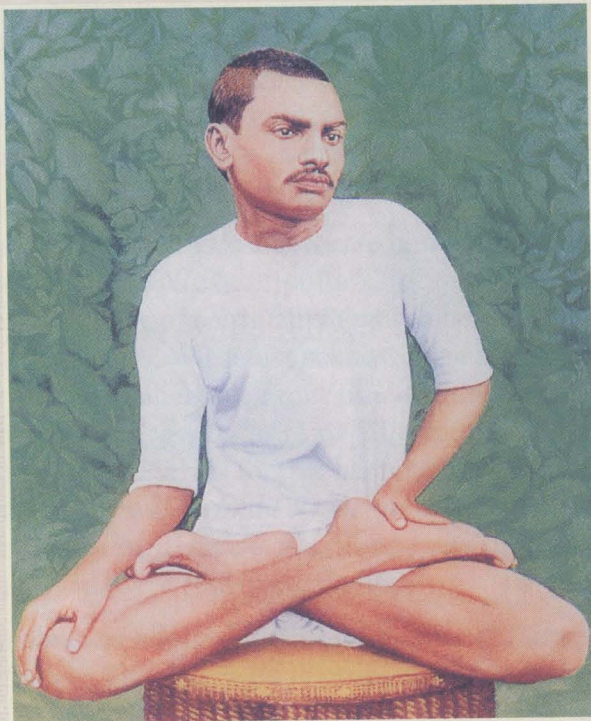
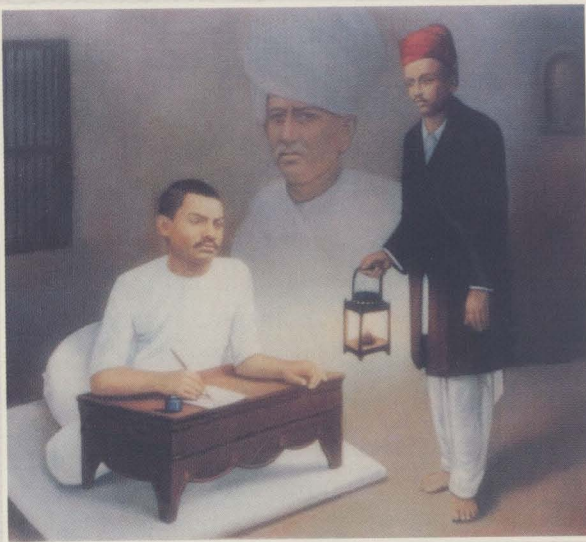
In keeping with this trend the Foundation has now joined hands with *Shri Gujarati Swetamber Sthanakwasi Jain Association, Chennai*, to bring forth the English version of the now famous and much sought after Gujarati and Hindi publication ‘हुं आत्मा छुं’ - as ‘I am the Soul.

The Foundation is confident that this endeavour will lead to the establishment of a much needed Indological publishing house of the Jain community in South India. Efforts have already begun on the possibilities of bringing out the translation of ‘हुं आत्मा छुं’ in several South Indian languages, to benefit students and research scholars in Jainology.

Krishanchand Choradia
General Secretary
Research Foundation for Jainology

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Pujya Srimad Rajachandrajji
on whose divine composition - Atmasiddhi
are these discourses based

(above: Artist's visualisation of the inspired composition)

Preface to the original Gujarati version

During the *Chaturmasa* of *Samvat* Year 2042 (1986 A.D.), our most revered Dr. Tarulatabai *Mahasatiji* delivered sermons and lectures based on the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' of Srimad Rajachandra under the auspices of *Shri Gujarati Swetamber Sthanakwasi Jain Association* at Madras. We find great pleasure in presenting the same to you in the form of this book.

In this age of scientific and material progress, values of life are fast changing. Our faith in simplicity and righteousness seems to be replaced by material benefits. In spite of all the progress, our subconscious is aware of the shortcomings, limitations and transitory nature of all material benefits. Even in a country like America, which is so materially advanced, people experience a vacuum in life. Only the untiring efforts of great saints and propagators like *Swami Vivekananda* and others have inspired people world-wide to turn to the self and spirituality.

The tragedy with us is that we are blindly imitating the west and acquiring the Western culture in spite of the rich and invaluable heritage of spirituality that has been handed down to us through the ages. We do not acknowledge and value the great culture we have inherited. From time to time seers and saints have showed compassion towards all creatures and advised us to turn to our inner selves for true happiness and perfection. One such great saint was ***Srimad Rajachandra*** who composed the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' almost a hundred years ago, for his nearest associates who were spiritually inclined.

'*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' is the quintessence of Jaina philosophy and Religion. The *Syadvada* doctrine of the Jainas is depicted here in the light of *Vyavahara Naya* and *Niscaya Naya*. Revered *Mahasatiji* has grasped the Jaina philosophy and the doctrine of *Syadvada* thoroughly and not a spark of sectarianism is visible in her commentary on *Atmasiddhi Shastra*. We heard and learnt

from her sermons and felt that such fine literature should reach the hands and hearts of one and all.

We, therefore, decided to publish these lectures in three languages viz. Gujarati, Hindi and English. The Gujarati and Hindi publications were complete in no time and were widely appreciated.

Now the English version of the same is before you. The language is simple but the contents are of a very high intellectual and philosophical standard and the simplicity and scholarship of revered *Mahasatiji* is clearly visible. Her efforts have been truly rewarded as we have benefited from her lectures and have full faith that now the English speaking people will benefit from this store house of spiritual knowledge which is published in a set of two Volumes.

Publishers

Thinking aloud . . .

It is indeed a blessed occasion for me, today:

Today I have got an opportunity to clear the debts of my teachers and my elders. I am fortunate to inherit the invaluable heritage of spirituality from my respected father, the roots of which were duly watered by revered Tarabai *Mahasatiji* (my father's sister). She awakened me and the Gujarati Swetamber Sthanakwasi Jain Association was established in Madras. With its establishment came the association and responsibility of serving Jain *Sadhus* (monks) and *Sadhvis* (nuns), which brought me closer to them.

Only in 1979, Gujarati *sadhviji*s came for the first time to south India. All our brothers of the Jain Association approached Bala *Brahmacharini*, *Adhyatma Jogini*, revered Lalitabai *Mahasatiji* of Gondal Sampradaya at Kolhapur and requested her to come to Madras. Coming to Madras meant treading on unfamiliar and unknown pastures and in spite of the language of the South and other problems, they accepted our humble offer and gratified us by giving their consent to come down to South. In due course she came to Madras along with her group of other virtuous *sadhviji*s.

I was enamoured and impressed by her in the very first acquaintance. Her simple but inspiring speech touched the very core of my heart. She was accompanied by her bright pupils revered Dr. Tarulatabai, revered Jasumatibai and other *Mahasatijis*. The eloquence and discourses of Dr. Tarulatabai *Mahasatiji* delivered during the *Chaturmasa* impressed me very much. My thirst for right knowledge grew intense in her association and I tried to enhance the same. The responsibility of the Association and the blessings of the revered *Sadhviji*s enabled us to undertake and organise the initiation (*Diksha*) ceremony of Shwetabai at Madras in 1981.

In 1984 I went to Bangalore and once again requested them to come to Madras for a second *Chaturmasa*. I took great pains to get their approval for the same. All the *sadhviji*s came to Madras and I got another opportunity to learn in depth about Jaina religion and Philosophy. This time too her lectures and teachings drew a large crowd, as her approach to religion was scientific in this modern age of science and technology. My faith in *Sudeva*, *Suguru* and *Sudharma* grew by leaps and bounds and again in her noble presence, Initiation Ceremony of three more young girls was conducted. My wife Smt. Sushila was a great source of inspiration and strength during the Initiation Ceremonies and during both the *Chaturmasas*. She wholeheartedly served the *sadhviji*s to the best of her ability and received their blessings.

Again in 1986, revered Tarulatabai *Mahasatiji* consented to come to Madras for the third *Chaturmasa*. Our earnest requests and our special prayer in view of the failing health of my wife Sushila, enabled us to get the consent of Bapji to send some of the *sadhviji*s to Madras, while the rest of them moved to Hyderabad. This favour of Bapji to send Dr. Tarulatabai *Mahasatiji* brought a lot of joy and rejoicing in the hearts of all laity of Madras.

The Jain *Agamas* are in Prakrit language and the Jaina *sadhus* are well versed in them. But the common man remains deprived of the vast knowledge of the *Agamas*, as he is not acquainted with the Prakrit language. The *Atmasiddhi Shastra* of Srimad Rajachandra in Gujarati is the quintessence of Jaina *Agamas* and Tarulatabai *Mahasatiji* decided to deliver lectures on this work during the course of her 1986 *Chaturmasa*. She had studied Srimad's literature in depth and had chosen the same for her Ph.D. thesis. This enabled her to master the subject and deliver inspiring lectures and so her decision to deliver lectures on the same delighted all of us.

It was then thought that such inspiring lectures should be published in a book form so that people could benefit from it in future. We are immensely grateful and thankful to revered Bapji and her disciple for giving their consent to publish these invaluable lectures. These lectures have since then been published in Gujarati and Hindi and now this effort in English.

Surendra Manilal Mehta

Past President

Shri Gujarati Swetamber

Sthanakwasi Jain Association

The pristine flow of the stream of spirituality

Pujya Dr. Tarulatabai Mahasatiji, the luminary disciple of *Adhyatma Yogini Pujya Lalitabai Mahasatiji*, has obtained a Doctorate in Philosophy from the Mumbai University on her thesis that covered the literature of the *Yugpurush Srimad Rajachandra*, *Avadhoot Yogi Shri Anandghanji*, the great poet **Banarasidass** and the saintly poet **Kabir**.

During the course of her research work for the thesis, *Pujya Mahasatiji* had done considerable and deep contemplation, study and analysis of '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*'. In Samvat 2042 she gave the discourses on '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' and those were first published in the form of the volume 'हुं आत्मा छु'.

Today, amidst our mundane life style, there is a dire need of superior spiritual literature. This volume 'हुं आत्मा छु' carries the virtues of Mahasatiji's deep study, an enlightened pen, a sensitive poet's heart in full bloom and the advantage of a different viewpoint resulting from research. Through these divine discourses, *Pujya Mahasatiji* has unraveled the mysteries of the Soul in such a way that they deeply touch our spirituality. The discourses also reflect Srimadji's inner state. The unique combination of knowledge with simplicity and utility has brought about the *Kanchanmani yoga* – like a gem studded in gold.

This book has attained such immense popularity here and abroad, that the second and third editions of the Gujarati version has gone into a print run of 2,500 and 2,000 sets respectively. The second edition of the Hindi version too is in press.

In several *Upashrayas* and devout organisations, this book is taken as the medium of self-study – *swadhyaya*. If these discourses which take us on a tour of *Atmadharma* were to be analysed, they would set forth a new direction to our spiritual life.

The *Pujya Tattvadarshi Jayantilalji Maharajsaheb* has looked upon this essence of these discourses as a pristine flow of spirituality and categorised the great volume as a divine mirror.

Every single phrase from the Contemplation of the Soul – *Atma Chintan* – which appears in ‘हुं आत्मा छुं’ is like a minor divine trail branching out of the kingsway of ‘हुं आत्मा छुं’.

Pujya Mahasatiji has proved the fact through her own discourses that the Jain *Kathanuyoga* leads to an understanding of the principles. While explaining and elucidating on the gathas, she has been greatly benevolent towards us by resorting to examples from the *Kathanuyoga* and making the principles readable (*suvachya*) and easily digestible (*supachya*).

The year 1998 was the birth centenary of *Pujya Mahasatiji's Gurudev* and the cynosure of the entire Jain community *Saurashtrakesari Pujya Pranalalji Maharaj*. *Pujya Dr. Tarulatabai Mahasatiji* along with all the other revered disciples of *Pujya Lalitabai Mahasatiji* worked untiringly under her to bring out the ‘*Abhivandana*’ volume that year. This volume in commemoration of the birth centenary of *Pujya Pranalalji Maharaj* has earned a place of honour in the history of Jainism.

To perpetuate the memory of *Pujya Gurudev*, the ‘*Saurashtrakesari Pranguru Jain Philosophical and Literary Research Centre*’ was established under the aegis of the great *Shri Pandit Ratnachandraji Jain Kanyashala Trust, Ghatkopar, Mumbai*, which was inspired by the *Pujya Gurudev* himself.

The sages have considered *dhyana* (Meditation) as the best means for attaining *karma nirjara*. In our life style today, which is full of uncertainties and the rat race for wealth, *dhyana* is essential to attain the peace of mind. Wherever *Pujya Mahasatiji* has ventured during her *vihar* (travel), she has made sure that camps are organised for the learning of *Preksha* Meditation.

The life of the sages is like a laboratory. The greatly compassionate sages first experiment with their own life and then inspire others to do the same. *Pujya Mahasatiji's* life too has been revolutionary and experimental.

The new generation is learning through the medium of English. Our youth settled here and abroad were in dire need of an English version of 'हुं आत्मा छुं'. *Sri Gujarati Swetamber Sthanakwasi Jain Association*, Chennai's efforts in publishing the English version, in association with the *Research Foundation for Jainology*, Chennai are indeed opportune and praiseworthy.

The honourable **Shri Surendrabhai Mehta** and his team at the Association and the Research Foundation, deserve rich accolades for their effort in this publication.

This great treatise, which is like an invaluable deed for spiritual upliftment, quenches the thirst for knowledge in the *mumukshus* (those desirous of moksha), *jijnasus* (those curious to know) and *sadhakas* (those in devoted pursuit).

If we can only partake of a few drops from this pristine, incessant flow of spirituality, we can taste the nectar of the Self and make our lives exalted.

Gunwant Barwalia

Mumbai

24.10.2000



Param Puja Pranlalji Maharaj saheb
the benevolent Sadgurudev

Birth : Veraval, Monday 16.8.1897

Diksha : Thursday 25.2.1920

Nirvana : Wednesday 27.2.1957

Blessings of Revered Gurudev Ratilalji Maharaj Saheb

Sadhvi Tarulata is a pleasant and impressive personality of the Jaina church. Besides herself, vast multitude of people are benefiting from her spiritual practices. I herewith send my best wishes and blessings on the occasion of the publication of her first work. I wish her every success and hope that she will continue to make valuable literary contribution in future.

Blessings of Revered Panditratna, Tattvadarshi Pujya Shri Jayantilalji Maharaj Saheb

Spring of the essence of Spirituality

I am the Soul. What a beautiful name for a spiritual treatise! The production is of a very high quality. I had earlier expressed my feelings once prior to the publication. But after I received the volumes on hand, I was left with a feeling that my words had been inadequate. The true picture of the treatise was clear once the volumes came to my hand. It was far superior to what I had thought. I was able to visualise the spring of words, with an excellent flow of thoughts.

I am the Soul – the treatise is great like a divine mirror, a treatise of knowledge, looking into which, one is presented with a vision of the true substance of the Self and one becomes aware that the tainting feelings and the atma are only different. A pristine sensation occurs that I am myself the Soul and the Soul is my Self.

There is of course, the relation with ‘***Atmasiddhi Shastra***’. ***Adhyatma Yogi*** Srimad Rajachandra has been infinitely benevolent towards the people by composing ‘***Atmasiddhi***’ and enabling the people to swim in the ocean of spirituality. Many ***Sadhakas***, ***Dravyanuyogi*** Philosophers and Insightful Souls have done ornamental work upon the gold of ‘***Atmasiddhi***’. And there are more talents unfolding everyday.

Our **Tarulataji** too has touched the same gold and done ornamental filigree work on it. There are several commentator – artisans who are fanatically sectarian and who analyse the original with a mixed approach of true and false views and do injustice to the original composer. While Tarulataji has kept her soul free of such mixed views and collected verses which provide a medium for equanimity and thus through her ornament like

thoughts very magnanimously embellished the original. Whether the verses were from **Kabir** or from **Narasinha** or from **Ramana Maharshi**, whether they were from philosophers of Jain following or totally anonymous great sages, Tarulataji has kept the maxim of ‘good is gold’ before her while making her selections.

Where there is a deliberation upon contradictions too, her balanced approach is so evident like the tender fingers, which lull the sufferer into sleep, while the thorn in his foot is being removed.

In this *Siddhi*-ocean of Srimad, there is no negation or striking down of any faith; there is only the reprimanding of stubborn and headstrong insistence on unilateral thinking. Srimadji has only tried to present the Jain philosophy as the all-encompassing view of all the faiths, like the sagacious Haribhadrasuri, a visionary yogi.

Tarulataji has understood this theme in its propriety and filled up a cupful of gems of verse-references to explain all the *gathas* of *Atmasiddhi*. How wide a spectrum of literature she has touched! She is the first *Sadhvi* in our country to have made such a commentary with a collection of such pure verses, which are so spiritually touching. Here is a *Sadhvi* who has fathomed the depths of the spiritual oceans, in her quest for harmony in the spiritual verses, and compiled a heap of such gems. Tarulataji has thus followed the *Atmasiddhi* and burnished the essence of spirituality. If eventually, this treatise were not to be called ‘I am the Soul’ or a series of discourses on *Atmasiddhi*, and were to be realistically christened with a universally touching title, it would have to be ‘*Adhyatmasar*’ – essence of spirituality.

We shall also refer to this treatise as ‘*Adhyatmasar*’ here.

Now, come let us go through pages of *Adhyatmasar* and in Tarulataji’s words (page 778 in Volume two of the English Edition) –

“After having realised the true pure form of the *atma*, the ego has to dissolve . . . Brothers! Pardon me, but when you see the ego of a person talking about *niscaya naya*, one wonders how the scriptures that came to him and the talks that he heard about pure *niscaya*, could be so transformed! How could they become instrumental in inflating the ego? The omniscient supreme soul has said in the scriptures, ‘Whatever be the agamas, to a *Mithyatvi* they turn into a form of *mithya*’. One can see this statement practically proving itself in such *jivas*.”

How superior is the feeling that has been woven into this definition! She has assessed the discerning ability of those who talk about *niscaya naya*! And Brothers! You will pardon me, but the commentator’s soul hurts while making such strong statements. That is why she has naturally sought pardon while serving the bitter truth.

In the entire treatise, it appears as if the essence of knowledge is present. The interspersed examples in the form of dialogues are very truthful and brief, yet they prove very useful in touching the principle.

The entire treatise is bedecked with ornaments like a graceful daughter-in-law of some cultured family and mirroring the image of a newly talented **Sharada**.

“Brothers! So long as there is no *dharma* in business, the right to speak plainly about *atma* is not acquired.”

Tarulataji is seeking to place very clearly in people’s day-to-day life, the aspects of *vyavahar* and *niscaya*. Business is the external activity of the entire life. If *dharma* is not to be seen in it, then this activity aspect weakens considerably and loses context, washing out the entire spiritual aspect. How effectively the commentator has brought this out!

I have but quoted two extracts from the treatise. In fact, the entire treatise is like a store of nectar for the readers. It is said in literature that ‘a lucid poetry is like a dip in nectar’. Our

commentator Tarulataji is not a mere orator offering dry spiritual fare. She knows her poetic dice very well. That is why she has made spirituality so interesting before presenting it. So that the sweetness of poetry is forthcoming and we can accept it. *Veetaraag* has been very well blended with *Shabdaraag* (the word-play) as a result the treatise is also an ornament.

Look, Tarulataji says : “The joy of atma is such a *kalpavriksha* – wish tree – which never enters fall. It is always in spring. It is always in full bloom.” The poetic words seem as sweet as the forest berries. She has become adept at it.

Finally, I wish to close here with just one question. How many are eligible to use this treatise which is a gem of *chaitanya*? These days, when there is a custom growing for light disco discourses, how many swans can be found who appreciate these philosophical gems? How can the humanity, which is now used to the eating spicy savouries, relish such *rasagullas*?

Eligibility is a must for this treatise. There are of course, heightened *mumukshu* feelings these days, so there are bound to be some eligible ones. Nevertheless, by the law of ‘*bahuratna vasundhara*’ – the earth has many gems, as the eligible persons appear this gem of treatise will eventually be of great use.

Today is the age where imitation and nickel-plated jewellery sells more and those in search of genuine gold jewellery are bound to suffer. However, those who appreciate gold will certainly recognise the *Adhyatmasar*. That is also my earnest desire . . .

I take great pleasure in expressing total satisfaction over the great treatise ‘I am the Soul’. If I were to write a critical appraisal, that would itself run into another large treatise. With this fear I stop here . . .

May Tarulataji always be victorious.

Anand Mangalam.

Blessings of Revered Bapji

Purity of Self is Perfection

Man is a thinking creature and with the help of his intellect, he acquires knowledge of anything and everything under the sun and exploits them for his benefit. In spite of all this he is unable to realize his true self. for only a simple and steadfast mind absorbed in self contemplation alone can enable him to achieve this highest good.

When the intellect endowed with the power of discrimination associates itself with the *Jnana chetana*, it takes the form of *Prajna*. The source of the same is within ourselves. Our sincere efforts and pure thought process together enable us to tap that source and realize the ultimate. *Sadhvi* Tarulata has striven to prove the above fact while lecturing on *Atmasiddhi Shastra*.

The aim of composing the *Atmasiddhi Shastra* is the purification of the one's own self and that of others. As it is true that there cannot be *Siddhi* i.e. accomplishment without *Shuddhi* i.e. purity, it is the self that is to be purified, realized and accomplished.

The aim of the author as well as the commentator is that everybody should realize and accomplish the self. A person with such lofty ideals alone can express the contents of the text in an impressive and inspiring manner, otherwise the discourses would have lacked originality. Besides the unique contents of the *Atmasiddhi Shastra*, we are also introduced to the devotion with which they have been presented by *Arya* Tarulata. I sincerely hope that his work will inspire one and all to realize 'the self'.

Arya Tarulata has not resorted to the aid of a flowery language but has presented the lectures in a simple language which is replete with meaning. She has neither deviated from the main subject nor has she tried to entertain the audience by

irrelevant illustrations. Instead she has tried to explain the truth, to the best of her ability. The knowledge of a layman benefits his own self. Whereas the knowledge of an ascetic benefits the person himself as well as others who come in his contact. The *Atmasiddhi Shastra* is like the latter which benefits the reader as well as the hearer.

Srimad Rajachandra says, “Commence your *Sadhana* i.e. spiritual practices and leave your worries about perfection with us. Check the inflow of Karmas, stop the binding of new karmas and discard your worries about the already accumulated ones. In spite of this if you do not get emancipation, you can take it from me”.

The subject matter of *Atmasiddhi Shastra* is the least complicated and important for one and all. So is the language and style of the commentary simple and effective. More over *Arya* Tarulata does not nurture a desire for name and fame and this is the effect of her selfless nature and spiritual practice that she sincerely observes. Such spiritually inclined person alone can climb the ladder of perfection and inspire others to tread on the path of perfection. There is harmony between her practice and the knowledge that she has acquired. In other words her practice are not mere rituals of an ignorant man.

It is befitting for the society to expect *Arya* Tarulata to undertake such literary work in the future. Just like the wealth of the rich, the knowledge of the wise should benefit the common man. We hope that she too will exploit her inborn talent and utilise it for the benefit of all to the maximum best of her ability.

Though this is the first attempt of *Arya* Tarulata at literary composition, it is unique and laudable. By this contribution, not only *Sadhvi* Tarulata, but also the Jaina society congregation and religion are ennobled and I am fortunate to be a witness to the same.

Now it is the turn of the readers to inspire the author to undertake more such literary works in the future. The readers are bound to benefit from such noble literature, but the commentator has reaped the fruits of her noble efforts while presenting the lectures. Lastly I would like to say that, may her knowledge serve her purpose of realisation and inspire others to realise 'the self'.

Sadhvi Lalita

February 19, 1987
Hyderabad

Pujya Lalitabai Mahasatiji was born at Dhoraji in Saurashtra on Friday, 24.1.1927 - Vasant Panchami day. Her Diksha ceremony was held at Vadia on Wednesday, 27.2.1952.



Puja Lalitabai Mahasatiji
who gently moulded her disciple Sadhvi Tarulata and
guided her through her formative years

હું ની શોધ

લગભગ ૧૯૫૦ નું વર્ષ, ૧૧ વર્ષની ઉંમર, રવિવારની રમીડ સાંજ સ્વધ્યાનક સ્થાંતરમાંથી કોઈકે કહ્યું: 'હું છું' કોણ કહે છે; શ્વે સત્ત્વનું નહીં પણ શ્વે કહેવાનું સત્ત્વ શ્યામ રહ્યું. કેટલી મિનિટો વાઈ અવર ન રહી. 'હું છું- હું છું' કહેતાં. કહેતાં નેચર મંદ પડી ગયો. કિશોર મનની સત્ત્વ બહારની શ્વે વાત

વર્ષો વિત્યાં સ્વધ્યાત્મ-ચોગિની વાત્સલ્ય-હૃદયી, પૂજ્યા ગુરુજીજી, મારા પાલા બાપજી [પૂ. બા. બ. લલિતાબાઈ મહાસતીજી] નાં શ્રી ચરણોમાં ચૂકાવ્યું. પૂજ્યા બાપજીનાં સત્ત્વ સુનિધ્યે, સત્ત્વ શ્વે દેહિએ, સત્ત્વ શ્વાત્મિક સિંચને રૂંચી 'હું' ને અનુત કચો શ્વે 'હું' શોધ પ્રારંભાઈ. શ્વેનેક સુ-ચોગો મળતાં રહ્યાં, શોધની પિપાસા તીવ્ર બનતી ચાલી. દિશા મળતી ન હતી. સ્થાંતર વેદના વધતી રહી. વ્યાં-ત્યાં 'હું' ની શોધમાં શ્વાથડતી રહી શ્વે

‘ મહર્ષિ રમણ નાં પવિત્ર પદ્મચુઓનાં સ્પર્શ, લેમનાં ‘ હું કોણ? શ્વે સુનાતન પ્રજ્ઞે

દિશા-બોધ આપ્યો. દિશા ખુલ્લી 'હું' ની શોધ
 ઉડાણમાં પ્રવેશ પાત્રી અને પ્રીતમ અભયંદ્રજનાં
 પ્રી આત્મસિદ્ધિ શારજા પર નવર મંડાઈ રહી.
 આત્મમતિ વડે શારજાનાં આગાધ રૂદરઓ ઉડે-
 લવા મથે રહી. આરા બોલાયેલા 'હું'ની શોધ
 આત્મસિદ્ધિ શારજાનાં સુદારે કરતી રહી.

આપે આપની સમક્ષ જે મારો નાનકડો
 યત્ન મૂકી રહી છું એ મારા 'હું'ની શોધ છે.
 શોધમાં નીકળેલ આનવ સ્વામે અનેક ઉડાણો
 હોય; તે ભૂલો પડે, આથડે, પાછો ફરે, ફરી
 ઉડાણે ચડે, ફરી આથડે, આમ જ થાય - - - -
 મારી શોધે અને ઉડાણે બડાવા છે કે નહીં, નથી
 જાણતા પણ શોધમાં છું. હવે 'હું' લાધ્યો
 નથી 'હું' ને પાત્રવાનાં પ્રયાસો માં જ...
 બિનવાહાનીનાં સુત્રો લધા તથ્યો ને ઉડેલવાનો
 આચાર કર્યો છે..

પ્રાપ્તે, મારી અજ્ઞાનતાનાં કારણે
 બિનઆત્મા વિરુદ્ધ કેઈ લખાયું હોય, બિનવાહાની-
 ની અજ્ઞાનતા થઈ હોય, તો મનસા-લખા
 કર્મણા મિચ્છામિદુક્કં.

આર્યા તરુલળા

In search of the self

In 1950, at the age of eleven, one Sunday evening I heard a voice from within 'I AM', but was unable to trace the source of the voice. As time passed by, the echo deepened and I got lost in it. I do not know how much time passed.

However, after some time the voice became low and merged in my inner self. At that time I was unable to comprehend the mystery behind the voice.

In 1958, I surrendered at the sacred feet of my Preceptor revered **Bala Brahmacharini Lalitabai Mahasatiji** (affectionately called **Bapji**) a great spiritual aspirant and practitioner with an immensely affectionate heart.

In her constant, intellectual and affectionate company, I resumed the search of 'The Self'. The circumstances too favoured my search and the thirst for the knowledge and realisation of 'The Self' became intense. I struggled to solve the enigma and continued sincerely with my search.

The holy words of **Ramana Maharishi** and his eternal question 'Who am I?' gave the required insight and impetus. I found a ray of light in his literature that pierced the darkness that prevailed all the while.

At such a time my eyes fell upon the '**Atmasiddhi Shastra**' of Srimad Rajachandra. I began to unravel the secrets of the scripture with my inept mind in order to pursue my search of 'The Self'.

What I place before you to-day is my humble search of 'The Self'. There are many side-tracks on a path that may some times mislead the traveller and sometimes enable him to tread on the path successfully. One forgets the path, deviates from it and after a few setbacks is again on the right track. This goes on.

I do not know whether my search has enabled me to reach my destination, but my search continues. I have tried to study and understand the words of *Jineshwar* in order to realise my true self.

Lastly I apologise (*micchami dukkadam*) if I have contradicted the words of *Jineshwar* by thought, word or deed and spoken against the teachings of *Sri Jina*.

- Arya Tarulata



Puja Dr. Tarulatabai Mahasatiji M.A., Ph.D.
whose discourses were compiled as 'I am the Soul'

Introduction of Tarulatabai Mahasatiji

One cannot give an introduction of the sun: its light warmth and other qualities are its introduction. The same holds true of all individuals. Their qualities and virtues are their true identity and a virtuous personality is the true mark of any individual.

Dr. Tarulatabai *Mahasatiji* is a multifaceted personality. Her profound knowledge of scriptures, her scholarly writings, her lectures giving expression to the words of Jineswara and her vigorous spiritual practices are some of the aspects of her personality.

At the tender age of 18, she realised the transitory nature of the world and was keen to find the truth. And so this worthy daughter of *Shri Vanmalidas Velji Thosani* and *Smt. Shantaben*, sister of *Navinbhai*, *Pushpaben*, *Madhuben* and *Varshaben* decided to renounce the world to realize 'The Self'.

Tarulataben got initiated as a Jaina *sadhvi* under the care of revered *Lalitabai Mahasatiji* at the instance and in the order of Gurudev *Shri Ratilalji Maharaj Saheb* on the second day of the bright half of *Falgun* in *Vir Samvat* 2014. With this started her *aradhana* i.e. spiritual practice. In just a few years she made a deep and thorough study of Jaina *Agamas* and also took the master's degree in Hindi Literature. Her studies only enhanced her thirst for knowledge which provided only a glimpse of Universal vastness of the objects of reality. She probed deeper to grasp immense and correct knowledge of the same. Having unmoving faith in Jaina dharma and the words of *Jineswara*, she was influenced by the Jaina principles of *Syadvada* and *Anekantavada* and practised *Ahimsa* in its subtlest form. She was convinced of the universal nature of all religions and desired to present the same before the common man. So she made a comparative study of the spiritual literature written in Jains and

Non-Jains traditions. Comparative study of the works of Saint poets viz. *Banarasidas*, *Kabir*, *Anandghanji* and *Srimad Rajachandra*, was her topic for her Ph.D. She imbibed the spiritual teachings of the saint poets-cum-philosophers, while studying their works. This knowledge became an inseparable part of her personality and dominated her thoughts, lectures and writings. *Tattva Jnana* (Metaphysics) and *Sadhvi Tarulata* became synonymous and the epithet "*Prakhara Tattva Vetta*" given to her fitted her personality. Reading this book, one will be convinced of the above fact.

Revered *Mahasatiji* remains forever indebted to her Guru, the most revered Lalitabai *Mahasatiji* and Jagajivanji *Maharaj Saheb*. She was fortunate to serve the latter when he undertook fast of 45 days at Rajagiri. She was inspired by the total detachment of revered *Gurudev* and this enhanced her spiritual progress. *Gurudev* Jayantimuniji who was serving the tribals of Bihar had dedicated himself for the welfare of the downtrodden and was forever engrossed in spiritual contemplation, was a great source of inspiration for Tarulatabai *Mahasatiji*. The teachings of revered Bapji too have left an indelible mark on her. *Swami Vivekananda*, the torchbearer of spiritual and cultural India, also influenced her. The spiritual practices of *Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa* and his discrimination between the real and the unreal influenced her immensely. Similar was the influence of *Ramana Maharishi* whose indirect vicinity guided her to meditate upon the truth and ponder over the eternal question of "Who am I?" I am the Soul is the answer to the above and hence the title chosen for this work.

During the long period of 35 years of initiation, the most revered *Mahasatiji* had travelled by foot in the regions of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, etc. and a vast multitude of people have benefited from her profound knowledge.

Here is a multifaceted personality. A thorough study and lucid explanation of various subjects is the fruit of spiritual grandeur and brightness, which can be seen in all her activities. She has the sensitivity of a poet and the simplicity of a saint and is forever eager to undertake various spiritual practices. Her command over the language and authority on the subject make her compositions impressive as well as a must for reading and experiencing. Her short poem “*Caravan*” in 41 lines depicts the state of mind of a spiritual aspirant who is yearning for self-realisation. One gets a glimpse of oneness of life and nature in her works. She also has the capacity to express the natural beauty in pleasant words and simultaneously convey the philosophical underlined message of goodness and righteousness.

I offer my humble salutations at the feet of revered Tarulatabai Mahasatiji and seek her blessings.

Surendra Manilal Mehta

Past President

Shri Gujarati Swetamber
Sthanakwasi Jain Association

Pujya Tarulatabai Mahasatiji was born at Dhari, Gujarat on Monday, 21.8.1939 - Shravan Shudh 7. Her Diksha Ceremony was held at Veraval on Thursday, 20.2.1958.

Reflections of 'The Self'

It is a matter of great joy that revered Tarulatabai *Mahasatiji* selected the *Atmasiddhi* Shastra for her lectures during the *Chaturmasa* of *Samvat* 2041.

Jaina *sadhus* and *sadhvis* are constantly on the move, they stay in a place for four months during the *chaturmasa*. Sermons are delivered everyday in the morning for four consecutive months. Each day a new topic is introduced and commented upon avoiding repetition. A work or two is selected in accordance with one's taste and ability to comment upon. The *Uttaradhyayana Sutra*, *Dasavaikalika Sutra*, *Jnatadharma Katha Sutra*, *Kalpa Sutra*, *Yogadrasti Samuccaya*, *Samaradityakatha*, *Yogashastra*, etc. may be taken up during the discourse. Smaller the work, greater is the demand on art and ability to comment and analyse its meaning.

Revered Tarulatabai *Mahasatiji* selected *Atmasiddhi* Shastra, a work in 142 couplets for her lectures, which goes to prove her eloquence. It is not an easy task to deliver lectures on the above work, which is highly spiritual and philosophical in its content. Any one can deviate from the topic and pass the time of the sermons. Only a person who has read widely, practises meditation and other spiritual pursuits alone can analyse and comment upon a subject of this kind. One of the Jaina *sadhus*, late Tattvananda Shri Vijayji *Maharaj* some times chose the '*Namaskara Mahamantra*' for the *chaturmasa* sermons. He used to comment upon the nine *padas* of it from different stand-points, avoiding repetition and bringing to light a new meaning of the same. The audience found his discourses interesting and inspiring.

Revered Tarulatabai *Mahasatiji* has secured Ph.D., from the Bombay University. She made a comparative study of the spiritual literature of saint poets and this proves her interest in

spirituality. These saint poets raised themselves above sectarianism and propitiated the supreme self. Their spiritual experiences were of a very high standard and their literature is deeply touching and meaningfully rich and influential. Revered *Sadhviji* has made a thorough study of the literature of *Srimad Rajachandra* and is qualified to deliver lectures on his *Atmasiddhi Shastra*.

At the age of 29, *Srimad Rajachandra* composed the *Atmasiddhi Shastra* in just about two hours at Nadiad in 1896 A.D. The work is a proof of his pure thought process and his extraordinary command over words. He has used the right words at right places. Even today, after so many years, the text is in such a fine shape one does not feel like changing a single word or line from its place.

Srimad Rajachandra in his *Atma Siddhi Shastra* has given a clear picture of the nature of the pure self. He says

આત્મા છે, તે નિત્ય છે, છે કર્તા નિજકર્મ,
છે ભોક્તા, વઢી મોક્ષ છે, મોક્ષ ઉપાય સુધર્મ ૪૩

i.e. There is the existence of the soul. it is eternal and it is the doer and enjoyer of karmas. There is emancipation and the means to acquire it is *Sudharma* i.e. right conduct.

The author has elaborated these six characteristics of the soul in such an impressive and convincing style that even an ordinary man can grasp it with ease. He has narrated the nature of a person in search of the self (*Atmarthi*) and also that of a person who is dogmatic (*Matarthi*). He has also carved out the path of liberation and importance of a noble preceptor for spiritual upliftment. In this way the *Atmasiddhi Shastra* has become a mini scripture. Various philosophical topics viz. Nine *Tattvas*, six *Dravyas*, eight Karmas, fourteen *Gunasthanas*, six *Leshyas* etc., are elaborated in *Jaina Agamas*, the knowledge of which is important to understand the pathway of liberation. The

Atmasiddhi Shastra serves as a unique means to grasp the knowledge of the essential constituents of the pathway of liberation, without undergoing any mental strain.

Srimad Rajachandra was a wise and learned man and had realised the true nature of the self. He used to be always absorbed in meditation. The following two lines of the text that distinguishes pure soul from the body are true of Srimad Rajachandra –

देह छातां जेनी दशा, वर्ते देहातीत
ते ज्ञानीनां चरणामां, हो वंदन अगणित १४२

i.e. A self realised man possesses a body but it is not influenced by the bodily afflictions and pleasures. I offer my humble salutations at the feet of such a perfect soul.

In 107 chapters the learned *Sadhvi* has shed valuable light on the philosophical contents of the *Atmasiddhi Shastra*. She has also analysed and elaborated each word of each couplet in an impressive and inspiring way. People desirous of self realisation have benefited immensely from her discourses on *Atmasiddhi Shastra*. Only a self-dependent soul engrossed in meditation and one striving for the destruction of *jnanavarniya* karmas can comment upon such a philosophical and spiritual tenet like *Atmasiddhi Shastra*.

We shall forever be indebted to Tarulatabai *Mahasatiji* for giving these valuable and meritorious lectures. It is my earnest desire that people from all walks of life derive inspiration from these lectures.

Prof. Ramanlal Shah

Contents of the book

A detailed and exhaustive commentary on the *Atmasiddhi Shastra* was completed in about 800 pages and as it was not practical to publish in one volume, we decided to publish the same in two volumes.

The first volume includes *Gathas* (couplets) 1 to 58. At the very outset the six essential characteristics of the soul as told by Srimad Rajachandra are introduced. Today people are spiritually ignorant and materialistic in their attitude. They are unaware of their true selves and involved in futile material affairs. The *Atmasiddhi Shastra* elaborates the essentials for spiritual upliftment and also describes the nature and dealings of a person who is spiritually inclined.

In the second volume *Gathas* 59 to 142 are analysed and the six essential characteristics of the soul are elaborated. Also the doubts arising in the mind of the disciple regarding the same are cleared. The disciple who has acquired the '*Bodhi Bija*' i.e. right faith realises 'the self' and the nature of a self realised soul is portrayed. The subjects discussed in the first 118 *Gathas* as also summarised by Srimad Rajachandra are also presented in this volume.

The literature of Srimad Rajachandra is written in a very simple language and the style too is unique. One may question that when the work is simple and self explanatory what is the need of such a detailed and exhaustive commentary? The reason for this is to understand and explain the importance of *Atmasiddhi Shastra* from Jaina view-point. Although the work is simple, it is replete with spiritual and metaphysical knowledge and the entire text of *Atmasiddhi Shastra* is analysed from various view points.

Revered *Mahasatiji* always commenced the discourse with salutations to the *Arhats* and *Siddhas* and concluded with the meditation on the nature of the pure soul. These two have become an important part of the discourse and so each chapter of this work commences and concludes with the narration of the same as the aim of all spiritual practices is the realisation of 'the self'.

I sincerely hope that this work will provide an insight into Jaina philosophy, quench the thirst for right knowledge in one and all and be instrumental in self-realisation.

Praful Shah

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I am the Soul - a prologue

This is a compilation of a series of discourses rendered by the venerable Dr. Tarulata *Mahasatiji*, a nun in the order of Jains, at Madras, now Chennai, during the specific period of chaturmas, i.e. four months, (of monsoon), a few years ago.

A natural, gifted orator, Mahasatiji's discourses, originally in Gujarati, caught the fancy of the layman in search of the Self. The series of discourses spread over the four months became so popular that they were immediately brought into print, first in Gujarati and later in a Hindi version.

The series is based on the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' penned over a hundred years ago, by Srimad Rajachandra, a great enlightened soul, at the young age of nineteen years.

The subject here is the Soul. The Soul is defined and a simple course delineated for it, to attain liberation, an escape from the life and death cycle, based on the principles of Jainism.

Mahasatiji has made an in-depth study of the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*'. Her thesis, which earned her a doctorate, is based on this work of Srimad Rajachandra, as well as his other priceless literary contributions. Mahasatiji's close association with this valuable work of knowledge qualifies her among the most appropriate exponents of Srimad Rajachandra's thoughts.

In a simple, fluent and engrossing way, Mahasatiji takes us on a guided tour in the realm of the Soul. Through this series of discourses that had spanned four months, Mahasatiji has, in fact, made an effort to introduce a novice to the Jain principles in a most interesting manner. She has faithfully elucidated the cryptic gathas of Srimad, and at the same time through illustrations and virtual excursions, which are a hallmark of her own inimitable style, managed to explain the fundamentals of Jainism to a

layman. No wonder, the compilations of her discourses were well-received by one and all.

With a view to reach a wider cross-section of the society, this publication, હું આત્મા છું, is now being presented in English.

While going through the pages of this translation it is essential to note that a modest effort has been made to retain the flavour of the original language and the style of the orator. Preference has been given to getting the essence across in simple, prevalent terms. Words, which are specific to the tenets, indeed technical, in Sanskrit/Gujarati/Hindi languages, while being presented in the Roman script, have been italicised. An effort is now on to compile them into a glossary of sorts with a reverse reference.

It is obvious that a second reading, with the knowledge of the equivalent terms, will enable a better understanding of the message of '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' as conveyed in the discourses of Mahasatiji.

Another point to be noted is that, this translation takes off from an original Gujarati. As such several expressions and references would carry a typical Gujarati flavour. Moreover, there would be repeated references to scriptures and saints and such - all those would, unless specified refer to the Jain order.

Srimad Rajachandrajī, before he came to be looked upon as a spiritual teacher, lived a life like any other layman. He used to be called Raychand, *bhai* being a suffix of respect. As will be evident from the early pages of the main text, Srimad was born with the imprint of accrued knowledge from previous births. He was a sage of the spiritual path, whose journey had been interrupted, in an earlier life-span.

From the age seven, he had been able to perceive his goal and inculcate the necessary austerity in his life. Owing to his ascetic nature, there were several laymen who took him as the

Guru, despite his young age. One such was Sowbhagyabhai, at whose instance Srimad penned the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' of 142 verses, when he was only twenty-nine. Yet, the fact that the 142 verses in which the essence of Jain principles has been presented in a cryptic manner, were compiled in just an hour and a half, without one letter being scratched, altered or revised, only goes to prove that this was truly a work of inspiration.

Srimadji has taken a plot where a disciple in search of the Self, is in a quandary as to which path to follow for attaining his goal. The disciple engages his *Guru* in a dialogue, through which all the doubts in his mind are clarified. The sincerity of purpose which the disciple expresses in so many words, draws the compassion of the *Guru*, who elucidates the entire process of identifying the Self, preparation for the journey on the path of spirituality and ultimately the method of Self Realisation. The disciple is overwhelmed with the compassion of the *Guru* and expresses his gratitude profusely.

The entire dialogue is interspersed with comments from Srimadji, also presented in gathas, who closes the *Shastra* with 14 gathas of summarisation.

Mahasatiji has shown us how to unravel the mysteries hidden in the cryptic gathas. In doing so, she has drawn upon her vast knowledge of Jain scriptures and devotional compositions, and the rich Indian heritage of philosophy and metaphysics. One also notices her concern over the erosion of values in modern life and the fast diminishing richness of our culture.

Every chapter in the book (which had been a day in the original series of discourses) begins with a reference to the three-fold path of liberation, namely *Samyag Darshan*, *Samyag Jnana* and *Samyag Charitra*. Mahasatiji, in a very astute way builds in a lead to the content of each chapter, in this opening paragraph itself.

Perhaps the most repeated word in this compilation is *Jiva* – the being. Mahasatiji, in her discourses, has built all her postulates around this *Jiva*, who is in search of the true identity and has realised that there exists a Soul within, independent of the body. The *Jiva* has been referred to in the neuter gender and encompasses the male and the female beings. Similarly, Mahasatiji's penchant for addressing the audience as 'Brothers' does not preclude women. It is merely a translation of the original '*Bandhu*' which could literally mean 'a relative'.

This actually is the hallmark of Mahasatiji's endearing style. At times her comments are scathing while at other times scalding; at times she appears to be goading the audience, at other times she is admonishing them. But her concern, her compassion is genuine. Here is a traveller far advanced on the path in search of the Self. She is well aware of the futility of the mundane. It is but natural for her to develop a feeling of compassion towards those who straggle on the path.

Originally, Mahasatiji had built in a pattern of meditative introspection of about ten minutes along with her discourse. Several such introspective sessions have been presented in the original as '*Atma Chintan*' – *Contemplating the Self*. Only four of those have been presented here in this edition.

The famous advertisement line 'the real thing' is indeed to be appreciated here, for the translator has had a limitation in expressing the original into English, owing to his limited vocabulary. So there is nothing like being able to read and relish the original Gujarati compilation, which is running into its third edition now. If the reader is not conversant with Gujarati, then there is also the Hindi version available.

Continuing on the idea of 'the real thing', Srimadji has suggested in the *Shashtra*, that one has to yearn for and seek out *Satsang* – a company of the sages, where it is possible to glean

true knowledge. However, in the absence of Satsang, one could resort to learning from the books. He has suggested that a repeated reading of the Scriptures helps one assimilate the principles.

Here, for those who are unable to learn from Mahasatiji in person, this compilation of her discourses can be an ideal recourse. Those who are already into the study of Jain principles and scriptures will find this a handy reference and a ready-reckoner. While those who are beginning their journey into learning the Jain principles will find this set of two volumes as an ideal guide. Of course, repeated readings are a must, as the food for thought presented herein is a little on the richer and heavier side, needing an extra effort to assimilate.

By the same token, the original composition of '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' in Srimadji's own hand has been reproduced in the opening pages of Volume 2. There is also a running compilation of all 142 gathas in Devanagari. The composition is lyrical and can be learnt by heart with just a little effort.

A reader is bound to come up with queries and doubts about various topics presented here. There would be some that might want to make notes while they read. For their benefit, both volumes include a few pages for notes. Some of us have a habit of laying an open book face down, if we are interrupted while reading. That is a sure way of damaging the spine of the book. Some of us are also in the habit of folding corners of pages to indicate where we stopped while reading. That will leave the book with dog-ears. To avoid both these, it is ideal to use a bookmark. A bookmark has been included for the readers' benefit.

So, here is your copy of 'I am the Soul', hoping that it will guide you in your journey on the spiritual path.

પરમશ્રદ્ધેય, વાત્સલ્યમૂર્તિ પરમપૂજ્ય

બા. બ. લલિતાબાઈ મહાસતીજી (બાપજી) ના ચરણોમાં સવિનય

સમર્પણ

હે અમ્મ!

તવ હૃદયની સર્વ સરવાણીઓ

વહે છે મુજ પરે!

શા - શા તેનાં નામ દઉં ?

મુજ મસ્તકે જે કર ધરે

કૃપા-કિરણ કે વાત્સલ્ય ધારા . . . ?

ઉર નાં અમી કે સુ-ભાવ સારા . . . ?

સતત મુજ શ્રેયનું ચિંતન

રહે છે તવ ઉરે . . . !

આ કાળમાં તવ ચરણ પામી

થઈ હું કૃતકૃત્ય ખરે . . . !

તવ અમી સિંચનથી ખીલ્યું જે

પુષ્પ મુજ જીવન બાગે . . .

તેને ધરું છું તવ ચરણમાં

મુજ હૃદયનાં સર્વ ભાવે . . .

- આપણી ચરણધૂલી

તરૂ

humble

Dedication

at the feet of

Paramshraddeya, Vatsalyamurti, Param Pujya

Bal Brahmacharini Lalitabai Mahasatiji (Bapji)

I bow to you, Shri Sadguru Bhagwant!

Bhagawan Mahaveer, the noble soul, bereft of all passions, on attaining omniscience, has left behind a store of knowledge that enlightens our path to *moksa* - liberation. *Moksa* is to be achieved by following the three-fold path of True Faith, True Knowledge and True Conduct.

This three-fold path has to be followed assiduously if one is in search of the Self. The soul, while wandering in the vast precincts of this Universe for endless time now, has undergone a change of its own identity. Tainted as it is, in the uncharacteristic hues of its surroundings, the soul has forgotten its own true self. Neither is it aware of what lies in store for it in future. Many of us who claim the knowledge of the entire physical world, seldom attempt to unfold the mysteries of our own Self. It is such souls, meandering in a deep slumber, that the scriptures seek to awaken and guide to the goal of realising the Self.

The soul often goes astray. That is when it begins seeking delight from the sensual pleasures. In truth, the soul is self-sufficient, content within itself. Yet when it goes astray, it tends to overlook its own qualities and wanders in vain in search of happiness in the material world. It goes to any length in this self-seeking adventure. What a wasted effort in search of loose-ends! Should one put in so much effort, struggle unrelentingly, only to achieve the shallow depth of material pleasures? Should our ability to think analytically be applied to such simplistic tasks? Should we keep scratching the surface of our existence or delve deep into the mysteries within? These are some of the questions that our great spiritual Preceptors have sought to answer. In doing so, they have laid down some traditions.

After moving incessantly for eight months (other than the four months of the rainy season) the *Sadhus* and *Sadhvis* (monks and nuns - Saints) settle down at one place to spend the remaining four months. They utilise the occasion to inspire and draw one

and all towards the path of prayer and penance. This season, as it impresses upon us the need to restrain, is conducive for worship. Today is the beginning of the four-month season. Since the tradition is there to follow, a being could make efforts towards spiritual uplift in right earnest. One way of doing this is to absorb the discourses of the learned saints.

Such a righteous path has been indicated in the great '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*'. What, after all, is this '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' about? What does it have to say?

What else would the scriptures say, other than talking about the uplift of the soul! These scriptures do not propound any new theories. They merely reiterate the essence of the truth as realised and experienced by our *Tirthankars*. The great scholar, *Yakini Mahattarasunu Shri Haribhadrāsuri*, who enormously enriched the Jain scriptural literature by authoring an astounding 1,444 volumes in Sanskrit and Prakrit, has succinctly summed up the universal truth in six simple Sanskrit statements, in his work '*Dharmabindu*'. Those are -

1. Soul exists,
2. It is eternal,
3. It is the doer of its own Karma,
4. It is the sufferer of the results of its own Karma,
5. It can attain *moksa* (liberation), and
6. A path to such *moksa* (liberation) exists.

These six statements constitute the basic assumptions of Jainism. They are repeatedly discussed in the Jain *Agamas* (the early scriptures). Originally the *Agamas* were set in the *Ardhamagadhi* language. Today it is difficult for the layman to follow that language. It is with this need, of the layman, in view that the great spiritual yogi *Srimad Rajachandrajī*, rendered the fundamental truths in simple Gujarati. Perhaps this creation of his is the outcome of our combined *punya* (good fortune). How else could we be gifted with such a great store of knowledge?

The creation of this masterpiece by Srimadji is the outcome of his realisation of the natural Self. He did not have to struggle long in this life to attain Self-revelation; he had come in equipped with an abundant store of knowledge and the virtue of penance from his earlier births.

Jnana and *Darshan* are such virtues that if a *jiva* were to perform penance and maintain its purity, they would be carried forward with the soul to its succeeding births. Several incidents from Srimadji's childhood go to prove this point.

A *jiva* that brings with it the impressions of its previous births, does not take long to pick up the worldly knowledge. Srimadji's gain of worldly knowledge was indeed in a very short span of time. His absorption of spiritual knowledge was also equally rapid. His early creations in prose and verse were always logical and brimming with spirituality. As he grew older, he began scaling greater heights in the realm of spirituality.

Some worthy spiritual aspirants had recognised the spiritual ability of Srimadji and looked unto him for spiritual guidance. One such was Shri Sowbhagyabhai, a unique soul yearning for liberation. Although much older than Srimadji, he had taken Srimadji as his mentor. When Sowbhagyabhai felt his 'end' approaching, he appealed to Srimadji in his letter -

"I feel my life is nearing the end. Please write me something that could enlighten my soul and help me in attaining a peaceful death in a spirit of equanimity and equipoise beyond attachment or aversion."

In reply, Srimadji wrote him the six basic tenets in prose. Sowbhagyabhai was greatly impressed with the precious contents of the letter, but wrote again,

"The contents of your letter are excellent, but difficult to memorise as they are in prose form. Please render them in poetry, so that I may commit them to memory and recall them all the while."

Srimadji was in a habit of going out for a stroll in the evening. The day Srimadji received Sowbhagyabhai's second letter, he had just returned from the evening stroll accompanied by one of his devotees, Shri Ambalalabhai. The sun had just set and darkness was creeping in slowly. There would be times when Srimadji relapsed into deep introspection. With a sudden inspiration he would address letters to those yearning for liberation and spiritedly express his feelings to such people. This was one such moment.

Srimadji requested Ambalalabhai to hold up the lantern as he wrote and what followed was a rare and astonishing event. In just about an hour and a half, Srimadji composed this masterpiece of 142 verses.

It was the year 1896, October 22, and the day was Ashwin Vadya Pratipada. The sacred place where this happened was the town of Nadiad in the Charotar province of Gujarat. The hallmark of Srimadji's writing was that whenever he wrote, not one word needed to be replaced. Mahatma Gandhiji has noted in his writings that he had never known Srimadji to erase or alter even a single word when he wrote. Such a logical and perfect flow of words could only be traced to an enlightened Self.

Srimadji sent a copy of the freshly composed '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' to Sowbhagyabhai. He also sent a couple of copies to other worthy souls in search of liberation. He had allowed limited access to this Shastra in view of its complexity. Only a knowledgeable being could analyse and assimilate the Shastra. Sowbhagyabhai read and understood it and elevated his own life manifold. Eventually, the Shastra was released to all and today it is a part of every household.

This '*Atmasiddhi*' has been compared to the Holy Ganges -

हे पतित जन पावनी, सुर सरिता समी
अद्यम उद्धारिणी आत्मसिद्धि;
जन्म जन्मांतरो, जाणता जोगीए
आत्म अनुभव वडे, आज दीधी

भक्त भगीरथ समा, भाग्यशाळी महा
 भव्य सौभाग्यनी, विनति श्री
 चरोतर भूमिना, नगर नडियाद मां
 पूर्ण कृपा प्रभुए करी'ती हे पतितजन.....।

Atmasiddhi is the saviour of the fallen souls (अधम उद्धारिणी). It cleanses us of all sins and takes us towards liberation. But the question that arises here is whether we have had enough of these *papa* (sins). Do we desire to cleanse ourselves? It is impossible to find a being full of only sins or only *punya* (virtues). Both sin and virtue coexist in us and from time to time one of them gains over the other. Noble thoughts and deeds increase the virtues and ignoble thoughts and deeds increase sins. But the two streams run parallel in human life. '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' is like a holy stream that will wash away all the sins tainting our soul. It will imbibe in us the strength to rise above the good and bad, and enable us settle at a higher plane of purity of thought and deed.

It is that holy water, which reflects the truth as realised by the *Tirthankars*, which can purify a soul only when one gets immersed in it, when one puts it into practice with conviction and devotion. Mere chanting from memory will serve no purpose, it will not absolve us of any sins. Not until we follow the path of purity indicated in the background to the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*'. Only when the soul immerses itself in the pure spiritual thoughts, the sins get washed away and the soul then emerges in its original pristine purity.

This *Shastra* is a gift from a noble soul whose penance in the previous birth was interrupted by time; a soul that was reborn with the specific intent of completing the penance. Such being the state of his mind, Srimadji had been able to recall his previous birth at a very early age. It is said that with the ability to look back upon previous births, unless a soul had appeared in a mindless life-form anywhere in the past, one could look back upon as many as 900 previous births. Srimadji was able to look back upon several of his previous births. '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' is the philosophical essence of this vast experience.

In the Hindu mythology, it is said that when the earth was overburdened with sins, it became necessary to bring down the holy Ganga from the heavens, to wash away those sins. King Bhageeratha performed a severe penance to please Ganga and Lord Shiva. When ultimately Ganga gushed down from the heaven, Lord Shiva sheltered her in the locks of his matted hair and then let her flow on to the earth. Drawing an analogy, Sowbhagyabhai has been compared to the great Bhageeratha. Like him, Sowbhagyabhai was instrumental in the appearance of the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' which flowed from Srimadji, exulting every mind. We are all indebted to that worthy soul, Sowbhagyabhai through whom we have obtained this great gift.

It does not suffice to simply study such a great *Shastra*; its essence has to be imbibed. The only way of doing that is through single minded devotion, without which we will stray away from the spiritual awakening. We can realise Self only when we totally detach ourselves from the outer world. Self can only be awakened with the guidance of a good spiritual preceptor. A jiva cannot progress on the path of spirituality unless there is unquestioned faith in and total devotion towards the preceptor. It is with this realisation that the Indian tradition places utmost respect in a good preceptor, a spiritual guide.

Srimadji invokes the blessings of the Guru in the opening lines and then commences the *Shastra*. Now let us begin the study of '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*'.

जे स्वरूप समज्या विना, पाय्यो दुःख अनन्त,
समजाव्युं ते पद नमुं, श्री सद्गुरु भगवंत १

The benediction of this work offers salutations to the great Preceptor. In the Indian tradition, every scripture begins with a benediction. The intense sense of devotion is typical of the Indian spirit. Sainly poets and writers commence their works with the propitiation of their deity. Auspicious work is begun with an invocation to thwart any hindrances on the way.

Invocation i.e. *Mangalacharan* derives from *Mangal*. *Mangal* in turn is derived from ‘*mam*’ (मं) and ‘*gal*’ (गल) which mean ‘sins’ and ‘melt’ respectively. Hence, ‘*mangal*’ means the melting away of sins. Salutation to one’s deity is a mark of humility, and humility is a penance in itself, whereby our Karma withers away. The beauty of the invocation is in the fact that the work that follows naturally gets dedicated to the great Preceptor, and the author’s ego, which in itself is a great hurdle, slowly effaces itself.

Thus praying, so that the ‘*Atmasiddhi Shastra*’ be completed without any impediment, Srimadji begins -

जे स्वरूप समज्या विना,

Swarupa (true original form) of what? A soul in its several births, has perceived through its senses, seen, recognised and tried to understand the worldly objects infinite number of times. But never has it made an effort to understand the Self? How is the Self? What is the real nature of the Self? Understanding a thing in its original form and substance amounts to gaining True Knowledge. Soul is such a thing, merely understanding which does not suffice; understanding it in its correct form and real nature is knowledge.

The real nature of the soul is pure consciousness. It is independent and alone, absolutely by itself. If this is realised, then the misconstruing of body as soul will be avoided. This misconstruing of body as soul is the fundamental delusion. It is self-deception, sheer ignorance, a sin in itself and also the root cause of all sins. A being mistakes the body for soul, and then undergoes pleasures and pains of the body as if they were being inflicted on the soul. In this ignorance, the being gets preoccupied with securing such sensual pleasures and avoiding the pains. This ignorant pursuit naturally nurtures a sinful nature. Indulgence or the satisfaction of the demands of the five senses, is rooted in the ego and it is this ego and the egocentric desires that drive a being into sinful acts without hesitation. Then there is only a vicious cycle.

Come let us ask ourselves honestly; have we left any stone unturned while trying to satisfy the desires of our senses and the mind? There is hardly anything that we have not done, and we seem determined to stop at nothing. We care two hoots for religion, ethics and morality. This is the attitude that lands us into endless trouble. A being should realise in depth that “I (and not the body) am the Soul”, that “blissfulness is my real nature. I need not seek pleasures in external gratifications; that is ignorance and is contrary to my nature. I shall not fall prey to them. I shall never succumb to them and shall not do anything deplorable in their pursuit.”

If a being always remains vigilant of this fact, directs all his actions to achieve this goal, then he is bound to be away from all sins, will avoid adding up karma and as a result enjoy eternal bliss instead of endless sorrow. Only those who have managed to identify their Self within themselves, have attained this bliss. Others have been wandering in the cycle of birth and death, longing and lamenting for a rare moment of happiness.

It is therefore, that Srimadji has said -

जे स्वरूप समज्या विना, पाय्यो दुःख अनन्त,

Brothers! Only those who realise the Self can get liberated. Those who do not, have to remain in the birth and death cycle. In practical life one who does not understand worldly matters is termed ignorant; what shall we call those who do not understand the spiritual path? Ignorance of worldly matters is sometimes painful, but ignoring the spiritual path leads to endless sorrow in the living present and perhaps in future too.

Now, if we intend to escape the flames of this wildfire-like endless sorrow; if we intend to put a stop to this cycle of birth and death, then the only resort left is to look within and seek the true Self. Our path is bound to open up the very moment we realise this, we will have embarked upon the journey towards our goal. It is this implication that is carried in Srimadji's phrase-

समजाव्युं ते पद नमुं,

Srimadji reverently bows to the *one* who has explained to us the real nature of the soul. Who is that one? The one who has himself realised the self; experienced the soul; immersed himself within and enjoyed the bliss of self-realisation. Only such great ones have the ability to become a direct guide to those taking the path of spiritual uplift. Only the one who attains this capability becomes eligible to be the great preceptor. To emphasise on this exalted status of the great preceptor, Srimadji, while offering his obeisance, adds two adjectives to highlight the greatness of such a preceptor and says -

श्री सद्गुरु भगवंत

Shree is the goddess of wealth; one who is wealthy. What wealth are we referring to? You all here are wealthy too; some millionaires, some billionaires; shouldn't you all be great preceptors? Yet you are not. Why is it so? You all are so embroiled in the pursuit of this material wealth, that you have lost track of the real wealth, the spiritual wealth. You are suffocating the soul within. Truly wealthy is the one who has attained the true perception of the soul, for that is the real wealth. Rest is all immaterial. He who has realised the '*sat*', i.e. the soul in its ultimate reality, is eligible to be termed as a great preceptor. *Sat* is the soul. *Sat* cannot be equated with the worldly pleasures or material wealth. Perhaps you feel '*sat*' is money, wealth. But try as you may, this wealth will not make a 'great preceptor' of anybody. Only the one who realises the 'Self' becomes eligible of being adorned with the prefix '*shree*'.

Bhagawant is a term that has many meanings. Here it reads *bhagyawant* 'a fortunate person'; who has been able to amass a treasure of virtues which make him the purest soul. A person who is capable of guiding others too in a similar pursuit. One who swims across the swift current of the material world, and rescues those getting drawn into its whirlpools. Srimadji bows repeatedly to such a great preceptor, endowed with '*shree*' a *sadguru* and True God.

Srimadji, thus offering humble obeisance at the feet of the great preceptor, at the beginning of '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*', attempts to explain to us the nature of the soul as experienced by him.

Our spiritual preceptors, in the past, have identified specific periods for introspection and self-analyses and for devoting ourselves to the search, identification and realisation of the soul. Today is the beginning of such a four-month period. Let us look critically within ourselves and analyse the self. Let us locate the sources of passions - the attachment, aversion, anger, jealousy, greed and avarice that lie buried deep within us and drive them away with the help of sincere repentance. Simultaneously, let us devote ourselves to acquiring the true knowledge, discerning faith, purity of conduct and compassion for all living beings; let us pursue penance, charity, chastity and noble thoughts. The '*Dashavaikalika Sutra*' says -

बलं थामं च पेहाए सद्धा मारुगमप्पणो ।

Without wasting your physical, mental and spiritual energies in pursuit of ego and egocentric desires, devote yourself to penance. This penance should leave an indelible impression of 'I am the Soul', on your mind. In Srimadji's words -

रे आत्म तारो, आत्म तारो शीघ्र एने ओळखो
सर्वात्म मां समदृष्टि द्यो, आ वचन ने हृदये लखो ।

This is the fundamental principle. If we realise it in its totality, then self-realisation is ours. The essence is to be imbibed as 'I am the Soul', not merely understood. Then -

जे एगं जाणई, ते सव्वं जाणई ।

That is, to know thyself is to know all. This alone should be the feeling, the devotion. Brothers! It will not be out of place, if I demand my *Guru Dakshina* (reward) on this first day itself. In the next four months, I want your devotion to be revolving around 'I am the Soul'. At the end of the four-months, I would like to hear the chant of 'I am the Soul' resonating from every pore of yours.

We are here for four months to devote ourselves; and to inspire others in their devotion. This penance will be on from this day, to the day of *Kartik Pournima* Full Moon. This *Jnana Yagna* - our zealous pursuit of knowledge of the self - will continue non-stop for four months, during which time let us all sacrifice our lowly passions like attachment, aversion, passions and perversions and let our soul emerge lustrous and pure.

It is for this self-purification that we are here to discuss the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*'. In the days to follow, let us unfold the deep knowledge that is bundled into the other couplets.

In this present era . . .

Liberation is to be sought following the three-fold path of True Knowledge, True Faith and True Conduct. Sincere practice of this will help us derive the meaning of Self.

The Self has life while the other things are inanimate. This jiva has never bothered to analyse and understand his own Self but has lost countless births in trying to understand the inanimate objects of the external world - *para*. What an effort mustered in trying to unravel the deepest mysteries of the inanimate. You may be aware, a scientist dedicates his entire life to unravelling the mysteries of the physical world. He is constantly at work in a laboratory unmindful of day or night, sleep and hunger. All this because his interest, his concern is in the inanimate, the lifeless things.

Every being is engaged in some effort. Everybody desires to achieve something, but their interests are varied. Someone interested in the Soul goes in search of it. Somebody else whose interest lies in the material world, spends the entire life in the vain search of things that pleasure the senses, oblivious of the world around him. That search of the inanimate gets him so involved that he is lost to himself unaware of his essential nature.

Haven't you noticed some kid who pulls apart every new toy that it gets and then puts it together. It will do that again and again until it gets to know the toy inside out. Its parents proudly say that the kid will grow up to be a great engineer. Indeed, it is a matter of pride. But if we evaluate the child's search in a wider spiritual context, it is apparent that every being is capable of going into the depths of any given thing.

Just as an interest in the material objects drives one to the very depths of it, an awakening of interest in the life that is within, can also help a being in unravelling the mysteries of the Self, putting an end to all sorrows. Srimadji has pointed this out at the very beginning when he said -

जे स्वरूप समज्या विना, पाय्यो दुःख अनन्त,

This jiva has done everything. Has tried to unravel all mysteries, has ripped open the Earth to the depths, has fathomed the oceans, roamed the skies, built supersonic space-crafts, mastered the might of Atom and enslaved its energies. The only thing that he left out is the search of the Self. He never felt the need to look into the depths within. Thus he who knows everything about the world around him, is totally ignorant about his own Self. Result is infinite suffering until now and until such time as he remains unaware of the true nature of Self. Unless the true nature of the Self is realised, there shall be no end to this suffering; and to achieve real happiness it is essential to understand the fundamental nature and the persistent mutation of the two elements that make up this universe - the animate and the inanimate.

The inanimate is also susceptible to change. It is mutating every second and being unaware of this fact, we have felt anguished at the changes in the inanimate, several times in our life. The inanimate, by nature is subject to decay, disintegration and destruction. This is a natural process and cannot be stopped. When once this realisation dawns upon us, no loss or damage to anything inanimate will make us sorrowful. For that matter, even the death of a loved one can be borne with a strong heart by one who knows and believes that death is merely the respective transition of the animate and the inanimate, that it is simply the end of the soul's stay in that body, that it is also the end of the stay of the inanimate particles in the form of the body. This mutation is inevitable. It is happening everywhere, all the while, in a transparent way. Death is merely a mutation which is visible. Why lament over it? Thus what is generally considered a reason for sorrow does not affect the one who realises the nature of Self.

Death becomes a reason of sorrow only because of our attachments and illusions. If we can withdraw such feelings reserved for someone, that will be the end of our grief. We are

least affected by the death of thousands who die across the world everyday. Why? Attachment and aversion are more dangerous than death itself. To break this hold of attachment and aversion it is essential to understand the nature of both the animate and the inanimate. One who grasps this will be free from all sorrow.

After having stated this in the benediction, Srimadji goes on to tell us the purpose of the *Shastra* -

वर्तमान आ काळमां, मोक्षमार्ग बहु लोप,
विचारवा आत्मार्थनि, भाख्यो अत्र अगोप्य २

What do we consider as the present? The time when Srimadji lived or the scientific age today? There are two ways of looking at this. One is to know that the fourth *ara* has ended and the fifth is on, and that in this *ara* it is said that no one can achieve liberation from *Bharat Kshetra* (region).

The other way is to look at the time when Srimadji lived. Srimadji would have noticed how the people about him were engrossed in the pursuit of the inanimate and indulging their senses. Imagine India as it were a hundred years ago. It was a period of Kings and Landlords who lived wallowing in luxury, pleasures and power. There were some among them who knew about the path of liberation, but never wanted to follow it.

Today after a hundred years, where in time do we stand? In these hundred years, man has unraveled the mysteries in the depths of the Earth, discovered the secrets of the sky and space, and invented the atomic-nuclear bombs. In the pursuit of power, mutual trust was lost and now even after two world wars man lives under the constant threat of a third world war. It is surprising that despite acquiring the means to physical and worldly pleasures, man is lacking peace and contentment. There is cinema and TV to please the eyes; air-coolers and air-conditioners to ward off heat; automobiles, so one need not walk. In Kabir's words, one who needs only two yards of land, has palatial bungalows. Yet, is he happy? Is there contentment? No. Just

consider this - people have plenty individually and socially, yet their yearning for what they do not have takes away their happiness and peacefulness. When do we get this happiness and peace? Only when we realise the true nature of Self. *The beginning of the realisation of the Soul is the first step on the path of liberation.*

What is the path of liberation in today's context? Not many know about it. It seems as if the path of liberation is lost. Let us first understand what the learned call the path of liberation. In the 'Uttaradhyayan Sutra' (28-2) Shri Prabhu mentions -

नाणं च दंसणं चेव चरित्तं च तवो तहा ।

एस मग्गुत्ति पन्नतो, जिणेहिं वरद सिहिं ॥ २ ॥

Similarly,

ज्ञान क्रियाभ्यां मोक्षः ।

and

सम्यग्दर्शन - ज्ञान - चारित्राणि मोक्षमार्गाः १।१

The path of liberation has been defined here. Whether we say that knowledge, faith, conduct and penance make up the path of liberation or that the synthesis of knowledge and action is the path of liberation or that true faith, true knowledge and true conduct together make the path of liberation, all mean the same. Such a defined path of liberation is lost to us today.

In the villages, trails are formed in the dust, when people tread a particular path regularly. A dust storm or a lashing rain wipes out such a muddy trail. Yet the moment the dust storm ceases or the pouring rain stops, traffic begins on that way and the trail is there again. A being fails to notice the path of liberation shown by so many *Tirthankars* as it is caught in the storm of material life.

The only thoughts that come day and night are those of this material life. What else do we think and dream of but this worldly life? Brothers! While you sit here, listening to this discourse,

what are the thoughts that strike your mind ? Are they about the material life or the spiritual life? Despite hearing words that invoke spiritual thoughts, if the mind remains preoccupied with material life, if you remain engrossed in the worldly affairs, what else do we expect but thoughts about the material world.

Our speech reflects our thoughts. Just look back upon all that you said on one entire day and compare if you spoke more about material things or about Soul - God - Faith - Devotion. What about the activity? The entire day's activity is centred around self-seeking, perhaps around the wife and family or perhaps for social status; tell me, did you really do anything apart from this for the sake of the Soul?

How will the path of liberation come to the mind when pride and vanity replace true faith, when attachment and aversion replace true knowledge and when passions and carnal desires replace true conduct? How do we possibly see the path of liberation when the knowledge dries up and all activity is possessed of the pursuit of inanimate things. Vanity, material outlook and indulgence have covered up knowledge, faith and character; and penance that is supposed to purify the Soul, often gets buried down under pomp and flourish.

Thus, seen from any angle, we find the mind, speech and body engrossed in the material life. The turmoil of material life is always brewing within. The soul is stuck in the mire of passions and hence the path of liberation is eluding us.

When will this path reveal itself to the being? Only when, deep within, thoughts limiting the material life begin replacing ideas of expanding it. It does not matter whether one is a family-person; the noble thoughts will guide one to the right path.

Bharat *Chakravartin* was returning from the conquest of the six continents bursting with an inflated ego. Complacent in his vanity he arrived at the *Rishabhakuta* mountain. It is said that all Emperors visited this place as a custom, after their victory

and engraved their names on the rocks before returning to their capitals. Bharat also climbed up the mountain, with an intention of engraving his name. But to his dismay he could not find space enough to engrave even a single letter. After some thought a solution occurred to him. He effaced the name of the previous Emperor and engraved his own in its place. As he stood admiring his own handiwork, he felt greatly flattered. The thought, that his name engraved there in golden letters, would last forever and remind the world after him of his greatness, pleased him very much. Thus very pleased with himself he began his climb down the mountain.

At the very next step another thought, a good one, came to him. He realised how vain and mean he had been. His conscience awoke with a start and censured him - 'Oh Bharat! You have been insensible. Today you are proud of your name engraved here, but just as you effaced the name of the previous emperor, will not the one who follows you efface yours? How long will your name remain? Did you wage all these wars and indulge in bloodshed just for the sake of this impermanent name?' His conscience pulled him up. Tears rolled down from his eyes as he left the place. Tears that washed away the attachment to the material world and nurtured the feeling of detachment. He then lived a life of total detachment. Although he was tied to the material world he aspired for liberation. Brothers! Look how the ability lying dormant in the being came awake, and led him to liberation in the same birth in which he had waged so many wars, only because his inner self had awakened.

We have ourselves shut off the path of liberation owing to our attachments and now we are all marching up the wrong one. Why! Some people even go to the extent of thinking that since there is no liberation in this life why pursue religion at all. They say, 'We will pursue religion at the time when and place where liberation is possible.' But Brothers! Do not think so. Make your effort, effort made never goes waste. If not in this life, perhaps

in the third from now you might get liberated. Perhaps in the fifteenth or even later, yet the effort has to be begun now. Let us invoke a feeling deep within, that liberation may not be achieved in this life, nevertheless whatever be necessary to go the step closer to achieving it, could be done now. Such a feeling is all that we need to invoke.

जो जागृत है सो पावत है

One who is awake and alert. attains success.

भाख्यो अत्र अगोप्य

For those who desire to awaken the self, who wish to realise the self, Srimadji has laid bare the secret of the path of liberation in this *Shastra*, without holding back anything. Pray why?

विचारवा आत्मार्थनि

So that those who seek to realise the Soul may ponder over it. We have spent so much time to think over other aspects of life, yet leave alone sparing time to ponder over the Soul, we are blissfully unaware that it is even necessary to think about the Soul, about what is good or bad for it, about what is its nature and to the contrary. We do not do anything in our life without giving it a proper thought. We think long before we take any action. If someone messes up his work, we are quick to blame him saying how unthinkingly he works. Yet when it comes to the matters of the Soul for which we follow a religion and do whatever it says, we do not think at all. We simply blindly follow the traditions. We never stop to think if following religion simply for the sake of it, will ever gain us anything good for the Soul or whether the Soul will get purified at all?

Here while saying

विचारवा आत्मार्थनि

Srimadji intends to tell us that it is essential to have a mind practicing religion before the body gets down to it. If religion is

wakeful in the thought, if it is woven into the thought process, then it will naturally flow into the conduct; one does not have to be mindful to strive and bring religion into practice.

If you were to perform an anushthana like *samayika* for say an hour, would you not think about it for a few minutes or a few seconds beforehand? What is *samayika*? How do we do it? Why should we do it? If we ponder deeply over such questions and seek their answers from deep within ourselves, then the joy of *samayika* will be startlingly different. And then the being will be excited to attain the Self, will be craving for it. Such should be the craving for the Soul, as has never been felt for any worldly object, only then will a seeker realise the Soul.

Once a pious Brahman youth, who was educated, reflective and a believer in the Soul, approached an enlightened saint. He bowed in reverence before the saint and expressed his desire —

“Maharaj! I have heard your fame and come here seeking self-realization. Would you guide me?”

The saint was learned. He could read the sincerity of purpose in the youth. He kindly seated the youth beside him and was engrossed in his own work again. A few hours passed in this way. The saint was in fact testing the youth's patience. When the youth passed this test, the saint took him to a river close by. On reaching the river, he took the youth's hand and said -

“Come Son! Let us first purify ourselves in the river water.”

The youth followed, thinking it must be a ritual before going in for self-realisation. They walked into waist-deep water and were soon it was chest-deep. The saint continued to lead the youth deeper and soon the water reached the youth's nose. The youth thought that perhaps that was as far as they would go. Yet the saint continued as if they were on solid ground. Soon the water was over their heads and the youth felt he would drown. A couple of steps further and the saint caught the youth by his hair and pushed him inside the water and again pulled him out thrice.

The youth having swallowed water, panicked and started yelling for his life. That was the limit. The saint then picked him up on his shoulders and came over to the river bank. The youth had swallowed enough water. The saint pumped the water out and when the youth came to his senses a little while later, asked,

“How do you feel, Son?”

The youth replied, “I felt as if I have just escaped the clutches of death.”

“Is that so? Well then, while you were drowning whom all did you remember?”

“Nobody.”

“How is that? Don’t you have a wife and children? Your parents? What about some friends?”

“I have them all, Sir.”

“Yet you remembered none?”

“No, Sir! The only thought hovering in my mind was ‘escape or you die’. How to survive was the only thing I could think of. Sir, to tell you the truth I was perturbed.”

The saint then said, “Son! You were so perturbed for the sake of an impermanent life that you forgot everything that you had. You were all alone in your thought. You must have felt as if you were the only one in the whole universe. Well, that is exactly how you should feel if you are trying to search the Self. You will have to sever all bonds, forget everything else. Only then can you realise Self, not otherwise.”

Brothers! Srimadji has also tried to tell us in this gatha, that the task of realising the Soul can be taken up only when we detach ourselves from the material life and focus our sight on the soul alone. This is possible only when we understand the path of liberation. How those who do not understand this path remain illusioned and how their time and energies are wasted on a misguided path is what we will learn from the next gatha.

Pitiable indeed, are the misled ones

Liberation is to be sought traversing the three-fold path of True Knowledge, True Faith and True Conduct. Total devotion to this noble path leads us on to the path of liberation.

Pursuing the three-fold path helps a jiva in breaking the hold of impious thoughts and to gradually settle down with devout feelings. True devotion invariably begets a true reward. For that matter one is properly rewarded for any worldly activity only when it is properly done. As you sow, so shall you reap. Doing anything, simply for the sake of it, without thinking whether it is proper or not, will not fetch any rewards.

You sow a seed in the soil and if it gets adequate air, water, light and manure, it germinates and grows. Yet when the soil is bad, in spite of getting everything else, it fails to grow or bear fruit. The inadequacies in the inputs will show up in the fruits. Thus both the situation and the circumstances have to be proper, only then can the desired fruit be gathered.

You get light when you put on a switch. But if the light fails to come on, you will try to find where the fault lies. Is the bulb failing to connect, is the wire cut, is the line faulty, is the switch damaged, has the bulb fused? Perhaps you do not know how to operate the switch. Brothers! In the course of the worldly life, such knowledge is gained naturally and you are always alert. You do not allow any fault to creep in for you know how necessary these things are.

But now we have to look at ourselves, at our soul and ponder. Why, in spite of practicing the religion so much, is the reward so meagre? Srimadji says -

मोक्षमार्ग बहु लोप

The path is lost in a maze of rituals. A person who has lost the way will walk miles upon miles and yet the destination will elude him. He will be running round in circles.

Brothers! Consider, you begin a venture today. You struggle hard and invest a lot of money. Yet if it does not flourish, if it does not give you enough returns, how long would you continue with it? Business should always progress. If a business does not grow in spite of having the best product to offer, then even an illiterate will not pursue it. Our elders may have been illiterate, yet they were aware of this. Today with all your education, you come to the same conclusion. The decision does not differ. Do you spare any efforts in expanding the business? Your struggle is relentless. You get so involved in the business that you forget your sleep and rest, hunger and thirst, your routine, your parents, wife and family; forget them all. There must have been several occasions when you hurt their feelings; not thought of their joys and sorrows.

Just think, if you can be so engrossed, so knowledgeable in this field, why not in the field of the Soul too? Have you ever thought why you practice a religion? What has been your progress after you pursued the religion? What have you earned from it? There ought to be some progress. Of what good is religion if you have not changed after practicing it? You will have to stir your soul to find this out. 'If I have not changed so far, then I must have gone wrong somewhere. There must be some slip-up, some fault'. For, if the need of religion was never felt, then this practice is just an eye-wash. If not, the effort ought to have been rewarded. That means the efforts were inadequate, hence the reward was missing.

Referring to such beings wallowing in their own faults, Srimadji has said -

कोई क्रियाजड थई रह्या, शुष्कज्ञानमां कोई
माने मारग मोक्षनो, करुणा ऊपजे जोई ३

Here Srimadji has highlighted two types of beings who follow the path of liberation with a mistaken understanding.

Those who are bogged down in rituals and others who pursue superficial knowledge. Both are worthy of pity.

Jivas of the former type keep performing many rituals, unthinkingly, in the name of religion. Yet as their soul is not in it, they do not get rewarded at all. They are just like the knife in your kitchen. You use it to cut mangoes or chilies or bitter-gourds. Which one of the flavours does the knife recognise? Sweet, spicy or the bitter. None, because knife is inanimate. Whatever an inanimate thing does, it does not fetch any rewards. Don't you think we too are bordering with the inanimate? That is perhaps why we perform unfeelingly and fail to get any results.

If religious activity is being carried out as a matter of routine, it is as good as the work of an inanimate thing. Consider this, Brothers! You come here and spend so much time. How precious is every second? Would you like your time wasted? When you come all the way here setting aside everything else, don't you feel that your precious time should not be spent fruitlessly, that whatever religious activity you perform in those precious moments should be worthwhile. Religion is not blind faith, it is the Truth, it is Reality. Hence discard all blind beliefs and practice the truth. Only then will there be proper reward. Your reward will not be anything material, it will be ethereal. Practice your religion in such a way that it fetches you inner bliss, makes you feel elated, for the true form of religion is the paramount feeling of peace and bliss. Ask your self if you have felt the elation and the joy. If the reply is negative, then be sure you have been practicing unfeelingly. Hence it is said -

कोई क्रियाजड थई रह्या,

We have missed the purpose behind the activity. What devotion? Whose devotion? On the path of liberation, one has to be devoted to the *jnana*, *darshan*, *charitra* and *tapa*. What really happens is *jnana* and *darshan* are often ignored. That leaves *charitra* and *tapa*. Here too penance is given the greater

importance without really understanding it well. Simply giving up food is mistaken for penance. Often such misplaced penance is performed and the great importance of penance is lost in the mundane activities. Is forsaking food and remaining hungry any kind of penance? No, it is mere fasting. The purport of penance has not dawned upon us. If merely giving up food were to be taken as penance, then the *Tirthankar* would not have listed out twelve types of penance and would not have placed greater importance upon inner oblation over external penance. Of course, if the fasting is done with full realisation, and with a feeling of involvement, then it becomes abstinence. If you knowingly avoid food telling yourself that this day your body can do without it, and make an attempt to purify the soul, then that abstinence has a proper meaning. Such an abstinence will help you burn down countless karmic matter. Therefore, any penance should be performed with a proper understanding.

Look similarly at conduct. We have mistaken external character for right conduct. Observing the vows of a householder or an ascetic is no doubt good conduct. But it is only on a material level. It is only a means to the expression of a good inner conduct, that is the purification of thought. It is not an end in itself. Howsoever faultless be your external conduct, unless it is complemented by the purity of thought, it is bound to ring hollow and does not beget any reward.

How do we define conduct? Here the purity of thought is to be understood. To understand this we need to first know what is proper *jnana* and *darshan*. For unless there is proper *jnana* and *darshan*, character does not develop at all. Srimadji, in one of his verses मूळ मारग सांभळो जिननो रे has stated in a simple and straightforward way -

छे देहादिथी भिन्न आतमा रे,
 उपयोगी सदा अविनाश . . . मूळ
 एम जाणे सद् गरु उपदेशथी रे,
 कह्युं ज्ञान तेनुं नाम खास . . . मूळ

Here defining *jnana*, he says that it should be understood first of all that the Soul is different from body, senses, mind, or intellect. What is there to understand? How do we understand? Do we define 'understood' as that which is understood by the intellect alone? Not here, understanding achieved through intellect alone has not been termed as *jnana*. When the purity of the soul begins to grow and when the soul changes from purer to purest, then the urge to know the Self is at the sharpest. This urge draws a being towards introspection. An introspecting soul develops equanimity. The Bhagawad Gita calls such a person as *Sthitapragnya*.

An equanimous person alone is inspired to receive and imbibe the advice of a good preceptor. Once the voice of the preceptor touches the soul, such a person gets drawn towards the elating feelings which enlighten. Just as a seed lying buried in the earth, absorbs the elements around it, converts them to its purpose and then sprouts. The seed first breaks itself and then the earth to push its seedling out. Similarly, a person with a balanced mind imbibes the advice of the preceptor into the depth of the Self and registers the same on the soul. Only then does he know the soul through itself. That the soul is of good use, has its own *jnana* and *darshan* and is indestructible. This is the limit to which *jnana* can bring us.

But that does not suffice. The knowledge of the mind only gets us this far and no further. Our effort has to take over from here. It is this point that Srimadji makes here -

जे ज्ञाने करीने जाणियुं रे,
तेनी वर्ते छे शब्द प्रतीत . . . मूळ
कहुं भगवंते दर्शन तेहने रे,
जेनुं बीजुं नाम समकित . . . मूळ

The introspection agitates the intellect. It reaches the periphery of the knowledge of the Soul but cannot rest there. Just as the seed in the earth that sprouts and then cannot remain

buried, and breaks out of the earth. The Soul gets agitated. The absence of the experience of Self drives the perturbed Soul to probe its own depths. Like the pearl-diver who braves death and dives deep into the sea to fetch its wealth, the Soul too is eager to be named hungry after the wealth of faith. It can bear falsehood no more. It realises the futility of lying about in the darkness of ignorance. It cannot relish living without goodness. Unable to bear even the slightest delay, and with the help of the great turmoil that has arisen within, the Soul realises the true self in its knowledge, and now begins to believe the self within. Knowledge is the means and experience is the achievement. This state has been called the revelation and by several other names by the wise men. The reason is evident in that, the devout who has achieved, is way ahead of the common-place religious beings. His avowed silence and meditation and such faculties develop naturally. No special efforts are required to achieve inner austerities, which come naturally, needless to say the external austerities become superfluous. This natural phenomenon encompasses faith, devotion and balance. Hence, the saying **सद्धा परम दुल्लहा** faith is extremely rare - has its justification here.

Everything else may be easily attained but *darshan* - the state where the soul begins to experience - is rarely attained. Rarer still would be the setting right of the being which had remained for ages like an upside-down earthen pot unable to receive anything and now having turned right-side up, is able to receive the knowledge, which had until now been the reason for the being's travails in the universe, which now instantly turns itself into a great instrument of detachment from the world. As if the pot - the inner consciousness - is now filled with a feeling of total detachment. **एगोहं नखि मे कोइ नाहमन्नस्स कस्सइ** - I am alone, nobody is mine and I belong to nobody - is the feeling that is experienced deep within.

Although this experience is only momentary, it is absolutely essential. Such pacifying experiences are only momentary owing to the conditioning of the soul. But unless a *jiva* is exposed to

such an experience how will it begin its trek on the path of progress? It is for this reason that the experience becomes the fortune of the soul.

Until now the being has remained in the feelings of faith. This however, is not the end of the road. It is necessary to proceed further on this path. Srimadji explains when and how while saying -

जेम आवी प्रतिति जीवनी रे,
जाण्यो सर्वेथी भिन्न असंग . . . मूळ
तेवो स्थिर स्वभाव ते उपजे रे,
नाम चारित्र ते अणलिंग . . . मूळ

What was learnt through knowledge was accepted through experience. This experience of the self is unparalleled and out of this world. Having once gone through this wonderful experience the being desires to go through it again and again. Quite often it even accepts. Yet once the anxiety starts flowing like a deep and rapid force, the soul gradually begins to settle down in a steady self-experience. As this steadiness graduates to higher levels, the depth of the experience also increases.

This increasing depth of experience naturally results in the soul inculcating vows and austerities in its external matters. It does not need any premeditated effort to keep such vows. For that matter, it does not even need anybody to administer such vows. Irrespective of the external appearance, the affiliations, the identifications, the being begins to constantly experience 'I am the Soul' in absolute bliss. Not even for a moment does it waver from this state of steadiness within its self, for the simple reason that it has experienced the presence of the Soul within. Beyond this point, the effects of the hidden or the dormant feelings of attachment with the inanimate get totally erased. Where then, will be the ego and the possessions? What remains is the experience of purity and nature of self. The invoking of this state of experiencing the nature of self and constantly remaining in it, is the real inner conduct.

Learning through knowledge, experiencing the knowledge through right perception and preserving the momentary experience forever through conduct; these are merely phases of the same process. Thus knowledge, perception and conduct are not to be seen as three independent processes. They are in fact, the sequential manifestation of the state of self-realisation.

Conduct is not just external austerities and rituals, apparels and gender but the realisation of the nature of the self - I am the Soul. Until this realisation occurs, the being mistakes the external vows-rituals for conduct and remains engrossed in them. The material conduct - *Dravya Charitra* - is merely a means to achieving the real inner conduct - *Bhava Charitra*, nothing more.

This is the path of liberation, only if the true form of these three jewels is realised and followed with devotion, not otherwise. Srimadji now describes for us the ones bogged down in rituals -

बाह्य क्रियामां राचता, अंतर्भेद न कांई
ज्ञान मार्ग निषेधता, तेह क्रियाजड आई ४

The scriptures have laid down the rituals and activities to be followed, keeping in view the ideal householders and the ideal ascetics, in such a way that following them will immediately lead a devout being to self realisation, which is meditating on religion in the true sense. The ones who are bogged down in rituals tend to forget the true reason and be done with the external activities. In fact, they remain engrossed in them day in and day out, meticulous in their observance, ensuring that not even a step is missed. Whether a householder or an ascetic, they remain active in the rituals and contented on having performed them. But what is the outcome?

Brothers! The scriptures even tell us about that unworthy being who was never to attain *Moksa*, although he emulated the pure character of Shri Gautama, never faltered in thought, speech or deed while observing *mahavratas* or *samiti-guptis*, and yet

remaining untouched by the *bhavadharma*, (that is failing to catch the spirit behind these observances), called them merely good deeds, amassed *punya* as a result, which took him to the high ninth heaven of *Graiveyaka* and there he enjoyed the heavenly pleasures for a great length of time.

So what? Nothing at all, just a big zero. After heaven he got back to the travel of rebirths. There was no shortening of the cycle. In spite of the whole effort, he remained unaffected inwardly, only the outwardly expression became pronounced.

What should have been the effect on the inward? There ought to have been a split, *antarabheda*. A delineation of the limits of the body and the soul, that comes under the realm of *Bheda-vijnana*, a science. The word science is interesting. In fact, our *Tirthankar* was the greatest scientist of all. Hence the epithet *Ananta-vijnani*.

Today Science is considered poles apart from Philosophy. But that is far from the truth. In fact, as Science delves deeper it gets closer to Philosophy. The ultimate result of Science is Philosophy. Knowledge is a subject limited to the intellect. Yet when Knowledge is brought into practice, it becomes a Science. Special knowledge is Science. Knowing any one aspect of a thing is Knowledge and knowing it in its totality is Science. Knowledge is a search. Science is research, while Philosophy is the achievement of total search, hence it is a search for Truth. It is in fact, a step ahead of search or research; it is the discovery of the pure, timeless truth. Hence Knowledge and Science both get absorbed into Philosophy. Philosophy takes up from where Knowledge and Science give up in fatigue. The *Tirthankar* not only knew his soul in totality, but also *experienced* it. His state of experience was uninterrupted. It was a state of experience along with eternal knowledge, hence he was called the *Anantavijnani*, the knower of the eternal science.

A being too, experiences internal delineation. That is a feel of the Self time and again, and the experience of joy along with it. But when does this happen? Only when the being gives up the interest in knowing material things outside and directs the same inquisitiveness towards discovering the Self. A being bogged down in rituals gathers all the superficial knowledge. He even keeps performing rituals in the name of religion. But he is not concerned with the Self. His religious performances are for the benefit of the body. He fails to understand what leads to the true uplift of the Soul. He works in the blind belief that performing difficult rituals alone will fetch omniscience - *kevaljnana*. But he is blissfully unaware of what this *kevaljnana* is, or what the welfare of the Soul is.

Kevaljnana is the constant experience of the Soul. The cause of this constant experience, and the cause of the short-time realisation of the Soul is the thought about the inner Self. One bereft of this thought about the inner Self, mistaking the thoughtless rituals alone for everything and keeping the rigorous penance and unbearable tortuous efforts of the great men in mind, goes on to merely imitate their outwardly actions, yet his countless effort will not generate the faith of 'I am the Soul' in him. On the contrary, he will always nurture doubts about the very existence of his own Soul.

Such ignorant beings perform so much outwardly penance that the body shrivels up. Why, many of them have been heard to say that this body is itself the hurdle in the way of the being. If there is no body then the Soul is bound to find liberation, hence this body should be dried up, it should be withered away. Performing such outwardly penance for years together, one manages to wither away the body but the passions of the inner self, the habits die hard.

These strong passions within us which provoke the five senses, have to be controlled with a full knowledge and

understanding by the being. The interest in the senses has to be dried up. If the interest within us is subdued, if it dries up, then where is the need to dry up this body. But one who is bogged down in rituals becomes similar to inanimate things, one who removes the thought from the ritualistic actions turns them into inanimate too, such a being does not understand this process of controlling the senses. Why, he does not even believe such an understanding is necessary and hence Srimadji has called such beings as *bogged down in rituals, the inanimate ritualistic beings*.

A being to whom mindless rituals mean everything will find talk of knowledge meaningless. Hence he rejects the path of knowledge saying it does not lead to liberation. But liberation cannot be achieved merely with outwardly rituals unless there is a knowledge of the inner self. For a being even to perform rituals it is necessary to acquire knowledge first. It is said in the scriptures -

पढमं ज्ञानं तओ दया

Knowledge first and then religious practices in the form of compassion. Which ritual for what purpose and what procedure for which ritual is extremely important to know. But most of the beings perform rituals simply as a tradition without truly understanding them. Like a flock of sheep following blindly, just because everybody else does it, so I have it to do, is how he understands it. He never gets to understand the essence of the rituals. The scriptures specify only action with knowledge. But the concept of knowledge has escaped the lives of the seemingly inanimate, bogged down in rituals, and only the bare frame of the rituals remains.

Such beings who believe that the path of liberation lies in their own inanimate beliefs are truly deserving of pity. Srimadji looks upon them with compassion. Now in the next couplet he tells us where the self-taught impractical beings go wrong and how they trudge around on a lost path.

The Wizened Wise

The devoted practice of the three-fold path, in addition to making us aware of the reality of the true nature of the Self, also reveals the Self to us. A being indulges in impiety (विराधना) only because he is unaware of the Self. That which leads to the decline of the feelings of attachment and aversion is devotion (आराधना).

The being is however, engrossed in these feelings. Instead of striving to reduce the feelings of attachment-aversion, we are involved in strengthening them. One who is desirous of liberation, has to gradually reduce the feelings of attachment-aversion, only then will he get closer to liberation. For, the total removal of the feelings of attachment and aversion is itself liberation. Otherwise the intensity of these feelings will result in attracting *karma*. The goal of liberation remains distant as a result, in spite of endless effort.

The learned have attempted to explain the path of liberation in every possible way. Here in '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*', Srimadji tells us about two types of beings. One is of course the seemingly inanimate being bogged down in rituals, who is wallowing in them, considering only those to be the totality. He carries the strong belief that what he does will lead him to liberation. This belief of his keeps him from looking towards the Soul. He remains unaware that the effort made by the Soul is the true effort. How then will he experience the *antarbheda*, how will he become aware of the duality of the body and the soul? That is how his feelings of devotion fail to arise. Thus despite stubbornly going through several rituals, such beings remain irreverent.

The second type of beings are the wizened wise, the ones with a dried up wisdom, the impractical theorists. Let us see what Srimadji has to say about the inward-outward state of such beings.

बंध मोक्ष छे कल्पना, भाखे वाणी मांही,
वर्ते मोहावेशमां, शुष्कज्ञानी ते आंहि ५

These beings embroiled in the talk of wizened wisdom may be loudly discussing the fundamentals of the Soul and its related matters; they may even be claiming to be the sole authority on the subject of the Soul; they may even be authoritatively tabling the definitions of the nine *tattvas* including *Jiva* and the six *dravyas*; yet their irrationality remains. They are far removed from the truth. They are lost in the darkness of ignorance about the being and its true nature.

They keep saying that the Soul is independent. That it is a substance which is eternally pure. That it cannot be bound nor can it be freed. That all these are just the figments of our imagination. That the soul is in its true accomplished form - *siddha svarupa*. That their soul is just like the soul of the *Siddha* and hence they move about amongst us proclaiming 'I am *Siddha* myself' while the truth is that they have hardly experienced the nature of the Self.

All these beliefs, although they are true in view of the *niscaya naya*, they need to be considered in view of the *vyavahara naya* of the Soul residing in the body. As long as the *jiva* is not totally free of *karma*, is bound by *karma*, it has to go through the cycle of birth and death. It is bound by several ties to this material world. A soul residing in a body may as well be qualified to attain *Moksa*, but it is not liberated as yet. Had this not been the case, then no philosophy in India would have dealt in its scriptures about the liberation of the soul. All religions whether Jain or non-Jain, believe in the liberation of the soul. Their paths may well differ, yet they have all highlighted the effort for the liberation of the soul. Hence, it is not accurate to term the concepts of bondage (बंध) and liberation (मोक्ष) as merely imaginary.

The great misfortune of those who so believe, is that their study of the scriptures is only superficial. They have never

pondered over the matter, nor have they tried to inculcate it into their thought process. They have overlooked the patronage of an able preceptor, a *sadguru*, which is essential for understanding the principles in the scriptures under a proper guidance. However sharp the intellect, the secrets in the scriptures do not unravel on their own. Unless one surrenders to the *guru*, the principles cannot be reached. They have to be assimilated with the help of the *guru* and with a deep contemplation.

Our great philosopher and most revered *guru* Shri Jayantilal Maharajsaheb obtained '*Shri Bhagavati Sutra*', the foremost among our 32 scriptures, from his *guru* and has deeply studied it, meditated over it. Wherever he may be, he always has '*Shri Bhagavati Sutra*' at hand. Having read it over several times, he ponders over it and unravels its secrets. On several occasions when he has come across a point over which he was not satisfied he has spent months together toying with that problem, unmindful of day or night, food or rest. He would rest only when a satisfactory solution came up from within.

In 1986 when six of us were learning the '*Shri Bhagavati Sutra*' from him, he would ask us a question out of it. All of us would ponder over it, each one of us finding the question so simple and would put forth our answer, confident that our answer would be right. To our dismay the revered Maharajsaheb would have an altogether different answer to offer. Thus without the guidance of a *guru* the depth of such scriptures cannot be unravelled. For, in these scriptures, which were vocalised by the *anantajnani* (the *Tirthankar*), every single word is full of infinite mystery. How can our commonplace intellect, devoid of any experience, understand them? Should we insist upon trying without the guidance of a *guru*, it is quite likely that we will end up confounded and confused.

Of course, it is possible to become a scholar with knowledge acquired in the absence of the guidance of a *guru*, but the

enlightenment would be lacking. A scholar may be able to wax eloquent on principles from the scriptures. Why, he may even be able to establish his supremacy in debates. Yet he himself would not have faith in these principles. We have come across scholars who could present the valuable ideology in the Jain philosophy with such conviction that the listener would be left dumbfounded. Yet their own faith in the same ideology would be non-existent. How could this happen? One becomes a scholar with the erosion of the *jnanavarniya karma*, while enlightenment comes only with the erosion of the *mohaniya karma*. Faith can be invoked only when the *mohaniya karma* is removed. Those who absorb the principles only on the superficial level will be lacking in faith. They will be called the dry, wizened wise.

Here, in this couplet it is implied that a few intellectuals, from a study of the scriptures, have understood that the soul can neither be bound nor freed. They have gone a step further and presumed that all actions of the body are the actions of the inanimate. Since the soul is animate, the actions of the inanimate body would not have any effect on the soul. Hence, indulging in the satisfaction of the senses does not harm the soul in any way. This presumption directs a person on to the wrong path.

There used to be a septuagenarian pious man in Saurashtra, who for years together diligently led an austere life, avoided *kanda-moola* (roots and bulbs) in his food, took no food after sunset, said his prayers - *pratikramana* - twice a day and detaching himself from the material world, devoted himself to social service. But one fine day, he was taken up with the concept of *niscaya naya*, having misunderstood it and being led astray did an absolute turn about. In the delusion that anything he ate or drank did not matter to the soul, he would sit up in the middle of the night and ask for potato fries. His family admonished him over this and tried to make him see some sense but in vain. It was as if the concept of *niscaya naya* had been hammered into

his head and there was no going back in him. His affinity for food had overwhelmed him with a vengeance. We often come across great scholars who wax eloquent about knowledge, yet in their own lives there is hardly a control over infatuation - *moha*. This is the reason for the comment -

वर्ते मोहावेशमां . . .

The wizened wise here are rooted in their infatuation.

Attachment and aversion are both forms of infatuation. Given a reason for attachment, a being reacts with an outburst of affinity, just as given a reason for anger he reacts with an outburst of aversion. Generally it seems that our laughter or tears, our enjoyment or sorrowing is all subject to a stimulus. We laugh when somebody makes us laugh and we cry much the same way. Faced with either of the stimuli we can avoid neither. If affinity wells up in us in response to an impulse for attachment, we do not stop to think 'this is not my true nature. That I should not get attached even when the reason arises'. Similarly, when there is a provocation for anger or aversion, we should be able to remain aloof and say 'I shall not get angry, it is not my nature. Joy or sorrow, whatever be the reason, I shall not react to it. I should be aware that I am not subject to provocation, I am above it'. Brothers! one who firmly dissociates from the rising passions will not be affected, whatever be the provocation.

Consider the episode of Gajasukumala Muni that appears in our scriptures. Live coals were kept on his head. It was provocation of the extreme kind. How would Gajasukumala Muni have reacted in that situation? What would have happened to him? The provocation was such that had he surrendered to it he would have strayed far away from his path. An enemy from the previous birth was administering lethal torture; what would have been the Muni's state of mind then? I feel he had no *dehadhyasa* - affinity left for the body, which must be why he never felt pain

in a situation of unbearable pain. He must have been unmindful of any happening. Perhaps his meditation was disturbed by the embers that were searing his skin and bones. He may even have realised that it was a situation where a terrible agony was to be felt. Perhaps for a fleeting moment he may even have felt the pain..... and at the very next moment his alert and conscious soul would have reminded him of the true nature. Then as a result, he would have said, 'what is burning is not me. I can never burn, what burns is not mine. I am *chaitanya* - the animate. That is *jada* - the inanimate. Hence it is not mine'. Then he would have got engrossed again in meditating over the soul. This deep meditation resulted in all attachment being wiped out within the shortest time. That was also why he could attain omniscience.

Brothers! This great soul, who could maintain equanimity of thought in the face of such a grievous provocation for aversion, was indeed an enlightened one. His was a great soul well ahead on the path of *Moksa*. He would never have mentioned that he was beyond provocation, then where was the need to bear with all that torture. 'My true nature is like that of the accomplished soul - the *siddha*'. He would never have engaged anybody in the web of such words. Yet this great man, who with an endeavour, to learn the innermost depths of his self, that spanned several births, naturally lived in a state of independence of the soul, managed to rise above all provocation and demonstrated his true accomplished nature - the *siddha svarupa*. Indeed an enlightened one is the one who has no affinity left for the body, no *dehadhyasa*; one who has learnt the *bheda-vijñana*, (the science that delineates the limits of the body and the soul) of the soul. We might be unable to give up the *dehadhyasa* altogether but nevertheless we could achieve it partially. Gajasukumala Muni had scaled great heights. Today we would not be able to reach those heights, and neither would we be faced with the grievous torture of that kind. But if we make the effort, we could most certainly rise above trivial provocations. Thus the intensity of

our attachment and aversion would diminish. This itself would be the relinquishment of *mohavesha*, the surge of passions.

But all this is possible only when the true essence of knowledge is absorbed. What are we going to achieve if we simply talk big and act to the contrary like the wizened wise?

Hence, it has been said that many beings have misunderstood mere rituals as the path of *Moksa*, while many others mistake mere discussion of knowledge for that path. Whether it is a being bogged down in rituals or one who professes the wizened wisdom, as their sight is set on the reward, their efforts get tainted with selfishness. The efforts being undertaken by either of them cannot be called selfless at all. Liberation is in fact the manifestation of the totally selfless true nature. Thus the two, i.e. selfishness and liberation, can never go hand in hand. Such beings will hover around the realm of the soul but can never get admitted to it.

Both kinds of these beings are engrossed in their infatuation. The ritualistic ones in their flow of rituals and the wizened wise ones in their discussions of principles. This infatuation indicates that the true purport of the reality has not occurred to them at all. Hence when in their lives if the equilibrium of the mind itself is lacking, how do we expect the equanimity of the soul? It is this infatuation on which the passions of attachment and aversion feed, thus it is the root cause for the cycle of birth and death. The decent garb of religiousness notwithstanding the infatuation is much like a poison.

Let us try to understand the depth of the topic through an important saying from the scriptures -

ज्ञान क्रियाभ्यां मोक्षः

Why should we strike this equilibrium of knowledge and rituals? The superficial equilibrium actually draws our attention to the difference in these two. But here we should consider whether knowledge and rituals are two different aspects or just one.

Nothing happens without a cause (कारण). There again, as the cause so is the effect (कार्य). Every effect has a cause. Yet although there might be many causes apparent behind an effect, in reality there is always a singular basic material cause (उपादान कारण). All other causes are merely supportingly instrumental causes. Although all causes are essential, the *upadana karana* which is the important one, is unavoidable.

Just as an earthen pot is an effect, for which the potter, his wheel and the kiln have all been instrumental causes, and yet the basic singular *upadana karana* is the clay, out of which the pot was made. That being the case, why are knowledge and rituals stated as two *upadana karanas* for the effect of Liberation? Here causes are two yet the effect is one. How is that? Earlier, we have understood that *jnana*, *darshana* and *charitra* have been presented as three for our better understanding yet for developing the stability of the soul the three act as one.

The seemingly different principles are experienced as altogether one, and not just that, the cause is the karma and karma itself is the resultant effect. In the Jain path of devoted pursuit (आराधना), cause, karma and effect are all rolled into one. The device (साधन), the devotion (साधना) and the attainment (सिद्धि), are all inseparable. Hence although knowledge and rituals may have been mentioned as two yet they are the same, only one.

This concept has been very succinctly and impartially laid bare in a verse by an experienced traveller on the path of liberation (साधक) -

शुं जाणे व्याकरणी, अनुभव शुं जाणे व्याकरणी,
कस्तूरी निज डुंटीमां पण लाभ न पामे हरणी,
अत्तरथी भरपूर भरी पण गंध न जाने बरणी अनुभव..

मणोबंध घृतपान करे पण, खालीखम घी गरणी,
लाखोमण अन्न मुख चावे, पण शक्ति न पामे घरणी अनुभव..

पीठे चंदन पण शीतलता पामे नहीं खर धरणी,
मणि माणिक रत्नो उरमां पण, शोभ न पामे धरणी अनुभव..

भाव धर्म स्पर्शन विण निष्कल तप, जप, संयम करणी,
शब्द-शास्त्र सह भाव धर्मता सहजानंद निसरणी अनुभव..

What experience do the learned have? What do they know? The female Musk Deer does not benefit from the Musk that is there in her own navel. The bottle of perfume is full to the brim yet it knows not the fragrance. A funnel swallows loads of ghee yet it remains empty. The flour mill eats up tons of grain yet gains no strength from it. The ass does not enjoy the cooling effect of Sandalwood although it carries loads of it on its back. The earth does not sparkle in spite of the jewels and precious stones in its store. All penance, chanting and abstinence will be in vain unless the soul is involved in it. Religion practised with knowledge and rituals, with the active involvement of the soul, will be like the ladder that takes you to liberation and the joy realising the true and natural self.

Brothers! The gist of this fifth couplet is that the materialisation of the precise theoretic principles in our day-to-day life, at every moment *is* spirituality, *is* genuine introspection and a perfect demonstration of mature effort (साधना).

Having explained the two archetypes of beings lost on the path of *Moksa*, Srimadji now goes on to describe that path and guides us on how to traverse it.

Detachment succeeds only with . . .

The pursuit of the three-fold path invokes the spirit of detachment and the soul is relieved of all karmas. Not until detachment is invoked, can the attachment with the inanimate be avoided. The passion for the inanimate results in the efforts to achieve them. So long as the desire for the inanimate remains, the mind remains preoccupied with the ways and means of acquiring them. This preoccupation obstructs the knowledge acquired by the intellect from touching the soul.

Here, two archetypes of *Jivas* have been referred to - the ritualistic (क्रियाजड) and the wizened wise (शुष्कज्ञानी). On one hand, the ritualistic *jiva*, in spite of performing the rituals is unable to invoke the spirit of detachment. He may be superficially performing all the rituals assigned by the religion, the sect and the tradition, yet the affinity that is within him for the passions, for the inanimate is unfettered. The wizened wise *jiva*, on the other hand too, is in much the same predicament. He may be waxing eloquent about knowledge, may be describing the nature of *atma* in a high-sounding language, may be able to explain it all to others, yet within himself the passions are unhindered, he is at a tangent from the plane of right conduct. He treats bondage and liberation as mere figments of imagination. Thus, neither the path followed by the ritualistic nor the one indicated by the wizened wise leads to *Moksa*.

Srimadji tells us how an equilibrium is to be sought amidst the two, in the next couplet (गाथा) —

वैराग्यादि सफल तो, जो सह आत्मज्ञान,
तेम ज आत्मज्ञाननी, प्राप्तितणां निदान ६

What is *Vairagya* ? It is in fact a specific form of attachment (राग). The term needs to be understood clearly. While attachment has been totally denounced, *Vairagya* at the same time has been rated as most respectable. Then what does *Vairagya* mean? Being

disenchanted. Disenchanted over what? We all would have come across situations in practical life, where a feeling of dejection would overcome us. There would have been times when we feel our mind is upset over nothing in particular. Doesn't this happen? When somebody asks - "Brother! What happened? Are you feeling sick? Did somebody hurt your feelings? Did you have a fight with somebody?" - you say "Nothing of the sort. I can't realise what, but something is bothering me. I feel very depressed today".

There are also times when you get disheartened over a reason. Say, something goes against your wish, or you lose something, somebody hurts your feelings, somebody insults you and so on. There could be many such reasons which leave you disheartened. But this disheartened feeling is not *Vairagya*. Then what is *Vairagya*? The effort to distance yourself from every object to which you are attached, whether a person, a thing, a passion, a tradition or an interest in something, and the inner state of detachment that arises from such an effort is called *Vairagya*.

To get a measure of the attachment that lies within us, we will have to investigate the inner world. Just try to estimate how large is the inner world. This outer material world that we see seems trivial when compared with the expanse of the inner world. Now let's see. You would sometimes say that this man cuts a wide circle, to mean that person's relations are established far and wide. But how far? Say you are settled in Madras, you are a Jain, then your contacts would be in the Jain community. If you went further, say in the Non-Jain community and perhaps in the business community. If you went beyond Madras, then perhaps in its vicinity or in specific towns across the country. Yet there are limits which you may not exceed. That goes to say that the external attachment has its limits.

The inner world, on the contrary, is a vast expanse. The yearning for places you did not see, things you did not get are all reasons for attachment. The mind immersed in its attachments is

bent on painting the whole world red. It weaves fantasies around things which it is never likely to get. Thus there is no limit to the feeling of attachment that lies within us.

Limiting this attachment within, withdrawing it from objects or persons in whom it rests and subduing it is *Vairagya*. If the attachment remains, then the feeling of dejection over certain objects is not *Vairagya*, only a sense of helplessness. You would have noted from the experiences in life, how after ageing there is a marked difference between the way you indulge in sensual pleasures now and the way you did when you were younger. As you grow older, you begin to get the feeling - 'why all this?' - towards the senses.

'Enough! Enough of this eating, drinking, dressing and draping, seeing, hearing, believing; there is no desire left now.' Don't you come across such repulsion?

This dampening of desires that overcomes you after indulgence, after having experienced enough, is not accompanied by a conscious effort to abandon the feeling of attachment within. It is merely a feeling of dejection that has arisen over the non-fulfilment of present desires. Sociology too has a part to play in this. The accepted norms of a society, which are firmly rooted in us, induce us to think that this behaviour may not suit our age. Sometimes it so happens that your children are grown up, married and celebrating their youth; don't you have to put down your urge to do the same? Don't you think that this does not suit you now? That is how the passions die down. This is not true detachment, not true *Vairagya*. The attachment within has not dissolved.

What we are attempting to understand here is that the aversion that arises out of an intention of relinquishing the attachment within is *Vairagya*. It is natural. It does not come out of a goading by anybody. We might pester somebody with a 'do this, don't do this' or 'this is okay, this doesn't suit you', but that

does not result in a detachment towards those things within us. The inner detachment arises out of a conscious mind; a strong disrelish develops towards sensual pleasures and then one begins to feel that the attachment with inanimate things is the reason that binds one here; one has to extricate oneself from it, one has to escape its clutches.

To achieve this one has to relinquish all attachment. How does one go about it? Enlarge the area of your attachment. Spread your affinity. You may ask, '*Maharaj!* Is that right? Should the area of attachment be reduced or enlarged?'. Just as the *Tirthankar* goes through *Diksa*, (gets ordained for penance), when he is full of pity for all fellow beings, in much the same way spread your personal affinity among all beings for the welfare and happiness of all. That is the spirit of universal friendship, universal love.

What is the limit of your affinity or love? Your own children and perhaps if you went a step further, your nieces and nephews. Well, that is the limit. You do not go any further. Similarly your friendship too, is limited to a few. But, that is not the way. Spread your love and affection across the universe.

आत्मवत् सर्वभूतेषु

Treat everybody as you do your soul and shower your love and affection among them.

Why should you treat everybody like your self? Why has this been said? To you, the most dear thing is your own life. There could not be anything dearer. You may say 'to me my child is most dear'. Yet when it comes to a testing time, when both of you are stuck in the same life-or-death situation, would you try to extricate yourself or your child?

It so happened once, that a rich man's house suddenly caught fire. Everybody ran out scared for the life. In the melee, his eight-month old baby was left sleeping in the cradle. Each one thought the other might have picked up the baby. Yet after a search they

realised that all had escaped but for the baby. The rich man was crying his heart out.

“O God! My only baby is caught in the fire. Please, somebody save him. Go get him out, please. Ask me anything. I am prepared even to pay a million or two!”

But who would go in? There were hundreds in the crowd that had gathered to see the house on fire. But who would risk his life? The question was, one might be greedy enough to risk one's life and go into the fire, yet if one were to die in the process, of what good would the millions be? A wise man in the crowd spoke to the rich father, “Brother! The baby is yours. Why don't you go in and get your baby? We will get you anything you need.” But the rich father did not go in, and the dearest baby died in the fire.

Let's consider! Was the child dearer or the life? You may say ‘What rot? My granny says her son is always in her heart. When the son is abroad, and she has cooked something special to eat, she cries, can hardly swallow a morsel.’ Yet the same son will not be so dear when it comes to a life-or-death situation. Hence, what is most dear to us is our own life. That is why, it has been said - आत्मवत् सर्वभूतेषु

Let all beings be as dear to you as your own life. When this feeling is imbibed only then is true renunciation, true vairagya born.

The sages have left us these axioms knowing our psychology fully well. Treat others as you would yourself and shower your love and affection over them. Spread the affection that you have reserved for your spouse or family over all the souls in this universe and your affinity gets distributed. That itself is renunciation. Once the attachment is released from the limited frame, it does not take you long to relinquish it. Water stored in a small vessel takes days or sometimes months in drying up, yet when the same water is spread over a vast area it dries up in minutes, with no extra effort.

In the same way, the aforesaid aversion or disenchantment that arises after being tired of indulging in sensual pleasures, if it is accompanied by a proper understanding, then it naturally evolves into renunciation.

Remember, we are not referring to the disenchantment that comes with the advancing age. It is not as if advancing age is followed by disenchantment. However old they may be, yet people keep thinking that time is still ripe for indulgence. Enjoy! Whenever I raise the topic of relinquishment or detachment amidst my brothers and sisters in their thirties and forties, they say, “Oh *Mahasatiji*! These are our years of enjoyment. Let us pamper our senses to the hilt”. When I ask, “Pray when do you stop?” they say, “After sixty. Tell us then about relinquishing”.

But Brothers! That is an age when you *cannot* enjoy. You face so many restrictions. The body and the senses tend to fail you. Social regulations come in your way. Only when you see your grown up sons, daughters-in-law, daughters does it strike you that it is past your time. What if your clock stops ticking midway? What am I going to tell you then? The sages themselves have told us when not to indulge and when to resort to religion-
dharma -

जरा जाव न पीडेइ, वाही जाव न वड्ढइ ।
जाविन्दिया न हायन्ति, ताव धम्मं समायरे ॥

The reason why all this is necessary is -

वैराग्यादि सफल तो, जो सह आत्मज्ञान,

Successful relinquishment is achievable when it is accompanied by *atamjnana*, the knowledge of self. But how is this *atamjnana* achieved?

जडथी उदासी तेने आत्मवृत्ति थाय छे

The disenchantment with the inanimate, material things in turn invokes the interest in the Self. ‘The inanimate things cannot

offer joy or sorrow, they are not equipped for it'. When such a firm belief arises, then the attachment with the inanimate is broken leading to the arousal of the feeling of disenchantment. It is this feeling that draws a jiva to the study of the Self. When it becomes evident that the inanimate do not really offer any happiness, the search for the same is directed towards the Soul. Here you may wonder if such disenchantment ever arises. Of course, it does. It arises in those who are in search of the Soul.

Let me relate an episode from the bygone ages. There was a highly learned Brahman scholar, proficient in the four *vedas* and numerous treatises. He basked in the vainglory of having subjugated several learned men in debates. He carried the impression that he was unparalleled and prided over the idea. Brothers! This conceit is a dangerous thing. It is a bottomless pit. Man keeps trying to rise above this pride, yet unknown to him it is this pride that keeps drawing him deep into its clutches.

This Brahman would be on the look out for any saint-sage coming his way and would soon go over and question them into subjugation. His questions used to be so perplexing that the other person would be baffled. The Brahman would then gloat over his victory.

Once a great *yogi*, a learned sage immersed in spiritual knowledge happened to visit this town. He had unravelled the mysteries of the self and used to be content keeping to himself. Our Brahman, as was his habit, reached this sage and began his complex discussions on attachment and detachment. The learned sage was quick to grasp the intent of the former and very politely said, "Oh great Brahman! I am unable to answer your questions. What is detachment? What is *sadhana*? What is disenchantment? These are subjects that I am not qualified to explain. But if you do care, please go over to King Janaka in Mithila city. He will tell you how a *sadhaka* (a seeker) goes about the *sadhana* (the effort, the search).

The Brahman thought, “Good fellow, trying to pass the buck to King Janaka. What’s so great about Janaka? He is so engrossed in the worldly pleasures, what is he going to make me understand? Well, let’s try him out. This seems like a great day, I have got a chance to cut Janaka to size. Calls himself a great enlightened *videhi*, eh? Let’s show the world how shallow this Janaka is”.

He reached Mithila and was soon at the Palace door. He did not need a permission to go in. In those days, Brahmans and Jains, these two groups commanded such respect and faith that not just Palaces, they had free access even to the private quarters of the Queens. They did not have to flash any visiting cards like you do now. Brothers! Consider this. In those days, the image of a Jain was so that a follower of *Jineshwar* was bound to have a flawlessly exemplary character, that he would be chaste and noble. The King would be least bothered if a Jain went to the Queen without any permission.

What is the state now? Do I have to say? You know better than I, as to who’s what in the society today. I only know you as you present yourself here. I do not know of what goes on beyond these walls. Yet it is true that Jains today cannot command the same prestige. We have ourselves to blame for this. Do pardon me, but I mean to ask whether you really command respect when you go someplace as a Jain. You may be proclaiming with a great fanfare that there is no religion like Jainism, but can you say with pride that there could be no match for the diligence, conduct and truthfulness of a Jain. No you cannot say so. Why? Where is the moral fabric? It’s lost. The same Jains who commanded respect amidst the Kings have lost it in the society today. Isn’t that a matter of shame? The Jains are not Jains enough any more.

Well, coming back to the Brahman, he barged into the palace without any permission. When he asked a maid about the whereabouts of King Janaka, he was told that the King was in

his bedroom. The Brahman was shocked, ‘Good God! They say he is a *videhi*, a great man above bodily passions, and here I am told he is in the bedroom during the day! That sage has sent me to a person infatuated with his Queens to learn about attachment and detachment’.

The Brahman went on towards the private quarters. The door to the bedroom was open. King Janaka was in bed with a beautiful, young Queen. The Brahman was dumbfounded at the scene. King Janaka saw him and read his thoughts, hence without stepping down from the bed, welcomed the former and said, “Welcome, O noble Brahman! Do come in”.

The Brahman was at a loss, hesitating whether to go in or not. Then Janaka repeated, “Come, come O Brahman! Do not hesitate, come in happily”.

Now the Brahman stepped closer and was awestruck at what he saw. The King had one arm around the Queen in embrace while the other hand was placed on the embers in the hearth. Now the hand was burning. The Brahman had not noticed this from the distance but now he was looking at a paradox. He also noticed that the King was undisturbed by either. Neither the pleasure from the Queen’s touch nor the pain from the burning hand seemed to affect him. His face showed no expression, absolutely unmoved he was. Aloof from the pleasures and pains, he was experiencing a state beyond the physical existence. The Brahman was overwhelmed. He had come in intent upon subjugating Janaka, to step on his pride. But on the contrary it was his pride that met the dust and he too prostrated before Janaka.

Said he, “O great King! I carried a mistaken notion that you were a fraud. That people sang your praises just to humour you. I was misled. That is not the truth. I have learnt so many treatises, defeated so many in debates, yet the disenchantment that you

have been able to achieve, rising above the pleasures and pains is alas, not in me. You are neither affected by the pleasure of a woman's company nor by the pain of your burning hand. You have truly attained the state beyond this physical existence, despite your being tied down to this worldly life and the entailing responsibilities".

The disenchantment with the natural reactionary course of the body while residing in it, is experiencing the state beyond the physical existence, is the *videha dasha*. Who does not have a body? Only the *siddha*. Rest of us all have a body to reside in. The attachment towards the body leads to the passions for the senses. When the enchantment with the body is withdrawn the passions will not last, they will be eliminated on their own. No special effort is called for.

Here King Janaka was such a dispassionate person. He became the ideal for the Brahman. The Brahman in search of the ultimate truth, abandoned all his treatises then and there and promised not to enter into any debates or arguments thenceforth, nor to demean anybody. Thus he left feeling much lighter having freed himself from the clutches of his own vanity.

Dear Brothers! The reason why I narrated this story of King Janaka was to emphasise on the point that it is not necessary to be a mendicant or a saint alone to be able to invoke the disenchantment within. People leading a material life, even while attending to all their duties as householders can very well experience this disenchantment if they lead a discerning life. One who is aware of the futility of the inanimate things, one who has well understood that the inanimate cannot offer any pleasure, becomes capable of attaining this realisation of the soul.

There may be anything that you feel is very dear to you, that it offers you pleasure; it is in fact not so. Let's suppose you relish a *gulabjamoon* very much. You may say, "Just let me have

a *gulabjamoon* and I shall not ask for anything else”. Yet if you are sick, and then you get a *gulabjamoon*, it will act like a poison. At another time you may be steeped in sorrow and your mind is all upset, and if soembody places a *gulabjamoon* before you, would you like to eat? On the contrary you may get angry and say, “I don’t even want to see it. Get this out of here”. Why does this happen? You said it gives you great pleasure, didn’t you? But no, when the mind is upset even a thing of pleasure begins to hurt.

Brothers! An inanimate thing cannot give us happiness or sorrow. Those are feelings stored within us, mere figments of our imagination. When this truth is clear not only to our intellect but also to our feelings, then we will be disenchanted with such inanimate things. Then we can eat what we get, wear what we find, live as we are required to. Disenchantment develops thus, towards things and towards passions.

When the senses do not lean towards passions, and if they do, not for long; that is *vairagya*, disenchantment.

वैराग्यादि सफल तो, जो सह आत्मज्ञान,

Successful relinquishment is achievable when it is accompanied by *atmajnana*, the knowledge of self. For successful disenchantment limiting our passions and attachment is a precondition. Only then will the realisation of self be possible, not before that. A person who thinks that following this religion will help him achieve the *atmajnana*, know his Self, then before his urge could be satisfied he has to first invoke a disenchantment within himself towards the inanimate. This disenchantment will break the attraction for the inanimate, and then the thoughts can be directed towards the soul. The discerning ability that is guided towards the soul will rest only with the acquisition of *atmajnana*, the realisation of the soul. What this effort of achieving our Self is, is a topic for another day.

The knowledge of the Self

The devoted practice of the three-fold path enables the achievement of the *Siddha Svarupa*, the liberation of the Soul at the same time creating a state of everlasting bliss. That state, that true natural state, that natural bliss which the Jiva has never experienced so far, can be experienced with this devoted practice. The effort that a Jiva puts in to this end is honourable, creditable and worthy of practice. Our scriptures deal with various ways in which this effort is to be channelled by a *Jiva* towards achieving the goal of the true natural state. Success is certainly achievable if a proper attempt is made having these scriptures for our guides.

The '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' elucidates the various internal and external apparatus and the appropriate times of applying them for reaching the path of *Moksa*. After having described the two types of *Jivas* perplexed and stranded on the path of liberation, Srimadji, while telling us what the correct practice should be after coming out of the confusion, says —

वैराग्यादि सफळ तो, जो सह आतमज्ञान,
तेम ज आतमज्ञाननी, प्राप्तितणां निदान ६

What is *Vairagya*? This aspect has been dealt with earlier. What is not related with the outside world, the affinity which is withdrawn away from the external material world and which encompasses the internal world is *Vairagya*.

If we were to closely evaluate our feeling of attachment or affinity, we would realise that our love identifies only with the external world. The feeling of attachment rests in everybody. One who has a heart, who has feelings, feeling of affection and love, is bound to express it somewhere.

Howsoever cruel a person may be, savage or brute he may well be, yet in some corner of his heart there would be feelings. A person may have murdered hundreds, may have crushed people like mosquitoes, his heart may never have shuddered while

murdering, yet the same person would be anguished at the smallest injury to his own child. He might shed tears at that. That is the feeling of affection lying dormant in him which gets awakened. It goes to show that all human beings have affection in their heart and this feeling is expressed at some place or the other.

This love of ours, that is spread across the external world, tries to extract pleasure out of it. Look at it from the psychological point of view; wherever our love is attached, whether in a person, a thing or a situation, the selfish desire to extract pleasure out of it is also combined. The urge to extract something, some internal pleasure out of it, creates a trepidation in the *Jiva*. When that in which our love rests, fails to generate the pleasure imagined by the mind, when the desired level of happiness is not reached, when the recipient of the love fails to rise to the expectations, then the *Jiva* is greatly distressed, feels aggrieved. Yet this is not true love. True love is that which is devoid of selfish desire of any sort.

Mahayogi Anandghanji immersed in his devotion to the *Jina*, places all his love in Him and says - और न चाहूँ रे कंत

I do not need anybody else. I want my Rishabha alone, and nothing else. Here Rishabha is only symbolic. Rishabha here is not the son of Marudevi, but the supreme element of Soul lying within us. It is a manifestation of infinite energy. Nothing else can be as beautiful, unparalleled and incomparable. "I desire nothing else but this supreme element. Whatever desire I have, whatever effort I am putting in is solely for this supreme element of Soul. Without it my effort is futile and sightless".

The learned say that when your sight is drawn away from the external world and directed towards the incomparable treasure chest within the Soul, with an intense desire to achieve something out of it; when some attraction, out of the many lying within you, begins to allure you, then that is your true love. But are we aware of the many attractions that reside in our Soul?

The external attractions are quick to draw you into their net. The *Jiva* gets enamoured instantaneously. These days you just have to step out and there are attractions aplenty. Whichever way you look there are elements to encourage all your senses and passions. You are charmed into seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling or touching something or the other. The allurements are unlimited, and how long does it take the *Jiva* to get enticed? Its instantaneous, it has nothing to do with age or comprehension.

When these passions, these elements entice you, don't you forget your self? "Who am I? How am I? Where am I? What is right? What is wrong?" do these thoughts occur at all. No, they don't. You get infatuated, engrossed in attempts to acquire and enjoy the objects that attract you. Just stop to ponder, whether what is happening is proper.

Vairagya will not appear unless you know the essence lying within you, unless an unflinching belief awakens in you that detachment - *Vairagya* can arise only with the firm thought, a strong conviction that there are powerful attractions within myself, whatever is to be believed, enjoyed, experienced is all within myself and that it cannot be had from any outside object.

From the very day of the birth, there are attractions beckoning you. As the age advances these attractions increase at such a pace that it is impossible for one person to get to enjoy all of them. What really happens is this lone *Jiva* has a limited time and unlimited attractions. How much time do you think you have come with? A hundred years at best? No way, the ones who reach hundred and hundred-plus get listed in the Guinness Book. I don't think we could make it to that list. We have come with a limited life-span of perhaps fifty, sixty or eighty years, in which little time we have to taste the pleasure of all the things in this world. Could we do it? No! What then? You realise it cannot be done, yet the desire remains. Then do we have to leave without enjoying? Yes, so it is. The things will lie here while we go away. Where to, if I may ask? Simply nowhere. In our typical *Kathiawadi* vernacular, it is termed as 'getting back'. If

somebody dies, they say that person 'got back'. Nice way of putting it, isn't that?

The Karma philosophy also says the same thing, and that is how it is. 'Getting back' means to say that the fellow has been reborn somewhere here. Where else to go? For these are the surroundings where his love lies. Objects are unlimited and he has died carrying the desire to enjoy them all. That means he has to 'get back' to enjoy them. The wheel of repeated births and deaths here will keep turning.

One complete life span was spent in enjoying so much, but did that really satiate? Did anything come out of having spent so much time and energy? It does not satiate, the fire of dissatisfaction always remains smouldering. Even after receiving all that was desired, and enjoying all that was received, this dissatisfaction does not allow the Soul to rest in peace. Then why shouldn't we think there is apparently some shortcoming in the objects of passion, when even after enjoying them we do not become satisfied. If those objects are not capable of satiating, then who is?

It seems as if there is some thing else, some other essence lying somewhere which might satiate the *Jiva*. What is this essence? When you begin to enquire, you realise that this essence is lying within us, nowhere else. Only when this essence within us become the centre of our attraction, can we turn to introspection. For this, belief is essential. A firm belief that 'I have not received any pleasure out of any external object and the affection towards any external object or any person is incapable of giving me happiness'. *Mahayogi Anandghanji*, who had experienced the soul, who had understood the essence within and even experienced it, has very beautifully explained it while establishing his affection for Rishabha -

प्रीत सगाई जग मां सहु करे रे, प्रीत सगाई न कोई,
प्रीत सगाई निरुपाधिक कही रे, सोपाधिक धन खोई।
ऋषभ जिनेश्वर प्रीतम माहरो रे, ओर न चाहूँ कंत ॥

With how many have you established a loving relationship? There are so many, who are not your blood relatives, whom you like to call yours, affectionately. An affectionate friend is one with whom you have established a relationship of love. But Anandghanji says that nobody can establish a genuine loving relationship. Why is it so? He has defined love as *nirupadhika* (निरुपाधिक), love which is not qualified in any way, which is absolutely undemanding. That which is absolutely free of the feelings of affinity, enmity or selfishness is true love. Now test your relations. You have relations with so many, are they all unselfish? Or is there a motive in them? Granted, it may not be a desire for anything tangible, neither money nor any thing, yet the feeling remains that the other person should reciprocate your love, measure for measure. That the other person should care for you as much you do, only then will the relation be lasting. Will it be otherwise? You may be doing everything for that person yet if that person fails to reciprocate at all, would you not break the relation? The reason here is that the love is affected, it is artificial, not natural. It is a dependent love, dependent on a person or object or situation; it is not everlasting. That means it is qualified. Qualified in the attempt, qualified in the result and since it is totally qualified, it is *sopadhika* (सोपाधिक). As Anandghanji puts it, the qualified love, the *sopadhika* love is bound to lose the treasure of the soul.

Hence, instead of loving an earthly being, he has loved Rishabha. He says, 'Rishabha Jineshwar, my pritam (priyatama) my dearest'. How meaningful is the word! 'Priyatama!' You might ask, 'Maharaj, what's so meaningful, so beautiful about it?'. Everybody knows the meaning of the word priyatama. What is the prevalent and accepted meaning of this word? A wife calls her husband priyatama, dearest, a beloved calls her lover priyatama, dearest. But what does the word literally mean? Do you know?

We have learnt of three degrees in grammar. The positive, the comparative and the superlative. What we love very much is

priya (dear), what we love even more is priyatara (dearer) and what we love most of all, exclusively is priyatama (dearest). How does this term refer to a husband or a lover? Whenever the poets have sung the praise of the Lord with a feeling of superlative love, they have called the Lord as priyatama. The devotee says, “O Lord! There is none more dearer to me in this whole universe, than you. Hence you are my dearest (priyatama).”

What is most dear to you? This world. Then this world is your dearest. If sensual desires and passions are most dear to you, then they are your dearest. If you love wealth most, then wealth is priyatama, if prestige then prestige is priyatama. If you relish tasty food most, then food is your priyatama. What do you like? What do you like most of all? Please inquire within! Your inquiry will not clear any doubt, it is bound to leave you baffled. You will feel badly after that. This day you have heard me say, now all through the day or at night, whenever you find time, try to sit down for a few minutes and ponder over this! You don’t have to come back and tell me, I don’t need to know. So don’t bother about telling me, simply question your self.

I have a feeling, you will come up with a list of five or six items. You will be wondering, ‘how do I rank them? Shall I call this dear or that? Should I call this dearest because I like it more? But hold, I like that more than this. And what about those many other things that I like most?’. This goes to show that there is nothing dearest to you. The status of the dearest is linked to your selfishness. Where your purpose is served, when ever your feelings in the mind find someone more favourable than the others, then at that moment he/she is your dearest. How is this possible? Does it really sound good? What does your social or moral view say about this? Is it possible to have a shifting rank for the dearest depending on whom you like when, or can there be one and only one dearest? There could never be more than one. But that is just how it is. If you ask your mind it is bound to say, ‘I like this, this and this too. I am not going to rank anything

lesser'. That is why we are left stranded. We gain nothing out of anybody.

The learned have told us time and again that in this external world wherever you have placed your love, whether in a person or in a thing, all that is perishable. It is not a love that will fetch you everlasting happiness. Withdraw from it and look within your self. There is so much within your self that will give you happiness. If you get enamoured with it, if you turn towards it, you can very well achieve it. The element within you is independent, inborn and natural. But will the temptation for external things stop only with the awakening of a strong yearning for the internal, not otherwise? A child stops eating dirt if you get him a chocolate, not otherwise. Brothers! The external relations, the external loves are all like dirt to us.

Great men while telling us about the strengths of the Soul, say, 'Happiness is within yourself, yet you lose it in search of external happiness'.

सुख प्राप्त करतां सुख टळे छे लेश ए लक्षे लहो,
क्षण क्षण भयंकर भाव मरणे कां अहो राची रहो

Joy seeps out as you hold it, that is the catch mind you, This agony of virtual death every moment, why let it bind you?

Have you ever thought over this line - सुख प्राप्त करतां सुख टळे छे - joy is lost as you get joy? You may have sung these lines or heard them so many times before. Do you think it sounds logical? You enjoy when you get joy, you don't lose it. Then why has Srimadji put it thus? Would he have erred by any chance? We are used to looking at things on the surface, hence we feel there is something wrong here. Yet when the great men present us with some gem of wisdom they have both the superficial view and the internal view before them. Their explanation considers both these views. Hence Srimadji explains, 'joy is lost as you get joy'. The first joy here is the material joy, material pleasure. While we struggle to achieve the joy, the happiness of our soul

is lost. Why? How does this happen? Don't animals take pleasure from the external joy that they get?

What is your definition for happiness? Whoever has the external joy and comforts is happy. You must have heard people say, 'So and so is a very happy man'. If you ask why, you are told, 'He has got everything, a wife, a car, a mansion. He is happy because he has all this'. This is external happiness. The craving for these external pleasures is infatuation, foolishness. The more you try to acquire these pleasures, the stronger your infatuation grows. The resultant aberration of your natural self in the form of rising passions of attachment and aversion in turn creates a sequence of Karma bondage. The happiness that resides in your soul then gets lost in the crowding mass of Karma. A *Jiva* burdened with Karma cannot experience the happiness of the soul. That is why Srimadji has said, 'Joy is lost as you get joy'. While we rush towards external pleasures, the internal happiness is lost. For it is a futile attempt to extract happiness out of something in which it does not exist. This madness takes you away from reality. These conflicting efforts are called *Mithyatva* (मिथ्यात्व) - illusion.

क्षण क्षण भयंकर भाव मरणे कां अहो राची रहो - this line has a great meaning that needs to be understood. What is virtual death? And what is physical death? We all know physical death. We have seen every big and small animal dying. The going away of the Soul from the body is physical death. Who doesn't know this? But has the view of a physical death ever provoked thoughts about virtual death in you? Brothers! Who can attain *siddhi* - the special endowment? Only the ones who have the natural ability to receive it. Owing to its own ability, whenever the need arises such a *Jiva* ponders over its self. Such occasions make it introspective.

Srimad Rajachandrajī, the composer of '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*', was just seven years old when a gentleman by name Amichandbhai died in their village Vavaniya. This person was

very dear to Raychandbhai. The young Raychandbhai happened to hear about the death. Yet he did not know what ‘dying’ meant. He immediately went to his grandfather Panchalbhai and asked, “Grandpa! Is Amichandbhai dead?”

Grandpa said, “Yes, my son! He is dead.”

“Grandpa! What does ‘dead’ mean?”

How is this question answered? What do you tell an innocent child? The grandfather tried as one would explain to any other child, “My son! Now he will not walk or talk, will not eat or drink, he will do nothing.”

“But why not? He is just the same. Then why wouldn’t he do anything?”

“Son! Those who die, do nothing”.

But this did not satisfy Raychandbhai. He wondered, ‘How did this happen? Just a little while ago he was doing everything and now he doesn’t walk or talk. How come?’, and to find an answer he went over to the dead man’s house. When he reached there he found many people tying the dead man tightly to a litter. Raychandbhai was moved to see this. He thought, ‘My goodness! What is all this? Why are they tying him like this? Does it not hurt him? And why is Amichandbhai silent?’ and so shocked he fell into a deep thought. He was perplexed why these people who would never have hurt Amichandbhai, were now tying him down. In the meantime, the people picked up the litter and started moving. Raychand was surprised and wondered ‘what next? where do they take him now?’ He began following them. Several elders tried to turn him back, but he concealed himself and followed them to the cemetery. Afraid of catching somebody’s eye, he hid himself on a tree.

As he watched from atop the tree, the litter was placed on the pyre and the pyre was lit from the side of the foot. Within no time the whole body was consumed in flames. Raychandbhai stood there electrified. He was bewildered over this happening

and was bothered by a hundred and one questions that none could answer. He sat brooding over them trying to find the answers within himself.

He thought, ‘They are burning the body now, what was there in it before? What was it that activated the body? Where has that thing gone now? What happened of it? Why are these people burning up the body?’ After a deep contemplation over the happenings, he came to the conclusion that there had been some wonderful force in the body, which was responsible for the activity, and that force had gone away. Then what was that force?

Brothers! You must have seen so many dying, burning bodies. Perhaps, you would even have lit a pyre or two. But did this question ‘how and why’ ever strike you? You may say, “We know when life goes out of the body, it is a carcass, and that is why it is burnt. We don’t need to think about it. Raychandbhai was just a kid not knowing anything, that is why he had all those questions.” Not so, Brothers! On the contrary he was more knowledgeable than any of us, and it was this knowledge that stirred awake his consciousness. His awakened soul took him deep into introspection and that led to his realising that what left the body was some animate element, the soul. Soul was responsible for the life in the body and when the soul left, the body had to be consigned to flames. Hence body and soul are different. Once this difference became clear, the turmoil within him subsided.

As he stood there atop the tree, he then recollected his previous lives. He could sense that this realisation of the duality of the body and the soul had occurred to him in earlier births too. Not only this, but also that he had led a saintly life earlier, and that his was a soul very much immersed in the hues of renunciation and detachment. Oh Brothers! At that innocent age of just seven years, his mind took the turn towards the soul. At that young age for the first time he saw the physical death of somebody and his soul was awakened. His nature and leaning were all pervaded by the soul.

Brothers! Do not feel hurt when I say this, but I have heard that when you all go over to the cemetery when somebody dies in the society, while the immediate kith and kin of the dead person are all lamenting there, just a little distance away all others discuss matters over a cup of tea. Why, I understand matters that don't easily get discussed elsewhere, be it business, politics or about fixing up some alliance, are all settled here! There is scant respect shown for the sobriety of an occasion like death.

If at such times your consciousness is provoked, then with a glaring example of the duality of the body and soul before you, you would begin a quest for the soul. I would like to know if at any time when you went to a cemetery, the thought about soul ever occur to you. If not, then the question arises as to how deep asleep are you? If the thought of the soul does not arise even where it rightly should, then where else would it? Would it arise at home, at your business, or while you eat and drink? Brothers! This physical death is a great catalyst to galvanise our thoughts about our soul, let us use it and awaken ourselves to the realm of the soul.

Virtual Death is something that demands a greater understanding. All of us assembled here and all the beings of this universe have died a virtual death several times and are so dying even now. Do you know how many times you died in your 50 or 60 years of life? "Oh Maharaja! We are not dead. We are alive and hence able to sit before you here". But Brother! I am not referring to physical death, only asking you about virtual death. How many times did you die the virtual death?

क्षण क्षण भयंकर भाव मरणे - the learned sage says your virtual death is occurring every moment. How does this virtual death occur? How is virtual death related to our attachment with the world? Why does this qualified love, this bond of affinity result in repeated virtual death? How agonising and painful is this virtual death to the soul? All this at another time.

Detachment determines Self realisation

The true devotion of the three jewels helps unveil all the wrappings on the soul; invokes all the strengths of the soul. The reason why we do not perceive the unlimited strengths lying in the soul is the casing of Karma.

The same power which the *kevaljnani Tirthankars* mastered and which enabled them to achieve *Moksa*, resides in us too. But our experience is quite different. Even if a short vow, a *pratyakhyana* is to be taken up, our psychological or spiritual weakness keeps us from doing so. In spite of being physically fit we are unable to perform any penance or to give up anything as a result of this weakness. Not only this, even the virtues of the soul do not get revealed, the infinite strength lying in the soul does not get activated.

Why does this happen? Brothers, think! You have got the rare chance of being born as a human, you have the ability to analyse and understand, you have the faith and the company of noble souls. In spite of having all these why is the sincere effort not forthcoming? The answer to this has to be traced within.

Why is Man, who does not falter at the least in deploying all the external strengths at his disposal for the achievement of material comforts, unable to progress on the spiritual front? Why is he, who is able to put in a tremendous effort into several other activities of life, so lax about the effort of the Soul? The reason here is that the importance of spirituality has not dawned at all upon the *jiva*. He is unaware of the wonderful revolution that can come into his life if spirituality gets woven into every moment of its activity. History can so well illustrate instances of people whose lives had been notoriously disgraceful, yet when they realised the greatness of spirituality and accepted it as the mainstay of their lives, they rose from the lowly state to become supreme souls.

First of all a *jiva* has to absorb that total surrender to Truth is the highest radical happening in a life. There is no goal, greatness or effort higher than that. For such a total surrender, a firm, unmoving, unflinching determination is required in the face of the most unfavourable circumstances. Oh! If it comes to abandoning everything, you should have an unmoving self-confidence that like the King Harishchandra you too will not budge even a little from your resolve.

For, such a determined state alone is the foundation of spirituality. The height of the structure depends on the strength of the foundation. A weak foundation brings down a tall building like a house of cards.

On the path of spiritual effort too, the need for a strong foundation has been emphasised. A weak foundation will not let the spiritual effort progress well. Where then is the quest for *siddhi* - the state of accomplishment? There should be no hesitation. It has been said -

डगमगतो पग राख तुं, स्थिर मुज दूर नजर छो न जाय
दूर मार्ग जोवा लोभ लागीर ना मारे एक डगलुं बस थाय,
मारे एक डगलुं बस थाय

On the hard surface of the spiritual path, just one step taken with a strong resolve can suffice. Such a step that will rest only with the accomplishment, with *siddhi*. A short vow or observance with a determined self can eventually lead to *siddhi*. Hence, determination first and progress follows.

Srimadji has said while explaining the sort of mind-frame and behaviour desirable in the effort to achieve self realisation -

वैराग्यादि सफल तो, जो सह आतमज्ञान,
तेम ज आतमज्ञाननी, प्राप्तितणां निदान ६

For some time now, we have been analysing the first two phrases of this gatha. The success of renunciation, detachment and the like is in the achievement of self realisation. Only when renunciation and detachment are accompanied by a realisation

of the soul - an experience with the self, can the fruit of *Moksa* become available.

Having understood this, we would now like to know what if, in spite of having woven renunciation and detachment into the activity of every moment of our life, in spite of the conscious inquiry and the influence of previous detachment having invoked a disinterest towards the world in the mind, in spite of the life being totally immersed in religious activity, and for that matter, in spite of the mind and intellect having accepted the greatness of self-experience, self realisation does not appear? At such junctures, many would experience a dejection. The mind would begin to waver. Sometimes even detachment and the like begin to seem meaningless, and the mind begins to question the genuineness. What should be done then?

It is to draw such a practitioner (*sadhaka*) out of the dejection and to make him see the reality that Srimadji has added the last two phrases of this *gatha*. Consoling the *sadhaka* with great love he says, "Brother! Be patient! Don't lose faith. The feelings of renunciation - detachment, the disinterest within, the unaffectedness now awakening in you, will sooner or later, certainly help you realise the soul, because these feelings are the best means to achieve self-experience". Renunciation and detachment are to be used as devices. If appropriately applied, the core of these devices will extract itself from the kernel and lead you up as if on the rungs of a ladder at the end of which is the destination - *Moksa*.

What is meant by the appropriateness of renunciation and detachment? First of all it is evident that a *jiva* is not so well acquainted with renunciation as he is with enjoyment. He has not learnt renunciation at all and he does not need to be taught enjoyment. Just think, Brothers! Has this *jiva* ever abandoned enjoyment? Wherever he went, in whatever lesser or greater species he was born, yet from times immemorial he has been wandering with the enjoyment. Even when born with uni-sensory ability his enjoyment has continued unabated.

Have you seen trees in this respect? Their growth and the metabolism within them is occurring non-stop. If you look closer, you will notice that not even for a moment does the growth stop. At times in autumn, a tree sheds all its leaves appearing barren and dead, yet when you watch the tree daily you will see how the tiny sprouts appear and before you realise they are transformed into tiny leaves. How is this growth so quick?

The *jiva* in the tree has the passion for food. Due to this passion, the tree keeps drawing from the earth as much strength as it can. Not just the earth, it keeps absorbing all the enjoyment that it needs from the atmosphere, air and light. That is how a tree grows. There are trees in the Amazon basin which clutch any man or animal that goes near them, and suck them up till they are dead. What a passion for food! Thus, even such uni-sensory *jivas* are continuously in enjoyment. Passion for food is also an enjoyment.

The passions for food, fear, copulation, acquisition reside in all *jivas* and the *jivas* are constantly trying to enjoy and feed them. Not just the uni-sensory *jivas* but all *jivas* in this world are busy satiating as many senses as they have. The emotions and passions related to enjoyment remain resident in the soul and as such the *jiva* is better acquainted with enjoyment. The thought flow is also affected by these passions. Unfortunately for the *jiva*, the momentary flashes of the emotion of renunciation that occur in him are not long-lasting. It takes a tremendous effort to hold on to this emotion, while the passions are such that they do not budge from the mind at all.

We should exchange the places of these two streams of thought. The passions for enjoyment that arise in us should be extinguished immediately, while the emotion of renunciation should be held down in the mind always. Only then will our passions die down and the feeling of renunciation grow stronger.

The atmosphere around us is conducive for enjoyment; it naturally nourishes our passions. The *jiva* likes such atmosphere

and goes about in search of only such circumstances. But now it is necessary to develop an atmosphere that can sustain the emotion of renunciation in the *jiva*. That is possible through good company; the proximity of noble men and thoughts. The *jiva* should try to seek company of noble and pious men and heed their advice. If that is not available, then to read good scriptures. If that is not possible too, then to develop a noble thinking and as a result inculcate noble behaviour. When this happens, the feeling of renunciation gains strength.

Only in those in whom the strength of the Self has blossomed, does the spirit of renunciation awaken and sustain itself. Thus it is beyond doubt that the firmness of the devices of renunciation and detachment certainly leads the *jiva* to the realisation of the Self.

The outlook of a *jiva* who has realised the Self, as regards happiness, gets drastically altered. A strong belief that the concept of happiness does not exist in the inanimate; that the happiness of the self is available within oneself, settles down in the *jiva*. He begins to look at external pleasures not as happiness but as the enemy that plunders the internal joy. It is for this reason that we had deliberated upon these words of Srimadji earlier -

सुख प्राप्त करतां सुख टढे छे लेश ए लक्षे लहो,

In the pursuit of material pleasures of passions, the happiness of the soul is lost and as a result the *jiva* dies a virtual death every moment.

We have dealt with the aspect physical death earlier, now let us look at what virtual death means.

What is virtual death? The moment we hear the word ‘death’ we think about the separation of the *jiva* (life) from the body. But that is the physical death. There is another definition possible, relative to the soul. What is it?

In physical death, something that is responsible for the activity of the body goes away and the body become inactive, listless. All its external apparatus, that is the senses and the mind which looked

animate become inanimate. Although the same senses and the same limbs remain on the carcass, without the soul they are useless. We can ascertain somebody's death only from the fact that the body has turned inactive. In spite of knowing that 'the separation of the body and the soul is physical death', we have not seen the soul depart. Yet we firmly believe that the soul has left the body.

Brothers! Let us apply this comprehension to understanding the virtuous emotions of the soul. The various virtues like knowledge, faith, strength, forgiveness, simplicity, quietude, equanimity and the like that reside in the soul are all active within themselves. The more these virtues are expressed, the more active they get. We notice these active virtues in great noble men. These virtues of equanimity, forgiveness, tolerance and the like become distinctly visible with the progress of their *sadhaka* state; while as a result of *sadhana* we see the manifestation of the consummation of *jnana* and *darshana*.

All *jivas* foster all these virtues in them. Yet the activity of the virtues perceptible in the great noble men is not to be seen in us. Our experience until now indicates an absolute inactivity of these virtues in us. In spite of there being no difference between us and the *siddha atmas* who attained *siddhi* through *sadhana* in this human form; in spite of our having secured the same human form, howsoever we may try, it seems as if we are of a different kind.

The absence of the manifestation of our virtues is the biggest bane. That itself is violence in thought. The violence in thought causes the occurrence of physical violence. As a result our virtues get destroyed at every moment. The rising feelings of attachment and aversion virtually kill the noble feelings like forgiveness which naturally evolve from the *atma*. The affected disposition (विभाव) is so very overpowering that the natural disposition (स्वभाव), poor thing! is cowered down into some nook.

Let us ask ourselves. What is the hue of the feelings that prevail upon the incessant activity of our mind, speech and body? They are either immersed in attachment or in aversion. Have

you ever experienced the touch of any third feeling beyond these two, in your activity? Have you ever done something in total equanimity, devoid of attachment and aversion? Perhaps the body and the speech may rest awhile but what of the mind? Does it ever rest? Lying within us it is busy building up the feelings of attachment and aversion. That means there is not even a moment that passes for this *jiva*, where he has not experienced either attachment or aversion.

This activity, this change in the disposition that is occurring every passing moment pollutes the virtues of the Soul, suppresses them under a covering. The virtues become more and more obscure. But has this ever occurred to the *jiva*?

If you consider the complete perspective, do all the *jivas* of the world prefer to indulge in attachment and aversion or renouncing them? Is there any joy in peaceful thought? Look! When the reasons for attachment or aversion are sometimes lesser or not adequate then the *jiva* is perturbed and struggles to acquire them. Brothers! This is the madness of the *jiva*. This indeed, is the disqualification for the path of devoted practice! What a limitless struggle to acquire those reasons which are thoroughly detestable and what a thorough neglect of the reasons that are so very respectable! Tell me! How do you get peace out of this? Living amidst such disturbing feelings is what other than virtual death? Suppressing the natural feelings of the soul to the greatest extent and living like the inanimate, does it not seem as if we are moving carcasses?

Then in Srimadji's parlance we are all dead beings. Physical death kills but only once, while in virtual death we are dying every moment. Hence, only when we cease to be embroiled in the state of virtual death, can we attain self realisation through the devices of renunciation and detachment.

Now the next *gatha* elucidates the greatness of renunciation and detachment.

Straggle in Renunciation & Detachment...

The propitiation of the three jewels completely awakens the natural disposition woven into every fibre of the Atma's fabric.

Here in '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' whatever has been said, is with the singular objective of explaining how the deviant affected disposition (विभाव) can be totally eliminated and how the natural disposition (स्वभाव) can be achieved. There are indeed, many who put in efforts to this end, yet their approach is full of shortcomings. Pointing out such shortcomings, Srimadji has told us that both the 'ritualistic' and the 'wizened wise' *jivas* are lost on the way; although their efforts are pointed in a particular direction, they are not proper.

The first precondition for reaching the path of liberation, the *Moksa marga*, is self realisation. Unless there is an awakening of self realisation, not even a step can be taken on the path of liberation. While telling us about the devices for achieving self realisation, Srimadji says -

त्याग विराग न चित्तमां, थाय न तेने ज्ञान,
अटके त्याग विरागमां, तो भूले निजभान ७

He who does not have renunciation and detachment on mind, will not attain self-realisation; and one who gets involved only with renunciation and detachment loses sight of the goal of achieving the self.

Renunciation and detachment are the devices for achieving self-realisation. Both these are essential in life for one who wants to realise the self. In saying so, Srimadji has dropped a hint for the 'wizened wise' that mere talk of knowledge and discussions over the scriptures do not make one learned. Renunciation and detachment are as important as knowledge itself. At the same time, Srimadji also warns the 'ritualistic' that renunciation and detachment alone do not constitute the end. Merely renouncing

or becoming detached is not the search for the self. It has to be a proper renunciation and detachment with the goal of the self in view.

We have understood what *vairagya* (detachment) is. Now let us analyse *Tyaga* (renunciation).

What is this renunciation (*tyaga*) ?

Quite often our constant contact with external objects and things is instrumental in making us believe that giving up such objects and things is renunciation. But that is a wrong notion. In fact, to draw us out of this misunderstanding, Srimadji has very effectively phrased in this gatha -

त्याग विराग न चित्तमां,

Renunciation and detachment should not be limited to objects and things but should pervade the internal conscious state. Renunciation should percolate down to our mind and soul.

Like the various feelings which are present in the natural and affected thought flow in our soul, the feeling of renunciation should also be naturally present in the constant flow of thoughts.

Here the question arises as to what should be the internal relinquishment. When understood in the context of the search for self, it becomes evident that the renunciation refers to the giving up of sins, abandonment of sinful feelings, relinquishing the unnatural affected disposition.

Several reasons can be found to induce external renunciation and they are effective too. But unless the importance of internal renunciation is impressed in our mind it does not take place. One who has understood this importance will be vigilant every moment - "unless there is renunciation, the passions continue to reside within me. They pollute, defile my soul. They push me away from my goal." Thus for an awakened soul passions prick like a thorn.

Remember this! You do not have to go out anywhere to ascertain if there is an awakening of faith in renunciation, if there is a liking for renunciation. Just ask your self 'Is there one passion, out of the passions that satiate the five senses; one passion that has begun to bother my soul?' You indulge in the passions, yet as you take the pleasure does this thought occur to you, 'O *Jiva*! How long will I enjoy? When will my urge for passions die down? I shall strive to curb my urges.' Brothers! A great effort is necessary for this. The urges do not leave so easily.

Sometimes we notice a naturally detached disposition in a person. But it is the result of efforts done earlier. Sometime in the past that *Jiva* would have made efforts to develop the feeling of detachment; the results become visible now.

Let us just consider the sense of taste. As we sit for a meal and as a food preparation is placed before us, our thoughts about taste-distaste awaken. Invariably, the feeling of 'this is liked and that is not' arises. And yet, even today you come across so many people who have no exposure whatsoever to religion, but exercise a great control over their taste-buds. You offer them anything to eat, they eat up without comment, without nursing any feeling of approval or resentment. Only when the womenfolk sit down for their meal do they realise that something was amiss in the preparations.

The natural command over the taste-buds seen here is apparently the result of great efforts made by the *Jiva* in the past. It shows there have been attempts to conquer the sense of taste. That accounts for the natural indifference towards the taste. It is also possible to find such indifference towards other passions.

In Maharashtra, near Kolhapur, there is a pilgrim centre by name Kumbhojgiri. A Digamber Muni lives there. You will find in his life a natural fading of passions. We have lived in his satsang (good company), studied Digamber scriptures there. Once we asked him, "*Munishri*!! Don't you ever get angry?"

He replied with a smile, “Sadhviji! What is anger? I do not know at all.” People who live with this octogenarian saint have never ever seen him get angry. Such a victor of passions, this *Muniji* must have made some great efforts in his earlier life.

But what state are we in? The ill feelings rampant within us, the passions do not subside, they are always popping up. First of all we are blissfully unaware that these passions are not favourable to us. How would they prick? And when they do not prick at all, why would you think of removing them? That is why there has been no effort earlier. Had we tried sincerely, perhaps such a natural state would have appeared in us too. But now, instead of lamenting over it, let us attempt reining our passions. This restraint will generate the natural state. That which needs to be conquered with a great effort now, will in future become the state of mind.

Thus a state of mind of renunciation and detachment alone will take a *Jiva* towards realisation. Then the attachment over all passions will diminish. But one whose attention is not upon self realisation, will develop attachment and get attracted to it. He will not be alert and is bound to slip up. To get free from attachment, not alertness alone, not caution alone, but every moment of self-awareness accompanied by restraint is essential.

Let us look at an episode from Ramayana. Rama and Sita are in the forest accompanied by Lakshmana. Lakshmana is avowed to safeguard Rama. Their hut is in the forest. As the night falls, Rama and Sita retire in the hut and Lakshmana is standing guard outside, fully awake. He is avowed to total renunciation of sleep. One night, Ravana’s sister Shoorpanakha, appears before Lakshmana in the disguise of a beautiful damsel bedecked in ornaments and attractive attire. Lakshmana’s youth, physique and handsome features attract Shoorpanakha. In the seclusion of the forest, to entice the lonely handsome man, she places the indecent proposal before him.

But Lakshmana was fully alert. He had in store a wonderful strength of restraint and celibacy. As such, Shoorpanakha's overtures, her beauty and her proposal had no effect on him.

Consider this, Friends! A brave young man like Lakshmana, beauty before him and all favourable circumstances; why was he not tempted? Such arousal, such a temptation is but natural in a man of the common mould. But this man was Lakshmana. When Shoorpanakha pleaded, "Take me as your wife", Lakshmana replied, "I am a married man. My wife is in Ayodhya. I cannot accept you".

Did Lakshmana refuse in spite of a desire? No, not even in a corner of his mind did he have any desire. He sent her across to Rama. He too chased her away. She came back to Lakshmana. Her passions made her forget the limits and senses and when Lakshmana rejected her the second time too, she recoiled like a serpent and Lakshmana chopped her nose and ears and sent her packing.

Let us match this episode with our inner state. The name Lakshmana has two words - *laksha* (लक्ष) - aim and *mana* (मन) - mind. The aim of the mind should be constant alertness - to stand guard for Rama, that is the soul. Mere alertness will not do. The weapon of restraints necessary to cut down temptation. For one who does not possess it, Srimadji says -

त्याग विराग न चित्तमां, थाय न तेने ज्ञान,

Brothers! Only those who have an inner state immersed in renunciation and detachment will achieve self realisation. The first precondition for self realisation is that passions be abandoned. Selfishness be renounced, sins be renounced, then alone would self realisation occur. It is then that the *Jiva* experiences that 'I am the soul', 'I know myself', 'I recognise myself'.

After hearing this you might begin to repeat like a parrot 'I am the soul'. But mere saying so is not knowledge. It has to be experienced within, and for that renunciation and detachment are required.

So many people say that even without renunciation and detachment we are able to learn many scriptures. We are able to talk in depth about knowledge. But this is merely cerebral knowledge and the knowledge of speech. Atmajnana (self-realisation) means knowledge arising out of experience. That is, the self experiencing the Self is self-realisation.

Those *Jivas* who have found the true faith (समावृद्ध दर्शन), have done so owing to such an inner state. The *Jiva* of *Bhagawan* Mahaveer in the life of *Nayasar* experienced the *samyak darshan* while offering food to a *Muni*, while guiding him on the path. You may ask, 'This *Jiva* was a family-man, immersed in his worldly activity, where was renunciation and detachment in him? How did *he* experience true faith?' The reason was, the *Jiva* may or may not have renounced any thing externally, but his inner state was steeped in renunciation and detachment. The heart was straight-forward and pure. Dharma resides in such pure hearts. The scriptures too, say —

धम्मो सुब्बस चिद्वुड्ढ

and hence that *Jiva* experienced *Samyak Darshan*.

After telling us about the importance of renunciation and detachment, Srimadji while defining their limits, very beautifully says in the next part -

अटके त्याग विरागमां, तो भूले निजभान

What would I make out of this? Having succeeded in bringing renunciation and detachment into the life, and believing this to be the totality if one gets stuck on the note that 'I have done everything, I do not need to do anything more now', then

that one is bound to lose sight of self. The self will not be conscious of the Self. What would a person be called if he himself becomes heedless about his Self? Why, in practical life too, when we come across some shortcomings in some work we chide the person saying, 'you are absolutely mindless' or 'where is your attention?'.

This is of course, the case of attention towards the Self. Why did he forget the Self and get stuck on renunciation and detachment? When detachment arises, it has to be a step towards progress, it is not something to get stuck with.

Mahayogi Anandaghanji Maharaj has expressed through a verse —

अवधु वैराग्य बेटा जाया
 वाने खोज कुटुंब सब खाया अवधु
 जीने माया - ममता खाई
 सुख दुःख दोनों भाई
 काम क्रोध दोनों को खाई
 खाई तृष्णा माई अवधु

There exists such a belief that if a child is born in the Moola nakshatra (constellation), it becomes the cause of the entire family's destruction. Of course, today this belief would not hold much water. But there used to be times when parents would abandon a child born in Moola nakshatra. It is said that the composer of 'Ramcharitamanas' the saint Goswami Tulsidasji had also been abandoned by his parents.

Here in these verses, Anandaghanji Maharaj has equated renunciation with such a child and has tried to tell us how the inner-world (equated with family) is destroyed by it. He says -

वाने खोज कुटुंब सब खाया

Renunciation has destroyed the entire family. That is, the internal world which is the cause of all the creation in the external world, is destroyed because of renunciation. Let us try to understand this concept through the Vedic viewpoint.

According to the Vedic belief, the Creator of this Universe is Brahma, Vishnu is the Protector and Shiva is the destroyer. These three are believed to be the supreme powers and it is through these powers that the wheel of creation and destruction of this Universe is run. Thus this whole world was created by Brahma.

I would want to know, who created all our worlds? What is meant by our world? What do you believe is the world? Your possessions, wealth, sons-family, and beyond all these the spread of your relations, isn't this your world? Who created this world? You may say, 'this has been coming on always the same way'

Okay, we could broadly consider so. Yet when we look in depth, we are ourselves responsible for creating our world. The attachment and aversion and the passions lying within us are instrumental in erecting our world. We are clear on the fact according to Karma philosophy that any person, any thing that we consider our own, has in some way been connected with us earlier. That is why we are in touch with the person, or the thing. What we have got is all because of our possessive nature. What we did not get was because we were in no way connected with it. It is evident, therefore, that the passions and possessive nature residing within us evolve into the relations with persons or things.

An urge within to acquire something, results in the creation of relations. Thus, our feelings of attachment and aversion result in the creation of the external world, and we have ourselves created the internal world too. We also nourish and protect the worlds and we alone can destroy them. Hence, we have within us the powers of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh.

The more intense our feelings of attachment and aversion get, the wider the field of our attachment and aversion becomes, that is, the external world grows wide; and as the feelings of

attachment and aversion become less intense, so does the grip of the external world. The moment when restraint is achieved on attachment and aversion, *Vairagya* - renunciation is reached. It is therefore, that Anandaghanji is rejoicing over the birth of the child who destroys the family-world.

Here the reason to rejoice is the arrival of a power that can destroy the material world that is attached since ages. It now seems that the material world can indeed be got rid of. That is to say, if we put in sufficient effort then the material world has to get destroyed. Shree Prabhu elucidates upon the uncertain nature in the first verse of the eighth chapter of 'Shree Uttaradhyayan Sutra' —

अधुवे असासयमि संसारमि दुक्खपउराए ।

This world unlike the Pole Star is impermanent. Here the internal world in the form of the deviant affected disposition of the Atma has been termed impermanent. That is to say it is perishable. However may be the entire external world, we have absolutely nothing to do with it. It may remain eternal or it may even perish. We are here only for a while and will soon be gone. Hence it is not for us to bother about the entire external world. But the internal world is perishable. When the inner stage is occupied by renunciation, then alone will it get destroyed.

Whom did *Vairagya* destroy first ?

जीने माया - ममता खाई

It destroyed *Maya* - affection and *Mamata* - possessive nature. Affection and possessive nature cannot be in the same place as *Vairagya*. *Vairagya* will not reside where affection and possessive nature do. One who wants to verify on the internal *Vairagya*, the feeling of indifference, will have to go deep within and search if the possessive nature is hiding somewhere. Are you still possessed of a person or a thing? If yes then you

understand how hollow we are within, although we talk of indifference on the outward. The possessive nature has not regressed even by an iota. On the contrary, we take pride in expanding our relations with people and things. But when vairagya awakens, affection and possessive nature disappear.

The next big strike of *vairagya* was on

सुख दुःख दोनों भाई

happiness and sorrow both. न सौख्यं न दौख्यं - Neither joy nor sorrow can affect the soul. In the circumstance of a favourable cause generating happiness, the *Atma* does not experience joy and neither does it feel the sorrow in an adverse circumstance. Then what is its nature? *Sthitapragnya* - *compos mentis* - balanced nature. The Bhagawad Gita says -

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगत स्पृह ।

वीतराग भय क्रोधः स्थितिधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥

One whose mind is not perturbed, whatever may be the sorrow, who has no involvement with joy and who has conquered his attachment, fear and anger - one with such a stable intellect is called a *Muni*.

When do happiness and sorrow not bother us? When the soul has acquired stability. One who has the key to the happiness within the soul, does not have to go out in search of a reason. Normally a person becomes happy for reasons of joy and sorrowful for reasons of sorrow. We have all experienced this. But there *are* the rare jivas who rise above this and seek out the joy from within.

You might say, '*Mahasatiji*! You are taking us too deep.' But Brothers! Unless the depths are seen we cannot scale the heights. We have heard enough shop-talk. Now if the soul has to be elevated, then not only do we go deep, but deepest into the darkness within and make the tremendous effort to rise.

We need to strive from within so that the external reasons for joy and sorrow do not confound us. I have been telling you repeatedly, Brothers! To go through all this you need a tremendous effort from within. Reasons - *nimittas* - will arise aplenty. But you resolve that you will not get involved with them. Be silent in the situation, restrain yourself, look the other way and change your attitude. Then the reason - *nimitta* can do you no harm.

But these experiments makes great demands on your time, strength, alertness, restraint and caution. These are all its conditions. Only after all these are fulfilled can we free ourselves from the clutches of the 'reasons' (निमित्त).

So dear Brothers! Srimadji has explained here that this whole effort is essential for the achievement of Self realisation. But ensure that you first generate the state of mind which is full of renunciation and detachment and that beyond that point the effort has to be at a swift pace. This is not the point to straggle. The unaware *jiva* has to be made aware of the self. This calls for a tremendous effort. Of what sort, to what extent and until when?

Shraman Bhagawant Mahaveer knew at his birth, in fact, even prior to his birth that his soul would attain *Moksa* in that life (तद्भव मोक्षगामी). That all his karmas would be dissolved in this very life. He made an incessant effort for 12 years and six months. Not even for a fleeting moment did he stop the effort. In such a long span of time he slept for just a couple of hours. I would like to know of you, had the Lord slept for 12 and a half years, would he not have attained *kevaljnana* (omniscience)? Why not? He certainly would have. That was destined so he would have.

Yet, as omniscience was certain, so was the period of his efforts. That only with this definite effort would the karmas be dissolved. Hence, he did not sleep. Brothers! How long do we sleep? We are asleep always. Even when awake we are as if asleep, our self is not awake. Our spirit is totally asleep. So, the

Lord had to devote twelve and a half long years to this tremendous effort. What endurance! What capacity! What forgiveness! Since he was endowed with all these, he could make the effort and reach omniscience. Just consider! How much effort, endurance and balance is essential?

So Brothers! There is nothing happening in our inside! Do you feel anything? How can you, when you cannot even feel your own heartbeat? You will need a stethoscope to ascertain that the heart is beating. When you cannot feel the pulsation of this body made of blood and bone, how will you feel the throbbing of the spirit? To be able to feel the throbbing of the spirit, an incessant effort is necessary. This effort alone will bring you self realisation and lead you to omniscience.

The devoted effort that is essential to reach this ultimate state begins with self realisation and is fulfilled in omniscience. Here in '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' the path, that traverses the length from the effort that goes into achieving self realisation unto the penance that is required for attaining omniscience, has been illuminated.

What hence forth will be our duty, will be outlined next.

The Soul Seekers here . . .

The devotion in the three-fold path becomes possible only when the *Jiva*, treading the path of Dharma, frees himself from the net of compulsions of theories; becomes eager to absorb what the sages have to say and makes the practice, of what the sages have said, the goal of his life.

Until now in the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' four gathas were devoted to elucidate that the vehement beliefs of the ritualists and the wizened wise are not practical for the *jiva*, not effective for attaining liberation. Now summarising the topic, Srimadji picks up the excellent principle of prudence, the ability to discriminate -(विवेक) and says -

ज्यां ज्यां जे जे योग्य छे, तहां समजवुं तेह,
त्यां त्यां ते ते आचरे, आत्मार्थी जन एह ८

There is a great truth hidden in the first line of the *gatha*. What is the addition to the responsibility of a *jiva* striving to achieve self realisation? He has to determine whether all the principles and essences of the entire world are apt or inapt. But the discerning ability arises by itself within one who is determined to achieve the uplift of the soul, and who is eager to renunciate everything. One who has become endowed with that faculty, call it a curious state or the search for *Moksa*; such a competent person alone is capable of thinking on this topic. Then comes the inner-acumen and this inner acumen awakens the analytical tendency in him.

Such a seeker may not have reached the fulfilment of the process of enriching the soul, yet owing to his presence in a state of study, discounts the detrimental and absorbs the advantageous reasons, for the good path and the growth of the virtues of the soul.

This ability to impartially differentiate between the detrimental and the advantageous is prudence. Prudence helps

you separate the good from the bad and shows them in proper light. It separates the aspects that are worth emulating from those that are not, and explains their true nature.

You may have heard of the (क्षीर नीर विवेक) 'Milk-Water Prudence'. When you place milk mixed with water before a Swan, it splits the two, that is, it drinks up only milk and water remains as residue. This is made possible by the sourness in its beak, the Swan really does not do it intentionally. There is sourness in milk too, which the Swan manages to attract. Thus milk and water get split. In literary parlance this gets termed as 'Milk-Water Prudence'.

Among the great men who have left a mark on the history of India, several have been decorated with the epithet 'Paramahamsa' (परमहंस). Especially among them, Ramakrishnadev who lived in Bengal, was more popularly known as Paramahamsa. The moment you say Paramahamsa, the image we visualise is that of Ramakrishnadev.

What is 'Paramahamsa' (Greatest Swan)? Swan's job is to separate milk from water. One who is the greatest Swan will also be doing something similar yet of a greater calibre. The Swan may just be prudent, but the greatest Swan will be the greatest prudent. Paramahamsa recognises the perishability of the Karma which mixes with the soul to pollutes the entire universe and rejects them impartially like water without any essence. He absorbs rather attains the great energetic Soul that is like the milk. Just like the milk and water, he manages to separate the Soul and the Body that have been living together and appearing as one from time immemorial.

One who after realising this difference, experiences the soul, after experiencing the soul stabilises in it, and after stabilising there gets engrossed with it, is paramahamsa. Whatever may be the religion, path, sect that one may be following, so long as one has experienced the separate entity of the body and the soul and has got engrossed in it, one is 'paramahamsa'.

To reach the category of paramahansa, the point where we begin is exercising prudence of what is good and where. This prudence has been explained in very clear terms by *Shri Sharyambhavasuri* in his '*Dashavaikalika Sutra*' (दशवैकालिक सूत्र) in the form of a question-answer session between a *guru* - teacher (गुरु) and a *shishya* - student (शिष्य).

The student asked -

कहं चरे, कहं चिट्ठे, कह मासे, कहं सए ।

कह भुज्जन्तो, भासन्तो, पावकम्मं न बय्यइ ॥

O *Gurudev*! If you say every activity in life binds me in some Karma, then how do I walk, how do I stand, sit, eat or talk in such a way as to escape getting bound in some *papa* karma?

Gurudev answered -

जयं चरे, जयं चिट्ठे, जय मासे, जयं सए ।

जयं भुज्जन्तो, भासन्तो, पावकम्मं न बय्यइ ॥

All the questions can be answered in one word! Prudence. Wherever there is life, it will entail all the related activities. Yet when they are carried out with prudence, the *jiva* will not incur *papa bandha* or negative karma. Hence, the entire life has to be led with prudence. Life without prudence is not life. Walking, standing, sitting, eating or talking are activities which nobody can do without. But we believe all these should happen.

But Brothers! This is only a broad consideration of prudence which is limited to the aspect of physical compassion (द्रव्य दया). As a result of observing this the *jiva* manages to reach only upto the stage of (यथाप्रवृत्ति करण) *yathapravrtti karan*, which it has done several times earlier. But to attain the natural disposition of the soul (स्वभाव), the essential (अनिवृत्ति करण) *anivrtti karan* can be attained only through (भाव दया) compassion in thought, which in turn is a finer internal form of prudence. But how do we understand (भाव दया) compassion in thought? In performing every bodily action, which is powered by the pulsation of life within, be it eating, drinking, standing or sitting, let this thought flow in you 'I am

the soul - independent of the body', so that the compassion in thought is strengthened.

If broad application of prudence strengthens physical compassion, then finer internal prudence strengthens compassion in thought. Thus an all round prudence awakens. That is the qualification of a seeker of *Moksa*. So a *jiva* should first assess his own qualification. Giving due consideration to his own taste, interest and capability, he should decide what and how much he can do on the path of devoted practice, and then do it.

To win over the internal tendencies, should outward renunciation be deemed necessary, then that should be done. Should the ability to exercise restraint over internal tendencies even without external renunciation, be developed then internal restraint be exercised.

For the elevation of the soul, three paths have been indicated - the path of enlightenment, the path of devotion and the path of karma. Of these three, one may follow any one path that leads to the improvement of the soul. That is to say, it will be necessary to make a choice of a suitable path keeping in consideration the level of internal improvement, the progress, the storage of feelings. It is necessary to judiciously ascertain as to which path leads to welfare. The situation is not the same for all *jivas*. For some the path of devotion might help progress, others might find it on the path of enlightenment while yet others might progress on the path of Karma. The judicious choice is to be made by one self.

When the *jiva* reaches far ahead on any one of these paths, then all these three paths dissolve into one in his practice. At the end, the unification of these three paths itself offers the result of *Moksa*.

Srimadji has said in his letters (Srimad Rajachandra Vachnanmrut 25:8), that it is essential for a *jiva* to analyse between appropriate - inappropriate, in another way too. Keeping in view the human mind he asks why has the *Bhagawant* who

laid down the scriptures, propounded four different *anuyogas* (अनुयोग)? Since all the stages of progress, from the beginning to the highest, are based on the premise of *syadvada* (स्याद्वाद), all the *jivas*, depending on the level of their progress can draw inspiration, with the assistance of their learning, from these *Anuyogas* (अनुयोग).

Earlier when we discussed the greatness of the sermons of the *Jineshwar*, it had been mentioned that the sermons were classified into four categories on the basis of their content, namely -

1. *Dravyanuyoga*
2. *Charanakarananuyoga*
3. *Dharmakathanuyoga*
4. *Ganitanuyoga*

Dravyanuyoga - in which the various substances including *jivas* have been analysed. The substance, characteristics and variant forms of *Jiva* (जीव) and *ajiva* (अजीव). Going further, the repercussions of the natural and the deviant variances and the like have been dealt with in this *anuyoga*.

Charanakarananuyoga - in which the principles and practice suited to the lives of both *Sadhhus* (saints) and *Shravaks* (householders) have been analysed. This *anuyoga* details the 5 *Mahavratas*, 5 *Samitis* and 3 *Guptis* of the *Sadhhus* and the 12 vows of the *Shravaks*.

Dharmakathanuyoga - This *anuyoga* relates the life-stories of those *jivas* who attained *siddhi* through devoted practice and of those who continue to wander in the universe due to their sins.

Ganitanuyoga - This *anuyoga* describes the three parts of the Universe, various dimensions of Geography and Astronomy, the calculations, the numbers etc.

The reason why four such *anuyogas* were formulated was the human mind! Every human differs from the other in taste, interests, thinking, status. These *anuyogas* prove useful in turns for the mind in its varied states.

Srimadji says, if mind has become doubtful, then it is advisable to study *Dravyanuyoga*. Having doubts is natural in humans. The mind particularly hesitates in placing faith in indirect principles as compared to direct ones. That is why, mind doubts the veracity of the teachings of the Omniscient. Even the omniscience of the Omniscient is not believed. In the same way, the mind begins to very much doubt such statements of *Niscaya Naya* (निश्चय नय) as “I am the Soul” or “Am apart from the material world”. When such a quandary about one’s own existence and the dynamics of the world bothers the mind, and if there is no opportunity to seek the company of a great sage, when there is no likelihood of the doubt getting solved, a self-study of *Dravyanuyoga*, (which proves the independent existence of the soul and the inanimate substances, which dwells upon the ephemeral nature of the relation arising out of the *sanyog swabhava*), resolves the self about the self. ‘I am the soul and am indestructible, am a pure substance for eternity, can awaken the supreme soul element in lying within’; such a strong belief arises out of this self-study. The mind becomes free of doubts and begins to frolic in an unwavering faith.

If the mind has become indifferent, then it is advisable to study the *Dharmakathanuyoga*. Here indifference is to be understood in two ways. Brothers! In common parlance one who does not like to do anything and lies about lazily is called indifferent. Such a person has no regard for worldly activity and at the same time has a dislike for religious activity - vows - observances. In spite of being physically and mentally capable, the extreme indifference for religious duties keeps him from doing anything.

The other sense of indifference is forgetting the Self. Very short yet a very meaningful definition indeed. The moments wherein we forget the soul, are the moments of indifference. How many moments do you forget the soul? Ah! You never

remember the soul! Then where is the question of forgetting it? You are unaware that “I am the Soul”. That means, you are constantly in a state of having forgotten the Soul; since you are living in a state of forgetting the Self, you are indifferent. You may well be active physically and mentally, but if you are not living with a regard for the Soul, then it is all indifference.

To get rid of such indifference, Srimadji has ordered a self-study of *Charankaranamanuyoga*. The vows, observances, activities, the aspects of external character and the ways to express the internal character detailed therein if understood, assimilated and brought into action, then the state of indifference can be overcome.

The days of observances mentioned in our tradition, namely the second, fifth, eighth, eleventh and the fifteenth day of the lunar months were also devised by our *Acharyas* for this purpose. A *jiva* is inspired to observe vows and *pratyakhyan* on those days too, and in doing so progresses in the feeling of *virati bhava* - detachment and can achieve the *apramatta bhava* in totality.

In the order of *Gunasthanas*, the fifth-sixth place is taken by *Virati bhava*, and then the seventh *gunasthana* is held by *apramatta bhava*. Until the *virati bhava* awakens in totality, the *jiva* does not reach the totally *apramada* state. Hence, for a *jiva*, vows and *pratyakhyan* are very necessary. One who protests against vows and *pratyakhyan* should understand that unless the *virati bhava* arises to put an end to involvement, the *jiva* cannot proceed in the direction of progress of the soul. Hence whether a householder *sadhaka* or an ascetic *sadhaka*, it is imperative for both to eliminate indifference - *pramada* through the self-study of *charanakaranamanuyoga*.

If the mind has become passionate, then it is advisable to study the *Dharmakathanuyoga*. Anger, pride, attachment and aversion keep rising in a *jiva* time and again. Sometimes these passions subside immediately, while at others, they stay long. A *jiva* constantly experiencing the *kashaya bhava* - passionate

feelings, binds himself in severe karma. If this bondage is to be avoided, if the fear of the bondage of rebirth has arisen within you, then you should free yourself from the passionate feelings at the earliest. But these feelings can be knocked down only if you have a strong device in hand.

That device is *Dharmakatha*. *Katha* - a tale, a narrative indeed, not the sort that deviates the mind, but the sort that subsides the passions. Hence, here we say *Dharmakatha* - religious lore. Brothers! In other kinds of tales, the *jiva* has a great interest and there are not one but many devices to satisfy that interest. With such devices you feed this interest throughout the day and taint the *jiva* with the internal passions. As a result the passionate mind becomes more polluted. Hence, this device of *Dharmakatha* to clean-up the soot of passions.

These tales, based on the true lives of *jivas* who happened before, tell us how excellent their lives were as they lived in a passion-free natural state - *swabhava* and how they derived excellent results. At the same time they also tell us about passionate *jivas* living in an affected state and how their ignoble behaviour made them struggle in this world. Here in the *Kathanuyoga* if there are the tales of Gautam and Abhaykumar, there are also the tales of Goshala and Kalasuriya, the butcher.

Thus *Dharmakathanuyoga* succeeds in inspiring the freedom from passions and as a result the *jiva* chooses passion-free thoughts.

The mind sometimes becomes so inactive that all the three *anuyogas* mentioned so far have no effect on it. To such *jivas* Srimadji says, if mind has become inactive, then it is advisable to study the *Ganitanuyoga*. *Ganita* - mathematics is such a thing that can revive a mind, whatever its state of inactivity. The reason is the concentration required to work on mathematics. You must have experienced it every day. As the day ends, you have to tie up the cash-book and the day-book; how engrossed you become! Mathematics, at the same time, demands a sharp intellect. Only

those with a sharp intellect can delve deep into mathematics. Hence, to activate the inactive mind it is essential to study the calculations of the infinite number of island-oceans, the measure of the *loka-aloka* - universe - and so on.

Thus, we have been told of where and what is ideal to do in the varying states of the mind. The *jiva* has to analyse its own state of mind and decide what is appropriate to do. Not only that, it is also necessary for us to know what is *jneya* - worthy of knowing, *heya* - worth discarding and *upadeya* - worth following.

The Jain tradition approves of nine elements. Let us analyse which of those are *jneya*, *heya* and *upadeya*. But first the names of those nine elements - *jiva*, *ajiva*, *punya*, *papa*, *asrava*, *sanvar*, *nirjara*, *bandha* and *Moksa*.

Among these *jiva* and *ajiva* are worth knowing. The characteristics, the divisions, the sub-divisions of both are worth knowing. *papa*, *asrava* and *bandha* - all these three are worth discarding. That *papa* is not worth doing is known to all of us. *Asrava* is the inflow of Karma into *Atma* and *bandha* binds this incoming karma to *atma*. Thus all the three are worth discarding. *Sanvar*, *nirjara* and *Moksa* are all worthy of respect. *Sanvar* can stop the inflow of Karma. With *nirjara* the rule of karma gets dissolved and *Moksa* enables the *atma* to attain eternal liberation. Since all these three have *atma* as their goal, they are certainly worth following. Now we are left with one element! Which one? *Punya*!

Where would you categorise *Punya*? Under *heya*, *jneya* or *upadeya*? It can fit into all the three. *Punya* is worth knowing, having known, worth following and after that worth discarding. We all well know the qualities of knowing and following, but how can *punya* be called worth discarding? How can the same element have all three qualities?

Here we need a very wide consideration. Where a *jiva* is immersed in the worldly affairs, and his routine activities of mind,

word and thought are all engulfed by *papa*; such a *jiva* has been ordered to perform *punya* to escape the *papa*. Secondly, the conducive environment necessary for a *jiva*'s progress on the path of *sadhana*, will not be available without *punya*. Hence, there too performing *punya* is not only necessary for a *jiva*, it is also imperative.

The supreme soul - *Tirthankar* is endowed with the capability of saving so many souls by virtue of the *Tirthankar Nama karma* and this karma is in the form of a very strong *Punya*. Thus, for a *jiva* on the path of self improvement, the strength of *Punya* also comes in handy alongside spiritual results. Hence, *punya* is worth following.

But for attaining *Moksa*, the total obliteration of all Karma is expected. There, along with *Papa* karma, the *punya* karma also needs to be destroyed. Only then will the *atma* be totally pure. But then no efforts are necessary to give up *punya*. In fact, the ordinary *jiva* has no such prescription. For him *punya* is certainly worth following. But when the *jiva*, in the ascent of self-progress, passes beyond the eighth *gunasthana*, the level of *nirjara* becomes very high and *punya* too starts getting dissolved. As a result *punya* is naturally given up and the new *bandha* of *punya* is also gradually stopped. In this view, *punya* has been named as worth discarding.

Thus, understanding what is suitable where, -

त्यां त्यां ते ते आचरे, आत्मार्षी जन एह ।

one who follows it as indicated, will have activated the process of self-realisation.

In addition, it is also appropriate to identify a proper teacher - a *Sadguru*. With this understanding, one in search of self-realisation must begin the search for a *guru*. It is proper to serve at the feet of a *guru*; one should do it. With what and how that is done, is a topic for another chapter.

Serving at the feet of a Sadguru

The pursuit of the three-fold path demands a spirit of total dedication. Not unless a *jiva* develops dedication towards the three elements - *sudeva*, *suguru* and *sudharma*, will he be able to perform proper devotion. Dedication arises only when the ego is demolished. The *jiva* has always been proud of whichever species he was born into and of whatever he got there. The animals and birds too are proud of the strengths they possess. This has been the habit of the *jiva* from infinity. This thing - ego, demands a lot of thought.

When broadly considered, (the question arises as to) what is an egoistic *jiva* nurturing an ego about? The *jiva* might be proud of the authority, the wealth or the power obtained in the material field. If he turns to the field of religion, he may feel proud of the few religious activities and rituals he has learnt. If he manages to acquire some rudimentary knowledge of the scriptures, then he will be proud of it. Thus in the material world, the *jiva* feels proud that - I am something and I have achieved something, and if I can achieve something it is because of my intellectual-abilities and I have achieved it with my own virtues.

But, in spite of having achieved all these so many times over, there is no deliverance for the *jiva*. Not only in the material field, but in the religious field too, the *jiva* has achieved all that there is to achieve, so many times, yet this has not helped the *jiva* in reducing even a single birth and as a result, the *jiva* continues to wander.

Whatever the achievements in the religious field, they will be beneficial for the *atma* only when total dedication awakens towards *sudeva*, *suguru* and *sudharma*. Otherwise, they are simply means to achieve external fame, reputation or accolades. Perhaps they will fetch fame and respect in a group of people, but without dedication the *atma* will not be benefited even a single percent.

Hence, in the following *gatha*, Srimadji tell us what is possible to achieve, for a *jiva*, with total dedication at the feet of a *Sadguru* -

सेवे सदगुरुचरणने, त्यागी दई निजपक्ष,
पामे ते परमार्थने, निजपदनो ले लक्ष ९

Here, what is to be done, how is it to be done and what will be the result of doing it - these three aspects have been mentioned.

Firstly, to serve at the feet of the *Sadguru*, one should dedicate oneself to his feet. And how?

त्यागी दई निजपक्ष

. leaving aside one's own beliefs, notions and obstinacy. What is the result then? Srimadji says : You will achieve the path to the Soul's salvation and the attention is directed towards the self. Here the term *nijapada* refers to the *svarupa* that is the true form of the self.

So now, firstly serving at the feet of the *Sadguru*. What do we mean by serving? Simply sitting at his feet? Or holding on to his feet while simply sitting there? No. Disciple is one who is humble; a discourteous, arrogant person cannot be a disciple. Once having accepted a great man, a holy person as the *Guru*, if there is lack of humility then disciple-hood does not arise. Disciple-hood has to arise from within. Just because somebody tells another that you are my guru and I am your disciple, he does not become one. What is required is total humility, total respect, total dedication at the feet of the *Guru*. His orders are to be obeyed to the last letter.

The *Acharanga Sutra* says :

आणाए धम्मो, आणाए तवो

and the *Uttarayana Sutra* says :

आणानिहेस करे

That is to say, 'Order itself is *dharma* and order itself is penance'. There cannot be any *dharma* other than this for a disciple. If an humble disciple were to be asked, 'What is your *dharma*?', he would not say, 'My *dharma* is observance of Mahavrata, five samitis and three guptis'. He would simply say, 'Living in the *Gurukul*, allowing the order of the *Guru* to percolate down to my every pore - that is my *dharma*'.

How does a respectful disciple take the order of his *Guru*? This has been very well conveyed in the next part of the same *sutra* -

इगियागार संपन्ने

A respectful disciple is one who understands the feelings of his *Guru* with merely an indication. The *Guru* does not have to say 'Do this' or 'Don't do that'. Going one step further, a good disciple doesn't even need that mere indication. He understands from the expressions of his *Guru*'s eyes. Eyes are said to mirror the inner feelings. A disciple ought to understand the psyche of the *Guru*. In fact, only if the disciple has this knowledge can he become a disciple, not otherwise. The *Guru* always knows the mind of his disciple, but the disciple will be acknowledged so, only after he develops the ability to read the *Guru*'s mind, not until then. Only those, who like to remain as servants at the feet of the *Guru*, not just as servant, but as servant of servants, will be able to serve at the feet of the *Sadguru*.

The scripture goes one step further and says -

गुरुण-मुव वाय कारए

That disciple will reside close to the *Guru*. Close does not mean only next to the *Guru* always. There could be a distance, even thousands of miles, but a true disciple will be one who can make a place for himself in the heart of the *Guru*. For a disciple to have a place for his *Guru* in his heart is no novelty. Only when the disciple places the *Guru* at the throne of his heart, will he be able to generate the feeling of respect towards the *Guru*.

But a disciple should live in such a way, in such simplicity, in a child-like innocence, that will find him a place in the heart of the *Guru*.

I do not refer to any period from the epics, but to this very age; to Ramakrishna Paramhansa, who had struck a fine balance of the Soul and the Supreme. The commitment, the dedication and the ethereal devotion that had arisen out of this dedication towards that Great Swan (Paramhansa) was personified as Swami Vivekananda. He had not yet become a *Swami* then, he was just a Collegian. But he had accepted the disciple-hood of Paramhansa. His name then was Narendra.

Whenever Narendra came to Ramakrishnadev, the latter would experience a state of bliss within him. Every pore of his would overflow with the exuberance. Narendra had gone to him with a wonderful curiosity, and had said -

“Have you beheld - experienced the Lord? Then get me that experience. I shall accept as my Guru, only that person who will be able to get me to behold my Lord.”

How could he say this? It was not his arrogance but the ability that lay within him that prompted him to say so. And Ramakrishnadev also took him up on his words and challenged him -

“You come to me, and I shall get you the experience”.

Subsequently, Narendra went to Ramakrishnadev for about a fortnight, and upon seeing him the latter would experience a strange inner bliss. It is noted in his biography, that sometimes Narendra’s coming would send Ramakrishna into a trance (*samadhi*). The pure thoughts in Narendra’s mind were rubbing off on Ramakrishna. As a result Narendra had made for himself an unparalleled and unshakeable place in the heart of Ramakrishnadev. Whenever Narendra delayed his visit by three-four days, Ramakrishna would be terribly upset and perturbed.

He would go out of his temple and shout - 'Narendra, Come! Narendra, Come'.

This is not attachment, never mistake this for attachment. Sometimes the ability of a disciple makes such an impression on the mind of the *Guru*, that the latter feels that his penance is progressing with the co-operation of his disciple. Just as under the benefaction of the *Guru* and with his help, a disciple finds his development, a *Guru* too can find his progress with the help of his disciple. And that is what happened. Ramakrishna Paramhansa's name became widespread because of Vivekananda and Vivekananda's stature grew with *Guru* Ramakrishna.

I shall cite another such name. Our Late *Gurudev Saurashtra Kesari Balabrahmachari Pujya Pranlalji Maharajsaheb*. Such an ideal disciple he was! His *Gurudev* was *Pujya Jaichandraji Maharajsaheb*. Pranlalji Maharaj's respect, the humility, the temperance, the willingness to serve and above all the unflinching dedication towards his *Guru* were exemplary and had found him a place in the heart of his *Guru*. This is indeed very rare. Often, even the *Guru-Shishya* are bound by the attachment. The *Guru* is attached to the *Shishya* and vice versa, and so they go on.

But such ideal souls are rare, whose simplicity, innocence and dedication get hold of the *Guru's* heart. Thus, इंगियामार संपन्ने - the disciple understanding the feelings of the *Guru* at the mere indication, resides close to the *Guru*; perhaps not physically, might even be thousands of miles away, yet the *Guru* feels, 'My disciple is with me here' and the disciple too feels, 'The blessings from deep within my *Guru* are being showered upon me'. For progress on the path of devotion this is very much essential. This is not a mere relation of *Guru-Shishya* (Preceptor - Disciple). It is nothing to do with the sort of relations which the worldly beings have. These are links of *sadhana*, means that support *Sadhana*. Hence, Srimadji too has said here -

सेवे सदगुरुचरणे, त्यागी दई निजपक्ष

He has placed a pre-condition. Whenever Srimadji makes such statements, he puts the condition first. O Brother! It isn't that you will get everything just by itself. This isn't like a morsel in your hand. It is a star in the sky! The morsel in hand easily gets to your mouth, but does the Star? Try reaching for it, only then you will realise how difficult it is.

Srimadji has placed the condition, that no doubt you serve at the feet of the *Sadguru*, but 'त्यागी दई निजपक्ष'! Give up your own beliefs, obstinacy, laxity, and then offer yourself at the feet of your *Guru*. If you insist upon, 'living as per my desire, my thoughts, my beliefs' you will not be benefited. How can you, when you salute the *Guru*, not once, not thrice but 108 times and yet insist on your own bullheadedness?

For achieving progress, you have to give up your attitude of trying to push your delusions such as 'my path alone leads to liberation', 'only the religious rituals that I perform can lead to moksa'. And for this reason you have to search for and identify a *Sadguru*.

Search - research goes on aplenty. But of what? Of the inanimate world. Science has forged far ahead. It has discovered so many things. It has broken down every inanimate thing and measured it up. It has harnessed the powers that reside within such things. It has even put those powers to use in day-to-day life. You read in the magazines daily and are pleased that science has taken great strides and has offered you new gadgets. Aha! What progress! Calculators! Computers! Press a button and your accounts are ready! No need to bother your brain about remembering anything. Just feed the computer, press the button and lo! It is recorded! You get flattered seeing all this. Aha! My elders never had all this and look what all we have!

But have you ever thought that these gadgets dull your brains? Brain-power is honed only with use, and loses its edge

with disuse. Don't you feel that such gadgets destroy the power of the humans?

What our elders could calculate orally, today a student of Commerce takes a pen and paper to do. Ask him! Does he know how much 25 times 25 makes? He wouldn't be able to say. But ask the old-timers to calculate anything, and they will do it quickly, sometimes even faster than a computer. For they have a strong foundation in their tables assigned to their memory. Today we cannot do the same thing because our wits have dulled. Whatever inventions have come in, have brought down the power of man, destroyed him to that extent. Were we not competent otherwise? We can really do without any of those gadgets. The power and capability within us is enough to know the entire universe.

Coming back, the point was that we are proud over the scientific gadgets that we have got. But for our self, for our soul have we done any research? Does the expert, deeply interested in the research of the inanimate, ever go to a saint and ask him, 'O *Bhagwant!* Where should I look to find my own soul?' But Brothers! When does this question arise? Only when the realisation dawns that some search is necessary for the Soul too. Only the one who seeks self-realisation, who is now afraid of this life, who is disturbed by the thought of roaming the universe, tries to find something for the Soul.

Is the search really necessary? Let us examine that in Srimadji's own words -

बीजुं कशुं मा शोध केवळ, शोध तुं सत्पुरुषने;
अर्पाई जा तेना चरणमां, सर्वथा शुद्धतर मने।
राजी रहे तेनी रजा सर्वस्व सत्य प्रमाणीने;
पछी मोक्ष जो तुज ना मले तो मागजे मारी कने॥

If there is anything that is fit for search in this Universe, it is a *Satpurush - Sadguru*. There is nothing else that warrants a search. For all other search, other than this, can only be in the

field of the inanimate. And what is there in the inanimate that calls for a search? This whole world is a group of atoms. Some atoms might be clubbed this way and others in some other way. Nothing otherwise, so what is there to search? If at all you want to go in for some research for yourself, for the Self, then just go in search of a *Satpurush*. *Satpurush* is one who has found the sat - the truth within himself. He has experienced the truth - *atma* - himself and is capable of making others experience it. Find such a *Satpurush*.

After finding such a *Satpurush* -

अर्पाई जा तेना चरणमां, सर्वथा शुद्धतर मने।

Make your mind absolutely clean, cleanest and then dedicate yourself. Your feelings should be so clean that they should not be carry even a trace of the dirt of avarice-artifice. There should be no veil in between. Where there is a veil, there cannot be true love, true dedication.

Anandaghanji *Maharaj* has also said -

कपट रहित थई आत्म अरपणा रे

Go to the feet of the Lord without deceit, offer yourself at the feet of the *Guru*. Open yourself up, to the *Guru*, just as you are. Your tendencies, your change of thoughts, your school of thought, open it up before the *Guru* just as they are.

And then -

राजी रहे तेनी रजा सर्वस्व सत्य प्रमाणीने;

The *Gurudev*'s desire alone is my life. His happiness alone is my success. When total dedication appears, then there is no vanity left within the self. Not just that, all the activities of mind, body and speech are governed by the desire of the one to whom one is dedicated. For there is now the firm conviction that, 'he alone, in whose feet I am resigned, is the totality for me. His

word is the ruling for me'. Hence, the question of any doubt arising does not remain. Then the need to make any conscious effort to please the *Gurudev* ceases to exist. The life of a dedicated disciple naturally flows in such a way, that every deed of his leads to more happiness in his *Guru*. Then for him, *Moksa* does not remain very far off. Hence, Srimadji tells the disciple who is dedicated to his *Guru* -

पछी मोक्ष जो तुज ना मले तो मागजे मारी कने॥

These words carry a deep meaning. Srimadji says you have found the *Satpurush*; the feeling of total dedication has also awakened; every moment of your activity is pleasing the *Gurudev*; there is unflinching faith in the *Guru*; now if you do not attain *Moksa*, then come to me. I shall give you *Moksa*.

Is *Moksa* something you can give? Then why has he said so? What he means is after you have done all this, attaining *Moksa* is a certainty, there is no scope for doubt.

To this end he has also said -

सेवे सद्गुरुचरणने, त्यागी दई निजपक्ष

Giving up one's own beliefs, notions and obstinacy, if one serves at the feet of the *Sadguru*, the good fruit is achieved immediately. What is the achievement? 'Supreme Goal' - *paramartha* - *param artha* - the highest intention, goal, target that is achieved. If, in this entire Universe, there is any highest goal, then it is *Moksa*. *Moksa* itself is the Supreme Goal. So far, all the goals that a *jiva* has pursued in this world have been immersed in worldly, materialistic desires and have led only to the increase of the sphere. When an effort is made to rise above the mundane worldly feelings and to pursue the means towards the goal of Soul, that will be true *paramartha*. And while living in the interest - thought - devotion of this *paramartha*, one should pursue the goal of the Self - निजपदने ले लक्ष.

Nija pada means the precious natural disposition - *svarupa* - of oneself. 'I am the Soul', 'I am in the form of *sat-chid-ananda*', 'I am the eternal unhindered unflawed substance' - this goal of the natural self - *svarupa* - arises in the *jiva*.

Brothers! How fruitful is the refuge at the feet of the *Sadguru*! You get what you could never ever find anywhere else. In another poem of his, Srimadji has expressed this same idea in greater detail -

बिना नयन पावे नहीं, बिना नयन की बात;
सेवे सद्गुरु के चरण, सो पावे साक्षात्,
बुझी चहत जो प्यास को, है बुझानकी रीत;
पावे नहीं गुरुगम बिना, एह अनादि स्थित ।

What is this बिना नयन की बात - the matter where eyes have no role to play? That experience which cannot be gained through the senses, which is beyond the senses - the experience of the Self - is the matter where eyes are not required. Our bodily eyes can see everything tangible - corporeal - in this world, but the intangible - incorporeal - soul is not visible to the eyes. What does one do if one has to see the soul, has to know it ? To see the intangible Soul one needs intangible eyesight. In other words, the inner eyes have to be opened. The opening of the inner sight, the intense perseverance to achieve the state of self-realisation alone can make one experience the Soul. But who drives you to this desire? One who has himself gone through the experience. Hence go, seek refuge at the feet of a *Satpurush* who has experienced the Soul, and you will personally achieve the Soul!

A *sadhaka* soul, who has not accepted the presence of the stream of supreme bliss that flows from the soul, and as such is experiencing a scalding thirst for it, is intensely perturbed over it; the *sadhaka* soul yearning for an audience - *darshana* - with, for the presence of a *Satpurush* who is immersed in the flow of *paramananda*; the *sadhaka* soul tormented by the doubling thirst,

will easily get refuge with a *Satpurush* and the thirst will be quenched.

Whoever achieved this supreme bliss in the past has done so in the same way. No one has ever been able to achieve the *atmananda*, pursuing his own ideology. There is just one refuge and that is at the Guru's feet! The refuge at the feet of the *Satpurush* alone has rescued jivas in the eternal past, is doing so in the present and so will it in the future.

Whether you look into the entire literature of Srimadji or that of Sant Kabir, here-there everywhere the *Sadguru* has been given importance. All saints have in one voice accepted the refuge of the *Sadguru*. There can be no progress on the path of devotion without a *Sadguru*.

Why, the best of brains, intellect, knowledge and understanding that one may have, all these strengths come to a naught without the grace of a *Guru*! Hence, this point is stressed upon repeatedly.

Srimadji has said - seek refuge with and serve the *Sadguru*, give up your own ideology and do not be obstinate, only then will you be able to achieve the supreme goal - *paramartha* - and the yearning for self-realisation will be awakened.

How and on the basis of what qualities, a *sadhaka* who has embarked upon the search of a *Sadguru*, identifies him, is the topic for another chapter.

Qualities of an ideal Sadguru

Purification of the Soul is not possible without the pursuit of the three-fold path. A guide is very much essential while following the path of soul-purification. How can one find a way without a guide?

The path of worldly life needs no search and the path to *Moksa* is never found without a search. The worldly path is very easy to follow. The *jiva* has knowingly-unknowingly, owing to his *papa*-karma, the sinful acts, has roamed the lowest of the lower worlds, and on account of his *punya*-karma been born several times as a human or super-human. He is roaming even now and will be doing so in future.

The path of uplifting the Soul is very difficult to find. The light, that illuminates the effort which leads one away from the *chaturgati* - the four levels of life - onto the *panchamagati* - the fifth level of existence is difficult to find. Without it, man keeps fumbling in the darkness. That lamp is *Sadgurudev* - *Sadguru* is the lamp that will illuminate your path. Kabir has also said -

पीछे लागा जाय था, लोक वेद के साथ,
आगे से सदगुरु मिल्या, दीपक दिया हाथ ।

He says - My life was being frittered away in the beliefs handed down by the scriptures and the traditions. But I found a *Sadguru* and he dispelled the darkness of my ignorance. He brought me into the light of my Soul.

How Kabir found his *guru* and what he had to do to get him is a very interesting tale.

It is said about Kabir's life, that he was born to a widow Brahmin woman. Fearing public outcry, he was abandoned on a lake shore. About the same time a Muslim couple by names Niru and Nima were passing by and happened to notice the innocent child. They had no issues. They carried the child home and began

taking care of it. A child grows into the faith and calling of his home. Niru - Nima were Muslims and weavers by occupation. Hence, Kabir too was named a Muslim. Since he was a weaver, he was considered to be of a low caste.

Whatever one's caste or calling, the dormant nature of the Soul is bound to wake up someday. Kabir too was drawn towards the intrigue of the Soul, but the lack of a guide kept him away from the true path. He was yearning for a *Guru*, but in those days being a *Guru* to a low caste child carried a stigma. Hence, nobody was willing to accept him as a disciple.

Kabir came up with a solution. A great accomplished saint by name 'Swami Ramanand' was his contemporary. He would visit the embankment of river Ganga early morning everyday. Kabir knew about this. One fine morning, very early when it was still dark, he went to the embankment and lay down on one of the steps that led to the river. Ramanand was returning after his ablutions. As he was climbing the steps, he stepped on Kabir and happened to say 'Ram, Ram' at that very moment. Kabir absorbed it. Kabir decided, that the one who had touched him with his feet, and in doing so had offered him disciple-hood through touch, was to be his *Guru* and the words that he had uttered at that precious moment were to be his *mantra* - key.

Kabir, for the rest of his life, looked upon Swami Ramanandji as his *Guru*, and took the name of 'Ram' as his mantra for penance. With a total dedication he worshipped his Sadguru, akin to Eklavya. And not just that! He has composed ballads in appreciation of the endless favours received from his *Guru*. He says -

सत् गुरु की महिमा अनंत, अनंत किया उपकार,
लोचन अनंत उघाडिया, अनंत दिखावणहार ।

Just as Kabir found a Sadguru who showed him the path to eternity and devoted himself at the Guru's feet, we too will have to find a *Sadguru* who will guide us on the path of upliftment of

the soul. How should a *Sadguru* be? Whom should we accept in the form of a *Sadguru*? Srimadji says while pointing out the characteristics of a *Sadguru* -

आत्मज्ञान समदर्शिता, विचरे उदयप्रयोग,
अपूर्व वाणी परमश्रुत, सदगुरु लक्षण योग्य १०

Atmajnana (knowledge of the self), *Samadarshita* (total equanimity), *Udayprayoge Vicharan* (stoical ability to avoid further addition of Karma), *Apoorva Vani* (unparalleled speech) and *Paramshrutata* (deep knowledge of all systems of philosophy) - one who is bestowed with all these five qualities is a *Sadguru*.

The first quality is *atamajnana*. One who has experienced the Self, who has experienced the Soul and at the same time harbours the clear and firm understanding that excepting the soul all other substances are separate from him; one who is conscious that - I do not belong to the body, my natural disposition is formless, of eternal bliss; one who is always aware that - attachment to any thing or person is not my nature, I am totally devoid of any attachment - such a person is *Atmajnani* - knowing the Self, who has experienced the soul.

In fact, the *jiva* does not prefer any attachment. We have all heard and expressed so often that a *jiva* comes in alone and goes away alone. Yet does not live alone. If, for some reason a person is left alone, his life becomes unbearable. He is constantly in a state of torment. But if you consider carefully, you will notice that in this world nobody belongs to anybody.

This is not limited only to the mankind. In the uni-sensory life form, infinite number of *jivas* are born and the same number of *jivas* die at a time, together. There, each *jiva* is aware of only its own birth and death. It can neither sense nor feel the other *jivas* living with it.

Similarly, in the bi-sensory life-form numerous *jivas* take birth and die. In the animal kingdom, dogs, cats and swine give

birth to four-five young ones in a litter. But each one has a different Karma, a different *papa-punya*, different feelings of birth and death. That is one does not celebrate the birth of another nor does one experience sorrow over another's death. This only goes to say that a *jiva* may be born into any species, along with any number of *jivas*, yet it is created to live alone without company.

The *atmajnani* knows and experiences himself to be all alone. It is said -

एगो मे सासओ अण्णा, नाणदंसणसंजओ ।
सेसा मे बाहिरा भावा, सव्वे संजोग लक्खणा ॥

I am a lonely eternal soul endowed with knowledge and faith. All the others - persons, things - have met as a coincidence. None is my own. All feelings are external.

One who maintains such a state of Self-experience is an *Atmajnani*.

The *Sadguru* has mentioned the second quality : 'Samadarshita' - total equanimity. One, who under all circumstances can remain balanced, who can look upon all other *jivas* not from the body-plane but from the *atma*-plane and thereby avoid being disturbed by the rise of *papa-punya* karma and the instigation of attachment and aversion, is indeed a *samadarshi*.

Such *satpurush* - great beings - will always be equipoised under all circumstances. Joy does not make them bloom nor does sorrow make them wilt. Their course of life flows in a very placid manner. They are described here -

शत्रु मित्र प्रत्ये वर्ते समदर्शिता,
मान-अमाने वर्ते ते ज स्वभाव जो;
जीवित के मरणे नहीं न्यूनाधिकता,
भव मोक्षे पण शुद्धवर्ते समभाव जो अपूर्व अवसर

Whether friend or foe, the same feeling towards either. The animosity of the foe does not make this person to express enmity nor does the affection of the friend get him to express attachment. One who does not differentiate between friend or foe. Whether the other *jiva* presents itself as a friend or foe, in either circumstances his own feelings do not change at all. In fact, to him all *jivas* are alike. The equanimity of such a great person is such that to him there is neither a friend nor a foe, neither anybody his own nor anybody alien.

Not only that, whether somebody honours or praises him or whether somebody dishonours or condemns him, to him those are not more than mere inanimate words. As such, sweet words do not charm him nor do the bitter ones daunt him.

For a person whose state of self-realisation has progressed beyond this stage, there remains no difference between life and death. Neither does he celebrate birth nor does he dread death. For death only affects the body, not the Soul. Why would one, who holds a strong conviction - 'I am the Soul, I am ageless, deathless, birthless' - fear death at all? Say, how can physical death disturb a person who has gone beyond the virtual death of every moment?

For one who has become detached from the worldly feelings, what allure would life hold? He is forever immersed in the Soul. To him life and death are the same.

And now Srimadji indicates the best type of equanimity in the last line - that for a person with equipoise it does not matter whether he lives in this world with the body or in a state of liberation without the body! What a great condition has been described here! The supreme desire to attain *Moksa* drives a *jiva* on to make the best effort; and yet whether it is the state of *Moksa* or the state of embodiment, it does not matter anymore. What does this indicate? It indicates that the *jiva* has experienced here and now, a sample of the supreme bliss, that would be available to him in the state of liberation, and is so taken up with it that the

thought that he has to get liberated also does not occur to him anymore. What an extreme state of equanimity! It is proved here that *Moksa* will be attained only after the abandonment of the desire to attain *Moksa*. So this high level of equanimity is the second quality of a *Sadguru*.

Now the third quality 'विचरे उदयप्रयोग' - stoical ability to avoid the addition of Karma. This quality is worthy of understanding. Let us give it a deeper thought.

Every worldly *jiva* undergoes an affliction of Karma from time-to-time. There is not a single moment when Karma is not occurring. The moment the karma arises, the *jiva* gets involved in the hue of that Karma, and tends to act in that manner. That is when *Moha* - attachment - and such karmas arise, the *jiva* gets immersed in the hues of attachment and as a result becomes instrumental in earning new karmas; these karmas arise next. Thus a binding of karmas, their rise, *jiva*'s involvement in the acts, and thereby new binding of karmas - this vicious cycle goes on and on. So long as this wheel of karmas continues to ply it is impossible to avoid further addition of Karmas.

Here, the *Sadguru* has been shown to possess such a rare quality that although he too goes through the cyclic process of the rise of Karma, he is able to merely look upon them dispassionately and remain unaffected by them. That is to say, that *moha* and other such karmas arise in his case too, but he guards against the affliction of the passions with the consciousness of the Self - passions are not my natural disposition, *svarupa*; I am a soul totally devoid of any attachment, free from all passions - and as such the Karmas cannot bind on to him.

Not just that, his every activity is devoid of any desire. He does not even rise or sit, move or walk of his own accord. Whatever happens, happens naturally, at the instance of the Karma that arises at that moment. No activity takes place with

the premeditation that 'I will do this'. Only the one, whose every action is devoid of motive and who firmly believes that no substance is capable of doing anything to another, will be able to exist in such a state of aimlessness. Thus, the one who is capable of avoiding the binding of Karma is a *Sadguru*.

The fourth quality is *apoorva vani* - unparalleled speech. Speech is available to all humans and they all make use of it. But that speech, which is specially different from others, which is not to be found anywhere else, is unique, unparalleled speech - *apoorva vani*. That speech which benefits others as much as the self. Never will a *Sadguru* utter anything that hurts anybody internally or externally.

They are in that state because of self-experience and they have achieved the essence of supreme bliss themselves. With an intention to bring all the *jivas* on the path of *Moksa*, they possess the ability to get other *jivas* to experience that supreme bliss. It is said that every sentence of the sage is replete with an infinite essence of the scriptures. Secrets which they can open up for us through their unquestioned speech; and that speech becomes instrumental in taking the *jivas* into the state of self-realisation never experienced before - never heard before. Hence it is termed as *apoorva vani*.

The greatness of the great men lies in the fact that whatever they say becomes scripture - agams, vedas; while the speech of a common man vanishes into thin air. Thus, the one with such a quality of inimitability in speech is a *Sadguru*.

The last quality mentioned is *paramashruta* - one who holds a deep knowledge. '*Shruta*' is knowledge. That knowledge which is supreme, the highest is *Paramashruta*. In other words that which is closest to being complete is *Paramashruta*. Amongst us, in the Jain tradition, total knowledge is called *kewalajnana*. Those who have not attained *kewaljnana*, yet have managed to reached the same level of knowledge through learning are called '*shrutakewalin*'s.

In our lineage of *Acharyas* there was one Hemachandracharya who was honoured with the title '*Kalikal Sarvajna*', for he was a great *shruta*-holder, a *shrutakewalin*.

Thus those who have a proper knowledge of all the substances of the world are *paramashruta*. When the knowledge laid down in the scriptures percolates into self-experience, it emerges with a touch of truth. Hence, such knowledge has been termed as *paramashruta*. A great man who holds such knowledge has a great intellect and a broad mind. He is capable of understanding the essence of all the philosophies that are in the world, and hence in his thought process there is a moderation. He does not carry a petty attitude of proving one philosophy right and another wrong. He is deep as an ocean.

Only the one who possesses such a deep knowledge, can take the enthusiastic *jiva* along the true path.

Thus in this *gatha*, the five qualities of a *Sadguru* have been mentioned. The same feelings can be expressed in other words -

सत्पुरुष ते ज के जेहनो आत्मोपयोग ज अटल छे,
 अनुभव प्रधान ज वचन जेनुं, शस्त्र श्रुति पटल छे ।
 अन्तरंग इच्छा रहित जेनी गुप्त आचरणा सदा,
 निन्दा-स्तुति शाता-अशातायी न मन सुख-दुःख कदा ॥

All the five qualities that *Srimadji* has mentioned are also covered in these lines. The first line refers to *atmajnana*, second to *apoorva vani* and *paramashruta*, the third refers to *vichare uday prayog* and fourth to *samadarshita*.

A *Sadguru* endowed with these qualities alone can be a true guide and lead a *sadhaka* on the proper path. Just as a tired and distraught traveller finds solace under the cool shade of a large Neem tree, a *sadhaka* distraught with the world finds peace of the soul at the feet of such a *Satpurush*; and progresses on the path of penance of the soul.

The extent and the effect of the greatness of *Sadguru* has been explained in the following *gatha*.

. . . . the thought of Soul does not sprout

Identifying a *Sadguru* is essential for the pursuit of the three-fold path. A *jiva* begins to feel the dearth of a *Sadguru* only after the urge to pursue the goal of *Atma* arises. Only then does the *jiva* go out in search of one.

A *jiva* in pursuit of the worldly affairs somehow finds several guides on the worldly path and from them it manages to pick up some refinement, some knowledge. The *jiva* even manages to test both his fortune and efforts and even earns something out of it. But after having achieved everything, when it feels something amiss within, when some inadequacy bothers it, it is then that it wakes up and starts the search for a *Guru*.

In the previous *Gatha*, we were told as to what sort of a *Guru* is to be identified and the wonderful qualities in a *Guru* were detailed. The greatness of such a virtuous *Guru* should be carried within us, and hence Srimadji now says

प्रत्यक्ष सदगुरु सम नहीं, परोक्ष जिन उपकार,
एवो लक्ष थया विना, ऊगे न आत्मविचार ११

In the present age, when the great *Jina* is not bodily amidst us, there is only one true and strong recourse left to us and that is ‘*Sadguru*’.

The Lord *Jina* gave us the scriptures, himself strode the path of dedication and opened up the same path for us. Indeed, had the great *Tirthankars* not delineated *dharma* for us, and had the *Ganadhars* and their lineage of disciples not included those sermons in the *Agams*, today we would have been bereft of an invaluable heritage, we would have been poor without it. The *Agams* formed by the omniscient are our greatest treasure. Hence there indeed is an indirect benevolence by the Lord Jineshwar. But if there is anybody who could explain this path indicated by the *Jina* and lead on it, it is the *Sadguru* alone. Who else can explain?

The other thing is that, in spite of the infinite benevolence of the departed *Tirthankars*, *Ganadhars*, *Kevalis*, *Shrutadhars* and *Labdhidhars* upon us, they cannot now offer us guidance in person. The guidance required at present can be offered only by a *Sadguru* who is physically present, who can show us the path and in the event we stray from it, can lead us back by the hand. Hence it has been said -

गरु तो जीवता ज जोड़ए, मरेला गुरु न कराय ।

A living Guru is a must, never take a dead Guru.

Only somebody who is alive, can see our shortcomings and censure us about them; can inspire us to draw back from our faults. Perhaps at times with love and at times in anger, yet he alone can spell it out. Ah! The great and benevolent *Sadguru* will even resort to applying persuade-motivate-castigate-discriminate (साम, दाम, दंड, भेद) tactics with only the *sadhaka's* benefit in mind, and bring him on the right path.

Merely by praying before the idol of *Tirthankar*, believing Him to be the totality if we continue deprecating the *Guru*, we will not find the right path. You go the temple daily, behold the idol, prostrate, pray, yet the Lord is not going to point out a single shortcoming of yours. Of course, beholding His passion-free, detached expression, we will be filled with a feeling of admiration, respect and devotion. At times, we may even begin to yearn for the same detachment as his. In spite of all this He cannot point out any of our faults. Hence, the need of a *Sadguru*, always remains.

Srimadji too has expressed these same thoughts in his letter no.466 -

“The great sages of the past were even omniscient, yet that cannot eliminate a *jiva's* faults. For if there is a pride in a *jiva* now, the sage gone past will not come to say so. But the sage who is physically present now, can certainly point out the fault and help eliminate it. Just as the distant ocean of milk cannot

quench the thirst of a thirsty, yet if a glass of sweet water were to be here, it would quench the thirst.”

Only a *Sadguru* can understand the scriptures formed by the Lord *Jina*. The scriptures show the path. They do not give us the essence. Essence lies within the *Sadguru*. The principles mentioned in the scriptures are mysterious. Those mysteries cannot be solved by our own intellect. The infinite mysteries of the *Agams* cannot be understood without surrendering to a *Guru*. The *Agams* can even mislead if not understood properly. The depth of the infinite knowledge cannot be reached without the help of a sage.

Another important aspect to be considered is that, the Lord Jineswar in spite of having achieved the totality, is absent and hence our mind cannot concentrate or remain steady up on his thought-meditation. While looking at the gentle radiance of the present *Sadguru's* strong soul and beholding his extraordinary strengths, we too become naturally radiant and can equate ourselves in his thoughts - meditation. Similarly, beholding the one whose strong soul is awakened and active on the path of penance, our own dormant soul awakens and becomes active on that path with a radiance.

Here let us consider our ancient *mantra*, the *Namokar mantra*. Of the five strings, the first is ‘*Namo Arihantanam*’ and the second is ‘*Namo Siddhanam*’. Of these two, considering from the point of cleansing of the soul, *Siddha* is the first. For *Siddha* has attained the forever pure, all-knowing, and spotless state by destroying all the eight karmas. Whereas *Arihant* is still bound by the four *aghati* karmas. Where there is karma there is impurity. As such the soul of *Arihant* is not totally purified. In the Jain tradition which values virtues, the status of *Siddha* is higher from the viewpoint of purity. So the first salutation in the *mantra* should be to *Siddha*. Not just that, *Arihant* also bows before *Siddha*. Thus *Siddha Bhagawant* occupies the highest category. The

question that arises is, how come in the *Namokar Mahamantra*, the first salutation goes to *Arihant* and then to *Siddha*?

The answer to this question is also explained in this *Gatha* of '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*'. Those who have attained the *Siddha* state are not amidst us. Then what is their real form? And what is the effort required to achieve that real form? If there is somebody who can explain that, it is *Arihant Bhagwant* alone. Had *Arihant* not elucidated the real form of *Siddha* to us, then we would never have known and no *jiva* would ever have been inspired to make an effort to achieve that form.

Arihant Bhagwant also told us that the form of all *jivas* is just like that of *Siddha* and that it can be achieved by a proper effort. How very reassuring!

Once an Indian asked Bernard Shaw, "Look, you have studied all the philosophies - religions of India. Now if you were to be born again in India, which faith would you prefer?"

Shaw replied with a smile, "In the Jain faith".

"Why so? India has a majority of Hindus. Jains are only a minority. A minuscule half percent. How did you choose such a minority community?"

"The speciality of Jainism is that the *jiva* which makes the effort attains the supreme state. Therein there is not one Supreme Soul, but everyone can become a Supreme Soul. I want to become a Supreme Soul and hence I would like to be born a Jain".

Arihant Bhagwant is the one who told us that every *Jiva* can make the effort and attain the state of a Supreme Soul. Hence, *Arihant* has been given a place of priority over *Siddha Bhagwant*.

Kabir too has placed *Guru* first among *Guru* and *Govind*. For *Guru* is the one who identified *Govind*, the Lord.

However much be one's intelligence, one's study of scriptures, one's knowledge of principles, unless the personal benevolence of the *Gurudev* rests within, one will not awaken to the goal of the Soul.

Here in this *Shastra* all things mentioned are keeping the goal of *Atma* in focus. Therefore, how the ability, required for the goal of *Atma* to awaken, can be achieved, has also been told. Srimadji says -

एवो लक्ष्म थया विना, ऊगे न आत्मविचार

Unless the greatness of the present *Sadguru* rests within, and his infinite benevolence is accepted with gratitude, even the thought of *Atma* does not 'sprout' in the conscience.

Here the word ऊगे - sprout - has been used. It is very suggestive. Indeed! Srimadji has weighed every word with a precision and then placed them in the *Gathas*. Let us evaluate this word. In this *Gatha* he could certainly have used any word other than उगे. But the thought of *Atma* is to be allowed to sprout within and hence he placed the word उगे.

What sprouts? The seed sown in the earth. The seed pushed under the soil alone sprouts. When does it sprout? Who does it? When it is immersed in the earth and when it splits itself, then alone does it sprout from within itself. It cannot sprout keeping itself safe and sound and without splitting itself. Thus, first of all it has to meet the dust and split itself. And not just that, if it remains within the earth after the split, it cannot grow. It will have to die. But the tender and minuscule sprout that emanates from the seed splits the layers of hard soil with its vitality and projects out. When it becomes visible to the outer world it is termed as sprouted.

The second question - who does it? The task of putting it into the soil is accomplished either by humans or some animal-bird. That's it! Nothing more than that. If at all human inspiration is at work, water - manure may be offered. But the process of sprouting has to be done by it-self. The life within the seed absorbs the nutrients-water-air-light from around itself and splits itself. Not only that, nobody helps the sprout to emerge from the earth. It has to struggle by itself.

Going along with the same story, if the tiny sprout remains a sprout, then the very sprouting becomes meaningless. But after sprouting, if it continues to grow, it reaches a height of 50 - 60 feet or more. The vitality within it gives it a life of 180 - 200 years. Even today we get to see age old trees which had begun their life as tiny sprouts. Their growth along with the passage of time is there for us to see.

Now, if we want the thought of *Atma* to sprout within us, what do we do? First of all like the seed that is immersed in the soil, absorb the benevolence of the *Gurudev* through every pore. Be indebted for his benevolence, forget your own self, abandon the 'I' altogether. Then allow the *Gurudev*'s air-water-nutrient like advice and words to be absorbed into you. This will happen slowly, not at once, and only if the process is incessant.

Accepting the words of the *Guru*, if you keep churning them in your self, only then will the inner-self remain steady. If the thought of the *Atma* arises like a momentary ripple and then subsides, it will not yield any fruit. Ripples rising in lake water, rise and subside; there can be no count nor do they serve any purpose. Likewise, if during our association with the virtuous, a fleeting thought about the *Atma* arises in our mind and later either we are ensnared in the worldly affairs or it simply subsides, then it has no value. But if that thought manages to reach the depths of the inner self and settles down there, then it becomes capable of making the inner-self split.

Only when the natural disposition (स्वभाव) and the affected disposition (विभाव) which appear to have merged within the Soul are split, when स्वभाव and विभाव are separated, when the inner-self is split, does the seed of the true knowledge sprout and emerge, splitting the hard earth of the worldly feelings. That is to say, he who has experienced the inner-self split, to whom the science of the detachment has become evident, his external activity also undergoes a change. This becomes perceptible in his feelings of equanimity, restraint and compassion.

Just as the seed has to sprout on its own, the *Jiva* too has to acquire the science of the detachment within itself on its own, even when it gets safekeeping in the form of guidance or manure-water in the form of the *Guru's* words. And if these feelings settle down in the Soul, they grow steadily on to achieve the development in the form of the levels of *gunasthanas* and ultimately the fruit of *Moksa*, which has appeared with the infinite and unbounded state.

Thus the term - ऊँ - sprouts placed in the *Gatha* is effective with its complete meaningfulness.

Normally, why doesn't the thought of *atma* sprout in a *jiva*? Where the seed is itself unfit, how will it sprout?

Brothers! You have probably heard of the 'Instant Watermelon Seed'. A villager had the seeds of such a watermelon, which when sown, would sprout immediately, grow in five-six minutes, bloom, flower and even yield fruit. In just under ten minutes of sowing you'd get tasty watermelons sweet as honey.

The villager would tour from place to place with the seed and earned his living by selling it. Once he reached the capital of a generous King. The King was greatly pleased by listening to his story. It was decided that if on the next day the villager could prove his claim in the presence of the citizens, the King would give away half his kingdom to him. But the faithful minister did not like the idea. He felt that if it really were so, and if the villager were to be successful in his claim, then half the kingdom would go to him and that was not right. The minister played a trick.

He escorted the villager with great honour to his own residence and after gaining his confidence asked him to show the seeds. Without letting him realise it, the minister managed to bake the seeds. Next morning this man presented himself before the king and very enthusiastically planted the seeds to show the wonderful miracle. He waited awhile for the sprouts to

appear. Five-seven-ten minutes passed, nothing happened. He was disturbed, but still waited patiently. But even after two hours when nothing happened, he felt hopeless and insulted and left that place.

Brothers! Think why he was unsuccessful? Just one reason - the seeds were the same but they had been baked. All his efforts were wasted. In the same way, if the thought of *Atma* is not sprouting in us, we should realise that we too have been baked by somebody. Who has baked us?

The energy lying in our *Atma* has been baked by the three-pronged heat of *Aadhi* (illness of the mind), *Vyadhi* (bodily disease) and *Upadhi* (illness of the Self). We have failed to safeguard the seed! There is enough vitality within us to let self-realisation appear on every section of the soul, but still it can not appear!

The greatest solace we have is that although the baked seed can never get back its ability to sprout, the ability lying dormant within us can even now be awakened with some effort, and can sprout and yield fruit.

So to awaken that ability within us, let us understand the importance of both the benevolence of the present *Sadguru* and the absent Lord Jineshwar, and develop faith, respect and devotion for them within us, so that the thought of *Atma* may sprout.

Sans the Sadguru's advice

Devoted practice on the three-fold path awakens the infinite bliss lying within our soul. Only when the self believes that 'bliss is my natural disposition', can it naturally feel this bliss.

So many times the jiva has understood and accepted the topic of five senses. It has not refrained from enjoying itself in sensual pleasures, through all its senses, whatever be the species it was born in. Why! At the beginning of life form on Earth, it only had the sense of touch, but even there it enjoyed itself. It never learnt of renunciation and today even as a human the feeling of renunciation is not awakening, this is but the proof of its being habituated to indulgence in pleasures for lives together.

But the jiva has to understand that the bliss that is there in renunciation is not to be found in indulgence. This understanding and the subsequent behaviour is available only to humans. In no other species, do the jivas have a scope of this understanding. Only when this understanding arises, does the jiva realise that 'my natural disposition is not indulgence but the state of experiencing eternal bliss' and makes an effort to believe it.

The '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' contains an order for a great effort to know the Self - True form, and for that surrender to a *Sadguru* and in that surrender let there be total dedication, complete faith in him. This faith alone will bring deliverance to a *jiva*. If we cannot do anything else, we should at least pour the entire strength of the faith that is resident in every section of our *atma*, on to the feet of the *Guru*; the *atma* will rise on its own, then nothing remains to be done.

Our faith is going all waste. A bit in this and a bit in that and a bit there too. We are in a confused state of 'if its a stone, it must be God'. This blind faith bears no fruit. When faith is dedicated to only one, its mass is enhanced, its strength is increased. It can be instrumental in the rise of our *Atma*.

Somebody may say, “where does one find a *Sadguru* in this age?” Where does one find a Soul-searching *Guru* in such difficult times? But if your karma is ready, if time is ripe for your discipleship, then you will not remain without a *Guru*. Your karma is a prerequisite, whatever be the sort of *Guru*. Why! If in this age there are *chhadmastha Gurus*, in *Tirthankars*’ age there used to be *kevali Gurus*. But they are only a means. If your karma is ready, *Guru* may even stray in towards you. Hence, make yourself competent; do not look for faults in the *Guru*, nor complain that you have not found a competent one. The day you qualify the *Guru* may drop in from the sky. But qualify first. Think, O *Jiva*! What is your qualification? Are you qualified enough to retain the precious gem-like *Guru*? It is akin to the Lioness’ milk that can be stored only in a golden urn. In any other, it is bound to break the container and spill. If one has to acquire an invaluable gem-like *Guru*, one has to be qualified for it first.

If after finding such a great *Sadguru*, we are unable to manage, then our egoistic impunity keeps us from realising his real worth. Instead of finding progress in his refuge, our incompetence takes us on the path of downfall. Hence, first of all, acquire ability and then go in search of a *Sadguru*! Why eulogise the *Sadguru* so much? Srimadji says -

सद्गुरुना उपदेश वण, समजाय न जिनरूप,

समज्या वण उपकार शो? समज्ये जिनस्वरूप १२

What the *jiva* needs to understand is the true form of *Jina*. For understanding the true form of *Jina* alone can help you understand the true form of *Nija* (the self). But this is possible only after accepting a *Sadguru*. You may pay heed to advice no doubt! But having heard it, if you place your faith, appreciation and interest in it, and then put it in to practice, only then can you understand the true form of *Jina*.

In the fifth *Shramanasutra* of the *Pratikramana*, it is said -

तं धम्मं सहहामि

पत्तिआमि
 रोएमि
 फासेमि
 पालेमि
 अणुपालेमि

Hearing the advice of the *Gurudev*, first of all place faith in it. ‘सद्दहमि’ - ‘I do believe’. Whenever you settle down to hear a discourse, bear in mind a feeling that whatever is being told here is for the good and good alone. ‘I have to accept as much as I can, and practice it’. If you come in with faith then your faith will grow upon the discourse you heard. But if you come in with a feeling, ‘*Mahasatiji* keeps saying so many things, all those don’t have to be followed’, how will the feeling of faith arise at all? Hence, first of all place faith upon the discourse you are hearing.

This is followed by ‘पत्तिआमि’ and ‘रोएमि’ that is प्रतीति and रुचि. There is a small difference in the two. A sort of love-filled attraction develops for the religion, for the principle upon which the faith settles. A person begins to like it very much and his inquisitiveness grows about that principle. So faith alone does not work, hence the *Sadhaka* says, ‘पत्तिआमि’ ‘I do appreciate’. But attraction can sometimes be lost. If circumstances are unfavourable the attraction may decline. But ‘रोएमि’ means ‘I do always hold an interest in the principle’. Once the interest develops, there may be times when it may be difficult to practice, but the interest does not dwindle, and this interest is instrumental in developing the strength to practice in him.

Once the interest for principles awakens in the *Jiva*, the *Jiva* makes a tremendous effort to achieve them. There is some sort of interest lying within all of us. But it is interest in worldly affairs, worldly things. We are also making effort to achieve that in which we are interested. Only if we develop a greater interest in absorbing the teachings of the *Tirthankars*, than we have in worldly indulgence, can we understand the principles. The mind pines night and day, ‘When will I get a chance and

when will I be able to hear the words of sages?'; 'When will I get the opportunity of noble company?' and a strong thirst arises, that is called 'रोएमि'

This is followed by 'फासेमि' - 'I do touch the principle.' What is the touch of religion? Who is so touched? This is a very thought-worthy aspect.

Among our five senses, the most sensitive one is the sense of touch, which is mounted onto our entire body in the form of the skin. Other senses cannot absorb their subjects and sense so well as the skin. *Jiva* can absorb feelings, good-bad thoughts through touch. Ah! In the Indian tradition of penance where ordainment is effected through *Mantra* (मंत्र दीक्षा) and through Vision (दृष्टि दीक्षा), it is also effected through Touch (स्पर्श दीक्षा). That is to say a capable spiritual *Guru* can take a disciple into a trance by a mere touch. The *Sadguru* has only to touch and the *Sadhaka* (disciple) experiences the *Bhava Samadhi* (भाव समाधि) - a state of trance. So touch is the conductor of good-bad thoughts-feelings. But this is only referring to the physical touch.

The touch we were talking about is the touch of the soul. The *Guru's* advice - principle touches the *atma* and the *atma* then experiences a sort of deep feeling. After all the capacity to sense belongs to the *Atma*, doesn't it? Hence, whatever principle you hear with 'फासेमि' gets absorbed into the soul.

That which is absorbed into the soul, does not take long in coming into practice. It naturally percolates into your action. Hence it has been said, 'फालेमि' - 'I do practice religion under any circumstance'. That is to say, I practice all those principles which are worthy of my practice.

Where touch and practice get woven like the warp and the weft, only there does the fabric of experience get made. So long as the warp and the weft are separate, it is only a yarn under process. But when the cloth is ready it becomes a covering for the body. Thus faith, appreciation, interest, touch and then practice.

The importance of practice has been highlighted by the last word ‘अणुपालेमि’ ‘I do practice religion’. It is not that I will practice once and abandon it. I shall practice continuously in such a way that the principle of practice percolates down to my soul.

‘अणुपालेमि’ has also been interpreted in another way by *Acharya Jinadas* - ‘I shall practice the religion that has been practised by the noble men of the past, in the same way.’

Thus having heard the *Sadguru*, one has to pass through so many stages. Only then does the advice percolate to the inner self and help understand the true form of *Jina*.

Brothers! The true-form of *Jina* is in fact our own true-form. Achieving it is not an easy task. It takes a great preparation to achieve. Now let us look at the true-form of *Jina* as mentioned by the *Gurudev*.

Who is called *Jina*? In a very broad sense, one who has won is a *Jina*. That is to say he who has won over attachment and aversion is *Jina*. A follower of such a *Jina* is a Jain. Brothers! Do you know? We are called Jains, but this word originates from a very long past. In the days of the *Tirthankars*, even until the time of Mahavira, nobody was ever called a Jain. The word was ‘*Ārhat*’. Since the *Tirthankars* were called ‘*Arihant*’, their followers became ‘*Ārhat*’.

The supreme soul *Arihant*, that is the *Tirthankar*, established the four centres in the form of *Sadhu-Sadhvi-Shravak-Shravika* (Monk - Nun - Layman - Lay-woman), delineated the *Dharma* for *Sadhus* and *Shravaks*, and the followers of this *Dharma* came to be called ‘*Ārhat*’. Whether a *Sadhu* or a *Shravaka*, both were called ‘*Ārhat*’. Thus originally we were all called ‘*Ārhat*’.

Subsequently there came a change in this word, in the *Acharya* tradition. Just as in other Indian religious traditions, the followers of Shiva were called *Shaivas*, of Vishnu - *Vaishnavas*, of Buddha - *Bouddhas*, since *Arihant* is called a *Jina*, the followers of *Jina* were called *Jains*. That is how we all came to be called Jains.

It is the duty of every Jain to understand the true form of *Jina* of whom he is a follower. Who and how is a *Jina*? Yes we already have the simple definition that says - one who has conquered the feelings of attachment and aversion and attained a fully dispassionate state is a *Jina*. But this is inadequate in defining the complete true form of *Jina*. The true form of the *Arihant*, the supreme soul is wonderful, encompassing infinite virtues. We may not be capable of understanding the true-form in its totality, but our great sages have tried to explain so that we may develop faith, devotion and respect for the *Jineshwar*. One of the *Acharyas* says while telling us about the true form of *Arihant* -

सहज निज आलोक से भासित स्वयं संबुद्ध हैं
 धर्म तीर्थंकर शुभंकर वीतराग विशुद्ध हैं
 गति प्रतिष्ठा त्राण दाता आवरणसे मुक्त हैं
 देव अर्हन् दिव्य योगज अतिशयोंसे युक्त हैं

सहज निज आलोक से भासित - The knowledge of the *Jineshwar* - *Arihant* - Supreme Soul is enlightening for the self - as also for others. He is the one who knows the self and the entire world through his knowledge. Not just that, he is also self-taught. In other words, the soul prepared to become the *Tirthankar*, is born with such capability, carried forward from the penance of the previous births, that in this life the necessity of the *Guru's* advice does not remain. The urge to take the ordainment rises on its own. He does not have to be enlightened by somebody to accept the necessary character. In fact, he is born with *Mati*, *Shruti* and *Avadhi jnana* - the three types of knowledge and the fourth - the *Samyagdarshan* - the True Faith. Even during the gestation, these strengths are with him and as such he knows beforehand that he is to become the *Tirthankar* later. Thus, to illuminate his soul, no other light is necessary. He is self-enlightened.

धर्म तीर्थंकर - One who establishes the shrine, the *Tirtha* of *Dharma*, is called the *Tirthankar*. Brothers! Establishing a shrine

is no ordinary task. You should be knowing. In this age, in your material world, not everybody has the capability of establishing even a small organisation. It can be done only by one who is strong enough physically, mentally, financially, intellectually and so on. Others cannot. Thus only the *Arihant*, who has amassed *punya* in the previous births, and has brought with him the strength of the *punyanubandhi punya*, can establish a *Tirtha*. There could be millions of *kevalis* but only twenty-four *Tirthankars* who establish *Tirthas*.

शुभंकर - So the *Arihant* - Supreme Soul, with his own strength of *punya* and because of the extraordinary virtues of infinite knowledge, infinite energy endowed in his soul, establishes a *Tirtha*. Indeed, the absolute compassion pervading the 'benevolent' soul, induces a material compassion-like speech in his action, and hence in his refuge everybody is blessed with welfare, everybody benefits. The *jiva* who seeks refuge at the feet of the *Tirthankar* is bound to be elevated, come what may. Thus all *jivas* find welfare.

वीतराग विशुद्ध हैं - Having vanquished the feelings of attachment and aversion he has become serene. His soul being bereft of any imperfection, is absolutely pure. Brothers! Do you know? *Arihant*, the supreme soul has managed to eliminate four *ghati-karmas* (घाती कर्म). Let us take a closer look.

There are eight types of Karmas - 1) *Jnanavarniya* (ज्ञानावरणीय), 2) *Darshanavarniya* (दर्शनावरणीय), 3) *Vedaniya* (वेदनीय), 4) *Mohaniya* (मोहनीय), 5) *Ayushya* (आयुष्य), 6) *Nama* (नाम), 7) *Gotra* (गोत्र) and 8) *Antaraya* (अंतराय). Among these four are *Ghati Karmas* - *Jnanavarniya* (ज्ञानावरणीय), *Darshanavarniya* (दर्शनावरणीय), *Mohaniya* (मोहनीय) and *Antaraya* (अंतराय). All these have only one end result and that is sin. Of the forty-seven natural qualities in each of these four Karmas, not one is of a virtuous nature. The other four karmas are called *Aghati Karmas* (अघाती कर्म) and they comprise of both vicious and virtuous natures. The *Vedaniya* Karma is bifurcated as *Shata Vedaniya* (शता वेदनीय) which is virtuous and *Ashata*

Vedaniya (अशाता वेदनीय) which is vicious. In the *Ayushya Karma* - the life as humans and gods is virtuous and as *tiryancha* (तिर्यंच) it is both virtuous and vicious, while the *naraki* (नारकी) is entirely vicious. In the *Nama karma*, the *shubha prakriti* (शुभ प्रकृति) is virtuous, while the *ashubha prakriti* (अशुभ प्रकृति) is vicious. In the *Gotra karma*, the higher *gotras* are virtuous and the lower *gotras* are vicious. Thus the four *aghati* karmas are both virtuous and vicious.

Now, in the case of the *Arihant*, firstly there are no *ghati* karmas at all and in the *aghati* karmas too they are predominantly virtuous. Thus the vicious feelings and vicious karmas are both destroyed and their soul is absolutely purified. Indeed, since he has managed to destroy the terrible faults like attachment and aversion, he is totally pure.

गति प्रतिष्ठा त्राण दाता आवरणसे मुक्त है - Propitiation of the *Arihant* gets a *jiva* three things. One is *gati* (गति) - birth in a higher order. Whoever sings the praises of *Arihant* with a pure heart will never face *durgati* (दुर्गति) - birth in a lower order of life. Not only that, the propitiation of *Arihant* makes one an *Arihant*, that is, it enables one to attain liberation in the fifth *gati*.

Secondly, it provides a status. What is a status? A person who is looked upon by the society with respect is said to be of a certain status. But Brothers! this status is something that the society has created and approved. It is something which comes and goes. It cannot be permanent. A person may be holding a high position today, but if he suffers a setback financially he loses his status; and again if luck favours him and he manages to recover his wealth and begins to draw respect in a group of five people. But we are not considering such status. The point here is not of being respected by five people, not of being propitiated by five people but of being categorised among the five. Categorised where? Among the five categories of the *pancha parameshthi* (पंच परमेष्ठी). Tell me! Where really is your status among these five? Find yourself a slot in at least one of them. *Arihant*, *Siddha*, *Acharya*, *Upadhyaya* and *Sadhu* - which of these five

categories would you like to be in? Everybody wants the top-most category. Why so? Having heard so much about *Arihant* you begin to feel that it would be good to find a place in the category of *Arihant*. You get to be in the top most then. But Brothers! This chair is not so easy to get. Here you have to progress step-by-step. You have to first enter at the fifth position, then work your way up through the fourth and third to the first, lastly it is the category of the *Siddhas*. So, thus one has to awaken the substance of the supreme soul lying dormant within. That can be achieved only through the propitiation of the *Arihant*. So *Jina* offers such a status.

Thirdly it is *trana* (ऋण) - strength in refuge. It offers refuge. *Arihant* is said to be a giver of refuge. Who can offer refuge? One who is almighty, who has love for refugees, who can completely protect them. *Arihant* - the Supreme Soul is enriched with infinite virtues. Indeed, the infinite knowledge of the *Arihant* goes right across the past and future of the refugee and gets to know all his feelings. As such he knows the malady of as also the remedy for the *jiva*. That is why we mention in our prayer every day - अरिहंते सरणं पवज्जामि - I seek refuge with *Arihant*.

Not even the strongest of the strong persons in this world has the strength to match *Arihant*, to offer refuge and alleviate the sufferings of the *jiva* smouldering in the worldly flames. So it is! *Arihant* - the supreme soul alone has the capability.

The strengths of the *jiva* wandering from infinite time have been encrusted in thick layers of karma, which keep the *jiva* from realising the strength of the self. But *Arihant* - the supreme soul, is - आवरणसे मुक्त है - free from all coverings. He broke the crust upon knowledge to become a *kevaljnani* - omniscient, he broke the crust upon faith to become endowed with infinite faith. He burnt down desire and earned the *kshayik samakit* and *kshayik yathakhyat* character. He destroyed all hurdles to attain the infinite strength - energy. Thus he became liberated by removing the crusts that hid the valuable virtues of the *atma*.

देव अर्हन् दिव्य योगज अतिशयोक्ते युक्त हैं - *Tirthankar* - the supreme soul, lord of the three worlds, venerable for Gods, Humans and Demons alike, is endowed with the Yogas. That is he has the mind-speech-body Yoga. Our yogic activity is rarely humane, it is mostly reflecting the carnal and devilish tendencies that we bring forth from our previous births. *Arihant* too, while having the same yoga, displays only divinity. His yogic activity is always satvik (सात्त्विक) - serene; there never is an opulent - rajas (राजस) or depraved - tamas (तामस) feeling in it.

If we look closer, we will notice that the *kevali* - supreme soul, does not have a voluntary yogic activity at all. His speech occurs on its own. He doesn't have to plan to say this or not to say that. But subject to certainty whatever needs to be said is spoken. Similarly the bodily activity is also not voluntary. Whatever is predetermined for the body to do is done. Going beyond all this, we will notice that *Arihant* does not have the activity of the mind at all.

The duty of the mind is to think. Thoughts are always related to the past or the future. They are reminiscences of the past and visualisations of the future. The present is but a fleeting second. It is not considered. *Arihant* knows all about the past and the future, so there is nothing to be thought. His mind is utilised only when the Gods of the *Sarvartha Siddha Vimana* Heaven question him with their minds and *Arihant* replies with his mind.

Thus, the activity of *Arihant* in all the three yogas being involuntary is divine. As a result his yogas do not bind him in any Karma. Yogas do result in a karma, but only twice, the third time it wipes out the karma.

अतिशयोक्ते से युक्त हैं - The *Arihant* is endowed with wonderful powers. What is not available ordinarily, such extraordinary specialities are called wonderful. Many of the extraordinary qualities are inborn, some are creations of devas - Gods, and many others are developed with the onset of omniscience.

The arrangement of the *Samavasaran* - समवसरण - the complete congregation of living beings, the Ashoka tree, the golden throne, the three royal umbrellas, twenty-four pairs of *chamars*, the *halo*, the God's trumpet, sprinkling of life-less flowers by the Gods, are all wonders created by the Gods. The rise of the unlimited virtue and extraordinary brilliance of the *Arihant* attracts the Gods and they set up all these. This arrangement is only for the *Tirthankar* - supreme soul, not for all *kevalis*. For nobody else can match the virtues of the Tirthankar.

Apart from these, the *Arihant* has four more wonders which we need to know about. But let us consider them later.

Brothers! It is beyond our capacity to describe the extraordinary wonders of the *Arihant*. How can we, who have a limit, describe the unparalleled and unlimited virtues? The Vedas too, where the *Brahma-svarupa* has been analysed, tend to wear out while eulogising. And in the end they say '*Neti, Neti* - नेति, नेति - and give up. *Brahma-svarupa* is the Pure True form of the *Atma*. It is impossible to describe. *Srimadji* too has said -

जे पद श्री सर्वज्ञे दीतुं ज्ञानमां,
कही शक्या नहीं पण ते श्री भगवान जो;
तेह स्वरूपने अन्य वाणी ते शुं कहे ?
अनुभव गोचर मात्र रह्युं ते ज्ञान जो अपूर्व

The omniscient supreme soul, knows and sees the complete true form of the soul through his knowledge and from every angle. But he cannot mention all that he saw and how he saw it. The question that arises is how is it that one who is omnipotent cannot say it? The answer is that when the omnipotent supreme soul describes the true form of the *atma*, to make us understand it he has to resort to using the medium of speech. We do not have such powers that we can understand while he explains. Feelings have a great power. Even among the worldly humans, the feelings of attachment and aversion are better understood through the expressions of mind than through words. So the feelings of the soul are also better understood through

feelings. But we guileful *jivas* cannot understand without speech. Hence, whenever the Omniscient explains, he does it through speech. And language is limited, so how much can he explain? As such the Omniscient Supreme Soul too could not make us understand. So Brothers! How can an ordinary person like me state the virtues of the supreme soul?

Hence, it has been said - अनुभव गोचर मात्र रह्युं ते ज्ञान जो . . . - Whether you call it the true-form of the Soul or the true-form of the *Arihant*, it is something that can only be experienced. One who experiences such a form within oneself, alone can understand that true-form! Kabir has said - गुंफे का गुड - The dumb man's jaggery! If a dumb person is fed jaggery and then asked to explain how it tasted, you will not get a reply. Why go that far! You who eat Ghee daily - if I were to ask you, 'What is the taste of Ghee?', what would you say? You cannot say. Only the one who eats can know! That's it! Only the one who experiences the Soul can understand how the true-form of *Jina* is. It cannot be expressed by writing down or through speech.

Kabir, while telling us about the impossibility of the expression of the *Arihant's* infinite wonder, has said -

सब धरती कागज करुं, लेखनी करुं वनराय,
सात समुद्र मसि करुं प्रभु गुण लख्या न जाय ।
“I could make paper of the entire land,
Quill out of all the forest there is,
I could make ink out of the seven seas, and
Yet could not describe how virtuous the Lord is.”

Thus, we made an attempt to understand the true-form of *Jina* that is impossible to state in speech. Who else but a *Sadguru* could explain such a superlative true-form? Hence, it is said that the *Sadguru's* wonders are infinite. And until the true-form of *Jina* is known, how can the effort to achieve it be made?

Now, the description of the four extraordinary features of the *Arihant* in the next.

. . . understanding the true-form of Jina

Devoted practice of the three-fold path, acquaints one with the Self and helps acquire the true-form of *Jina*. As the *Jiva* has not recognised the Self, it keeps wandering in the cycle of birth and death. The *Jiva* is smouldering in the heat of *Adhi*, *Vyadhi* and *Upadhi*. To escape such *karmic* miseries it is not only necessary but inevitable to know the true-form of the Self.

If we have not been able to understand the true-self until now, it is because we are engrossed in the worldly affairs. So long as the activity is directed to achieve worldly goals, so long as the changes in the soul from time-to-time result in increasing our involvement with the world, the feeling of the Soul does not arise at all within us, and until then we may well talk about *Moksa*, but *Moksa* cannot be attained.

What is *Moksa*? It is not a happening, not a substance that is begotten, it is neither a qualification nor any power or wealth. It is a state of the soul. It is the complete transition into the natural disposition. This transition of the disposition begins with the achievement of the true-self. The path to this achievement is shown by the *Sadguru*, who takes us to the true-form of *Jina* by acquainting us with the Self.

That is why Srimadji has said -

सद्गुरुना उपदेश वण, समजाय न जिनरूप,
समज्या वण उपकार शो? समज्ये जिनस्वरूप १२

Sans the advice of the *Sadguru* the true-form of the *Jina* cannot be understood. We have earlier deliberated upon the true-form and tried to know the state of his *Atma*.

Now let us see what specialities are attributed to *Arihant* - supreme soul, over and above the *Kevalis*. Those specialities are termed as 'extra qualities' (अतिशय) in our parlance. The *Tirthankar* is endowed with thirty-four extra qualities. Of those, the basic

four, two of which are a result of *Kshayik* (क्षायिक) feeling and the other two of a strong rise in the virtues, are to be analysed here.

Vadidevasuri, in his invocation at the opening of the treatise '*Pramananayatattvalankar*' (प्रमाणनयतत्त्वालंकर) has mentioned these four -

रागद्वेष विजेतारं, ज्ञातारं विश्ववस्तुनः ।
शक्र पूज्यं गिरामीशं, तीर्थेशं स्मृतिमानये ॥

I recollect the Lord of the *Tirtha*, who is a conqueror of the passions, who has fathomed all the substances of the entire Universe, who is prayed to by the *Indras* and who is the sovereign of the speech.

The same feelings have been expressed by *Kalikal Sarvajnya Hemchandracharya* in the invocation of his treatise called '*Syadvad Manjari*' (स्याद्वाद मंजरी) -

अनन्तविज्ञानमतीतदोषं अबाध्यसिद्धान्तममर्त्य पूज्यम् ।

The *Tirthankar* has infinite knowledge, has destroyed all the faults. The speech that flows from him is undisputed and he is prayed to by the Gods.

These *atishayas* - extra qualities in the scriptural terminology are - 1) *Jnanatishaya* (ज्ञानातिशय), 2) *Apayapagamatishaya* (अपायापगमातिशय), 3) *Vachanatishaya* (वचनातिशय), and 4) *Pujatishaya* (पूजातिशय).

1) *Jnanatishaya* (ज्ञानातिशय) - The knowledge of *Arihant*, is infinite knowledge. The knowledge in which the infinite substances are reflected, with their infinite qualities and the infinite transitions of past and future, is infinite knowledge. He can experience the infinite qualities because the infinite qualities of his self have become completely manifest. The unwrapped strength of the infinite knowledge that resides in the innumerable sections of the Soul is enabling the soul to incessantly enjoy the

experience of the Self. This knowledge can never end for it has arisen only after the total destruction of the *jnanavarniya* karma - the karma that covers the knowledge. Not a single shroud remains on this knowledge anymore. As a result the entire *Loka* (लोक) and *Aloka* (अलोक) have become as clear to the *Arihant* as a hand-mirror. Such a knowledge cannot be available to anybody but a *kevaljnani*. For the *mati*, *shruti*, *avadhi* and *manahaparyaya* knowledge are of *kshayopshamik* (क्षायोपशमिक) nature while *kevaljnana* is of a *kshayik* (क्षायिक) nature. This is the speciality of the *Arihant* when compared with the other *jnanis*. Hence this is called *jnanatishaya*.

2) *Apayapagamatishaya* (अपायपगमातिशय) - That which is free from all imperfections - *apaya* = imperfections and *apagama* = have all been destroyed. The *Arihant* is free of all imperfections. *Arihant* has managed to nip the reasons themselves which in a common man lead to the manifestation of faults, imperfections. The two biggest imperfections in a *jiva* are attachment and aversion. These are the two that lead to all other faults. Whether eight karmas or eighteen sins, all those are to be found where there are attachment and aversion. And attachment and aversion are only there where there is desire. All the sins and faults that become visible in a *jiva* on account of the *mohaniya* karma. But *Arihant* has achieved serenity by totally vanquishing the *mohaniya* karma. Unless serenity is attained, it is impossible to become free from all imperfections. So long as there remains even an iota of *mohaniya* karma, there is no perfection, no complete purity. Faults are directly proportional to the mass of attachment and aversion which in turn reflects the mass of *mohaniya* karma. As the *sadhaka* progresses on the steps of *gunasthanas*, his faults begin to reduce and purity improves. But complete purity can come only when he reaches the *Arihant* stage. Hence, the state of perfection free from all faults has been called *apayapagama*.

3) *Vachanatishaya* (वचनातिशय) - He is the lord of the speech. His speech is different from that of the common man. The reason is that he has experienced the complete truth and it is now residing in him every moment. As a result the speech emanating from his lotus mouth is touched by the truth. The speech is not the making of his intellect. His speech is self-inspired, self-effectual, bereft of any force, rising above the emotions of joy, sorrow, love and hate.

The speech of the Lord is *abadhyasiddhant* (अबाध्यासिद्धान्त) - that is it cannot be contradicted. The principles that are propounded through his speech take care of the *syadvad* (स्याद्वाद) angle and as such nobody can contradict them. Similarly, he is himself bereft of the feelings of dissension or demonstration and of all expectations.

The speciality in the speech of the Lord is that when he sermonises, everybody understands it in their own language. Not only humans, but devas, animals, birds all understand it as their own. That is the great virtue of the Lord.

Just two words uttered by the Lord were greatly beneficial for a *jiva*. The Lord said to a terrible snake by name *Chandakaushik* -

संबुद्धह, किं न बुद्धह ।

'Understand! Why don't you understand?' - and the snake threw all its internal - external venom to traverse the worldly life. Such is the greatness of the Lord's speech.

A devotee has composed a song in praise of the greatness of the speech -

मधुर राग मालकौंसमां वहेती तीर्थकरनी वाणी,
मानवने नवजीवन देती तीर्थकरनी वाणी,

सुरनर मुनिवर सौए मोहे
धीर गंभीर सूरुमां सोहे

शब्दे-शब्दे प्रगट थती ज्यां स्नेह तणी सरवाणी

वादी षड्ज मध्यम संवादी
वात नथी कंई विषय विवादी

सादी भाषा शब्द सरलता, सहुने झट समजाणी

One very interesting aspect - Lord Mahavira's voice is resonating in the four corners of our land even after 2,500 years of his speech, and it will continue to do so till the end of this *ara* (आरा), that is for 18,500 more years. This extraordinary speciality is possible only in *Arihant's* speech. Hence, this wonder of *vachanatishaya*.

4) *Pujatishaya* (पूजातिशय) - Indra, the deva bows before *Arihant*. Normally, humans pray to devas, but here the deva of such devas - Indra, King of the devas, prays to Lord *Arihant*. The word '*Arihant*' itself indicates that he is venerable in all the three worlds.

The word '*Arihant*' derives from the root '*Arha*' (अर्ह), which means 'that which is venerable'. Amongst us the original word is '*Arhat*', which over the passage of time has been evolved into '*Arihant*'. We analyse the word *Arihant* as - '*Ari*' = enemy and '*hant*' = vanquish. One who has vanquished the enemy in the form of attachment and aversion is *Arihant*. But originally the word was '*arha*' and hence venerable.

In our prayers we say that the Lord *Arihant* is worthy of prayer, salutation, offering and remembrance for the sixty-four Indras. In all the *Kalyanaka* celebrations of the *Arihant*, Indra comes with all his devas and they rival each other to pray before the Lord.

So this is the glory of the virtues of *Arihant Bhagwant*. In the third life prior to this one, when he would have activated the twenty reasons that bound him in the *Tirthankar nam* karma, he would also have acquired the *punyanubandhi punya* in bulk, as

a result of which he is endowed with thirty-five types of truth-speech-voice qualities.

Such virtuosity is not to be found in other *jivas*. Hence, the uncommon power of the speech is available only to *Arihant*.

Of the four *atishayas* - extra qualities, the first two being attributed to the destruction of the *jnanavarniya* karma and *mohaniya* karma respectively, they indicate the state of his soul. When we have to understand the true form of *Jina*, it is necessary to understand these two extraordinary qualities. So let us try to understand from within, the detailed description of *Arihant Jineshwar* that we have compiled, for -

समज्या वण उपकार शो? समज्ये जिनस्वरूप

How will the feeling of devotion towards *Bhagwant* arise, if we do not understand the true-form of *Jineshwar Bhagwant*, if we do not pay respect to the wonders that rest within him, if we do not realise the uniqueness of his virtues? How can there be welfare without it? Hence, only if we understand the true-form of the *Arihant Bhagwant* in the refuge at the feet of *Sadguru*, can we manage to uplift ourselves. Otherwise we may spend years together in the company of the *Gurudev*, yet not absorb his advice at all, and then leave alone the benefit of the *Gurudev's* benevolence, we may not get anything at all.

Hence, seek refuge with and pray to the *Sadguru* without a second thought, and direct your intense devotion to attain the true-form of *Nija* (self) while understanding the true-form of *Jina* in the *Atma*.

The existence of Atma and

The devoted practice on the three-fold path acquaints you with the Self and helps you attain the true-form of *Jina*. This is also the foremost and highest goal of a *Jiva* - after achieving the true-form of the Self, to reach the state of *Jina* through an intense effort. All of us have the state of *Jina* lying in our Soul. All those souls which are great and noble are preparing to become *Jina*. The greatness rests only after attaining *Moksa*. The intense effort of a *jiva* is on until *Moksa* is attained.

The *Sadguru*, who inspires a *Jiva* on the right path, has been eulogised here for the attainment of that state. The company of the sages - *satsang* - is so potent that it can lift a *Jiva* and place him in the category of *Jina*. The transformation in the life of King Shrenik is a living example of the potential of *satsang*.

King Shrenik put in devoted prayers at the feet of *Bhagwan Mahavira*. He did it in such a way that the ability to become a *Tirthankar* arose in him. A delinquent or a sinner can become noble, a virtuous man, can give up his sins in the company of the sages. But whether it is attempting to become a sage in the company of the sages or a *Tirthankar* by propitiating the *Tirthankar*, it indeed, is an uphill task. King Shrenik did this very thing.

Shrenik was an opposer of the Jain religion to begin with. But when he turned this way, there arose in him such a unique devotion for *Bhagwan Mahavira*, such a staunch faith that he propitiated Him with all his strength. Propitiation is not merely faith or respect, but a devoted practice with all the strength that a *jiva* is endowed with. Its result is bound to be unique. Shrenik had physical and mental strength; in addition he was endowed with immense financial strength. He was a King and hence wealthy.

But look how he made a business of earning commission in piety while propitiating at the feet of the *Tirthankar*! He just sat

at the feet of the Lord, prayed to Him, heard the sermons and arranged for the Lord to observe *chaturmas* (the four months of rains) at Rajgruhi for fourteen years. Not just that, he always lamented his inability in getting ordained. When he saw the many fortunate *jivas* accepting ordainment after hearing the Lord's sermons, his own queens and princes being ordained, while he himself experienced the inability to get into the order, the sadness within him reached the peak and he was in a turmoil.

He began earning commission from piety. He made his financial strength available to everybody and facilitated those who desired to get ordained. The finest noble thoughts that resided within him took him on the path of becoming a *Tirthankar*. That is, he earned the *Tirthankar Nam Gotra* karma, and now he is bound to become *Tirthankar* just like *Bhagwan Mahavira*. In this same *Bharat Kshetra* (region), in the coming *Avasarpini* age, he will be the first among the future twenty-four *Tirthankars*. Thus because of the company of a *Tirthankar*, he will be a *Tirthankar*.

The power of the good company did have another result - *Shrenik* achieved True Faith, he experienced his Soul. His earlier actions had already bound him to a life in hell and hence going to hell was inevitable. The scriptures tell us that he did go to hell but endured the intolerable torture in peace. The true faith that resided in his soul kept him from sensing the miseries. How could they? Misery is after all misery. The same miseries that affect the *Mithyatvi* - मिथ्यात्वी - (one with a wrong faith) also affect the *Samyaktvi* - सम्यक्त्वी - (one with true faith). But -

ज्ञानी के अज्ञानी जन, सुख-दुःख रहित न कोय
ज्ञानी भोगवे ज्ञानशुं, मूर्ख भोगवे रोय ।

*Enlightened or ignorant, none escapes the sorrows and joy,
The prudent suffer with wisdom, while the foolish suffer and cry!*

By this rule the vision of the one with true faith would have undergone a change. He does not look upon sorrow as sorrow.

He always remembers, 'I have to suffer for the Karmas that I have accumulated. No one has given me sorrow. These karmas are my own invited guests'.

The *jiva* binds himself in Karmas through attachment and aversion. That is when the feelings of attachment and aversion arise in the soul, there is a sort of vibration. Due to this vibration the karma-particles lying around us are also activated and attracted upon the soul. This is what we call the bondage of karma. Now these karmas when they attach themselves to a *jiva*, they immediately create in it various sorts of abilities. The karma-particles are inanimate. They do not know when they have to rise and offer results to the *jiva*. But at the very moment when the Karma is bound, the situations develop in the *jiva*.

Two situations are predetermined. One is called *Abadha Kal* - अबाधा काल - the period between the bondage and the rise of Karma; the second is the length of time for which that karma has to be suffered. Thus the karma arithmetic is all determined. There can be no changes in it. The reason for such situations developing for karma are our own feelings. Thus, it amounts to saying that we have ourselves invited the Karmas to come at a particular time, and accepting our invitation they promptly arrive on the dot at our door. Therefore the karmas that have arisen are like invited guests who have arrived.

Brothers! Tell me! How happy you are when those you have invited arrive! How you look after them! With what love, and respect! How respectfully you honour them, felicitate them! When they arrive you don't make faces, don't show your boredom. Just the same way the prudent *jiva* welcomes the arisen karmas with a smile, knowing well that they were of his own doing. He does not lament their arrival and as such the extreme torture of hell is also borne with an equanimity and considerably reduces the bondage of new karmas.

Do consider this! Most often when people are surrounded by suffering from all sides; when physical, mental, financial, household, social - all worries attack together, they say there is nobody in as much agony as they are. Why don't they say nobody has done such things, committed such sins or hurt others so much as they have? One who understands this, his vision undergoes a change, he does not consider sorrow as suffering and does not hold others responsible for his plight. He thinks, 'Well, the karmas that rise are on the way out, so rise they may. After all the ones that get destroyed, I will not have to suffer them in future.'

Brothers! This change in the vision of looking at things is essential. Let us change the way we are used to, in evaluating the activities, incidents, the advantages and the disadvantages. After all changing the vision is *Samyag Darshan* - true faith, as a result of which the *jiva* develops the ability to absorb both favourable and detrimental situations.

The King Shrenik is in the hell, yet he has taken with him the true faith, hence, he will pay for and settle all the sins and will not open a new account of sins. After completing that life he will be born again in the *Bharat Kshetra* as a *Tirthankar*.

The idea of relating this episode is to emphasise that *satsang* - good company of the sages - is a very strong device for the upliftment of the soul. Look, where the properly served *Guru's* feet can take you! You become like the one at whose feet you seek refuge. If the quality is lying within us, we are bound to become like him. That is why the *Guru's* feet have been eulogised everywhere.

But in this *Dusham* (दुष्म) age, full of sorrow, there cannot be a *satsang* always. *Dusham* age has also been interpreted to say that here the chances of devoted practice will not be available always, there will be no *satsang* everyday. So what does a *jiva* do in such times? *Srimadjji* has a solution for it -

आत्मादि अस्तित्वनां, जेह निरूपक शास्त्र,
प्रत्यक्ष सदगुरु योग नहि, त्यां आधार सुपात्र १३

There are no chances of finding a *Sadguru* in person, good inspiration is hard to come by and the awakening of the soul is not to be overlooked. What should a worthy *jiva* do in such a situation? The answer is a recourse to good reading. Draw succour from those scriptures in which the existence of the soul and other substances has been proved and analysed. At the same time try to read, understand, contemplate upon the good literature wherein experimental and essential guidance is provided and try to solve the mysteries emerging from them.

The usage आत्मादि ‘*atma* etc.’ is meant to reflect both the Soul and non-soul i.e. the inanimate and all other substances. In the *Dashavaikalika Sutra* too, it is said -

जो जीवेऽवि विगणइ, अजीवेऽवि वियाणइ ।
जीवाजीवे वियाणन्तो, सो हु नाही संजमम् ॥

One who knows the animate - *jiva* and the inanimate - *ajiva*, and can differentiate among them, is the one who can understand tolerance.

First of all know the animate. ‘I am animate, I am the soul and my existence is permanent’. Along with the existence of the soul, the inanimate also exist.

In the Jain tradition, the existence of six substances has been accepted. Among those, *Jiva* alone is animate and the rest five are inanimate. *Dharmastikaya*, *Adharmastikaya*, *Akashastikaya*, *Kal* and *Pudgal* - all these are inanimate. Of these, the first two, that is, *Dharmastikaya* and *Adharmastikaya* are in the form of energy which is not visible to the naked eyes, but useful for both the *jivas* and *ajivas*.

Dharmastikaya is instrumental in causing movement. We walk with the strength of our legs. But to walk, ground support is necessary. However strong the legs may be, but in the absence of ground, we cannot walk on thin air. In the same way, along with the ground and the legs, if the invisible support of *Dharmastikaya* is not available, we just cannot walk. Whenever any animate or

inanimate being moves from one place to another, this invisible force is involved. Science too has accepted this force.

In the same way, *Adharmasitkaya* is also a force and it is instrumental for the *jiva* and *ajiva* remaining stationary. In our sitting, standing, sleeping and such stationary postures, along with our body and place, *Adharmastikaya* is also responsible. For both *Jiva-ajiva* substances *adharmastikaya* offers the support of stability. Had this force been missing from the Universe no *jiva* or *ajiva* would have remained stationary ever.

We can neither see both these forces, nor can we feel them in any other way. But we have to accept them in faith. These principles are proclaimed by the omniscient supreme soul and hence there is no reason why we should disbelieve them.

The third substance is *akashastikaya*. *Akash* - sky - *avakash* - space - empty space. The word *akash* immediately draws our attention upwards. We immediately point our finger skywards. But what is it? Empty space. Infinite sky. There is sky in the *Loka* and in the *Aloka* there is only sky, nothing else. The sky has to provide space for the *jiva* and the *ajiva*.

The fourth substance is *Kal*. What is *Kal*? It is only a transitory substance that cannot be held down by any force. It keeps passing by along with the movement of time. We say 'time has gone by'. But have we seen where to? Of course, we have tried to catch hold of time, tried to measure it with the pace of the Sun and the Moon and for our own consolation developed the measures of hour, minute, second, microsecond, nanosecond and so on through which we established the arithmetic of days, months, ages, *aras* and *avasarpini-utsarpini* and the cycle of times. In spite of all this we cannot hold down even a single second nor can we experience it. We have considered the changes in the *jiva* and *ajiva* that occur with the continuous transition of Time - *Kal*, and tried to understand Time through it. But no worldly *jiva* has ever been entirely successful in it. Only the

omniscient have been able to know and see this formless substance.

We may understand these four substances in principle. But they are neither detrimental nor conducive to the Soul. But now we have the *Pudgal* substance to understand, the ignorance of which is the root cause of this whole worldly life.

The spread of the Universe is all on account of the *Pudgal* substance. There are two types - *Rupi Pudgal* (*Pudgal* with form - that can be seen) and *Arupi Pudgal* (formless *Pudgal* - that cannot be seen). What can be seen and felt with the senses, accepted and brought into use in our worldly life, what can be acquired and given up with effort are all *Rupi Pudgal*. But there are so many other *Rupi Pudgal* substances which are not discernible to the senses in spite of having form. Among them the most important is Karma.

The Karmas have a timeless relation with the Soul. That has to be broken, the Atma and the Karma have to be separated. For this we need to know the natural and the affected transitions of both.

Every substance is subject to transition. Since both *Jiva* and *Ajiva* are substances, they are undergoing a continuous transition. The natural transition of the *jiva* is to go back into the form of knowledge etc., of its Self. The primary form of *Ajiva* is a atom. The atom keeps mutating within itself into colour, odour, taste, touch and form and that is its natural transition. But with the impetus of reasons, *jiva* and *ajiva* both take on the affected transition.

When the *jiva* gets the impetus from attachment and aversion, it transits in to that form. Under the influence of attachment and aversion the *jiva* gets affected in the form of stratum of birth, the senses, passions, *leshya*, *yoga* and *veda* etc.,. That is to say, owing to attachment and aversion, it binds itself in those respective Karmas and as a result of the rise of those

Karmas, acquires the birth and other properties. This is the affected transition of the *Jiva*.

In another way, our activities of mind, speech or body are mostly subject to attachment or to aversion. If we analyse all our activities, we would realise that not a single activity is without the influence of attachment or aversion. Either one of those feelings is connected always. So to say they are mixed in the hue of attachment and aversion. This mixing is the affected disposition and it results in the bondage of karma and sets up a chain reaction of further affected disposition. Thus with an interaction with Karma, the *jiva* is transformed into the affected transition. When it becomes free of all karma, the affected disposition is removed and it transits in to its natural disposition.

At this point let us wait to ponder. We always say, 'The feelings of attachment and aversion that arise in me, the passions like anger that overcome me, are all the result of my Karmas. Even when miseries come in, they are the result of the rise of my Karmas, the result of my sins. Had the Karmas not been there, I would not have been in misery at all.' Thus we blame our destiny and our Karmas. But what is Karma? Of what and of what sort is this transition?

Karma is inanimate, it is Pudgal. In its original form, it is nothing but an atom. But when it merges with other atoms to form a cluster of two, three, numerous, innumerable or infinite atoms, that is its transition into affected disposition. The infinite number of atoms abounding in the atmosphere of this entire *Loka*, are always in a free transition towards their natural disposition. But when they form a cluster, the *Pudgal Skandhas* (पुद्गल स्कंध) - group of atoms - get attracted towards *jivas* due to the *jivas*' feelings of attachment and aversion. Or shall we say, the *jivas* attract the *Pudgal* with their attachment and aversion. The *Pudgal Skandhas* that get attached to the *Jivas*, transit into various forms. Those are -

1. *Audarik* Body (औदारिक शरीर), 2. *Vaikriya* Body (वैक्रिय शरीर), 3. *Aharak* Body (आहारक शरीर), 4. *Karman* Body (कर्मण शरीर), 5. Mind (मन), 6. Language (भाषा), and 7. Respiration (श्वासोच्छ्वास).

The worldly *jiva* attracts particular *Pudgal Skandhas* from time to time and they get transformed into particular forms. That is, the *jiva* is responsible for the transition of the atoms into the affected disposition.

We blame the Karmas for the imperfections that arise in us, but the transition of the *Pudgal* into the affected disposition of Karma was the result of the *jiva*'s transition into the affected disposition. Our attachment and aversion attracted the *Pudgal* from outside and transformed them into Karma, that was the transition of the inanimate *Pudgal* into the affected disposition in the form of Karma. In its original natural disposition, it does not have the ability to offer any result to any *jiva*, but we have given that ability to the *Pudgal*. That is to say, before the Karma could make us imperfect, we have rendered it imperfect. Had we not developed that ability in them, they would not have given us the misery and torture.

Although the worldly life is built only when the *jiva* and *ajiva* both transit into the affected disposition, but just as they unite they also split and that leads to the *Moksa* of a *jiva*.

Taking up the existence of *Atma* and other substances, we studied the six substances. Let us now also consider the nine elements.

One is *jiva* and the other is *ajiva*. We have already considered these two while studying the six substances. Apart from these the seven elements are - 1. *Punya* (पुण्य), 2. *Papa* (पाप), 3. *Asrava* (आस्रव), 4. *Bandha* (बंध), 5. *Sanvar* (संवर), 6. *Nirjara* (निर्जरा), and 7. *Moksa* (मोक्ष). In the '*Tattvarthadhigam Sutra*' *Punya* and *Papa* have been clubbed under *Asrava*. Hence, let us understand *Asrava* first.

Asrava is the inflow of Karmas into the soul through good and bad feelings. That which flows in through good feelings is

Punya and that which flows in through bad feelings is *Papa*. *Asrava* occurs when passions mix with the yogas of the mind, speech and body.

The *Bhagwants* who laid down the scriptures have explained *Asrava* with a simple example. It is akin to a lake that remains filled in spite of water being drawn from it for use. The reason is there are a couple of perennial springs at the lake-bottom. In the same way, in the lake-like *Atma*, senses and mind act as the springs through which the karmas keep flowing in. As a result, although this *Atma* has been suffering the karmas from infinite time, it is not yet free from them.

All those countless karmas which the jiva has suffered in the infinite past have risen, given their result and been destroyed, separated from the *atma*. In spite of this the jiva has not become free from karmas, for as the process of suffering karmas continues, the process of bondage in karma also does.

In a lake there may be a couple of springs but here all of five streams are flowing in continuously carrying a drop at a time. The droplets of water in the mountains flow down together in the form of springs and go on to take the shape of a mighty river in which millions of cusecs of water flows.

Brothers! Ask this Soul! How many good-bad feelings it expresses with every passing moment? And how many karmas does it bind with those feelings flowing through five streams? What should be done? Simple, stop that stream! How do we do it? It is not a fluid which can be stopped with a cement dam.

If you want to empty the lake, first plug the springs at the bottom, and then either let the water out or allow it to dry under the Sun. Ah! Even if you use up the water, the lake is bound to dry up. Well, in just the same way, the *Asrava* which is flowing onto the *Atma* in the form of *punya-papa*, comes through the feelings. So, this should be the approach to stop that. In fact, you need a stronger resolve and that is called *Samvar*.

The five streams through which *Asrava* flows in are - *Mithyatva* (मिथ्यात्व) - wrong beliefs, *Avrat* (अव्रत) - ignoring covenant, *Pramad* (प्रमाद) transgressions through ignorance, *Kashaya* (कषाय) - passions and *Yoga* (योग) - situational.

The feeling that stops the stream of *Mithyatva* is *Samyagdarshan*, which appears at the fourth *Gunasthana* or shall we say the *jiva* reaches the fourth *Gunasthana* the moment this feeling appears. Once the fourth step is reached, the Karmas that bind you due to *Mithyatva* - misplaced faith - are stopped.

To stop *Avrata*, there is the *Virati* (विरति) feeling. *Deshavirati* (देशविरति) includes the Layman's (follower of Jainism) vows (श्रावक व्रत) and *Sarvavirati* (सर्वविरति) includes the Ascetic's vows (साधु व्रत). These thoughts of vows, which arise as a result of reaching the fifth-sixth *gunasthana*, result in the stoppage of karmas binding because of *Avirati* - *avrata* - ignoring covenants.

The *jiva* in the clutches of the five *pramadas* - transgressions through ignorance, continues to bind karmas even after reaching the *Virati* feeling. This stream gets plugged, is stopped when the *Apramatta* (अप्रमत्त) state, that is getting engrossed in the true form of the Soul, is reached. The seventh *Gunasthana* is that of *Apramatta* feelings. Once that step is reached, the karmas that generate from transgressions cease to bind.

It is necessary to be totally free from passions, to stop the karmas that bind because of passions like anger etc.,. Once the passions leave, the *jiva* is in the twelfth *gunasthana* and then the bondage of karma is a mere namesake.

The last stream of *asrava* is that of *Yoga*. After attaining *Kevaljnana* at the twelfth *gunasthana*, there still remains a trickle of *asrava* through the *Yoga* of mind, speech and body, which of course, binds only twice.

पढमसमए बद्धं, बिइयसमए वेइयं, तइयसमए निज्जिण्णं, ते बद्धं ।
पडुं उदीरियं वेइयं निज्जिण्णं सेयाले य अकम्मं यावि भवइ ॥

At the first instance it binds, at the second it inflicts, and at the third it self-destructs. Thus after the chain of bind - touch - rise - hurt and self-destruction of karma, the *jiva* becomes free of Karma. Then as the Yoga is dissolved and the *Ayogi* state is reached, the *jiva* immediately attains *Moksa - siddha* state.

Thus, to stop the five types of *Asrava*, the *jiva* needs to get into five types of *Samvar* feelings. With these thoughts the *jiva* attains purity and at the end *Siddhi*.

The binding of karmas that arrive due to good-bad thoughts, with the *Atma* is bondage - *bandha* (बंध). It is not that both are literally tied up together. But the *jiva* with karma attracts karma and karma gets attached to karma to form a shroud over the strength of the *jiva*. The *jiva* does have the strength to break this shroud and emerge. If the *jiva* desists from feelings of attachment etc., and remains in its true-form, in the natural disposition of knowledge, then the karmas just cannot come and attach to the *Atma*. But the *jiva* which transits into affected disposition tends to attract karma and later behaves as if it is entirely in the form of karma itself.

Such behaviour of the *jiva* has led to the belief of the bondage of karma and *jiva*. It has been explained with the similitude of the binding of milk and water or iron-ball and fire. The soul and the karma have merged as if milk with water. But with effort they can be split. The fire that enters the iron-ball can also be separated by dipping into water. Similarly the *jiva* can also be freed from Karma. This is the plus point of the *jiva*.

The principle of *Nirjara* (निर्जरा) is exclusive to the Jain tradition. None of the theistic philosophies of India have been able to explain the concept of *nirjara* in spite of having accepted the *Atma* - the soul and *Parmatma* - the supreme soul.

Nirjara is withdrawal. When withdrawal is incomplete it is Partial (आंशिक) *nirjara* and when the withdrawal is complete it is

Total (सर्वांशे) *nirjara*. There are karmas on the soul. When they rise, they are suffered and discharged. The miseries get discharged as they are suffered in dependence. The withdrawal that occurs on account of penance - sacrifice etc., done inadvertently is all *Akam* (अकाम) *nirjara* in which there is no *Samvar*. When with the firm belief that 'I am the Soul, pure, spotless, without the affliction of even a single atom', there is the experience of the true form of the Soul, and subsequently a stability in the same feeling, it is a strong *Samvar* and results in such a profuse withdrawal of karmas that they start flowing away and cannot stay with the *atma*, their stay becomes impossible, that is *Sakam* (सकाम) *Nirjara*, where *Asrava* is stopped and *Samvar* occurs.

These two - *Samvar* and *Nirjara* are the only answer to *moksa*. Firstly *Samvar*, followed by *Nirjara* and resultant *moksa*.

The last principle is *Moksa*. What shall I say of *moksa* - Freedom? Where there is bondage (*bandha*) there is freedom (liberation). Since the *jiva* is in bondage it can be liberated. Total release in all ways, for always from the karmas is liberation - *Moksa*. In Srimadji's words -

एक परमाणु मात्रनी ना मळे स्पर्शता,
पूर्ण कलंकरहित अडोल स्वरूप जो;
शुद्ध निरंजन चैतन्यमूर्ति अनन्यमय,
अगुरू लघु, अमूर्त सहज पद रूप जो अपूर्व . .

That's it! Attainment of such a true-form is *moksa*.

Thus having known, considered and understood the six substances and nine principles properly, it is necessary that we make the analysis of *heya*, *jneya* and *upadeya*. If there is no scope of personal company of the sages, if you do not get a chance to find a *Sadguru*, under such circumstances the worthy *jiva* can perform his own penance with the support of the scriptures that concentrate upon renunciation and self-realisation.

The method of self-study will be handled later.

. . . . Desist deviating from faith!

The pursuit of the three-fold path is the only way of achieving the true-form of the Soul. Experiencing the true-form of the self and enjoying the bliss from that experience is the duty of the *jiva*. Hence it has to awaken the faith that 'I am the Soul, and I have a permanent existence' as has been told in the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*'. For only when there is the existence of the Soul, can there be an effort to realise it. Had there been no soul then why would we bother with this effort? Those philosophies in our country which do not accept the soul, do not have anything to say about effort - penance.

If there is Soul, there is also Karma. If there is Karma, there is also sin and virtue and if there is sin and virtue, there are also hell and heaven where their fruit is to be experienced. Once the existence of all these is proved, hell or heaven are both undesirable for the *jiva*. If you do not desire hell, then do not desire heaven either. For heaven is also a worldly life. Since the goal of the *jiva* is not worldly life, heaven is also to be avoided.

Thus a worthy *jiva* can stabilise itself in the absence of a *Sadguru* by depending upon the scriptures that prove the existence of *Atma* etc.,

Here in the *Gatha*, Srimadji has used the term 'worthy' (सुपात्र). Why so? The 'Sri Nandi Sutra' says - if the best *Agamas* fall into the hands of an unworthy, misled *jiva*, they can prove damaging to it. But if the same *Agamas* are studied by a worthy *jiva*, they prove very beneficial to it. Hence, a worthy *jiva* alone can discover the mysteries of the *Agamas*. By using the term *Supatra*, he has indicated that the *Shastra* is for worthy *jivas* only. At another place Srimadji has said -

पात्र विना वस्तु न रहे, पात्रे आत्मिक ज्ञान;
पात्र थता सेवो सदा, ब्रह्मचर्य मतिमान् ।

What happens when our digestion is poor, and we continue to eat everything? We suffer indigestion, take ill and sometimes may even die as a result. First of all correct the digestion and then eat the heavy stuff. Brothers! The concepts of philosophy are not easily digestible, they too require worthiness, the ability to digest, only then can they be digested.

If at present we lack the ability, an effort should be made to awaken it. Seldom is a divine soul born with the worthiness as a result of the effort done in previous births. *Aivanta* a child-sage was born with this worthiness. He took off with Gautam, and offered himself at the feet of a great *Guru* - Mahaveera. After being ordained as a *Muni*, being a child, after all, he once made the mistake of playing with a leaf-boat in water which has life in it. But his inherent worthiness turned this mistake of his into a gift. *Bhagwan* asked cryptically -

“*Aivanta*, should we be doing this?”

With great remorse, and in repentance, *Aivanta* said, “What shall I do, O Lord?”

“Son! Take the vow of *Iriyavahi padikkami* (इरियावही पडिक्कमि)!”

And Brothers! With a sincere feeling, to repent, to purify, to rid the soul of all torment, *Aivanta* performed the rigorous penance of *Iriyavahi* and with the subjugation of the *Mohaniya* and *jnanavarniya* karma, he was endowed with the knowledge of eleven parts, his inner sight opened. This was his greatest worthiness.

We are under the great burden of karma. There is not even a semblance of worthiness in us. In the past (births) perhaps there might have been a good opportunity. But we have lost the bet. Now how long do we continue to lose? How many births do we pass in the same way? If there is even a little sense, an understanding in us, let us make an effort to attain that worthiness.

‘I may or may not be benefited in other ways, but let me at least become worthy of following the order of the *Veetarang (Tirthankar)*’; awaken this feeling at least. Awaken such an interest within your Self that ‘come what may, even if I am unable to attain a knowledge like *Avadhi* or *Manahparyaya*, even if I am not endowed with any special powers; Why! even if I cannot perform a severe penance, I shall at least ensure that I make my Soul worthy’. Ah! Those rigours one has to go through to become worthy!

Clay lying around in pits, is in the form of clay and it cannot be called a pot. Oh how the clay suffers before it becomes a pot! One doesn’t find clay blocks lying somewhere. They have to be dug out of the pits, and that means first of all the clay has to bear the brunt of the pick and the shovel. Where are we lying about? Infinite number of jivas are lying around in the pit like Universe. We are also bound in the indulgence of sensory passions. Our benevolent sages, try to pick us out with the strike of their words of advice. Let us keep those words in view and rise out of the pits of indulgence.

The Potter takes home the clay that has been dug from the pits, pours water into it and then tramples it, kneads it to make it smooth and tacky. Pebbles are all picked out and then the clay becomes suitable for the wheel. Oh what tolerance! Worthiness comes only after first suffering the strike of the pick and then getting trampled by the foot. Brothers! Why has the Lord mentioned the ‘22 *Parishahas*’ (परिषह्)- 22 repeated sufferings - for a *Sadhu*? Why has he not called them sorrows? परि is ‘again and again’ and सह is ‘to suffer’. With repeated suffering one goes on awakening the tolerance within.

This *jiva* has not learnt tolerance at all. It gets only perturbed whenever unfavourable circumstances arise. Hungry and missing food; thirsty and missing water; hot summer and bothering heat; cold winter and bothering chill. Can equanimity be maintained

then? Immediately the struggle begins, the search for the means. But have you ever thought - ‘So many people fast, so many poor cannot find anything to eat, and they tolerate it. Why not I watch for a while as to what happens to my body and mind if I do not eat?’ But even before the body the mind gets perturbed. Mind is more bothered.

But at such times tell the mind, ‘Keep your cool! Why should you bother? It is the stomach that wants, why should you interfere? I want to put myself to test’. Nobody passes without a test - ask the children here! Don’t they have to write an examination? In the same way, if we have to achieve tolerance, we have to pass the test. Just as for us the *parishahas* are the measure of our tolerance, for you in the worldly life there are sorrows which may perhaps be more than twenty-two; suffer them in equanimity and that will build up your tolerance.

Many people ask us, ‘Why do you pluck your hair by hand and punish your body so much?’ But to us it is like a meter. To measure the extent to which our attachment with our body has diminished, the Lord has asked us to perform the *keshalocha* (plucking of hair) every six months. Even when one hair is pulled the pain is excruciating. It is not that during *locha* there is no pain, but the equanimity with which it is endured is to be watched. The measure of the *jiva*’s attachment is deduced by monitoring the feelings at that time. So, the more the *jiva* endures, the more its worthiness develops.

The smoothened clay is taken on to the potter’s wheel, the wheel begins to rotate and after first setting the wheel in motion, the potter begins to shape the block of clay with his handicraft. Rotating with the wheel is not less painful. The various mental worries that arise in our mind also set us on a wheel of sorrow. And in our rounds of the eighty-four (the number of births is so many lakh species), we are always on the wheel and turning. Just as this block of clay cannot get down from the wheel until it

shapes up into a pot, the *jiva* doing its rounds on the wheel of eighty-four, has to be born into lesser-higher species, suffer the sorrows in *akam nirjara* and where it is possible to get a true teaching along with the penance and sacrifice, to perform *sakam nirjara* with restraint. This alone can help it rise higher, sooner and enable it get off the wheel of eighty-four.

Do you know? Does the pot get off the wheel on its own? No, it has to be sliced away by a thread, only then can it get off. Similarly, the *jiva* too has to suffer the sorrows that hurt and inflict. The moment it gets off the wheel the pot has to endure the heat of the sun, after which the potter taps it with a tool to give it a perfect shape. Brothers! Even we are tapped by our benevolent sages with the tool of advice, but if we take it lightly we are not going to be shaped as we should be. The haphazard shapes of passions and tendencies that tend to indulge in us, are what the sages' tool tries to tap us for. But do we really want it? Or do we like only somebody who makes sweet talk and praises us?

And now the last test of endurance is the most important. To pass through the fire of the kiln and come out unscathed, without even a single crack. Even a small hole is not acceptable, and if it is there, then all that has been endured so far is a loss. It will not even be worth a shell. Same goes for us too. If the affected disposition cannot be given up in spite of penance - renunciation - vows - restraints - prayers, if we cannot stabilise in our own natural disposition, if our idea of finding the joy of the Self in others is not abandoned, then it is all a waste like pouring over an upturned pot. But, if we learn the natural disposition and learn to recognise the Self, then we have passed.

Brothers! If you happen to go buying a perfectly made pot, and tap it, how very resonant it sounds. Only such a pot is lovingly bought and taken home by somebody and filled with water, which, when it cools, quenches the thirst. Brothers! After passing

through the tests of tolerance - forgiveness - equanimity - magnanimity - generosity and such virtues, we too begin to sound quite different. We will be able to satisfy the *Guru*, give him happiness at whose feet we will be offering ourselves after we remove our attention from material goals to the goal of the Self. After that, all scriptures that we read are bound to give us a better perception.

When there is no occasion to find a *Sadguru*, a worthy *jiva* must read scriptures that prove the existence of *Atma* etc. After this direction, Srimadji tells us what is to be done next -

अथवा सद्गुरुए कहाँ, जे अवगाहन काज,
ते ते नित्य विचारवां, करी मतांतर त्याज १४

Having lived in the company of the *Sadguru*, having personally received his advice several times, if there is an occasion where you cannot continue to be with him, your self-study has to continue always. Otherwise, the attractions of the worldly things are so strong that they succeed in drawing the *jiva* towards them. Hence, study those scriptures which the *Sadguru* has indicated and in a way he has told. Meditate upon only those scriptures which contain the essence of knowledge and offer the keys to stabilise the *jiva* in the Self. Books that attract the mind towards them, which excite the passions of the senses have been forbidden forever.

The word '*avagahan*' (अवगाहन) - diving deep - has also been used here apurpose. You may only read five lines a day, but try to delve deep in them to unravel the mysteries they hold. And the same lines have to be read over and over again. If you read once and proclaim that you have read a lot, it has no value.

Once a person with all vices approached a *Sadhu* and said, "*Maharaj!* I have read an entire library, that contains 3,500 books! Tell me, can somebody read all so many?"

“Brother! What difference has that brought into your life? How many vices have you been able to give up?”, asked the Sadhu.

“But, *Maharaj!* What has reading got to do with vices?”

“Well, Brother! You are not a man, you are a walkie-talkie Library! There is no difference between you and a Book-case!”, was the Sadhu’s wry comment.

Brothers! This is not ‘*avagahan*’. Think after you read. Churn after you think. That churning turns it into the life’s essence, and that is *avagahan*. Hence, in the scriptures, two words have been specified for self-study - वाचना and परियट्टणा . What is read should be repeated again and again. Of course, regularity and persistence are two prerequisites. Only then will the read principles affect the soul.

After that in the last line it is said - करि मतांतर त्याज ; this needs a special understanding, a deeper thought.

Ordinarily, a man tends to believe the religious tradition followed by the family in which he is born, to be the best. He has not accepted a religion with an understanding. It is not often that one is taken up with the superiority of a religion, and then accepts it as the best. Each follower, of the various religions-faiths-sects that are there in the world, considers his religion to be the most superior. We ourselves say everyday that no religion is like ours. Ah! It is not that you alone say so. Ask any Muslim, he will tell you that followers of Islam are pure, all others are impure, kafirs!

Not only that, man tends to nurse a dislike towards others religion. But ask an impartial person to decide which religion is the best. What does he say? It will be necessary to look into the life of a person who follows a certain religion, before you can certify it to be superior. That religion which brings in a spiritual change in the life of a man is the greatest! Can we put our life to

test before anybody? If no, then what right have we to call our religion true and the other religion as false. Today we believe the religion followed by the family we are born in, as the best. Had we been born in another family, perhaps this religion may not have seemed so great, and then would you call the other one great? We talk without understanding the essence of the religion.

Let us consider another angle. Any religion is always superior. Whatever is inferior cannot be religion. But the superiority - inferiority or the high - lows that we discuss could be relating to the community. But we have not been able to identify the difference between religion and community! We take the community itself as religion, but community is not religion, it is only an arrangement, and there can be good-bad principles, customs in it. There could be internal differences, differences of beliefs within it.

There are so many religions in India. We need not talk of all of them, but let us consider the communities within the Jain religion. First there was the split of *Digambers* and *Shwetambers*. Then in the *Digambers* there came *Vispanthi*, *Terapanthi*, *Taranpanthi* and such other communities. In the *Shwetambers* there came to be so many communities like the *Murtipujak*, *Deravasi*, *Sthanakvasi*, *Terapanthi*, *Songadh path*, *Srimad Rajchandra's path* and so on. All these differences relate to communities, not religion. Religion cannot be split. It cannot be partitioned. Nobody can make pieces of a religion.

Brothers, pardon me! But, among those of you here, there are some *Sthanakvasis*, some *Deravasis*, some follow the *Songadh path* and some others believe in *Srimad Rajchandraji*. The *Sthanakvasis* believe their religious tradition to be true, the *Deravasis* say they are true, and others? Others too say they are true. But I would say that all are wrong. *Deravasi* is not a religion. *Sthanakvasi* is not a religion. *Songadh* or *Srimadji's* sects are not religions. They are mere communities, and there are bound

to be variations, differences in the rituals, customs, beliefs and thinking, between communities.

Let us consider the reason for these. Whenever a new community developed, it is invariably with a rebel cause. Whenever differences of opinion arise due to the customs and rituals in the community in which we have our faith, they lead to disunity of minds and that takes the shape of a rift. The rift leads to a new community. There is bound to be some difference between the new and the original. If I were to start a new community because I do not accept your customs, your traditions, then I would have to form a new set of rules and regulations. Although there is no difference in the fundamental principle; in fact there cannot be one.

Yes, in the Jain tradition, there has been a remarkable characteristic that in spite of the many split communities, the fundamental principle, the belief is not disputed. All the communities have a firm belief in the absolute freedom of the Soul and accept that the soul can become the Supreme Soul. Not only that, the basic theories of *Shaddravaya* (षड्द्रव्य), *Navtattva* (नवतत्त्व), *Ashtakarma* (अष्टकर्म), *Chaturdash Gunasthana* (चतुर्दश गुणस्थान) etc. are accepted by all of us. If at all there is a difference, it is in the external customs.

So Brothers! What I want to say here is that if we stop mixing up our communal beliefs for religion, if we can discern between religion and community, then there will be no need to start the ‘I am right, you are wrong’ argument. The statement is as simple as saying, “One whose yearning for the Soul has awakened is right, and one who is indulging in the worldly affairs is wrong”.

In addition, one who does not understand the implied meaning of the last phrase of this *Gatha*, gets it all wrong and is confused. Srimadji said - करि मतांतर त्याज - not to mean that you should change your community. It's not as if because you were

born as a *Sthanakvasi* it is a wrong one, or if you were born as a *Deravasi*, it is a wrong one. It is not the question of changing communities. But the reference is to the discarding of your misconceptions and wayward beliefs that arise out of not understanding the accepted principle, customs and mysteries of the community which you follow. Discard the differences! It is not asking you to change your community, but there are many ignorant jivas who mistake it as saying that the community into which they were born is not perfect, so they abandon it. Then the fools go on to say that their religion is different from ours. Oh those fools! Can religion differ? Are we all souls and you inanimate? We both are souls, then how can the religion of the soul be different? But do they want to get to the truth at all?

Brothers! Pardon me for using harsh words, but the one who does not understand the principle, does not recognise the religion of the Soul, goes on to change the community out of ignorance. As if changing the community too has become a fashion of the day. What would you call such ignorant people? This act of changing the community is no different from shifting the dead-man's litter from one shoulder to another. If one shoulder tires and if the weight of the litter is shifted from one shoulder to another, it makes no difference to the dead-body. It remains dead. In the same way, if the person changing the community cannot achieve the goal of the Soul, if he cannot awaken the dormant energy within him, then of what good is the change?

Brother! The Lord Jineshwar has asked us to understand the principle and follow it. If your curiosity is strong enough then wherever you are, in whichever community you may be, you can know, understand, contemplate and perform while being there. Well, if you are prepared and worthy, you do not have to go looking for it anywhere.

Test the principles that your intellect and imagination have accepted, and regularly study the scriptures and the principles

which your *Sadguru* has stated. Always repeat them. With us there is a tradition of self-study of the scriptures. Not only in the Jain tradition, but in the other Indian traditions too, there is a custom of getting the child to learn the scriptures by heart from a very young age. At the beginning he may not understand, but as the age advances the understanding also develops. So the scripture is learnt and he does his self-study. Later when he begins to understand the principle, there is contemplation. This contemplation impresses upon the Soul. Along with the other impressions that are made upon the *jiva*, it is necessary that these impressions are made too.

For this, one who first studies and then develops a craving for it, reads a thousand, two thousand or five thousand *gathas* every day and contemplates upon them and thus develops a craving. Just as a craving has developed for the body after having been attached to it from infinite time, in the same way if you attach yourself to the religious scriptures you will develop a craving for them too. The body which remains on your mind even when you sleep is after all discardable but the craving for the principle is worthy of respect.

If after discarding the foolhardy beliefs of our own, we constantly delve deep into the scriptures told by the *Sadguru*, then the goal of the soul will remain awakened. The next duty of the *jiva* will be explained soon . . .

If Jiva desists from self-conceit

The various types of abilities required in a *Jiva* desirous of pursuing the three-fold path have been mentioned in the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*'. From our analysis of what has been told so far, we infer that first the greatness of the *Sadguru* has to be understood and then one has to dedicate oneself totally to his feet. Absorb the essence-truth in the *Satsang* of his personal presence. If there is no opportunity of the *Sadguru*'s personal presence, then delve deep into books and scriptures that arouse a greater faith in the principles of *Atma* etc., that focus upon Self-contemplation and advice inspiring renunciation, repeatedly contemplate upon them, repeat them often, transcend beyond the realm of the intellect into the depths of the *Atma* with them, so that they naturally come into your practice.

Now Srimadji mentions the prerequisite for ensuring the certainty of attaining *Moksa*. Only if this is done, will there be *Moksa*, not otherwise. He says -

रोके जीव स्वच्छंद तो, पामे अवश्य मोक्ष,
पाय्या एम अनंत छे, भाख्युं जिन निर्दोष १५

If *Moksa* is desired, then self-conceit i.e. acting according to one's own wish, has to be given up. *Jiva* has this habit from infinite time. It is accustomed to moving upon its own opinion, its own intellect. And it has been believing that what it does is right, as a result its self-conceit has not been overcome.

What is self-conceit - *svachchanda* (स्वच्छंद)? स्व means the Self and छंद is an addiction. One's own addiction, own opinion, own obsession, that is the senseless pride remaining within, the ego. In short, getting everything done to one's own choice is self-fancy.

Here somebody may counter that can't every person live as per his intellect? One can only think as far as his intellect is developed. Whether a literate or an illiterate, the area of their

intellect is limited to the self. Well, that's all right. But what if the person claims that he would accept only that idea which settles in his intellect, notwithstanding who has given it to him? 'It may be something an ordinary person has said, but I would accept it if it is understood by my intellect, or it may be something an intellectual has said, but I would accept it only if the principle can be digested.'

But let us ask him - what is the capacity of your intellect? Have you measured it ever? Quite often we find people saying, "whatever I do, I do it with great understanding and thought", whether it is a matter of their own family or of the society, but every person says so. If all were to be understanding and thoughtful, then why should there be such chaos? Hasn't somebody gone wrong somewhere? But will the ego allow this fault to be acknowledged?

Just as this goes on in the field of worldly affairs, the self-conceited *jiva* believes so in the spiritual field too. *Jineshwar* has said the two substances inanimate and animate are independent. One substance can do nothing for the other. In spite of it the *jiva* believes, "I can do a lot for many. Not only can I do, but I also know it all. What is it that I do not know? I am an all-rounder!" Such false-pride is the self-conceit of the *jiva* on the spiritual path. The self-conceit keeps him from recognising the true principle. Where there is I, I and only I, how can there be faith in what the sages say?

If a *jiva* has to really understand the principle, he has to adopt the view of a scientist. For years there are discoveries being made in the scientific laboratories. Whenever a new scientist makes an entry into his field, he first properly understands all the principles of the discoveries made by his predecessors. Goes deep into them to study and progresses with a belief that those principles are true. Then on his own merit he may even make new discoveries, but he never thinks, "Is my intellect lower than any? Why should I rest on the principles propounded by

somebody?" He works, learning from the experience of his predecessors.

In the same way, with us, while referring to attaining the scientific knowledge of the self, not mere knowledge (ज्ञान) but the term scientific knowledge (विज्ञान) has been used. This use implies that, 'you should go deepest within yourself and conduct a research. Who are you? Of what sort are you?' Only from these can you arrive at the true principle. But before you do this you will have to accept in full faith, the essence of the experiences of our learned sages. If we are unable to believe what the Omniscient said, if we are not able to digest all the principles he propounded, it is because we are accustomed to evaluating them only with our intellect. But that's not how it should be. Just as you accept so many things in good faith in your practical life, you will also have to accept the basic principles in good faith.

Nobody tastes poison before accepting the fact that poison kills. It is believed from others' experience. That is why, as the saying goes, 'Poison is not to be tested'. So only when our faith in the words of the *Veetaraga* awakens, our attachment for things will subside, and the false pride will vanish. This faith is the most priceless treasure of our Soul. But how terrible are these times! A person who does not have faith in religion, who does not believe in the Omniscient, proclaims from the roof-top that he does not believe in religion. What irony! The biggest parody is that he takes pride in the place where he should be shameful. It is a reverse flow. This itself is the self-conceit of a *jiva*. And where there is self-conceit, there is bound to be egoism. So understand this, that a conceited person is always egoistic.

An egoistic person cannot accept anything spoken by others. If we were to speak of topics other than spiritual principles, the universe is full of a variety of things. We have not been able to measure them all. In spite of these things being perceptible to our senses, have we been able to know them all? You may read

many magazines, you may have all the devices to know the universe, there may be the radio, the TV might be getting you a lot of information, but still you would not know about all the principles; for however sharp our intellect may be, it is but using only about ten percent of our mental ability. The remaining ninety percent is packed - dormant. So how can we measure the universe with such a feeble power?

In the same way, the principles of the realm of the spirit are larger than the Universe. So then how can the path of devoted practice be measured with intellect? Hence, place faith in the words of the sages and make an incessant effort to understand them, to investigate them. But do not disbelieve them simply because you do not understand the principles. The *jiva* has to keep his mind open always. Our generosity and magnanimity should be growing. If the doors of faith are shut and the padlock of vehemence put on it, then principles can never be understood, self-conceit can never be overcome and false-insistence can never be removed.

Three reasons why the self-conceit of the *jiva* is not overcome, have been mentioned here. Firstly, whenever somebody tries to explain him something, he says, 'I know a lot, understand a lot. What can you tell me? I know everything, I can do everything'. There is no bigger ignorant than the one who believes so.

Secondly, the extent of attachment towards material things like money etc., is much more than towards a *Satpurush*. Search within! Where and to what extent is the attachment? What fraction of the attachment that you have for wife-children-family, do you show towards the *Guru*, the Sages? Brothers! Unless a true love emerges from within towards the sages, the world cannot be avoided.

Let us recollect Bharat Chakravartin here. Many of the happenings in his life indicate the state of his mindframe. Several situations in his life tell us how aloof he was in spite of all the glory and power of his empire. His love for the worldly life was

next to non-existent. In spite of being in the worldly life he was untouched by it.

Bhagwan Rishabhdev, Emperor Bharat's father had become a monk and was wandering in an effort to attain the *Kaivalya-Lakshmi* (omniscience). It was an year since and Bharat Chakravartin was seated in his palace when the Minister came in with the good news, "O Emperor! The *Chakraratna* has appeared in our armoury". The Emperor was filled with joy with the knowledge that he would soon rule the world and that divine weapons would assist his victories. It is said that Gods assist an Emperor in various ways. Presenting the *Chakraratna*, a very strong weapon, is one of those. Whoever possesses it can never be defeated. Bharat got the tidings. As a rule, soon as the Gods gift this weapon, an elaborate *Puja* has to be performed.

Before Bharat could think about this, a page-boy from his private quarters came to break the good news, "O Emperor! You have been blessed with a boy-child". Bharat was delighted. At a King's place, the birth of a boy-baby is an occasion of great revelry. In the worldly life there is no joy greater than the birth of a son. Even a commoner celebrates the birth of a son in a big way, so a King, of course should be doing it with great paraphernalia. Before he could order the page-boy . . .

. . . Citizens came in saying, "Greetings, O King! The first *Tirthankar* Shri Rishabhdev has attained *Kevaljnana*!". Bharat stood up in excitement and joy. He was overjoyed. The aura of the *Tirthankar's kevaljnana* had appeared in *Bharat Kshetra*! As he was about to leave, the Minister said, "O King! First propitiate the *Chakra Ratna*. It is your most important task. The *Chakra* will not remain without a *puja*. Every other thing must wait - first the *Puja*".

Bharat wondered, "Where do I go now? What do I do now? To the *puja* first, or to celebrate the child-birth or to the Lord's *Kevaljnana* Celebrations?" As Bharat wondered, the Chief

Minister said, “O King! You should first of all, perform the *puja* to the *Chakraratna* and then after announcing the celebrations for the child-birth, start preparing for it”. Bharat thought, “All these are material affairs, the *jiva* has enjoyed them ever so often and will do it again, but where can I get this opportunity of attending the *Kevaljnana* celebrations of the *Tirthankar* again? My Lord has been endowed with *Kevaljnana* after thoroughly purifying his soul, I should be performing *pujas* at his feet first.” Setting all business aside, he reached there, bowed before *Tirthankar* Rishabhdev and participated in the *Kevaljnana* celebrations.

Brothers! Tell me, where should he have gone? You are seated here in a religious gathering, so you may say that he should have gone to the Lord’s *Kevaljnana* celebrations. But what does your mind say? ‘First of all the *Chakraratna*, that is offering the *Chakravarti* status, should have been propitiated. Ah, the *Kevaljnana* has already been attained, will it go away now? And of course, the entire town will be going over to attend the *Kevaljnana* celebrations. Ah, the devas and the Indras will also be there. What if Bharat alone does not attend?’.

If such a situation were to arise in your life, wouldn’t you think the same way? Especially when it is to do with the religious field you would certainly say so. ‘Why should I alone be doing all this? Isn’t there anybody else? What harm will come if I were to abstain?’

Brothers! You have all heard the Birbal-Akbar anecdote. The tank was to be filled with milk, instead it got filled with water. Everybody thought, ‘All other citizens are bound to bring in a cup of milk, what if I were to add a cup of water’, and they took advantage of the night. The next morning there was only water and not a drop of milk in the tank.

Think! This instance occurred hundreds of years ago. But human tendency has remained the same. Have you changed?

You will say, “Yes, we have become not just modern, but ultramodern”. The exterior living habits, dress codes may have changed, but the internal tendencies have remained much the same. Ah! They have become narrower.

How far shall I say? You neither want to get into religious activity nor let anybody do it. If somebody has awakened to a faith in the religion, if he is getting into devotional feelings, if he is trying to get a *Satsang* with the sages who have come to town, he immediately becomes an eyesore for you. You say, “Aha! What a religious act you are getting together! What do you with the Sages? You seem to be spending the entire day with them.” How prejudiced! How narrow-minded! Where will it take you? These are the worldly tendencies that do not let you get away from self-conceit.

Brothers! Bharat did not have a love for the material world, he had his love in the Lord. So, one who has a greater love for the worldly affairs cannot escape self-conceit. Isn't that our predicament?

I ask you, didn't Bharat have any responsibility towards the worldly life? In spite of that he gave the first priority to his love for the Lord. Whenever I say something to you, pat comes your reply, “*Mahasatiji!* What do you know, how great our responsibility is? Don't we have to manage it? You don't realise how our responsibilities are.”

How do you say we don't understand? Have we dropped out of the sky? We have come from amidst you. We have seen it all and we know what responsibilities the worldly life has, what limitations you have, we know it all. But when you don't want to do it, you say, “We have responsibilities. Every minute counts”.

Hold on! I do not believe your every minute counts. I do not believe that you spend every minute thoughtfully. Light entertainment costs you three to four hours. Aha! Sometimes the whole night is spent. A few of you get together and start chatting

and time just flies! You settle down with playing cards and how many hours pass? Where is the count? You are liars! Of course, if you spare time here in the assembly or in some religious work it counts. Brothers! Do not feel hurt. But meditate deep into your inside and ascertain where your attachment is. Whether in the worldly affairs or in the *Satpurush*. If you place the same interest that you have in the worldly life, in the *Sadguru*, in the path showed by him, your self-conceit is bound to disappear.

The third reason is the false prestige! Fear of adverse publicity. What if somebody says something about my becoming very religious, about my frequent company with the Sages. You are afraid of THIS! Now, what do I say? Should I thank you? You are simply great! You are so bothered when you get religious, but have you ever thought while entering a Bar, what if someone says something? What about the prestige then? Oh! If I can go on to say something more. Brothers! My words may sound harsh, but they are true. Don't misunderstand me.

But somehow I have been unable to get myself over this since I heard it. Followers of Mahaveera, baton holders of *Ahimsa*, categorising yourselves as pure Vegetarians, how are you really? Are you pure Vegetarians? Then how do you go into hotels that cook Non-vegetarian food? On top of it you go on to praise them saying Veg and Non-veg are cooked separately there. Have you ever seen their kitchens, their utensils? Where has your passion for tasty foods taken you? Oh! I know it's not tasty food that draws you there, as much as the prestige of eating at such places. You believe your prestige rises. What a base feeling working here! If you are upto this today, what will your children do tomorrow? Today in the big cities, sons of the rich families eat and take pride in eating Non-veg. Where will all this end?

Brothers! This is not merely from the viewpoint of religion. Just consider the practicality of it. Where are you now? Wherever you are now, your next generation is bound to step lower down,

bear this in mind. Then you will be sorry. There will be nothing left but regret and it would still be very late. You can neither return nor get your children to turn back. But the society has made such false paths as means to achieving false prestige and you have taken to them. How can religion arise then? How will dharma touch your insides? And if it does not, then of course, there is the wheel of eighty-four!

Such degraded thinking and the ignorance of the greatness of religion, keeps a man from turning towards religion. He thinks what if I attract adverse publicity? What will the people say? And those who really do not want to pursue religion, do not do it themselves and condemn others who do. As a result afraid of being censured, one who pursues religion tends to run away from it and the sages.

Thus these three reasons keep the *jiva* from giving up self-conceit. But there can be no elevation of the *jiva* without giving up self-conceit. Srimadji says -

पाय्यां एम अनंत छे, भाख्युं जिन निर्दोष

The *Jineshwar Bhagwan* who has become *Veetarak* by discarding attachment and aversion, has said that the *jivas* in the past, that is infinite *jivas* who attained *Moksa*, did so only when they gave up self-conceit and developed a dedication for the *Satpurush*, trudged the path shown by them, discarded all fear of prestige, never bothered about adverse publicity, gave up egoism and possessiveness and walked the true and noble path. That is the only way a *jiva* can attain *Moksa* in future too.

Brothers! Here we are discussing the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*'. Srimadji has placed a precondition that to attain *Moksa*, self-conceit should be discarded. If this is acceptable only then talk about attaining *Moksa*, not otherwise.

So now, in the next gatha Srimadji tells us what effort is essential to put a stop to the self-conceit that has been with us since infinite time.

Sadguru's personal touch . . .

To pursue the three-fold path, it is essential for the *jiva* to seek refuge with a *Sadguru*. Without *Sadguru's* refuge there can be no path in sight. Until now, since *Sadguru's* refuge has not been found, the *jiva* is wallowing in self-conceit, and has decided about the principles with his own understanding and imagination. *Dharma*, the means to *Dharma*, the devoted practice of *Dharma* and the result of *Dharma* - we have been believing all these matters as and how our intellect has accepted them.

Hence, we have to seek refuge with the *Satpurush* who has experienced the truth - *sat*. Srimadji says -

प्रत्यक्ष सदगुरु योगथी, स्वच्छंद ते रोकाय,
अन्य उपाय कर्मा थकी, प्राये बमणो थाय १६

When does the desire to avoid self-conceit arise? When the self understands that 'my behaviour under the influence of my intellect is improper. The reason why my sorrows have not been removed until now is also my self-conceit.' 'Now I want to be free from my sorrows' - he who is so determined within, finds self-conceit pricking him like a thorn, and he naturally exclaims -

आज सुधी हुं रह्यो गर्वमां ने, मागी मदद न लगार
आप बळे मार्ग जोडने चालवा, हाम भरी मूढ बाळ
हवे मांगुं तुज आधार प्रेमळ ज्योति

But where is such eagerness? Mostly a *jiva* believes that what it does is right, as such even when he is in the *Satsang* of a *Sadguru* he does not give up his vehemence. Even while listening to the advice, he will absorb only that which sounds convenient to him, and if something is not convenient in spite of being true, he will not accept it. That is, since he goes in with a biased mind to hear the *Gurudev*, he is unable to receive anything from him.

The situation is like that of the ant which is carrying a grain of salt and expecting a sweet taste out of it. If sweetness is desired,

then the salt has to be removed from the mouth. Brothers! In practice we know this well, we do not have to be taught. Assume some inedible thing is filled in a glass jar, what would you do if you wanted to fill it with some edible stuff? First of all you would empty the jar and then clean it up in such a way that not even the smell of the earlier stuff remains. Only then would you fill it with the other stuff. Let me take a simple example. It is winter. You are having breakfast. First you take a sweet tonic, and then it is tea-time. But you would not take tea immediately. You would prefer to have some spicy snack before tea. Why so? If you were to straightaway drink tea, you would not have found it tasty. It would have tasted flat. So if you want to enjoy the taste of the tea, you first change the taste in your mouth.

Brothers! These things do not need to be taught. But when you come for *Satsang*, only if you come in without the tastes of the worldly affairs, vehemence, wrong beliefs in your mind, will you find the Sage's advice interesting and acceptable. The ego lying within the *jiva* itself does not allow the advice of the *Sadguru* to be absorbed. Hence, you must abandon ego and seek refuge with the *Sadguru*.

Brothers! The opportunity with the *Sadguru* can be termed successful only when the interest in worldly affairs diminishes and the yearning for the goal of the soul increases in his company. When you listen to the advice, do not do so simply for the sake of it, but with a deep thirst to receive something, to achieve something out of it. Oh! You may be running a business, conducting a trade to manage the householder's duty, but the feeling within should be, "O Lord! When do I get the first chance to quit all this?" The *Satsang* can be fruitful only when the worldly life feels like a trap.

But shall I speak the truth, Brothers! Do you really feel like giving up business? Do you feel like restricting it or expanding it? What would you like? Would you back out if you had a

chance? Progress, progress and then say I can't manage. But dear Brother! How can you? You are alone and the task has expanded five-fold. But that is unquenching thirst, that is greed!

I remember a brother from Mumbai, who came for our darshan at a village in Maharashtra. They were just husband and wife and had a business that had grown far and wide. He had offices in cities all over the country. He didn't have even a moment to spare.

I asked him, "Why have you expanded your business so much? Don't you have enough to keep you both happy?"

He replied jocularly, "*Mahasatiji*! There is enough to run not one but three births!"

"Then why do you expand the business more?"

"Well, it's like a hobby with me."

Ah, look! What a hobby the *jiva* has? Divert that pursuit! Those pursuits which make you sin, which increase your greed, which unnecessarily get you punished, give them up and divert your energy towards the *atma*. Develop a hobby for *satsang*, for reading, a hobby for the vows and observances. Brothers! The other brother had a good time coming, so he changed the area of his hobby. Now he spends very little time on business and more in the search of *atma*.

I am not to get engrossed in the worldly affairs, but should regret the fact that I do what I do because I have it to do, but it is something I do not want to do. My life is the order of the *Sadguru* in his refuge, that is my *dharma*. When such a feeling pervades day and night, it is said to be the experience with the *Sadguru*. Only when the *jiva* can accept the *Sadguru* as the totality, can the self-conceit be avoided. Sages have said -

भव एक जो राजी करे, सत्युरुषने सहवास्यी,
एनी बधी इच्छा प्रशंसे, रोम-रोम उल्लास्यी;

पंथर भवो माहे ज तो तुं पामशे मुक्ति सही,
गुरुराज अनुभव गंग सहजानंद रसथी लहलही

Sages tell us, “You have so far wasted infinite births in the pursuit of your worldly affairs, in the interest of your passionate activities.” Wherever and whenever the *jiva* has gone, it has done precious little other than enjoying the sensual pleasures. It does the same by itself and inspires others to do the same. We do not recollect the things that we did in the many births that have gone past. But let us consider the present birth! What have we done in the years that have gone by in this life? We have spent the entire life in providing everything that the body demands, and in providing for the family that is attached to us. Don’t you feel you have lost the precious years that have passed?

You struggle night and day. You say, “I do not do it for my sake alone. I am worried about my family, I have do it for them.” But let me ask you - it is true that you are worried about your family, but in what way? In one good way, you provide all the facilities that your children need while growing, provide them good education. If its a girl, you find a good match for her, or in your words a wealthy match, and get her married. If its a boy you educate him, set him up in business and get him married. That’s it! You are through with your responsibilities, aren’t you? Don’t you exclaim - ‘Poof! Am I relieved!’ ?

Dear Brothers! Did you do everything that you were dutybound to do as parents? You may say ‘Yes’. But I say NO!

Did you expose your children to religion? Have you inspired them in any way to turn towards the Soul, after they complete all their responsibilities? If no, then your duties are unfinished. When will you tell them about religion? When you fully retire from a busy life? But then you would be infirm and the grown up children may not accept the culture of religion. If at all you want them to learn about religion, you have to catch them young. Now would

you agree? You were young when your children were in their childhood. That means it was you who never thought of religion, never felt the yearning for the soul, were never bothered about spirituality. Then how could you offer your children any exposure to religion? Well, this is how we lead our life. You spent your life in earning and enjoying the joys and comforts of your body and mind. Your children have learnt the same from you.

You have spent not one but infinite such births. Even after arriving here, after hearing the words of the *Veetarag*, what are you doing? You sit here like the liquid in the strainer, for a moment filled with the juice of *Vairagya*, and then absolutely empty! Back to square one!

No, Brothers, no! This should not go on. Let's begin the day now that you have arisen. Let us for this once search the *Satpurush* and dedicate ourselves to him, remain in his refuge and appease him. Only this one life! But how do we appease this *Satpurush*? His order should fill every pore in us, we should be always prepared to carry out his orders. Now the best question is, whom does the *Gurudev* order? He only orders the one for whom there is the feeling of affection in him, a feeling of doing good; the one whom he wants to uplift. Only that *jiva* who is fortunate enough and who is not under the weight of karmas, can have such a good fortune. Hence, one should be pleased from within while carrying out the orders of the *Gurudev*.

The *Gurudev* sometimes uses soft words and sometimes harsh. But he always has your well-being in mind. To get the *jiva* that has been going in the wrong direction from infinite time, to the right path, he is forced to use those words. We speak of 'mother's bitter medicine' don't we? Who else can be more worried about the child than its mother? So, whatever be the order of the *Gurudev*, carry it out to your best.

When the occasion comes to carry out the orders of the *Gurudev*, it should invoke happiness in your every pore, carry

out the order with a feeling of joy, with the firm belief within you that it is but for my benefit. Appreciate the fact, “How fortunate I am, that I have the strength to pass the first step towards devotion.” First comes the devotion to *Guru*, then the pursuit of the three fold path.

I am reminded of a historical event. There is a special place in the history of the world, for Napoleon Bonaparte. He was a great commander. His leadership was wonderful. He was such an adherent of discipline that no soldier could transgress his orders. Anyone making the smallest of mistakes would be punished to death.

Once he was on a march with the army, bringing up the rear. He was passing orders and the army was marching ahead. It was a very long march. Hundreds of soldiers marching on followed by Napoleon. The file of soldiers came across a deep gorge. There was no road ahead. But the soldiers had their orders to march forth, and to stop for nothing. And lo, Brothers! How surprising! Soldier after soldier started falling into the gorge but nobody uttered a word or said, “But Sir! There is a gorge ahead, no road.”

Thus, many soldiers fell into the gorge. Napoleon wondered all of a sudden as to why the lead-marching soldiers were not visible. He ordered them to stop and rushed his horse to the front. When he saw the deep gorge into which the soldiers had dropped, he was overcome with grief.

He spoke to the soldiers, “I did not realise there was this gorge on the way. I kept on ordering you to march ahead, but should you not have told me that there was no way ahead?”

“No, Sir! Ours is to religiously follow your orders. Ours is not to stop, be it in the face of death, valleys, forests or whatever. We know nothing but orders!”

Brothers! This was the discipline of an army, their culture. They accepted death but never raised a voice against the order of their Commander! Consider this! We only have to follow orders for our own uplift in the spiritual field. So what commitment, what culture, what dedication? Unless there is a total dedication, there cannot be a subjugation to order.

Amongst us, when somebody gets avowed into the shravak or sadhu vows, a usage appears in the text - जावज जीवाए - *javaj jivaae* - (till death do us part). That is like saying, the vow that I am taking now, I shall observe with such dedication, such firmness, such sincerity that if I may well have to die, then I will, but I shall not be diverted from my vow!

Brothers! What are these vows? They are the orders of the *Jineshwar*, our great *Acharyas*. We need the preparedness to imbibe them into every pore and follow them happily. What will be the result? ‘ पंधर भवमां मुक्ति ’ - Liberation in fifteen births - The *jivas* following the orders, do not have to wander for long. Their worldly existence gets limited. Hence, the self-realised person says here that he has attained the natural bliss that has sprung from self-experience like the holy water of Ganga. So he is able to affirm strongly that if this much is done, then *Moksa* is certain, there are no other strings attached.

Here we have an inspiration to overcome self-conceit with succour from the *Sadguru*. Like we have read before, self-conceit can be overcome only with the dedication to *Gurudev*. But if this is not done then - अन्य उपाय कर्या थकी, प्राये बमणो थाय - Efforts on your own to overcome self-conceit, are bound to fail and even likely to enhance the problem.

There are many who think it is below their prestige to go to the feet of the *Sadhu-Sants*, or to serve them in their troubles. Their ego is hurt. Such people may well be having faith in the religion and the religious principles, may well be reading the

scriptures, contemplating upon them and understanding the principles, but they lack the humility to seek refuge at the feet of a *Sadguru*. That is, they so believe that they can follow *dharma* sitting right at home and eliminate their shortcomings by recognising them; so there remains no necessity of seeking refuge with the sages.

What a great ego! In spite of doing everything necessary, the ego remains as it is. If it has not reduced even by a fraction, how will it take the right path? Thus the self-conceit does not dissolve, but the ego gets fed and fattened. That which is fed increases, does not decrease. If you take ill and if there isn't enough immunity in you, you take such medicines that increase your immunity and can fight the germs. How alert you are about the ailments of the body!

But this is a scourge which has attached itself to the soul from infinite time. And we have been feeding it. Why! We not only feed our ego, but like to go to places where our ego is fed! What do you say about our tendency? It is because of this ego that great *jivas* are yet wandering in this world, collecting sorrow in worldly life. Is this ego worth feeding or worth discarding? Let us understand it and try to eliminate it.

Hence Srimadji says - There is no uplift without the refuge of the *Sadguru*. The self-conceit will not be removed without his refuge. So go seek refuge and follow his orders. Those who do not follow the orders are liable to have an increased self-conceit.

Perhaps you know this story. A criminal was once accosted and jailed. His offence was proved and in punishment he was to be flogged. He had been warned not to speak and that his punishment would be doubled if he spoke.

When he was brought out to be flogged, he was told that he would be flogged ten times.

‘Oh! So many times?’

‘Twenty!’

‘But why?’

‘Forty!’

‘Oh God! I will be dead.’

‘Eighty!’

And thus, he went on talking and his punishment doubled. Brothers! Your self-conceit goes on doubling each time you transgress the orders of the *Gurudev*. Ask your self? How many times have you transgressed the order? You transgressed once, your self-conceit doubled. Thus every second we do the same thing. The Lord has delineated both the *Shravaka Dharma* and *Sadhu Dharma*. If we do not follow this *dharma* then we are self-conceited.

But no, we do not want to remain self-conceited any more. So if we have an opportunity to be guided by a *Gurudev* or *Satpurush*, let us be dedicated at his feet and dissolve our ego.

How a *jiva* dedicating itself to the feet of a *Guru* and breaking the shackles of self-conceit, is benefitted will be related in the following pages.

True faith for him is foretold

The pursuit of the three-fold path acquaints one to the difference between self and the others. The ways of going about the devoted effort to achieve that difference have been indicated everywhere in the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*'.

Only when beliefs generated by own understanding and imagination are given up and the attention is directed towards the *Satpurush*, an unflinching faith is placed in him and his words, can one follow him in a proper manner.

Amongst us, such great *Satpurushas* have been called 'आप्त पुरुष' - *apta purush*. The word '*apta*' has been used in all the Indian philosophical traditions and volumes have been written upon it. There is a treatise by name 'आप्त मिमांसा' which analyses in detail as to who can be termed an '*apta*' from the spiritual view. Who is '*apta*'? One whose words, as they emerge from his experience, are always worthy of respect, emulation and pursuit is called an '*apta purush*'.

In the practical life, our parents, elders and the aged are our '*apta*'. They have gone through many good-bad experiences of life, they have understood life, accepted it and evaluated it. They guide us on the ideal path of worldly life from their own experience. If we lead our life in accordance with their guidance, we will certainly be happy.

In the spiritual path, the words of those experienced great men who have experienced the Soul, who have attained success on the path of devoted practice in spite of the hurdles in their way, are worthy of respect for us, and to us they are the '*apta purushas*'.

Whether it is the path of worldly life or the spiritual path, there are bound to be hindrances. The path of worldly life is not so easy. In the worldly affairs, at every step so many types of difficulties crop up. So many people get to experience all sorts of hardships at a very young age. They say, "I have seen and

experienced a great lot in these few years, gone through a lot of ups and downs.” At such times the elders, the parents are a great help. They build confidence and courage in the youngsters telling them how they emerged successful out of such hardships. They also show the way for coming out of the difficulties.

In the spiritual path too, the hardships are not few! There too at every step difficulties keep cropping up. Firstly as the effect of the ignoble thoughts that we have nurtured earlier starts showing up and secondly, through the poor quality of our virtue. Both these reasons are instrumental in hindering the devoted pursuit.

The *Prabhu* has described the feelings that arise in the third *gunasthana*. That *gunasthana* is called mishra, where there is neither a taste nor a distaste for the words of the Jina. The *jiva* in whom such mixed feelings reside is said to be at the third *gunasthana*. Presume a noble soul, owing to his faith in the sages, is on his way to visit a sage for *darshana*. He meets a friend on the way. The friend asks, “Which way are you going?” The first man says, “There is a saint in town. He is very venerable. You too should join me, come on!” And the friend agrees. Both are on their way when a third man meets them. He too asks the same question, “Which way are you both going?” The first man says, “To bow before the saints”. The third man is a very misguided fellow. He holds no interest for saints. He looks at the second friend and says, “Look, this fellow is mad! Are you too? Come with me. Nothing is going to come out of your visit there, come!” And the second friend turns back.

Now the second one who turned back is said to be of mishra - mixed - feelings. When the first friend offered to take him to the saint he agreed, and when the misguided fellow asked him to turn back he again agreed. He missed seeing the saint. Look at the hindrance! This hurdle! On the path of religion, such obstacles keep cropping up. Only the ones, who save us from such obstacles and guide us on the true path, are to be called ‘*apta purush*’.

When inspired by such people, there arises within, an intense interest, an intense eagerness and a strength of determination. The feeling of 'do or die' takes firm root. 'Come what may, difficulties, enticements, but I shall not turn back. I shall not deviate from the path' such unflinching faith alone can lead a *jiva* further.

The largest obstacle in the spiritual path is self-conceit. We have been describing self-conceit over the last few pages. That self-conceit can be overcome only when an unflinching and unshakeable faith is placed in the words of the *Jineshwar*, of the *Satpurush*.

Ganadhar Gautamswami asked a thousand questions to Lord Mahaveer. The *Prabhu* answered each one of them, and when Gautam got satisfied he would exclaim, तमेव सच्चं, तमेव सच्चं - You alone are the truth. Every time Gautam asked a question, he did so after he bowed before the *Prabhu* and saluted him. It is said in the scriptures that each time Gautam put a question, he first chanted the तिक्खुत्तो - *tikkhutto* prayer and bowed before the *Prabhu*. How many times would he have saluted the *Prabhu*? Gautam would question with such humility. The *Prabhu* would answer. If Gautam did not understand, he would ask again and the *Prabhu* would explain again with the same feeling. And when Gautam would get satisfied, he would spontaneously exclaim, from the bottom of his heart - You alone are the truth.

Prabhu, you alone are the truth! These words of Gautam indicate that the *Prabhu* was residing in every pore of his. This is it! When such feeling, such faith, such unflinching belief arises, it is possible to be immersed in the *Prabhu*. Then where will the self-conceit stay?

Here I am reminded of a story from Mahabharata. Satyabhama always used to complain to Sri Krishna, "O Lord! Whenever I hear you, you seem to be chanting the name of Arjuna. What is so special in Arjuna? Why is he so close to you?"

It is a tendency with us to expect a reciprocation of our love placed in somebody, to the same measure. Not just that, we even wish that nobody else becomes more beloved to that person, than us. Is that possible? But Brother! Love is not won with a lawsuit or a right, it is a natural feeling. It is a feeling that springs from within.

Satyabhama also had the feeling in mind that Sri Krishna should not love anybody more than her. So she said to Krishna, “It is true that Arjuna is a great archer, but does it mean you should be chanting his name all the while?” Krishna only smiled in reply. He thought that time alone will answer her question.

It so happened after some time that Arjuna had dozed off on a bed. Not far from him, Krishna and Satyabhama were busy talking. Suddenly, Krishna happened to look at Arjuna. Arjuna’s long hair was trailing on to the floor. On seeing that, Krishna told Satyabhama, “Go Satyabhama! Straighten Arjuna’s hair and place them on the bed. Be careful, that he doesn’t wake up!”

Brothers! What love Krishna had for Arjuna?!

Satyabhama went to Arjuna. She very carefully picked up his hair and as she was about to place them on the bed, she abruptly stopped. She seemed to be stunned and unable to move for a while. Krishna saw it all and understood. When Satyabhama came, Krishna smiling to himself, asked her, “Satyabhama! What took you so long? It should not have taken you more than a moment. What happened to you?”

“O Lord! It was a great surprise.”

“Why, what happened?”

“O Lord! When I picked up his hair and was about to place them on the bed, I heard a chant of ‘Sri Krishna’ ‘Sri Krishna’ emanating from them. I was stunned.”

“Was that so, Satyabhama? Did you really hear it?”

“Yes, O Lord! Please forgive me! I always felt that there could be nobody more beloved to you than I, and I would not be able to bear it. But today I realised that you are residing in every pore of Arjuna. Even in the deepest sleep his hair is chanting your name. What devotion he has for you!”

Brothers! Krishna had settled within Arjuna. That is the same way in which *Jineshwar* should settle in our every pore and an unflinching faith should arise towards the *Satpuruṣh* walking the path shown by *Jineshwar*. Only when an intense readiness arises to walk the path delineated by him, can we experience the soul. In other words it may be called *Samyag Darshan*. -

स्वच्छंद, मत आग्रह तजी, वर्ते सदगुरुलक्ष,
समकित तेने भाखियुं, कारण गणी प्रत्यक्ष १७

Srimadji has asked us to give up self-conceit, misguided opinions and vehemence. Brothers! This must be making you wonder why there is so much reiteration of the same matter. Since how long have we been reading of renouncing self-conceit! That is because, all the time that the *jiva* has spent so far has been in self-conceit. To rectify the mistake of several births does it suffice if we mentioned it but once? To get us to improve, it needs to be told over and over again.

The watch you use has to keep moving from second to second. That is, it has to tick. It ticks 60 times in a minute, 3,600 times in an hour and 86,400 times a day. If the ticking stops, the time gets stuck for us, for our count. To proceed further, the ticking of every second is necessary. In the same way the *Satpuruṣhas* remind us again and again.

They say that you should awaken for your own sake. First accept that your self-conceited. Then you will realise that self-conceit is totally rejectable and that as a remedial measure, it is inevitable that you find a refuge at the feet of a *Sadguru*. Then walk the path shown by the *Sadguru*. That's it! If you do this,

the greatest shortcoming in you - your ego gets flattened. The moment the feeling of accepting refuge awakens, the ego starts melting. For it is impossible to accept refuge with somebody unless you become the most unassuming.

The ego lying in the *jiva* keeps showing up whenever, wherever it likes. The 'I am somebody' feeling never dies.

Once upon a time in a village, a lady was going somewhere. She was accosted by another coming down the way.

The latter asked, "Where had you been?"

"I had been to your house asking buttermilk, but your daughter-in-law said there was none," said the former.

"What! Did my daughter-in-law say so? Come, come along with me."

The latter took the former again to her house. After getting in there, the latter turned towards the former and said, "There is no buttermilk". The former was stunned. She said, "Hey, what is this? This I had learnt from your daughter-in-law too. I thought you pulled me along because you had buttermilk and she did not know about it."

The latter said, "No, it isn't that. There never was any buttermilk. But since when did my daughter-in-law take over the rights to this house? How could she tell you that there was no buttermilk. Am I not here? How can she say no while I am here? I had to teach her a lesson, so I brought you back."

That is what you call EGO! What a false pride! These trifles give us the measure of the human mind. Brothers! In all of us, there are many such egos. In truth, there is but one ego, but it is habituated to going in several directions. To break this ego, Srimadji has ordered us to place our engrossment in the *Sadguru*.

This engrossment has been called *samakrit* - समकित -. At this point, let us deliberate a little over *samakrit*.

There are two types of *samakit* - *vyavahar* (व्यवहार) and *niscaya* (निश्चय). *Vyavahar Samakit* is the proper faith in the three principles of *Arihant Deva*, *Nirgrantha Guru* and the Compassionate Religion delineated by the *Kevali*. It is said in the *Tattvartha Sutra* -

तत्त्वार्थश्रद्धानं सम्यग् दर्शनम् ।

Niscaya samakit is the faith that is the self-experience, the knowledge of the Self is *Guru* and application of that knowledge is Religion.

The same idea has been expressed in other words by Shri *Sahajanand Swami* in his poetry -

सम्यग्दर्शनं देव मेरे, गुरु है सम्यग् ज्ञान,
आत्मस्थिरता धर्म मेरा, साधन स्वरूप ध्यान

What the *jiva* has to achieve or shall we say realise is *Niscaya Samakit* which is in the form of *Atma*, the experiencing of *atma* and the feeling. All this is the experience of the *atma*. But before and along with the internal effort that is done to achieve it, there has to be a practical effort too. This practical effort is called the *Vyavahar samakit*.

First in it, is the interest in order. Unless there is a liking for the order of the *Apta Purush*, the path cannot be found. As has been said before, the great experienced sages are the *Apta Purushas*. *Kalikal sarvajna* Hemachandracharya has said while eulogising *Prabhu Mahavir* -

श्री वर्धमानं जिनमाप्तमुख्यम्

The most important among all *Apta Purushas* is Shri *Vardhamana Jina*. That is the great *Prabhu Tirthankar*. He has experienced with his soul, all the feelings that clearly appear in *Kevaljnana*. Hence, his speech expresses the supreme true principle. Hence, he is *Apta*, and if we do not have the opportunity, then those who have realised the self on the

Tirthankar's path - the *Ganadhars*, *Kevalis*, *Purvadhars*, *Labdhidhars*, *Nirgrantha Munis et al* are the *Apta Purushas*. If we were to march to their order, *Samyag Darshan* will not be far.

In principle too, there is the need for the *Apta Purush* in attaining *Samyaktva*. *Shri Umaswati* has said in *Tattvartha Sutra* -

तन्निर्गदधिगमाद्वा ।

Several *jivas* attain *Samyag Darshan* naturally - *nisargat*, that is to say there is nothing or nobody instrumental for it. Several other *jivas* attain it by some means - *adhigamat*.

When a *jiva*, who is misguided from infinite time - who has not even a touch of *samyaktva*, whose ignorance continues, who has never experienced the soul - attains *samyaktva* for the first time, it is either because the *Tirthankar Prabhu* or some *Satpurush* is instrumental. It has to be in their refuge, because of the devoted practice on their order. That is, whether we call them *Apta Purush* or *Sadguru*, only when we get engrossed in them can we attain *Samyaktva*.

Secondly, if such *jiva* - who has once been touched by *samakit*, who has accepted the self-realisation - becomes misguided, or loses *samakit* due to the rise of some *mohaniya* karma, it does not need any more instigation to resume the effort for attaining *samakit*. If there is some instigation, such a *jiva* will make the effort at a faster pace. If there is no instigation, it takes long to attain *samakit*.

So in this *gatha*, the feeling of the *jiva* engrossed in the *Sadguru* has been called *Samakit*. That is only because an interest in the order of the *Guru* is a direct instigation for attaining *Samakit*. Hence the effect has been lodged in the cause and that has been called *Samakit*.

Now let's look at the next necessary effort for a *jiva* . . .

... humility before Bhagwan

The devoted pursuit of the three-fold path drives away self-conceit, and enables you win over the internal enemies.

What damage the external enemies cannot do, the internal enemies can, and they do. The enemies residing in the world can cause physical damage. They can attack the prestige or fame. They can even go further and kill. But all these are worldly things. They do not cause much damage to the soul. It has been said -

गळानो कापनारो ये, शत्रु बूरू करे न जे;
दुर्बुद्धि ते दुरात्मानि, पोतामां रहीने करे

Internal enemies are the ones which create external enemies. Just as *Mohaniya* karma is in the form of attachment, it is also in the form of aversion. Let us understand both. We construe passion - *moha* - as possessiveness, affection, love and such. But avarice, hate, anger, greed are also forms of passion. If we love somebody we say we have an attachment - *moha* - with that person. But we don't say we have an attachment with a person with whom we have an enmity. For we have only seen attachment - *moha* - in its limited form. It is very wide and all encompassing. Aversion is also another of its form, and both attachment and aversion are enemies within.

If there were to be no enemies within, there would be none on the outside. In fact, the internal enemies even damage the qualities of our soul. So whether inside or outside there can be no peace.

A tremendous effort is required to push these enemies away. Your weapons have to be as strong as the enemies themselves. Just a spark is sufficient to destroy cotton, but iron cannot be destroyed. If it has to be melted you need a furnace, and the fire has to be that strong. So Brothers! A proper devoted effort alone can destroy attachment and aversion.

Srimadji has explained to us the rejection of self-conceit. If by directing the attention towards the *Atma*, the goal of *Atma* is to be attained, then whatever is worth discarding, has to be discarded. There are ways of doing it. Now Srimadji tells us the surefire way of discarding self-conceit -

मानादिक शत्रु महा, निजछंदे न मराय,
जातां सद्गुरु शरणमां, अल्प प्रयासे जाय १८

Pride, prestige, hunger for fame, greed and such enemies, appear like enemies, and you may even be in the midst of an effort to uproot them. Determined you may well be, that you would not rest until you have removed all these shortcomings. But these 'will not be killed with your effort' - निजछंदे न मराय -. The effort that you put in with your method, your intellect will not eradicate them.

Consider, Brothers! A person may be very strong, courageous and persevering, a great brave. He may be endowed with the same physical and mental strength that is required for a soldier, and want to be in the army. But not knowing anything about arms, having never studied them at all, if he were to seek admittance into the army by paying money, would he succeed? Never. There money has no value. What is required is the knowledge of arms and combat. How to attack the enemy and how to escape their attacks, a knowledge of both the tactics is essential. Only then can there be victory in the war.

In the same way, to fight the enemies of the soul too, a knowledge is required. Who can teach us that art of warfare? The *Sadguru*. The total dedication at the feet of the *Sadguru* alone can offer the courage, expertise and strength to fight the internal enemies. Devoted practice is the internal warfare. There is no need to fight anybody else, one has to fight the passions of the mind. Hence it has been said -

लडो सौ आत्मसंग्रामे, बीजा संग्राम शा करो ?
शुद्धात्माथी दुरात्माने, जीतीने सुख मेळवो

But this strength and art of combat cannot be found without the mercy of the *Guru*. Only if his blessings are with us can we face the inner world in a fight. What is the inside filled with? Lust, desires, carnalities, anger like passions and the deep feelings of attachment and aversion. What a tremendous strength would be required to face and fight all these! Where does one get it? Only in the refuge of the *Sadguru*. We have all sorts of strengths but they will not prove successful. Hence, it has been said - जातां सद्गुरु शरणमां, अल्प प्रयासे जाय - After dedicating totally at the feet of the *Guru*, there is no need for an effort. While otherwise, do what you may and yet you will achieve nothing. The *Sadguru*'s refuge is the saving grace. The disciple places all his faith at the feet of the *Guru* and then rests assured. 'Save me, or sink me, I am in your refuge'. Just as a person cannot cross the ocean by swimming; on the contrary he would be destined to face difficulties, agony and death. But the one sitting in a boat, neither has the fear of drowning nor the worry about reaching the shore.

And when such feeling arises, it can bring miracles into the life of the devoted *sadhak*. And how! He may even surge ahead of the *Guru*. Srimadji says -

जे सद्गुरु उपदेशथी, पाप्यो केवळज्ञान,
गुरु रह्या छद्मस्थ पण, विनय करे भगवान १९

If you have learnt the advice of the *Gurudev* well, with his help if you learnt the art of defeating the internal enemies and if you have brought them into practice, then your attachment and aversion are bound to be destroyed forever. And once this happens, *kevaljnana* will appear. The *Guru* may still remain confined but the disciple becomes a kevali.

There is no rule that says the *Guru* has to first attain *kevaljnana* and then the disciple. Not only this, the disciple can

also attain *Moksa* before the *Guru*. Several of the disciples of Gautam *Ganadhar* who were enlightened by him, attained *kevaljnana* before him. In the same way, from among the eleven *Ganadhars* of *Prabhu* Mahavir, nine *Ganadhars* attained *Moksa* before him. *Prabhu* had more years of age left and his disciples had already ascended the *Siddha* category. *Prabhu* Mahavir was moving about as an *Arihant* and when he offered salutations to the infinite *Siddhas* saying - णमो सिद्धाणं - *Namo Siddhanam*, he was saluting his own disciples. Brothers! That is a miracle!

But in spite of this miracle, in spite of the *Guru* remaining confined and the disciple attaining *kevaljnana*, what is the disciple's duty? What is his *dharma*? That *Srimadji* has tried to explain in this *gatha*. He has said - विनय करे भगवान्!

The great experienced sages have pointed out *vinay* - विनय - humility as the root of religion. It has also been said -

विनय मूलो धम्मो ।

The root of religion is humility - *vinay*, and the fruit of religion is liberation - *Moksa*. For the attainment of *Moksa*, *vinay* is an inevitable prerequisite. If good fruit is desired, then the root has to be strong. The tree with an uprooted or rotten root is bound to fall. If the tree has to be kept green and flowering and if fruits are desired, then it is the root that has to be looked after. In the same way, for the desired fruit of *Moksa*, the root of *vinay* has to be nurtured.

Hence, it has been said here that even the disciples who have attained *kevaljnana* should bow before the confined *Guru*, for the *Guru* is immensely benevolent. Had the *Gurudev* not indicated the path, the *sadhaka* - disciple would not have reached the goal of *kevaljnana*. So the *Guru* is not to be forgotten. In fact, until attaining *kevaljnana*, that is to say until crossing the twelfth *gunasthana*, he has progressed only with the help of the *Guru* and has been achieving uplift of the soul from time to time.

Any *sadhak* needs to be dependent until he attains *kevaljnana*. After attaining *kevaljnana*, there remains no need for any dependence, for *kevaljnana* is the highest knowledge, which does not go away after it is attained once. It is the knowledge of how-to-avoid-a-return and once one has attained it, liberation is definite. Hence, here is an order to be humble before the *Guru* who can give such a wonderful knowledge.

Some questions arise here. Can a *kevaljnani* disciple bow before the *Guru*? Can he express servitude-devotion? And if he does, should the *Guru* accept it? Let us pick up an incident from history to deliberate over these questions.

In the *Samosaran* of *Bhagwan* Mahavir, the *sadhvis* Chandanbala, Mrigavati and others were assembled and absorbing the speech of the *Prabhu*. It was time up. All other *Sadhvis* including Chandanbala returned to their abode. Mrigavati was engrossed in the speech of the *Prabhu* and introspecting. She had lost the sensation of the external world. She did not realise that other *Sadhvis* had left, neither did the other *Sadhvis* want to disturb the sermon of *Bhagwan*. All had left. Mrigavati was filled with the inner experience generated by the *Prabhu*'s speech and the *Samosaran* which had been lit up by the presence of the Sun God.

The sermon was completed. All the *devas* left too. It was turning dark. Mrigavati came out of her trance, and on opening her eyes found darkness all around. She wondered, "Oh! Never realised how time had passed. Let me get back to the abode." When she reached the abode, the door was closed, all *Sadhvis* were off to sleep. When she knocked on the door, her *Guruni* Chandanbala herself came to the door. The door was opened but when Mrigavati entered the premises, the locking pin was lost. As a punishment, Chandanbala ordered her to stand at the door with her finger used as a locking pin. Realising her own mistake, Mrigavati stood there and went into contemplation.

She thought - “What a blunder! I have transgressed the limits of the *Muni*’s code of conduct. I have been instrumental in causing hurt to the *Guruni*’s mind.” This thinking awakened an unrestrained repentance in her. The regret of her mistake took the form of scalding heat, and burnt up all her *ghati* karmas. The door was closed, her finger stuck as a locking pin, and her eyes were filled with tears. The door to her soul opened up, the inner sight was cleared up and the flame of *kevaljnana* was alight. It was early dawn. All *Sadhvis* were waking up from sleep. Chandanbala was also about to wake up, and heard the melodious tinklet like voice of Mrigavati, “O Venerable *Bhagavati*! Please arise very carefully. There is a huge Cobra resting close to you.”

Chandanbala was surprised to hear this. ‘How could she know in such pitch darkness?’ They all were, after all, the disciples of *Bhagwan* Mahavir, each one better than the other. It did not take her long to realise, there was something more to it. She asked, “Mrigavati! Did you attain the knowledge?”

“O *Guruni*! With your blessings!”

“Complete or incomplete?”

“With your blessings!”

And Brothers! Chandanbala also realised that Mrigavati had attained *kevaljnana*. If it were incomplete, it would be *Avadhijnana*. But this was complete, so it had to be *kevaljnana*. Chandanbala rose and ran to touch the feet of Mrigavati.

“Please forgive me, I hurt a *Nikat-kevali* (person close to attaining *kevaljnana*) like you.”

But Mrigavati said, “This was all your benevolence. Had you not punished me, I would not have repented and my karmas would not have been destroyed.”

Brothers! For having hurt Mrigavati, Chandanbala also repented and soon attained *kevaljnana*.

Look, how free from karmas, were these souls! How very humbly did Mrigavati answer the questions of Chandanbala, even after having attained *kevaljnana*! For that matter, when Chandanbala asked her those questions, the former was still confined and the latter had already attained *kevaljnana*. Mrigavati could have very well told her straight away that 'I repented, so I got *kevaljnana*'. But no, she kept on saying just that it was - 'Your blessings'. Now that is the height of humility!

Brothers! Consider this! From *Sadhaka* to those worthy of attaining *kevaljnana*, all *jivas* have to be humble. Where do we fit in? There is no sort of capability as yet in us. So imagine the humility necessary in us. Unless the feeling of humility arises in us, there will not be the grace of the *Guru* and neither will the interest in the soul awaken. So let us first try to understand the *dharma* of humility and then try to bring into practice. Telling us that it is difficult to understand this *dharma*, Srimadji says -

एवो मार्गं विनय तणों, भाख्यो श्री वीतराग,
मूळ हेतु ए मार्गनो, समजे कोई सुभाग्य २०

In the earlier *gatha*, we were told that even after attaining *kevaljnana*, a *kevali* disciple continues to bow before a *Guru* who is still confined. This is bound to perplex anybody. The relation of *Guru* and *Shishya* are worldly bonds, while the state of *kevaljnana* is a result of the purified soul. Certainly this state is of a higher order. How can the behaviour of bowing before the *Guru* even after attaining this, be explained? This question is but natural, not out of place, but the implied meaning of what has been told has to be understood. Indeed, the first and foremost thing that is required is the unflinching faith that this path has been shown by the *Veetarag Paramatma*, not by some confined *jiva* out of his imagination or out of a narrow feeling of his personal gain.

What an importance has been attached to the greatness of humility on the path of devoted practice! It is implied that this

humility is essential until the last step of this *sadhana* - devoted practice. Indeed, how can one forget the great benevolent *Guru* who has been instrumental for the attainment of *Kevaljnana*? That is to say, whatever be the height of achievement, the benevolence of the benefactor cannot be forgotten. Aha! Looking at the actual situation, imagine how humble the *Veetarag Prabhu* would have had to become when he attained *kevaljnana*. Would this humility dissolve after he attained *kevaljnana*? No, this can never be! Hence, his humility naturally makes him bow before the *Guru*. This state in the Jain philosophy is the supreme example of the total internal and external development. In this way, the valuable virtues of all purified souls manifest in the form of the ten-fold *dharma* of forgiveness and others.

Brothers! Let us put our understanding to work, let us open our eyes of discernability, and try to understand this path of humility. We will be able to understand only if our goal of total purification is determined. The feeling that, for the ego to be crushed humility is inevitable, will arise. So let us make a devoted effort to demolish our ego.

Thus far the duties of a *kevaljnani* disciple were delineated. What and how the duties of a confined *Guru* should be, are the contents of the next *gatha*.

... drowns in the waters of rebirth

Those who put in a devoted practice of the three jewels, succeeded in going across. They could win over the *Keval-Lakshmi*.

Vinay - humility, is the root of *dharma*. Spirituality springs from humility and only then does progress of the *atma* occur. While disclosing this secret, Srimadji has said that even a *kevaljnani* disciple bows before the confined *Guru*, never forgets the benevolence, and expresses gratitude. At the same time, now he tells us that when such disciples offer their salutations to the *Guru*, he does not accept them.

Not just that, not even in a corner of his mind does he have an expectation of the disciple's salutation. The *Guru* never thinks, "I guided you on the way, inspired you, what an effort I have put in for you! You have progressed only because of me. I am your benefactor hence you should bow before me". He never nurtures such expectations and if he does, then Srimadji has called him *Asadguru* - असद्गुरु .

It is necessary that we understand both these aspects correctly. In the disciple's life, there is a need to be humble towards the *Guru*, for every second, every moment. In all three ways, the disciple has to be forever humble. How superior the humility of *Guru* Gautam was towards *Bhagwan Mahavir*! He always used to be present before the *Prabhu*. His seated pose would also indicate humility, right leg folded down with the knee on the floor, left leg folded with the knee up, folded hands and bowed down head! This was his pose of humility. Just like devoted Hanuman sitting in front of Ramchandra.

What levels had Gautam himself reached! What powers he possessed! Before he took the discipleship he was the undisputed supreme scholar of the *Brahman* society, knew all the four *vedas*,

a man of great scholarly achievements. The moment he took refuge with the *Prabhu*, he became endowed with the knowledge of the eleven *angas* - parts of knowledge. Then followed *Avadhijnana*, *Manahparyayajnana* and several other achievements. In spite of being the master of all these powers that bested each other, he never erred in his humility for even a moment. This is a disciple's supreme humility.

On the other hand, the *Guru* never wishes that the disciple would progress only if he bows before me. On the contrary, he guides the disciple that humility is your *dharma*. Your humility, your modesty, your dedication alone will result in your uplift. Humility and service are the preconditions of a *sadhaka's* life. Thus keeping only the benefaction of the disciples in mind, the *Gurudev* teaches them the path of humility. But a *Guru*, who in spite of being incapable and weak, believes out of a desire to feed his pride, that since he is a *Guru*, the disciple should bow before him as per *dharma*, is called an *Asadguru* - the opposite of a *Sadguru*.

Asadguru is one who has not experienced the *sat* - truth. Himself not having experienced the soul, cannot get others to see that path, and yet goes about proclaiming that whoever goes to him will find upliftment. Aren't there many such sects and denominations today? Each one of those sectarians believes that those joining their sect will be enlightened, will attain. Oh, noble Brother! Is *samakit* - lying about in sects? Is *samakit* lying about in beliefs? Or does it occur only by accepting these sects? Of course! If there is somebody who has attained, has experienced the truth, he may be able to guide others on the path. But how erroneous it would be to believe that *samakit* can occur merely by believing such a person!

Oh! So many people keep coming here and say 'Come to our fold, and you will attain'. Just a little while ago, a Brother was here. He said, "*Mahasatiji*! You will not remain without

attaining *samyag darshan* after going to where we go and whom we believe. You should certainly come there once!”

We said, “Brother! Beg your pardon! But we do not come into the fold that believes that merely going somewhere or believing somebody could help us attain *samyag darshan*. But when a *jiva* makes a devoted effort and in that effort if there is a subtraction of *darshan-mohaniya* (*kshayopasham* or *upasham*), then *Samyag darshan* occurs. Of course, in that process there may be somebody physically instrumental. It is not necessary that *Samyag darshan* will occur only when we go wherever you go. If the *upadan* is prepared, any device will appear.”

Brothers! Srimadji says that people with such beliefs who get others to follow them are *Asadgurus*. Why! They fool gullible people, make thousands of devotees, for these are times when you can run any kind of fraud. You only need the courage and intellect to do it. “The world bows before the one who can make it bend,” so goes a saying. Going on the wrong path, you may get millions of followers, but perhaps on the right path you may not even find any. But the result of all this is dreadful. You will get success, fame and prestige to suffice this life. But the wandering from birth to birth increases. Hence Srimadji says -

असद्गुरु ए विनयनो, लाभ लहे जो काँई,
महामोहिनी कर्मथी, बूडे भवजळ माँही २१

Srimadji says, “The *Vinay dharma* is the greatest. Without *vinay*, the *sadhaka* will not attain the success of his devoted practice. In spite of this, if the *Asadgurus* accept *vinay* from *sadhaka*, accept service, nurture the feeling of acquiring false success and fame by making disciples, they get bound in *mahamohaniya* karma and as a result their wandering in this world increases manifold.

What is this great *Mohaniya*? Of the eight karmas, *Mohaniya* is the most dreadful. Also compared to all others, its period is the longest. The period of *Mohaniya* karma has been mentioned as 70 *Krodakrodi Sagaropam* - क्रोडाक्रोडी सागरोपम . As many *Sagaropams* as you get by multiplying 70 crores by 70 crores. Not years, mind you! In the calculations, *Sagaropam* is the biggest measure of time.

It is not that a *jiva* binds itself in a *Mohaniya* karma of this magnitude always. For a specified variety of causes there are specified periods of karma bondage. So what really happens? The worldly life increases. How?

Consider this! Once if a *Mohaniya* Karma of 70 *Krodakrodi Sagaropam* magnitude binds on the soul, how many births does a *jiva* have to take to suffer its effects? Let us first look at the length of time. One *Avasarpini* is made of 10 *Krodakrodi Sagaropam* and similarly one *Utsarpini* is made of 10 *Krodakrodi Sagaropam*. Together one *avasrapini* and one *utsarpini* make a *Kalachakra*. Three and a half such *kalachakras* are required before the peak of a *Mohaniya* karma can be reached in a 70 *Krodakrodi Sagaropam* period. In such a wide span of time, how many times can one die and be born? Let's presume only the fifth ara which is of 21,000 years. Presume a life-span of 100 years for a human, so there will be 210 lives and those presuming that all lives are human. Otherwise in the lower echelons there would be many more. Thus, if in one ara there can be hundreds or thousands of births, then how many can there be in a 70 *Krodakrodi Sagaropam* period? One does not escape with only a human life or that of an animal, and the *jiva* can neither go to the *strata* of Gods very often. So to complete the effect, one is bound to spend many lives in the Naraka too, and those again of the higher *strata*. If in those places, further *Mohaniya* karma of a high state is added then the chain is unending. Thus the link of births continues.

Now, let us see how *Maha-mohaniya* Karma binds. In the fourth *Shraman Sutra* of the *Pratikramana Sutra* it is said - तीसाए महा मोहनीय ठाणे हि - that there are thirty types of *Mahamohaniya* places. Let us look at a few of them.

In spite of not being learned, if one falsifies as a Sage and in spite of not possessing any power, if one believes he is all powerful and makes others believe so, he is binding himself in *Mahamohaniya* Karma.

This same thing has been stated in the *gatha*. A person with such a nature has been called an *Asadguru*. If they keep up an expectation of humility, they bind themselves in *Mahamohaniya* karma. It is all right so long as they pose themselves as they are. But they are hardly like a quarter and pose like one and a quarter! What a fraud! Many such fraudulent *Gurus* entice gullible *jivas*, duping them with their so called powers and misguide them. A boat made of stone, itself sinks and takes others with it. A person involved in fraudulent worldly affairs may perhaps bind himself in a lesser karma, but the fraud in the religious path is bound by *Mahamohaniya* Karma only. Also causes the same to others, hence it is necessary to be wary of such frauds. But Brothers! If fraud can be identified, then it cannot be a fraud anymore.

Secondly, if one demeans the religion delineated by the omniscient *Prabhu*, one is also bound by *Mahamohaniya* Karma. Brothers! That is why our experienced elders always keep telling us, “You may well not understand the speech of the *Tirthankar*, you may well not be able to believe in it, you may well not be able to put it into practice, but do not demean this speech. Do not call it untrue. It is not your fault that you do not understand. Your *kshayopsham* may be less so you do not understand, but do not demean it. Else you will be bound in the *Mahamohaniya* Karma of 70 *krodakrodi Sagaropam* and will not be able to go across even after suffering the sorrows of *naraka-nigoda*. Oh, whither the supreme state of the soul with its infinite power of

knowledge! And whither the lowest state of *Nigoda* with only the *shruta* knowledge equal to an infinite fraction of a letter! That too for an infinite period of time!

Another cause for binding in *Mahamohaniya* Karma is said to be the act of effecting a split in the four-fold order of the society. Some people enjoy causing a rift within the Householders' society, the *Sangha*, by splitting the unity that exists among them. In doing so they flatter their ego. They believe - "You see, How clever I am! I struck but once and managed the split." Such people are experts in causing disputes and ruptures in the society. But this does not raise their status, it pulls them lower on the contrary.

Brothers! Do think. In the bygone days - and I do not refer to a very old period, say just a 50 or 100 years ago - the grouping of our society used to be called a *Mahajan*. Every member thereof used to be called a *Mahajan*. His word used to carry a lot of weight and if a King were going wrong he could even go over to the King and say, "O King! This is not right. It should not be allowed," and the King would have to agree. The acceptance showed the respect that was reserved for a *Mahajan*. But today the *Mahajan* organisations are all broken up. The foremost thing is that the sort of noble conduct that is desirable is not to be found anymore. Principles, justice and trustworthiness are to be found no more. The self-respect of being a Jain is missing. There are disputes galore within the community.

Pardon me, Brothers! But today the feeling of hate that has peaked in the religious institutions can be matched by none other. Matters have even gone to the courts. What dirty politics is being played! How poisoned the minds get because of this! Behind all these problems is the handiwork of the ego that lies within us! Whatever happens is for the flattering of the ego. Everybody wants to flatter one's own ego and when that becomes difficult there is a clash of egos. Sparks fly, and then the fire.

Brothers! Consider this! Just because of the trifling selfishness of feeding the ego, how many minds do we set afire? How many relations do we strain? How many *jivas* become thwarted from religion because of you? How many enemies do you make? Then with all these, what else can happen but a bondage of *Mahamohaniya* karma? Hence, dear Brothers! If you can, then serve the society and the community, and if you cannot, just get out of the way. But never become a cause for conflict. Only if you want the bondage of *Mahamohaniya* Karma and the wandering in the wheel of eighty-four, get into the game of power. Otherwise stay away from it.

There are thirty ways in which you could get bound in *Mahamohaniya* Karma. We cannot discuss all those here. Let us look at just one more.

Forgetting the benevolence of the benefactor, if one begins to hate him, then one binds *Mahamohaniya* karma.

The benevolence of the benefactor should be remembered forever, at every moment. Among them how can the benevolence of that benefactor who has been responsible for the attainment of soul-state, be ever forgotten? The *jiva* suffered the sorrows of the infinite worldly life because its soul-state had not awakened. *Sadguru* is the one who brought an end to these infinite sorrows. But several *jivas* tend to forget the benevolence of such benevolent *Gurudev* and being jealous of him, become their opponents.

What did Goshala do? He burned in the fire of jealousy that raged in his heart on seeing the *Prabhu*'s growing impact after attaining *Kevaljnana* and the propitiation of the *Prabhu* by the Devendras; the same *Prabhu* whose proximity had awakened in him many powers. How he went round advertising canards about the *Prabhu*, just to prove that he was in no way inferior to Him! In the same way, he did not hesitate in declaring himself an

Omniscient and called *Prabhu* a liar. Not just that, he not only forgot the benevolence of the benefactor, but went on to cause terrible damage to him. He tried to burn the *Prabhu* with the *Tejoleshya*!

You get to see a vivid picturisation of the level of barbarity to which the feeling of jealousy within, takes the human. But Brothers! What was the result? *Prabhu*, of course, was *Veetarag* - bereft of passions, an embodiment of forgiveness, the very manifestation of equipoise.

How would he be affected? But Goshala bound himself in *Mahamohaniya* Karma that increases the worldly life. What a frightful result for forgetting the benevolence of the benefactor!

Brothers! Think! Had Goshala dedicated himself to *Prabhu*'s feet and accepting His omniscience, put in devoted practice on the path shown by Him, he could have attained the other shore of the worldly life.

Thus, a *jiva* gets bound in *Mahamohaniya* Karma in many ways. A *jiva* ought to think about these reasons. If such is the case in its own life, if there are such reasons then it has to be wary of them. It is necessary that it awakens up to them. Otherwise it may have to go wandering in the ocean of lives.

After having given us the best principles of *Vinay Dharma*, Srimadji goes on to explain, in the following *gathas*, as to who can understand and accept these matters that help realise the soul.

. understand this concept!

Only a worthy *jiva* can devotedly pursue the three-fold path.

In our analysis until now, we have ascertained who is able and who is not, to do or to get to do devoted practice. And hence Srimadji, having differentiated between a *Sadguru* and an *Asadguru*, has explained in clear terms as to how a person accepting humility should be, while one who is humble is bound to offer humility. Having said all this, he now indicates as to who can understand all that he has said. For whom is it meant?

In a broad perspective, it may appear as if the guidance is for all the beings of the world. The *Tirthankar* - supreme soul - in his sermon, does not differentiate saying it is meant only for so and so and not for others. The *Prabhu's* speech is like the rain-fall from the clouds. It falls equal upon all. If it falls on the Mango tree, it also falls on the Neem. If it falls upon the palace of the King, it also falls upon the hut of the poor. If it falls in the flowing river, it also falls in the dirty pond. The free showers of the rain soak everybody.

In the same way, the *Prabhu's* speech is meant for all *jivas* and in particular for the poor sinful souls. The infinitely merciful *Prabhu* radiates his voice for the benefit of all beings. *Devas*, *danavas*, humans, animals all have a right upon his voice.

The *Prabhu* of course, showers his speech equally upon all, but who can receive it? Unless there is the capacity to hold, the speech will not remain. Who can understand this guidance ? So now Srimadji says -

होय मुमुक्षु जीव ते, समजे एह विचार,
होय मतार्थी जीव ते, अवळो ले निर्धार २२

Mumukshuta - मुमुक्षुता - is the yearning for *Moksa*. That one in whom all the internal urges have subsided, all passions are subjugated, who has no interest left in the worldly affairs, who

indulges in the worldly activity, albeit in a detached way, who leads an aloof life is a *Mumukshu*. It is an internal state. *Mumukshuta* is not a thing that can be seen externally. It is a resultant state that manifests within. It is not attained by going somewhere, or by following or mixing with a particular faith, sect or group. A *jiva* who has lost interest in the worldly affairs, who wants to understand the futility of the material world, who has unfolded the mysteries of the Soul and is prepared to accept them, wherever such *jiva* may be but the yearning for *Moksa* will be always there in the mind.

Only a *jiva* who has such capabilities, can understand the secrets of the path of the *Jina*. The dedication to the feet of the *Sadguru*, the perseverance of the dedicated feeling unto the highest state of devoted practice, as also the unflinching faith in the three principles of *Sat Deva* (True God), *Sadguru* (True *Guru*) and *Saddharma* (True Religion), respect and honour for them - these are the duties of a *jiva*. Blind faith in *Ku Deva* (False God), *Ku Guru* (False *Guru*) and *Ku Dharma* (False Religion) is worthy of rejection. It is, in fact, necessary to exercise the analysis between *heya*, *jneya* and *upadeya*. Srimadji explained these topics in the gathas that have gone so far. A thoughtful *Mumukshu jiva* in search of *Moksa* can understand them. For only such a *jiva* has understood the value of that path. We all know from experience as to how alert we are in trying to acquire a thing whose value we know and how we protect it once we have acquired it. We don't have to be told about its protection.

Once a trader went abroad to earn money. He stayed there long and earned a lot of wealth. He planned to return to his homeland. His wealth was enormous, not something that could be carried easily. He converted it all into precious gems which fit into a small pouch. It was travel by foot in those days. There was a deep forest to cross and the fear of highway robbers. The gems were to be protected and so was his own life. He used his

intellect. He collected a few glass beads and put them in another pouch with him. He stashed away the pouch with the gems in a quiet, secluded corner of the forest. Then he went about in the forest shouting, "I have gems with me, precious gems", and running helter-skelter.

He came across a gang of highway robbers. They heard him and thought, "Looks like a mad fellow. But let us find out what he has got." They detained him, snatched his pouch and looked into it, only to find glass beads. "Ha! A fool indeed. Leave him alone!" so saying they let him go. Soon the trader met another gang of robbers. The same story was repeated. Then the trader criss-crossed the jungle several times shouting 'Gems, Gems'. All the highway robbers took him for a mad man. When the trader felt he was safe enough, he quietly went to the spot where he had hidden the gems and retrieved that pouch and again went through the forest shouting as before.

Brothers! This is what you call protection of valuables. Once he realises the value, then man would even accept becoming insane. It does not matter if others consider you insane. Only those who have realised the value of the words of the *Jineshwar* and the advice of the *Sadguru* will delve deeper into it, will make the devoted effort to understand it. They will be prepared to forsake everything for the sake of that path, and in doing so, if the world considers them insane, or fools, they are not affected. The faith and devotion for the *Prabhu* that abounds the hearts of such *mumukshu jivas* and the proximity of the *Prabhu* which they experience, is such that they are not at all concerned with what the *jivas*, affected by the worldly affairs, have to say about them. They, in fact, say -

संसारी के छे रे भगतडां घेलां छे
 तमे घेलां न जाणजो रे, पभुने मन पे लां छे
 संसारी के छे रे भगतडां भूंडा छे
 तमे भूंडा न जाणजो रे, भक्तिनां मूळ ऊंडा छे

So thus, what the *jiva* has to do and what he has to forsake on the path of the devoted practice of the Soul, can be understood only by the *mumukshu jiva* and none others. The others in fact, misconstrue even the simple and straightforward things. Hence, for such *jivas* Srimadji has said -

होए मतार्थी जीव ते, अवळो ले निर्धार

That *jiva* who insists upon doing what his intellect, knowledge and imagination suggest, will not be able to understand the matters of devoted practice. Why! Not only will he not understand them, he will also misconstrue them.

A *jiva*, whose passions are not diminished yet, who has not lost the interest in the worldly affairs, who has not yet given up the wrong-beliefs and stubborn attitude, will not be interested in anything other than his own fixed notions. The very words or the very proximity of the Omniscient Supreme Soul will not only not prove beneficial to him, but just like the nectar that turns into poison after entering the mouth of the snake, the principles also get twisted and misconstrued for the *Matarthi jiva*.

Hence, Srimadji implies that the *Matarthi jiva* never realises that self-conceit is to be rejected. The greatness of the *Sadguru* never really percolates to his heart. He even scorns the great *dharma* of humility. He believes there is merit in the wrong beliefs of *Kudeva*, *KuGuru* and *Kudharma*. Whatever high principles that are spoken in the presence of such *jivas*, instead of proving beneficial for them, tend to become damaging. For -

सक्करखोरनुं साकरजीवन, खरना प्राण ज हरे,
क्षार-सिंधुनुं माछलडुं ज्यम, मीठा जळमां मरे प्रेमरस
उत्तम वस्तु अधिकार विना मळे, तदपि अर्थ न सरे,
मच्छभोगी बगलो मुक्ताफळ, देखी चंचु ना भरे प्रेमरस

Once a Sage, in his discourse, generally explained about the selfishness of the world. A young man in the audience misconstrued that principle owing to his own wrong notions. He went home. Threw out his parents and started beating his wife, asking her to leave. He was even preparing to pick up and throw away his children. It became a big racket. Hearing the shouting and crying, the neighbours came in. All began to ask, "What happened? Why this all of a sudden?" The parents, wife and children were not at fault at all. They said, "We don't know what our fault is." The young man said, "You are all selfish. So long as there is selfishness, there is attachment. The Sage has said in his discourse that all selfish relations are worth breaking. So I don't want any of you! You are all selfish. Go away, from here, I don't want to keep anybody selfish with me!"

Brothers! What did this man pick up from the discourse? What a misunderstanding? What will one, who does not understand such a simple thing, do if he is told the serious things about devoted practice of the soul? He will make a big mistake out of it. Hence, Srimadji has said that a *Matarthi jiva* converts the best things into the worst. As such, even when such a *jiva* gets an opportunity of *Satsang*, it does not prove beneficial for him. Therefore, Srimadji says -

होय मतार्थी तेहने, थाय न आतमलक्ष,
तेह मतार्थी लक्षणो, अहीं कक्षां निर्यक्ष २३

A *Matarthi jiva* is not thoughtful, that is, he does not have the capacity to think on his own. Hence, there is the attachment with the worldly affairs and detachment from spirituality. The interest that he has in attachment is not be found in achievement. He considers the means of achieving the soul as insignificant and is more engrossed in establishing the attachment with the world, in nurturing it and in spreading it. He considers all the means for achieving these as important and as beneficial to himself. Thus because of the feelings of interest and attachment

his interest in the soul never awakens. 'I am the Soul - an unattached, dispassionate, pure, animate substance. Different from all others' - such a feeling never occurs. His yogas of the mind, speech and body are always engrossed in the worldly affairs.

Think, Brothers! You go through so many thoughts every day and night. About what are those thoughts? Perhaps some day you can jot down all the thoughts that occur to you on that one day and then look up as to what thoughts occurred. Of the Soul, or those of things other than the soul? I feel only a fortunate *jiva* alone would think of the soul at every moment. Rest is all world, world and world! Nothing else. Tell me! You are sitting here in a Prayer Hall, and what are your thoughts now? In which direction are your thoughts flowing? Tell me the truth? You do not remember the soul even while you sit here! If one of you says, "*Mahasatiji*! As long I am here, I remember the soul", that's good enough! Atleast you are that fortunate. But what should I say of those who do not remember their soul even while sitting here? Brothers! When will the yearning for *Moksa - mumukshuta* - arise? If *mumukshuta* does not arise even while sitting at the feet of the sages, if the interest in the soul does not arise even in a religious discourse, then where else will it?

Those who are constantly engrossed in the worldly affairs, who consider the principles of *dharma* in no way different from the worldly feelings, such *jivas* have been called *Matarthi*. Srimadji gives us a description of the *Matarthi jivas* in the following few *gathas*. He says here -

तेह मतार्थी लक्षणो, अहीं कहाँ निर्पक्ष . . .

How are the *Matarthi Jivas*? Their qualities have been mentioned here impartially. The learned always take a balanced view. In their view, there never is an attachment towards a noble person, nor aversion towards an ignoble one. They in fact, consider that the conduct of every *jivas* is independent. It is not

within our means to alter the conduct of any one *jiva*. Hence, they simply observe with an impartial feeling, each *jiva* as and how it behaves. But there is a reason why the behaviour of a *Matarthi Jiva* has been told.

In the *Agamas* too, there appears a description of both types of *jivas*. While telling us about those *jivas* who attained *Moksa* with a devoted practice, severe penance and through meditation, they also tell us about the *Viradhaka* - विराधवक्त्र - the wrong-doing *jivas* who wind up wandering in the world. If in the treatises, there is the story of *Samaraditya Kevali*, there also is the story of *Agnisharma* who added infinite lives. If *Bhagawan* Parshwanatha has been eulogised, then the arrogance of Kamatha is also recorded.

The intention with which this has been told is to get a *jiva* to examine his own feelings and if they are on the wrong path, to consider their damaging results and turn towards the path of devoted practice. Abandon the sinful ways, and adopt the virtuous path. The learned do not intend to condemn the misled *jivas* by describing them. They are only trying to draw your attention to the facts.

Here Srimadji is doing us a favour by trying to tell us about the qualities of a *Matarthi* impartially. In the following few gathas, every single internal and external feeling of a *Matarthi* is described. Let us all know them and compare them with our own thought process, and make a sincere effort to discard the feelings worth discarding.

So now we move on to the qualities of the *Matarthi*!

. . . attached to the Guru!

The devoted practice of the three-fold path, can occur only after the yearning for the soul arises. If the yearning for the soul persists then reasons for devoted practice too abound. The more the refinement in the feelings, the earlier one finds the external reasons. If one is not getting enough reason to get into devoted practice, then it is the weakness of one's own feelings to blame.

A *jiva* devotedly practising *dharma* only externally without the thought of *Atma*, harbours many myths. His belief about *deva*, *Guru* and *dharma* or his understanding of the topics of knowledge etc., is full of defects. Srimadji, while indicating the places where such *jivas* go wrong, says -

बाह्यत्याग पण ज्ञान नहि, ते माने गुरु सत्य,
अथवा निजकुळधर्मना, ते गुरुमां ज ममत्व २४

Just as every man needs a guide in the worldly life, on the path of liberation too he needs a *Guru*. Just as in worldly affairs one goes to an experienced person for advice, in the spiritual path too, the self-realised sages take the place of the *Gurus*. Those *jivas* who are unaware of this, who have no knowledge of the spiritual path, whose interest in the soul is not yet awakened, do accept a *Guru*, but only a namesake! A *Guru* who is merely dressed like one, but who has not yet experienced the split within - he has not experienced the separate identity of the body and the soul with the help of the science of differentiation - *bheda vijñana*. Accepting such a *Guru* will not lead to accomplishment.

Although external rituals are necessary, the goal has to be of self-realisation. In our tradition, the *Sadhus* are made to accept the vows of compliance of *Pancha-Mahavvrata* and Five *Samitis* and Three *Guptis*. The *Mahavvrata* vow is of nine grades. The forbidden is neither to be done through mind, speech and body, nor got done by another, nor is another doer to be endorsed.

Let us ponder here awhile. A *Sadhu* too, has all the compulsions of the activities of a life, and it is hardly possible that such activity would not involve a sin or some violence. There too, it is perhaps possible to exercise control over the speech and body, but it is difficult to exercise control over the mind. In spite of it the *Pachchakkhan* - पच्छक्खण - of all *Sadhus* is of nine grades! Why so? It is a deep mystery. In the first place, if there is such a vow and if the *Sadhu* is true to his vow, then he will avoid violence from the mind too. It is likely to occur unknowingly, but the thought of entering into a premeditated violence will never occur. He will try to keep away from any activity that involves violence. Secondly, such repeated efforts lead to a complete removal of the feelings of violence from the inner self. Then he can never get into violence. Not just that, he will not even be able to bear anybody being hurt in the slightest way. The elimination of the feeling of violence from the disposition is the highest form of non-violence.

The feeling of compassion that arises within such *jivas*, manifests itself in the form of physical compassion in their activity. Their external renunciation in the form of *Mahavrata*, becomes a means to the achievements of the knowledge of the self.

But the *jivas* who, in spite of accepting the vows of the *Mahavrata*, are unable to remove the feelings for violence, falsehood, thievery, intercourse and possession from their chain of thoughts, may very well and strictly be following the rituals of *Mahavrata*, may be practising all the external customs and traditions, yet can never awaken their interest in the soul. And they can never make it to the grade of the *Satpurushas*.

Hence, the observance of the *Mahavrata* has been treated as only external conduct. External conduct is an important means of attaining the conduct of thought. If, in spite of following the external conduct, the conduct of thought in the form of stability

in the soul does not arise, then the observance of the *Mahavrata* is nothing more than the material state.

Brothers! Understand this well! The *Mahavratas* are worthy of observance and should be observed. If anybody is opposing them, he is in grave error. But at the same time it is also to be understood that the observance of the *Mahavratas* is not just for the sake of it. But for the awakening of the conduct of thought in the form of being enthralled with the natural disposition of the Soul, in its wake. If the external rituals are being observed without this understanding, then it is to be called only external renunciation. Hence, Srimadji says that accepting a *Guru* who has no knowledge of the self and shows off only external renunciation, is a mark of the *matarthi*.

Now the question arises - how does one differentiate between a *Sadhu* who is merely following external renunciation and one who is self-realised? How does one identify? Superficially he may be maintaining a good character, may be undergoing a considerable suffering, may even be discussing the knowledge from the scriptures, he may even be explaining the scriptures, so shouldn't we take him for a *Guru*? This question is bound to occur naturally. If along with all this, he also has realised the Self, it will not remain hidden. The most important thing is that a self-realised Sage will never be over-assertive. He will not only never say, 'What I do and say is right, rest are all wrong', but not even think so. He will not have any interest in any activity which enhances the scope of attachment and aversion. Every activity of his is connected to the feeling of detachment. He never believes that he is great and others are lowly. He believes that everybody behaves according to their respective *kshayopsham* - क्षयोपशम - state of karma, and nurtures an impartial feeling towards them. Thus his flow of thoughts is in a different direction compared to others. How can such *Satpurushas* remain without being identified?

Otherwise, those sages who are renounced and not yet self-realised, yet always nurturing a grief over it; always carrying the feeling, ‘Oh Lord! What a parody! I have no interest either in the world or in the worldly affairs, the craving for attaining the Soul is in me always, why then am I not receiving the True Faith - *Samyag Darshan*?’ And such grief leads to a determination in the mind that ‘Now I shall rest only after attaining *Samyagdarshan*. Of what good is my becoming a human if I do not attain *Samyag Darshan*? Of what good is my becoming a *Sadhu*?’ A *Sadhaka* with such awakening is well on the path of a tremendous effort. A refuge with such Sages is also suitable for the soul-seeker.

The *matarathi jiva* is mistaken in accepting a *Guru* with a superficial renunciation. Not only that -

अथवा निजकुलधर्मना, ते गुरुमां ज ममत्व

but he accepts that *Guru*, who has been traditionally accepted as the family-*Guru*, by the family in which he is born, and keeps feeding that feeling of attachment. To him it does not matter whether that person is fit enough to be a *Guru* or not, whether his refuge will lead to an upliftment of the self or not. He suffers in the stubborn belief that ‘this is my *Guru* and he is the greatest’.

Here, acceptance of one’s own family-*Guru* is not totally prohibited. But a family-*Guru*, who is superficially renounced and incapable of leading a *jiva* across, who is merely masquerading as one but is a total fraud, is worth rejecting, not worthy of serving at all.

Such *Gurus* may sometimes devastate a man altogether. I shall tell you about a metropolis. A lady from a rich family used to come to the prayer-hall daily. I once asked her, “You come here, but how come your children never do?” She replied, “*Mahasatiji*! Earlier my children used to come, but after an incident at our place they never feel like coming.”

What happened was that the lady once fell into the trap of a miracle-man. Her husband and children also began to believe him. They brought him home and hosted him for a while. In the meantime, many superstitious people attracted by the *Sadhu*, used to visit him. So much so that there would always be a queue of people wanting to meet him. That *sadhu* claimed that he had found relief for many in grief. Everybody in the family got involved. There would be prayers, chanting, meditation and all. Everybody was deep into religion. Then one fine day, everybody in the lady's family had to attend a wedding somewhere. There was unflinching faith in the *Sadhu*. No reason to suspect him. In fact the *Sadhu* was so much like a family member. So they all left for the wedding, leaving the house in the 'safe' hands of the *Sadhu*. The *Sadhu* got a chance. He had time until night, for nobody was to return before then. He took off with whatever few lakhs worth of stuff he could lay his hands upon. That night when they all returned they realised that the '*Gurudev*' had left all of a sudden. They wondered why this sudden change in his programme. Then as they found to their shock this and that missing, their faith was shattered beyond repair.

Brothers! Such fraud *Gurus* are only masqueraders. The only knowledge they possess is that of plundering. True *dharma* is miles away from them. What will be the fate of the *jiva* who attaches himself to such *Gurus*? He will become aimless. Hence, the poet Pritam, who is a follower of our path, has so well said -

ज्ञानहीणा गुरु नव कीजिए
 वांझ गाय सेव्ये शुं थाय समागम संतनो
 कहे प्रीतम ब्रह्मविद भेटतां
 भवरोग समूळो जाय समागम संतनो

Here the Sage-like poet Pritam has compared an unenlightened *Guru* with a barren cow. A barren cow does not give milk. Anybody would hold a cow in his yard for the sake of milk. Why feed a cow which does not give milk at all? Well, if the cow is barren, it will not give milk, today, tomorrow or ever.

In the same way, what will be the outcome of your serving a *Guru* who has not realised his self? Hence the poet continues, if one comes across a *Guru* who is endowed with *Brahmajnana* - ब्रह्मज्ञान - that is, one who has experienced the True form of the Self and recognised the True form of the *Jina*; who carries the true and firm belief that *Brahma* is the Soul, *Brahma* is the Supreme Soul, then the disease of rebirth will be uprooted altogether.

Brothers! Whatever be the disease, it has to be eradicated from its roots. If it is suppressed as is done in today's medical system of allopathy, then it will spring up again like a tree with its roots undisturbed. Hence, a disease must not be suppressed, it must be eradicated from its roots. If we pursue the path shown by fraudulent *Gurus*, it will superficially seem as if we have followed the *dharma*, but it would never touch the depths of our inner self. Outwardly it may seem that the passions and sensual feelings are being controlled by it, but internally there is no purification. Medicine is that which removes a disease from its roots.

We too suffer from the disease of rebirth. That is, the tradition, of being born repeatedly and dying repeatedly, continues.

पुनरपि जननं पुनरपि मरणं

We will continue to roam in this orbit of the world and will continue to do so until the seed of the life does not get destroyed. The one who gives us the strength to destroy it is the *Sadguru*. Hence, such a *Guru* should be served.

The *Matarthi's* belief in a *Guru* is something that is bound to drown him. When there is a fault in the belief itself, how will the understanding of the true form of the soul ever dawn? And in the absence of such understanding the feeling of devoted practice does not arise. As a result the wandering in the world continues.

Now Srimadji tells us the other qualities of a *Matarthi*.

Mistake it for the description of Jina . . .

Devoted practice of the three-fold path can be put in only by the soul-seeking - *atmarthi jivas*. The *atmarthi* has the knowledge of devoted practice and hence at the first good opportunity, he turns on to that path. A *matarthi jiva* who wallows in superficial feelings on the other hand, can never recognise the devoted practice. How can he, who does not realise that the devoted practice is his duty, practice at all?

The *Matarthi jiva* evaluates every device of devoted practice in his own way and believes his evaluation to be apt. In the practical field, where matters that concern your personal life are involved, your evaluation is acceptable. But when something is not limited to you alone, there you have to accept the society's evaluations. Your values which are meant only for you, may not be approved by the society. And on a broader base, the evaluations offered by the *Mahapurushas* still hold good.

In the spiritual field too, the norms about the understanding of devoted practice and conduct follow the values laid out by the ancient *Mahapurushas* who practised this path and attained success. If those values are not acceptable to us, then we are bound to be stuck in wandering.

The *matarthi jiva* too finds the devices of devoted practice, but being in a confusion over their value and true form, they do not prove useful in the progress of the Soul. In the field of utility in your practical life, the devices that you found were first recognised, understood and then evaluated. Proper devices that end up in the hands of proper persons not only make living life a simpler process but also offer a pleasure of the mind. But a device in improper hands becomes useless. In the same way the *matarthi* does not recognise, understand or know how to use the external and internal devices that he finds and hence cannot find the path of the soul's progress.

Here, while enlisting the qualities of the *Matarthi*, Srimadji has told us how full of delusion is the *matarthi*'s belief about a *Guru*. In our scriptures while defining a *mithyatvi jiva* - मिथ्यात्वी जीव - a *jiva* with wrong beliefs, it is said that one who believes in *ku Deva*, *ku Guru* and *ku dharma* is a *mithyatvi*. In the same way one who does not believe in *su Deva*, *su Guru* and *su dharma* is also a *mithyatvi*. A *matarthi* mistakenly believes a *ku Guru* to be a *su Guru*; his faith rests in the *ku Guru* and hence he is called a *matarthi*.

Now let us see what a *matarthi* thinks about the *Deva* -

जे जिनदेहप्रमाण ने, समवसरणादि सिद्धि,
वर्णन समजे जिननुं, रोकि रहे निज बुद्धि २५

In the *Jaina sadhana* - devoted practice, *Arihant Deva* is venerable. Every *Sadhaka* - the practitioner, who performs *sadhana* places the *Jineshwar Bhagwan* in the temple of his heart. He expresses his faith in praises and devotion and puts in an effort to achieve the goal.

Matarthi jiva too, may accept *Arihant Deva* himself as the *Deva*, but he performs the *puja* merely by looking at the external features. The Lord *Jineshwar* does have immeasurable external qualities. The *matarthi* imagines the true form of *Jineshwar* in those qualities and believes, salutes, propitiates him. But he never understands the true form of the *Jineshwar*; neither does he know why only the *Jineshwar* is worthy of obeisance.

Here the question may arise - why is *Jineshwar* our *Deva*? . . because he is bereft of all passions, he neither has attachment nor aversion. Whatever he says, is with a singular compassion and an impartial view. Hence, such a *Jineshwar* is our *Deva*.

राग नथी एने द्वेष नथी एने प्रेम भर्यो पारावार
निशदिन कूणां काळजडेथी वहेती करुणानी धार

शाता पामे सघळां प्राणी
एवी मारा वीरनी वाणी

The unattached *Deva* alone can show the true path to all the *jivas*. Where there is attachment there cannot be an impartial intellect. It is our own experience that wherever we have an attachment, we liken that person's mountain like fault to a mole. And where there is aversion, we make a mountain of a mole. A view that is tinted with attachment and aversion can never be impartial, and hence *Deva* is always *Veetarag* - bereft of all passions.

Matarthi jiva does believe such a supreme soul bereft of all passions to be *Deva*, but he only accepts the external form. Since the *Arihant* Supreme Soul is born with the unlimited accumulated *punya* of previous births, *Devas* and others are in his service. They create a beautiful *Samavasarana*. The impact of the *Prabhu* is enhanced. In fact, the thirty-four *atishayas* and thirty-five types of speech is also due to the *punya*. Apart from these, *Prabhu's* body too has an unparalleled and out-of-this-world aura. The unmatched beauty of his body not only attracts the humans, but also the *devas* and *devis*.

Shri Mantungacharya, while elucidating the reasons for the beauty of *Prabhu's* body, says in the *Bhaktamar Stotra* -

यैः शान्तरागरुचिभिः परमाणुभिस्त्वं,
निर्मापितस्त्रिभुवनैकललामभूत !
तावन्त एव खलु तेष्यणवः पृथिव्यां,
यत्ते समानमपरं न हि रूपमस्ति ॥ १२ ॥

O *Prabhu*! Your physique is created out of the best atoms brimming with the essence of peaceful emotions. You have absorbed all those atoms, which were the best in the three worlds. Now not a single such atom is left. As such nobody else has the unparalleled beauty as yours.

The *Prabhu* with such a wonderful and dazzling body is the centre of attraction for all. Owing to the wonder of *Punya* acquired due to the noblest feelings nurtured in previous births and the strong desire to present *Dharma* to all *jivas*, the *Prabhu* attains all the external *riddhis*.

After all this, it is nothing but the game of *Pudgal*. *Punya* is *pudgal* and the *riddhis* attained due to it are also *pudgal*. The *Matarthi jiva* gets enthralled in this game of the *pudgals* and mistakes it for the true form of the *Veetarag Prabhu*. But the inner entity of the *Prabhu* is something wonderful. The *Matarthi* does not awaken to that fact. The *Atmarthi* realises this and hence he recognises the true inner form of the *Prabhu* and attempts to engross himself in it.

The question that arises here is why is the *Prabhu*'s bodily appearance eulogised time and again? What benefit does it offer? Brothers! The external appearance of man plays a very important role in his life. When we hear the name of some great person, hear the praises sung in appreciation of his virtues, an image of a sublime person is conjured up before our mind's eyes. Along with his greatness, his external splendour too comes to the fore. We believe that such great men who have reached such great heights are bound to be so beautiful and we naturally get attracted. In the same way, the description of the body of the *Arihant*, his external personality, attracts the common man. Even if men are drawn to him by such attraction, his speech ennoble such *jivas*. The divine form of *Arihant* is described keeping these views in mind.

But we do not have to stop there. How extraordinary would be the spirit of such a one whose divine bodily splendour is so wonderful? That spirit itself is responsible for the brilliance of the body. Hence we have to consider his true inner form. How unequalled would be the *Veetarag* (dispassionate) state of the one who is completely devoid of any attachment or aversion?

What state of detachment would he be experiencing? Sometimes, even for a few moments, when our mind is peaceful and the feelings of attachment and the like have as if died down, what a great delight we experience! Then how wonderful should be the true form of the one who is free from all blemishes! Appearing in this earthly world, born with three - mati, shruta and avadhi - jnanas and *kshayik samakit*, attaining a progressive state of spiritual growth, how unparalleled would be the inner state of the *Prabhu* when he attains *kevaljnana*! How can we visualise that true inner form? It is beyond the limits for ignorant *jivas* like us. Yet, it is not only essential that we know this true inner form, but also place our faith in it and attempt to realise it.

Further describing this true inner form, *Shri Manatungacharya* says with great devotion -

त्वामव्ययं विभुमचिन्त्यमसंख्यमाद्यम्
ब्रह्माणमीश्वरमनन्तमनंगकेतुम्
योगाश्वरं विदितयोगमनेकमेकम्
ज्ञानस्वरूपममलं प्रवदन्ति सन्तः ॥ २८ ॥

While singing the praises of *Bhagwan Adinath*, *Acharyashri* has bestowed several adjectives on the *Prabhu*. Although no adjective is adequate enough to describe the great true form of the *Jineshwar*, yet out of devotion, beautiful words flow out in praise of the *Prabhu*.

Prabhu is 'avyayi' (अव्ययी) - constant. *Avyaya* is something in which no change can occur. We come across *avyaya* in grammar. Wherever an *avyaya* be placed in the formation of a sentence, it remains the same in all tenses, all forms, all genders. Its structure does not change at all. The true form which the *Prabhu* has attained is infinite and unlimited. The complete purity of his soul is such that now nothing can tarnish it. He has attained complete perfection. Those impressions remain for infinite time. He has totally absorbed the state of *jnata-drasta* (ज्ञाता - द्रष्टा), and hence *Prabhu* is 'avyayi'.

Prabhu is 'Vibhu' (विभु) - enlightened. *Prabhu* has attained the brilliance of the inner self, hence he enlightens the self and the others. His inner and external self is enlightened and he enlightens others. Nothing escapes his knowledge in this universe. All things in this universe are reflected in the mirror of his soul. As he leads on others on the same path where he attained enlightenment, *Prabhu* is 'Vibhu'.

Prabhu is 'Achintya' (अचिन्त्य) - inconceivable. One who cannot be measured, cannot be understood through thinking is inconceivable. The human thinks with the mind and understands things. But the mind can think only to a limit. The infinite and magnificent true inner form of the *Prabhu* is unlimited, how can one reach there? Mind is inanimate indeed, and the *Prabhu* is the mysterious invention of the infinite spirit! Where is the match? *Prabhu*! You cannot fit into our thinking. Hence you are 'Achintya'.

Prabhu is 'Asankhya' (असंख्य) - incalculable. That which cannot be measured with a count is incalculable. Infinite virtues of the *Prabhu* have appeared. The infinite number of virtues that reside on the innumerable sectors of the *atma*, have become apparent, hence you are 'incalculable'.

Prabhu is 'Adya' (आद्य) - foremost. One who has attained *kevaljnana*, *kevaldarshan* and the complete character as described, one who is the earliest and infinite, is therefore the foremost. In this stotra, *Bhagwan* Rishabhdev has been eulogised. *Prabhu* was the first *Tirthankar*, first Rajeshwar of this *avasarpini kal*, first social worker and in several ways the first in the social and religious fields. As such he is famous as 'Adinath' in the Jain - non-Jain traditions. Hence he is 'adya'.

Prabhu is 'Brahma' (ब्रह्मा) - cosmic. One whose *Brahmatattva* (cosmic substance), that is the pure soul substance, has awakened is *Brahma*. *Prabhu* attained his own *brahmatattva*. In fact, in

the Hindu tradition, *Brahma* is the Creator, the creator of this Universe. *Bhagwan* Adinath taught the *jivas* of the world to live a constructive life by offering the three arts of *asi*, *masi* and *krishi*. Hence, he is '*Brahma*'.

Prabhu is '*Ishwar*' (ईश्वर) - Lord of the wealth. One who has attained the wealth (ऐश्वर्य) is the *Ishwar*. *Prabhu* has attained the *antarang lakshmi* like *anant jnana*, *anant darshan*, *anant virya* and *anant sukh*. You may call these four as *Bhav Pran* or *anant aishwarya*. In fact, this wealth is indestructible once it is achieved. Hence *Prabhu* is '*Ishwar*'. *Ishwar* is also called as *Nath*. *Prabhu* is *trilokinath* (त्रिलोकीनाथ). He protects all *jivas* providing them refuge, helps them go across the ocean of rebirths. Hence *Prabhu* is '*Ishwar*'.

Prabhu is '*Anant*' (अनन्त) - infinite. Whatever the *Prabhu* has attained is all infinite. Not even one of those has an end - *anant chatushtaya* (अनन्त चतुष्टय), *anant avyabadh sukh* (अनन्त अव्याबाध सुख), *anant kshayik samakit* (अनन्त क्षायिक समकित), *anant akshaystithi* (अनन्त अक्षय स्थिति), and so on are all infinities that the *Prabhu* has attained. Hence, *Prabhu* is '*anant*'.

Prabhu is '*anangketu*' (अनांग केतु) - the vanquisher of Kamdev. One who has vanquished *Anang*, that is Kamdev - the Lord of passion, is *Anangketu*. *Prabhu* has completely destroyed the *Mohaniya* karma, which is the root cause of all passions, and as such there is absolutely no blemish left on any sectors of the soul.

Sant Tulasidas describes the occasion of the Wedding of *Shri* Ramchandra in his '*Ramacharitmanas*' - Rama enters the *swayamwar mandap*. His reflection is seen in all the quartz pillars in the hall. The poet imagines that the image in the reflection is in fact that of Kamdev, the lord of passion, who was ashamed (got an inferiority complex) at beholding the gorgeous, dazzling, handsome countenance of Rama and hid himself in the pillars.

Kamdev cannot even come close to Rama. This is a symbolic statement. When Rama went to choose his bride, the bridle of the Lord of Passion was in Rama's hands. When a common man chooses a wife, his bridle is with Kamdev.

Kamdev cannot manage to enter into the pure inner self of the *Prabhu*. Hence *Prabhu* is 'anangketu'.

Prabhu is 'Yogishwar' (योगीश्वर) - the Lord of Yoga. One who has attained mastery over Yoga is Yogishwar. The activities of the mind, speech and body Yogas of the *Prabhu* are not akin to those of a common man. *Prabhu* has attained all the three yogas. Having attained the Yogas, and having realised their futility, one who is marching to becoming an 'ayogi' is 'Yogishwar'.

Prabhu is 'Viditayoga' (विदितयोग) - knower of all Yogas. That is he knows the result of the substantial-variations of the mind, speech and body. In other words, *Prabhu* has the knowledge of all the combinations - yogas - of the inanimate with the inanimate and the animate with the inanimate - that are bound to ensue.

Prabhu is 'anek' and 'ek' (अनेक - एक) - plural and singular at once. A devotee while praising the *Siddha Bhagawan* has said -

एक मांहि अनेक राजे अनेक मांहि एकिकं
एक अनेक की नाही संख्या, नमो सिद्ध निरंजनम् ॥

In the *Siddhalaya* - the abode of the *Siddhas*, where one *Siddha* abides, there many *Siddhas* do too and where many *Siddhas* abide there is one too. The sector of the *Akash Pradesh* - the space, which one *Siddha* has occupied can also be occupied by other *Siddhas* simultaneously. In spite of it, the entity of each *Siddha* remains independent and hence *Prabhu* is only one. Considering yet another view, since the true form of all the *atmas* is identical he is only one, and since there are many virtues in

the *Prabhu*, he is plural. *Prabhu* by himself is one, but since he resides in the hearts of many devotees, he is plural.

Prabhu is '*Jnana Svarupi*' (ज्ञानस्वरूपी) - in the form of knowledge. In the infinite sectors of the soul, there are the elements of knowledge. There cannot be a single sector of the soul free of the element of knowledge. *Prabhu* has completely destroyed the *jnanavarniya* and attained complete knowledge. In fact, knowledge is soul and soul is knowledge. Thus his spirit is immersed in knowledge. Hence *Prabhu* is '*jnanasvarupi*'.

Prabhu is '*Amal*' (अमल) - immaculate. That where there is not a spot of dirt - मलिनता - is called *amal*. Where there is attachment - passion, there will be dirt. Since there is no attachment, there is no dirt. The absolutely pure soul *Prabhu* is '*amal*'.

The sages and the *atmarthi jivas* perceive such virtues of the *Prabhu*.

Here, we have been told, what the true inner form of *Jineshwar Bhagwan* is, which is the truly valued form and that alone is worthy of knowing. Only through these virtues can we understand the true inner form of the *Jineshwar*. But the *Matarthi jivas* get dazzled by the external energy that appears on the *Prabhu* as a result of his *punyodaya*, and mistake it for *Prabhu*'s true form. And they believe it to be the achievement of the purpose of their understanding. Yet it is a serious mistake.

Srimadji has told us what misconceptions there are in the beliefs about the *Tirthankar*.

Now he enlists other indications of *Matarthi jivas*.

. . . . see with unseeing eyes!

The pursuit of the three-fold path is possible only for that *jiva* in whom a detached attitude towards the world has arisen. As long as he is attached to the world, the affection for the world does not reduce. The affection for the world in a *jiva* is such that he has never been free from the thoughts of the world. Due to his love for the world, whatever he did has been for the growth of the world.

Wherever, in whichever species - in the four gatis - the *jiva* went, the only application of the sensory abilities that were available, has been for the perpetuation of the chain of birth and death. How and what transpired in the earlier births is forgotten, but let us consider this birth and see what and how our activity has been since birth until now.

Consider, Brothers! A child is born, it knows nothing. It does not even know about opening its eyes. Yet the use of the senses begins. Have you not seen? A just-born baby is given juice-drops squeezed from a cotton swab, and the baby begins to taste with its tongue. The inherent knowledge of the food sense awakens and although the baby does not formally know that taste is sensed through the tongue, it does accept the juice.

In the same way, the use of other senses also begins. In a short while, it begins to perceive with its eyes. Hold any thing before it and it gets attracted. It begins to listen with the ears. You make some noise or call its name, it listens and turns to look. Thus it begins the use of all the senses effortlessly. Simultaneously, the mind also begins work. The baby laughs in its sleep. Why so? Apparently some reaction in its active mind reflects in the form of a smile.

Brothers! When we were babies, nobody taught us saying - Look, this is your ear, you hear with it; this is the eye, you see

with it. In spite of that, we put all the senses to their respective uses. Have you ever thought how this could happen? In the infinite past, the *jiva* has done nothing except enjoying the sensory pleasures with one-two-three-four or as many senses as it was born with. *Jiva* is attached to passions. Our spirit has become extroverted and is running in the direction of passions. As such whatever intellect we got with the senses, whenever we got a mind, all these strengths were deployed only in that direction. The result of such deep engrossment between the senses, mind and body was that the *jiva* was not left with any time at all to think of its own good.

Indeed, the more the *jiva*'s engrossment in sensory passions, the more the attachment and aversion will be. And the stronger the influence of attachment and aversion, the farther will be the *jiva* from the soul, that is to say, the thought of the soul never awakens in it. The feelings of attachment etc., feed false faith - *mithyatva* (मिथ्यात्व). So long as false faith is fed, how will the search for the soul awaken? And hence without recognising the excellent means available in this vast universe, the *jiva* is knocking around insensibly.

The *jiva* does come across excellent means, but the darkness before its eyes does not let it recognise them. As such, in spite of finding redeeming means, it cannot pursue them that is to say, it cannot pursue the goal of the soul with the help of those means.

The selfless, compassionate sages experience a sort of sorrow within them, seeing the effects of the *jiva*. They shower compassion upon it and make an attempt to bring it to the right path. As such, they point out each and every characteristic of such a *Matarthi jiva* and make it realise its own folly.

Here, Srimadji first told us where the *Matarthi jiva* erred in placing its faith in a *Guru* who was only superficially detached and then he explained the delusion in the *Matarthi*'s knowledge

in mistaking the *Samavasarana* and such powers for the true inner form of the *Jina*. What is the result of these two follies? Explaining how stubborn the beliefs of the *Matarthi* become because of these follies, Srimadji says -

प्रत्यक्ष सदगुरुयोगमां, वर्ते दृष्टि विमुख,
असदगुरुने दृढ करे, निज मानार्थे मुख्य २६

A *Matarthi* is a *mithyatvi jiva* and even a *mithyatvi* may be born with some *punya* in store, and as a result of that *punya* he may even get the proximity of a *Sadguru*. There may even be interaction with him. He may even be serving the *Guru* physically. Ah! he may be even hearing the *Guru's* speech. Yet in spite of all this, neither the *Guru's* words nor his orders remain with the *Matarthi*. What he wouldn't do to hear the *Guru*! If it meant spending money, he would willingly spend. He would believe and make believe that he is really listening. But alas! Like an upturned pot.

An upturned pot, placed under the rain-trench in a downpour, doesn't collect even a drop of water and on the contrary knocks about and eventually shatters as the yard gets filled with rain-water. Similarly, the *Matarthi jiva* hears the advice, but not a single word gets absorbed. Not just that, he behaves quite the contrary to what he has been told. A leech stuck to the cow's udder does not drink milk, it only sucks blood. Similarly, the *Matarthi jiva*, instead of absorbing the good out of the priceless advice of the *Guru*, looks for the faults.

I am reminded of what Moraribapu once said. He was rendering Ramayana in a village. One evening a youth approached him and said, "*Bapu*! I have a question".

Bapu was elated. He thought, 'Aha! How interested this young fellow is in Ramayana! Obviously he has contemplated upon the story he heard, and hence he must have this question.' With great joy *Bapu* said, "Ask me".

“*Bapu!* Hanuman had a tail, then how come his mother didn’t?”

Look Brothers! What a question! Was this the only thing to be absorbed from a great epic like Ramayana? This was like the sieve that strains the flour. It lets out all the flour and holds back only the dirt-like husk. That’s it. The *Matarthi jiva* cannot get a *Satsang* in spite of coming in contact with a *Sadguru*. He cannot make the effort of experiencing the truth within him and squanders the gem like opportunity that has come his way. It is like the gem in a crow’s nest. What does a crow know about the value of a gem? And whose splendour is it any way?

Brothers! That *jiva*, on whom the good counsel of achieving something for the soul has prevailed, goes on improving his own ability and keeps searching frantically for such reasons that will light the lamp of his spirit, in the atmosphere of *Satsang*. That *jiva* pines for the company of a *Sadguru*, and if he doesn’t find it, rues every moment of it. “Why, oh why, don’t I find a *Sadguru*?” That is the turbulent question that bothers him within. For now, he has developed a keen urge to become a true disciple. Such a *jiva* will not have an interest left in any other subject. He will go through the mundane activity for the sake of it, he will perform his duties whenever necessary, but within him, he experiences a deep anguish at the separation from his *Sadguru*. For he knows, ‘Once I meets the *Sadguru*, his blessings are bound to be showered upon me. He is bound to awaken an introspection in me. Except him there is no other power capable enough to introduce me to my soul. Hence, now I cannot remain without my *Sadguru*.’ A devoted poet says -

गुरुजी! तम विना बेली मारूं कोई नथी हे . . जी;
 बापजी! सांभळो पोकार (२) तम विना . . . गुरुजी
 गुरुजी! जळ विना तलखे जेम मिनका हे . . जी;
 दिल मारूं तलखे दीदार (२) तम विना . . . गुरुजी

Where on one hand, the *atmarthi jiva* is anguished at the lack of an opportunity to meet a *Sadguru*, there on the other hand the *Matarthi jiva* is unable to avail of the opportunity presented to him. His inability to see and the mistake of accepting a *Kuguru* as a *Suguru*, keeps the doors of his understanding closed, and does not let them open. Even when a *Sadguru* goes to him and indicates the true path, he is not willing to walk on that path.

शुं जाणे भक्ति वनचर वगडाना रे वासी ?
पासे जड़ने प्रमोदीए, तो निश्चें जाए नासी रे
साथु पुरुषनो संग न कीथो, आपोआप उदासी . . . शुं जाणे . . .

Such will be the state of the *Matarthi*! He neither believes the *Sadguru*, nor does he let go the attachment with the *Asadguru*! He can never think whether learning from an *Asadguru* is favourable or detrimental. But he holds a firm belief in an *Asadguru* because the ego within him is fed. His attachment with the *Asadguru* goes from strength to strength. For there he gets a name, fame and a false prestige that has the approval of the society. Such a *Guru* will only praise him, and then again if the *jiva* is known to be free with his money, there is no stopping him. He will be respected in the social councils, and adulated everywhere.

Remember this, Brothers! Such fraudulent *Gurus* will always get such disciples. They have nothing to do with the pursuit of the soul, neither do they have any interest in *vratas*, *pratyakhyana* etc. They want a name-fame and all. That's it! Such should be the *Dharma* and such a *dharma-guru*! Dancing like a toy to the tune of the disciples. In this age we get such superstitious people aplenty and fraudulent *Gurus* make disciples of such people to feed their selfish motives. Their ego is also fed and so is that of the disciples. Well, those are the feelings everywhere. How can anybody be benefitted at all?

Such *jivas* have been in a quandary from infinite time. Their view has always been perverse. They could never get a proper view nor do they want it. They do not respect the truth. Why, they do not even know what the truth is! As such they continue to disregard the truth and due to the perverse view respect the falsehood. Such *jivas* are pitiable indeed. In spite of having found the path of elevation, they cannot progress on it. What else is this but the misfortune of the *jiva*? Brothers! Let us examine ourselves within, as to what should be understood by this lack of respect for the soul, for the truth in spite of having heard the speech of the *Tirthankar* and having gained the company of the sages? Where do we stand? After having heard the description of the *Matarthi jivas*, do we think we ought to be categorised with them? This needs a special thought.

What other mis-beliefs the *matarthi jiva* holds, will be explained hereafter.

..... those who misunderstand *Shrutajnana*

The pursuit of the three-fold path will bear fruit only when it is properly done. Otherwise, the whole effort results in a waste. Just as in the worldly affairs, propriety is insisted upon, in spiritual pursuit too it is. In fact, it is more so here.

Quite often it is noted that a person loses faith if he does not derive the desired benefit in spite of observing the religious vows and rituals that have been pursued as customs. When vows and fasts, that are observed with the intention of thwarting some impending dangers, fail to do so, then man says, “Religion is useless. I did this and I did that, yet I did not get any result.” And then he stops observing those vows.

This view needs to be given a thought. Do such rituals and observances prevent the worldly sorrows? And if they don't are they falsehood? Had these observances alone been the solution to adversity, then man would not have the need to make any other effort. He would complete the observances somehow, but that is not the case. It is true that *Dharma* helps in adverse times, but how?

During times of distress, the religious view tells us that the sorrows that have befallen us are the result of our own past doing - karma. Hence, maintain your equipoise, do not get disturbed. Do not blame anybody else. It is not because of others that you are in sorrow, but of your own hidden reasons. Hence, there is no choice but to bear it with equipoise. If this equipoise is maintained, if the balance is not lost even amidst the worst of pains, then the sorrow of many births can be got over.

Gajsukumar and *Muni* Metaraj maintained such equipoise that they could remove the sorrows of not one but many births. They had risen above the feeling of the body. “Whatever is happening is happening to the body. I am but the soul. Separate

from the body. I should remain unto myself. If I look at the body, then I would feel the pain of the body. But I am above the body. Remaining aloof from the body even while residing in it is my *Dharma*. Feeling for the body will result in bodily activity and feeling for the soul will result in spiritual activity.”

How will sorrow bother anybody who has achieved such an analytical view? It will not be recognised at all.

Well, this is what the *Dharma* teaches and this is the proper devoted practice. Such practice alone bears fruit. Otherwise, effort put in without understanding goes futile. Mere pursuit of customs and formal traditions does not fetch us the fruit. As we sow, so we reap. Spiritual thought fetches spiritual fruit and worldly thought fetches worldly fruit. Brothers! *Dharma* pursued with a worldly intent might offer a momentary relief from sorrow or might even offer some peace of mind - happiness, but at the end there is only sorrow. For the creation of *Dharma* has been with a spiritual motive. We should never forget that only the *Dharma* pursued with spiritual intent can offer everlasting happiness. Banarasidasji says in '*Natak Samaysar*' -

लीन भयौ विवहारमें, उक्ति न उपजे कोई,
दीन भयौ प्रभु पद जपे, मुक्ति कहा सौ होई

How can one, who is engrossed in worldly affairs, not knowing the *Bhedajnana*, who keeps praying in all humility, attain liberation at all? He will never. One who does not understand the proper devoted practice is a *Matarthi*. We are continuing the description of a *Matarthi* here. Srimadji says -

देवादि गति भंगमां, जे समजे श्रुतज्ञान,
माने निजमत वेषनो, आग्रह मुक्तिनिदान २७

The pursuit of knowledge commences with *Shrutajnana* and culminates in *Kevaljnana*. What is *Shrutajnana*? Every *Sadhaka* has to undertake this pursuit, but how? Keeping the *Shastras*

created by the Omniscient in view, one has to proceed with the help of the *Agamas*. What do the *Agamas* say? What is in their store? What is their purpose? Without understanding these matters, one who grasps only the broad aspects, and carries the impression that he has become learned, is a *Matarthi*.

From the *Shastras* we learn of the *Deva*, *manushya*, *tiryancha* and *naraki* life forms (देव, मनुष्य, तिर्यन्त्र, नारकी गति) and their various classifications, variations and so on. The 198 types of *devas*, the 303 types of *manushyas*, the 48 types of *tiryanchas* and 14 types of *narakis*, thus in all 563 types have been mentioned. Why! Not just that, but the analysis of the relation of all these *jivas* with karma, *bandha*, *udaya*, *udirana* and *satta* (कर्म, बंध, उदय, उदीरणा, सत्ता). The minutest details in these have been mentioned. Many people learn all these details by heart. They keep repeating them. Some of them have 500 - 700 verses by heart and they keep splitting the hair over the the most dimunitive matter. Even when they enter into a discussion with somebody, it is the same; they get down to the same questions of how many *dandaks*, *avaghenas*, *sharir* etc., in which *jiva* and so on. They repeatedly harp upon these same questions, but why the *Agamas* carry these descriptions, what is the essence of the same, is all beyond them.

Having heard the description of the life-forms, and believing the *Deva-gati* to be superior, they dream of going there. One cannot go there with this body, but they think they could atleast become *devas* after death. If we ask them, “Brother! Why are you planning to go to the *devaloka*?”, they say, “Look! One has to go somewhere or the other after death. Here one cannot be immortal and *Moksa* is yet so far. Therefore, if we go where there is unlimited wealth, could we not enjoy it? For here we haven’t got the wealth, and if we have, then it cannot be enjoyed in this short life, one has to leave it here and go away. However long one’s life may be, it is difficult to enjoy all the wealth. But

the deva's lifespan is also large and the wealth there is immense, as such there is enough scope for satisfying the desires of the mind. Hence, it will be best if we go there."

Brothers! Having learnt the description of the *devas* and other life-forms, the craving for passions has increased! Was this the purpose of mentioning these things in the *Shastras*? No, one has only to imbibe the essence of that knowledge. The various life-forms of *devas* etc., have been described only to indicate that if you do so-and-so things you are likely to be born in so-and-so life-form. The adverse conditions that you will find there will lead to more attachment and aversion and that will again bind you in new karma. Thus the cycle goes on.

But if realising that the *jiva's* true inner form is dispassionate, an effort is made towards conquering passions, then the bondage of karma is arrested. And when the bondage of karma gets arrested, the wandering through the life-forms is also checked. The supreme goal of the *jiva* is the fifth state of *Moksa*. And for attaining it, if one realises - Who am I? What is my true inner form? Where have I come from and to where am I bound? - then it is *Shrutajnana*. But instead of realising this if one gets stuck in the web of classification, it is not going to benefit him. Hence, that is not *Shrutajnana*. *Srimadji* has called those, who insist upon calling it *Shrutajnana*, as *Matarthis*.

In '*Upadesha Chhaya*' *Srimadji* tells us what such a *Matarthi* does, when he goes to a *Sadguru* and discusses the *Shastras* -

"He goes to the Guru daily, raises all sorts of doubts and hypotheses about unisensory and other jivas and questions him. He goes everyday and asks the same things over and over again. Not one day does he ask as to what is the purpose of knowing the unisensory to penta-sensory jivas? It is not that the ideas about unisensory and other jivas are going to break through the *mithyatva-granthis*. In truth, *samakit* has to be attained."

“The Sages while describing the Universe, have done so to remove the ignorance which has been the cause of the *jiva*’s infinite number of births therein. But how can that *jiva* who is engrossed only in the description of the world, be benefitted? This will be termed ignorance. That which enables you to remove ignorance is knowledge. That which is useful in the spiritual pursuit is knowledge. That knowledge which is not useful in the spiritual pursuit is ignorance.”

Indeed it is necessary to know as to how far the *jivas* from all the four life-forms can reach on the path of spiritual pursuit. *Samyag Darshan* can occur to *jivas* from all the four *gatis*. A *tiryanch* can even become a *shravak* and a *manushya* can make an effort to attain *Moksa* while devotedly practising as a *sadhu*. Thus realise that for the purpose of pursuing the spiritual path, the *manushya* form is the best, and that every moment of this birth should be put to the best use, as this birth as a *manushya* will not come our way again and again; when this knowledge awakens within us that is *Shrutajnana*. But one who only counts the classifications, keeps discussing them and gloats in the belief that he has gained knowledge, is a *Matarthi*.

In other words, *Matarthi jiva* insists upon propagating the sect or school of thought that he follows and holds the foolish notion that *Moksa* will be attainable only if one belongs to a particular sect or dresses up in a particular way, and not otherwise.

Today, many people believe that only a follower of Jainism can attain *Moksa*. But what is this *Moksa*? Complete freedom from attachment and aversion is *Moksa*. This transformation can happen no matter what religion one follows. Jainism does not hold the monopoly that authorises only its followers for *Moksa* and prohibits others. A follower of Jainism may very well be observing the rituals but if the attachment and aversion within is not destroyed, then there can be no *Moksa* no matter how many births he goes through. At the same time for a follower of another

faith who observes rituals in his own custom, and destroys attachment and aversion, *Moksa* is a certainty.

Amongst us, *Siddha* has been defined to be of fifteen types. Of them, one is *Grhasthalinga Siddha* - that is a person may be dressed as a householder, but if all karma is dissolved, then he can attain *Moksa*. Similarly, *Anyalinga Siddha* - that is a person who may be following another faith or sect, may be an ascetic with long hair in braids, wearing saffron clothes, a necklace of beads and wooden footwear - anything that his sect permits and behaves accordingly, at the same time his soul is progressing towards purity with dissolving karmas, can also attain *kevaljnana* and subsequently *Moksa*. Now here is a follower of another faith, but since he relinquished attachment and aversion, he attained *Moksa*. Such *jiva* becomes a *Siddha* and hence is called *Anyalinga Siddha*.

Once we had an occasion to discuss this topic with a brother. He was knowing the *Agamas* well. We asked, "What is your opinion?" He said, "I firmly believe that while in other faiths one may very well attain *kevaljnana* but not *Moksa*. Soon as he attains *kevaljnana*, he will abandon the robes of an ascetic and wear the robes of a Jain muni acceptable to the Jain tradition." We couldn't help laughing. What gibberish! What a twisted belief! Once *kevaljnana* is attained, the *Veetarak* - the one who is free from all passions - who is enjoying the bliss of the soul, will not be bothered whether he has worn any clothes at all. Then where is the question of wearing the robes as this person says? He would be united with the experience of the soul in its form of complete knowledge.

Indeed, what relation does *Moksa* have with the dress? *Moksa* does not occur due to or of the dress. *Moksa* is of the pure soul. Why! Among the Jain sects, the *Digambers* say that so long as there is cloth on the body, there can be no *Moksa*. Cloth

is an attachment. Where there is attachment, there is no *Moksa*. But Brothers! We say - so long as there is the body, there cannot be *Moksa*. Only if you relinquish the body, will there be *Moksa*. Then why do you saunter about with this body? For attachment is the impediment to *Moksa*. Then be it of the body, or of the cloth or of any other thing. Brothers! There is no limit to argument and counter argument! It would suffice if we understand that *Moksa* is of the Soul and not of body, cloth or dress.

The *Matarthi jiva* does not wait to think thus far. He is obsessed with his own obstinate ideas. He believes - what I say is the truth. Then where does he get the patience to hear the truth from others?

How such a *mithyatvi jiva* is, and what his beliefs are, has been told by Banarsidasji in his '*Natak Samaysar*' -

धरम न जानत बखानत भरम रूप,
ठौर ठौर ठानत लराइ पच्छपातकी!
भूल्यौ अभिमान मैं न पाउ धरै धरनी में
हिरदैमें करनी विचारै उतपातकी ॥

फिर डांवाडोल सौ करम के कलोलिनिमें,
वै रही अवस्थासु बधूले कैसे पातकी।
जाकी छाती ताती कारी कुटिल कुवाती भारी
एसौ ब्रह्मघाती है मिथ्याती महापातकी ॥

He does not know the true form of the *Dharma* and believing his quandary to be *Dharma*, he praises it. Wherever he goes, he takes a partisan view of his own faith and eulogises it. Unbridled in his pride, he hardly walks on the earth. He indulges in destructive activity. The state of such a *matarthi* is like a boat that is tilting precariously in a river. How can such a sinful person receive the good counsel? That *mithyatvi*, the destroyer of his own true inner form, who is full of venom and pernicious illogical ideas, is a great sinner.

A *Matarthi jiva* may stubbornly insist upon pushing the faith or appearance he has believed, where there is stubbornness, there is a unity of belief. *Moksa* is not in unity, it is in diversity. Hence there should not be an obstinate approach. Brothers! In any facet of life, obstinacy generates friction. All the wars that were waged in our history, whether worldly or religious, were solely because of obstinacy. Where there is obstinacy, there is no peace, no equanimity and no happiness. The insistence - “What I say is the truth and all others are wrong” - brings about a mutual hatred. It ruins life. Just imagine! If obstinacy can generate misery even in the most insignificant facet of life, how can a stubborn man progress on the spiritual path of self-purification? Leave alone *Moksa*, he cannot even get closer to *samyag darshan*. Hence, if the soul is to be realised, obstinacy should be totally given up. But the *Matarthi jiva* does not understand this and is preoccupied in the grip of his own beliefs. Therefore, the spiritual path is not for him.

Now, some more characteristics of the *Matarthi* in the next.

..... to earn worldly respect!

The pursuit of the three-fold path is the pursuit of the goal of the soul. One whose interest in the soul has awakened, has commenced the pursuit. But for the foolish *Matarthi*, the devoted practice never begins.

Here in the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*', while enumerating the characteristics of the *Matarthi jiva*, the faults in his faith, knowledge and beliefs were mentioned until now. There is also a fault in his conduct. He has never realised what conduct is. As a result he does a lot of things, but without understanding - aimlessly.

लह्यं स्वरूप न वृत्तिनुं, ग्रह्यं व्रत अभिमान,
ग्रहे नहीं परमार्थने, लेवा लौकिक मान २८

The *Matarthi jiva* does perform vows and daily rituals. It is generally noticed that any *jiva* begins the foray into religion with a vow-ritual which is the form of *dravya-charitra*. He does not know much as to why a vow is to be observed or what purpose it serves. But he has developed some interest in religion. 'I want to be religious, I should be religious' having so understood, he sets about observing vows. In many cases their life is overwhelmed with penance and sacrifice. It goes on round the year.

Such *jivas* have a limited understanding - 'I am a Jain, a follower of *Bhagwan Mahavira*. My Lord performed a twelve and a half year penance. So shouldn't I?' Some go a step ahead and believe that fasting leads to the waning of karma. With this belief, they perform the severest penance and at the same time believe that their millions of karmas were washed away!

But Brothers! I ask you, "You observed the *Ashtam* - three days of fasting, in the three days of penance how much karma was reduced?" What would you say, "*Mahasatiji*! How can one ascertain that? How can it be measured? But everybody says that penance leads to reduction of karma, and since I observed the *Ashtam*, it must have reduced."

This 'must have' is the hazard that keeps us from understanding the essence of the *dharma*. Look Brothers! Nowhere else is this sort of account maintained. Profit is equal to effort. That is the simple arithmetic. You spend five rupees and if you do not get equivalent goods, do you approve? You send your errand-boy with a hundred rupees to buy the groceries. When he returns don't you first tally to ensure nothing is short? If something is short you send him out again. But for the hundred rupees given you ought to get equivalent goods. You will not settle for anything less.

Brothers! Whether you observe *Ashtam* or *Maskhaman* - one month of fasting, shouldn't the returns on such severe penance be commensurate? Look! I am not referring to worldly returns. There cannot be worldly returns on penance and sacrifice! I am referring to that return which is bound to be received and that is the dispelling of Karma. I ask my brothers and sisters who are into penance whether they have ever thought after going through a severe penance like *Maskhaman* - 'I have gone through such a severe penance, what would be the amount of karma that is redeemed?' Of course! You will convince yourself that certain redemption 'must have' occurred. Can so many days of fasting go without redemption of Karma? It must have been redeemed. But no, it is not the 'must have happened', but the 'did happen' that can be experienced. You experience that the strength of your penance has redeemed so much karma - that there has been *nirjara* of karma.

What is *nirjara*? In '*Natak Samaysar*' it has been thus defined-

जो पूरव सत्ता करम, करि थिति पूरन थाउ
खिरबेकों उद्यत भयौ, सो निर्जरा लखाउ . . .

When the karmas which are lying in supremacy within the *Atmapradesh*, reach a state of culmination and get redeemed, that is *nirjara*. With penance, this process of culmination is completed earlier and the karmas are plucked away from the *atma*.

Here the question is, how can the quantum of karma, that was redeemed due to the penance, be ascertained? Karma is not a measured or weighed substance, where we can again measure and say - so much is the reduction. Karmas are infinite. How does one know if some of them are reduced? If a little water is removed from the ocean, how does one ascertain the quantum of water left? Can all the water of the vast ocean be measured? Same is the case with the Karmas. Even after a few karmas are redeemed out of the infinite, they still remain infinite. Can you say how many karmas were redeemed?

To solve this mystery, Srimadji has placed a potent word *vr̥tti* (वृत्ति) - disposition, in the gatha. He says - लब्धुं स्वरूपं न वृत्तिनु; the *vr̥tti* has to be recognised. Alongwith the Karma, there are two types of *vr̥ttis* flowing in the *Atma*. One is natural disposition (स्वाभाविक वृत्ति) and the other is the affected disposition (वैभाविक वृत्ति).

Realising the true form of both the *vr̥ttis*, dispelling the affected *vr̥tti* and awakening the natural *vr̥tti*, is all that there is to the pursuit of *dharma*. Penance becomes only a part of it.

Now, one who is conscious of the *vr̥tti*, and performs a penance for that very reason, if he has to fast even for one day, he will sit aside on the previous day and think, “What dispels the affected *vr̥tti* is a *vrata*. I should be observing such a *vrata*. Then which is the *vr̥tti* within me that has been bothering me?” Presume that there is passion within. Passionate disposition is of course, detrimental to others but is more so for oneself. “My passionate disposition bothers me a lot. It taints my thoughts. It lowers the class of my speech. It goads me into doing things that are improper. I get disturbed on seeing beauty. My heart starts pounding when I hear passionate words or see passionate scenes. It bothers me a lot. Now I do not want this disposition. Tomorrow I shall fast and try to remain close to my soul. I want to reside in my true dispassionate inner form and observe my disposition at close quarters. I want to wage a spiritual war against it. I want to vanquish it. I want to uproot it. It is there because it is rooted

firmly. I should weaken it.” So thinking, if on the entire day of the fast, the same observation, the same resistance continues within, then the affected disposition will surely weaken and it will be possible to experience the extent to which the *vr̥tti* has weakened.

Brothers! This is *nirjara*! Such affected *vr̥ttis* arise within as a result of the rise of Karma. But if they are fought against, they will weaken and even get destroyed. In the same way, the *vr̥ttis* of passions like anger etc., are also lying within us. Whether somebody else knows or not, we ourselves know how angry we get and for what reason. Where and when we can forgive. How much ego there is, what sort of inducement it needs, when it rises, and when it remains subsided. In the same way, when the feelings for the material world and the feelings of greed and aversion arise. When simplicity and contentment can be displayed? All these are the good and bad dispositions lying within us and we are fully aware of them.

When we resort to penance and sacrifice, the first goal should be of weakening all these *vr̥ttis*. For this purpose, the *vr̥ttis* have to be examined constantly. Which *vr̥tti* has weakened and to what extent, after performing the fast? Whether it is now possible to maintain equilibrium given the same situation which used to trigger off anger earlier and is the anger of the same intensity as before? Think and observe in the case of other passions and feelings too.

If there is a positive change in the situation before and after the penance, if in spite of stimulation the *jiva* is not getting affected and is getting less affected, then it is to be understood that there has been a *nirjara* of karmas due to the penance. And if the situation has not changed, if it is status quo, then there has been no *nirjara*. This is the yardstick for *nirjara*. There is no scope for saying ‘must have happened’. We can ourselves experience the result.

Only that *Sadhaka* who has recognised the true form of the *vr̥tti* can estimate the value of *vr̥ta*. Otherwise - ग्रहं व्रत अभिमान - for a *matar̥thi* who does not know *vr̥ttis*, a *vr̥ta* will lead to more aberration. That which was intended to reduce passions, will lead to more intense passions. It has been observed that people performing penance are more prone to anger. The reason is that they perform unlimited penance without realising the purpose.

Why! Several *jivas* perform penance-sacrifices only to satisfy their egos! They keep saying - 'In a month I observed so many *upavasas*, *ayambils*, *ekasanas*. I give up leafy green vegetables, roots and bulbs on special occasions, I do not take food after sunset'. Not just that! 'I put in so many hours in *samayik*, in devotion. My daily ritual goes on undisturbed. Come what may I never miss all this'. Wherever they go they don't miss reciting this over and over again.

Not just that! They start comparing with others. 'Look I do so much and my neighbour or my so-and-so relative does nothing at all. If you have been born shouldn't there be some religious activity?' Brothers! What *vr̥tti* does this show? All this is being done to show off before people and to inflate the ego. What was achieved with the sacrifice? Only the ego was fed. Wasn't that backtracking? Then what else is he but a *matar̥thi*?

Some people keep an account of the *vr̥tas* they have observed - 'So many *atthai-navai*, so many turns on the rosary, self-contemplation for so many hours every day and so on and so forth. Now there is nothing more left to be done'.

Brothers! I shall ask them, "You have listed all these, but what about the sins you have piled up all through the life? Why don't you list them? Why don't you say 'I have sinned ever so much! This is the limit, so no more sins henceforth'."

You don't count the sins. You would rather say 'I will sin as long as I live!' and not 'I shall perform penance and sacrifice as long as I live'.

Such a person who sacrifices says, 'I have excluded everything! Now what is there to give up? I gave up eating and drinking! I gave up a little of entertainment and indulgence!'

But did you give up sinning? Did you ever tell your self 'No more of this sinful attitude! This sinfulness is like a poison. Whether little or more, it is bound to kill the thought of the soul. O Soul! You are experiencing the affected disposition. Free yourself from it and come into your own true form! So long as you continue to experience the results of sins, you are not going to experience the true self nor peace!'

But if such a thought arises, won't he become an *atmarthi*? He wants to remain a *matarthi* and gloat over the *vratas* he has performed. As a result that *jiva* who has fallen for worldly fame cannot achieve the supreme effort - *paramartha* - ग्रहे नहीं परमार्थने.

What is *paramartha*? *Param-artha* - doing something for achieving the supreme goal is a supreme effort. The supreme goal of a *jiva* is *Moksa*, hence all the means to achieve *Moksa* are *paramartha*. The words of the *Sadguru* which are a means to *Moksa* are also *paramartha*.

In worldly practice the meaning of *paramartha* would be 'work that benefits people'. Doing something with mind, body and wealth for the poor and the languishing, for the needy humans or animals is *paramartha*. But there too people expect general acclaim. A man does it all and at the same time goes around saying, 'I do so much. I offer clothes to the poor, offer them house and food. It is an outlay of so many lakhs annually. People are greatly benefitted.' Brothers! It is a great thing that you work inspired by compassion and pity. It is indeed worth doing. But if the hunger for fame and status rises, all the good is lost. Brothers! Pardon me, but there are many such people who no doubt, do all these things, but at the same time keep those people for whom they have been doing, under their thumbs. Which is the *virtti* that

is active in such cases? Is it compassion, love, pity for the sorrowing or the need to feed the ego? If I were to ask you, you'd say, "No, just pity alone!"

But that is not true. Let us consider another viewpoint. If you happen to go over suddenly to the people whom you have been helping in whatever way, and if they don't pay you respect, don't even acknowledge your presence, then what do you feel? How your ego is hurt? 'I did so much for these people; is there any regard for it? Such people do not deserve any help.' Now where is the pity? Where is the feeling for the sorrowing and the downtrodden?

Brothers! On the worldly path too, pride over *paramartha* is to be shunned, it is not respectable. Then it is bound to be worthy of shunning on the spiritual path too. But the *matarthi jiva* needs the worldly respect, the false prestige and hence he will never find *paramartha* interesting. He never wants to absorb the advice of the *Sadguru*!

Let us consider our customs and traditions for a while. How we have made the *vratas*, *pratyakhyana*, penance seem so material! What are we to achieve, if the *dharma* that is meant for beyond this world is valued in worldly terms? We achieve nothing on the contrary it is a loss.

Brothers! You do get social status because of expertise in worldly affairs, when you spend money, then why use the means of *vratas* and vows to achieve it? Man does the penance-sacrifice, devotion, *pujas* at the temple and so on just so that he may receive applause in the society, that he may be respected, that he may be cheered, respected in the councils or that he may get labelled as a religious person. All this prestige increases his social value and his worldly affairs go on smoothly. Hasn't he used *dharma* as a means and dragged it into worldly affairs after all? This *virtti* prohibits you from achieving *paramartha*. It does not let *atmartha* awaken.

Keeping this goal in mind, the *Shastras* have mentioned several ways of performing penance. *Ugra tapasvi*, *Deepta tapasvi* and so on were mentioned along with one other - *Gupta tapasvi*. The silent performer or the secretive performer. Whatever penance he performs, no body gets to know about it. He is the only one who knows. Why so? Why this attitude of hiding? Is it right? No, here the intent in hiding is not dishonesty. But he feels, 'The penance that I perform is only for the *nirjara* of my karma, I do not need any worldly acclaim'. In the *Shastras* too, the observance of *tapa-vrata-pratyakhyana* with the intent of this world (इहलौकिक) or beyond (परलौकिक) or for purposes of receiving acclaim-prestige, is prohibited. The *Shri Dashavaikalika Sutra* says -

नो इहलोगद्वयाए तवमहिद्वेज्जा, नो परलोगद्वयाए तवमहिद्वेज्जा
नो किञ्चिन्न-सद्-सिलोगद्वयाए तवमहिद्वेज्जा, नन्नत्थ निज्जरद्वयाए तवमहिद्वेज्जा।

If somebody gets to know that I have performed penance, and pays me respect, then my ego gets inflated. If my praise and fame are sung my ego gets inflated. If nobody gets to know of my penance and I am not looked after and served, my anger grows. I am in fact, performing this penance to vanquish my anger, pride and other passions. On the contrary they seem to grow. Hence, whatever penance I perform should be in secrecy - *gupta tapa*, whereby there will be no scope for rising passions.

Brothers! Perhaps you may not be able to perform *gupta tapa*, but you can at least avoid the desire for fame and prestige.

Another thing that needs to be mentioned - something like termite that is eating into our society - the custom of give-and-take after penance. The one who performs the penance offers mementos and eating-parties to the society and relatives and the society in turn offers gifts. Why, indeed? Perhaps the purpose is to celebrate the success of the penance or to felicitate the performer. But today that purpose is all but forgotten. It remains only a materialistic viewpoint. 'If this is not done, the society

will censure.' Ah! If the person performing the *upavasa* - fast, does not offer a memento to the society, his fasting is called dieting! How judicious! Whoever developed this definition? If somebody performs penance, what right does the society have to demand something from him? And of what good is that, which has been so extracted, for the society?

Brothers! This custom need a thorough rethinking. People have mistaken this for the fruit of penance. Is that all the value of the observances of the *Dharma* that is for beyond this world. Why these customs? Why is it that something has to be offered? Of course, if the family of the person performing penance feel like it they may well offer help to the needy - it could be within the society, some organisation or another family! But what difference does a container worth ten or fifteen rupees make, whether it enters your household or not?

Pardon me, Brothers! But people who proclaim themselves as religious also encourage such customs. They list out in advance as to what should be given to one who performs an *ashtam* of *pakhi*. Well, is that all the value to an *ashtam*? Why do you sell observances? How can true religion be understood through these? Just as you are bound to give dowry in the marriage of your daughter to save her from misery, the person who performs penance must also spend so much wealth, or else his penance will not be treated as penance! In fact, for having performed penance, he is bound to get something in exchange - money-gold-silver etc.!

The persons who do this and those who are instrumental are all to be categorised as *matarthis*. They cannot be classified anywhere else! These activities are not dispelling but feeding the passions which increase the worldly attachment. The goal of the soul never appeals and *matartha* never goes.

How a *matarthis* is troubled by many more such perverted thoughts has been told in the next.

Never taken the form of the attitude

The pursuit of the three-fold path brings forth all the *vr̥ttis* lying within the soul. With the progress of the devoted practice, the natural *vr̥ttis* gain in strength and the affected *vr̥ttis* fade out.

The intention of devoted practice is to highlight the natural disposition. We get engrossed in the affected disposition mistaking it for the natural. We believe the activities, habits and mannerisms arising out of the three yogas to be the natural disposition. But that is not so, it is only an aberration of the natural disposition. It is an aberration caused by the *mohaniya* karma affixed on the valuable true inner form of the soul. Other karmas simply hide the strength of the soul, they do not cause aberrations. The *mohaniya* karma suppresses the atma's own natural disposition and creates a new aberration. The *darshan mohaniya* karma suppresses *samyaktva* and generates the feeling of *mithyatva* and the *charitra mohaniya* karma debilitates the strength of the natural conduct of the soul and generates attachment and aversion through passions like anger etc.,. These aberrations are to be found in all *jivas* big or small to a lesser or greater extent. And the entire life's activity is fuelled by these passions, and hence we have believed them to be the natural disposition.

The passions that we bring along at birth become apparent in our activity from childhood itself. Have you seen the anger in a six or eight month old baby? His mother alone knows of his anger. She keeps saying, "He is only six months, but look at his anger!" It the manifestation of the passions that affect the child from within. The child does not let anybody touch any of his or his mother's things. That shows his greed and desire. These are passions. It is not that carnal desire is the only passion. All behaviour that goes against the true natural disposition of the soul is passion. A human begins the life, begins the process of

making others understand or understanding others with these aberrations. Even a young child expresses his emotions through anger, greed, stubbornity etc.,. With growing age, these passions grow stronger. And now we believe that these aberrations are the true natural disposition.

This delusion has to be broken. The sages have organised the observances for this very purpose.

At this point, there is one thing that needs to be specially understood. When does our *Tirthankar*, get the name *Tirthankar*? He is endowed with three forms of knowledge at birth, the moment he gets ordained he acquires the fourth, that is the *manahparyaya jnana*. Then with penance - meditation and devoted practice, *kevaljnana* appears. Well, having reached this point, having achieved the highest status from the view of the purity of the soul, he has not become a *Tirthankar* yet! Now this supreme soul endowed with *kevaljnana* explains the *sadhu-Dharma* and the *shravak-Dharma*. Everybody hears it. But if nobody accepts the *vrata* he cannot be a *Tirthankar*! Only when somebody accepts the *vrata* of a *sadhu* or a *shravak* the *Tirtha* gets propagated and he is called the *Tirthankar*. So to become a *Tirthankar*, the rise of the virtuous state of *Tirthankar nama karma* is instrumental, of course, but equally instrumental is the acceptance of the *vratas* by *sadhu*, *sadhvi*, *shravak* and *shravika* and their progress into *desh-virati* and *sarva-virati* feelings!

Brothers! Imagine from this, the importance of the acceptance of a *vrata*! The *Prabhu* delineates the path of *Moksa*. The biggest hurdle that is there on the path of *Moksa* are the *jiva's* own predilections. And these predilections can be restrained only with the leash of the *vrata*. Hence accepting a *vrata* is of great significance.

Many predilections have got woven into our life like the warp and the weft. The activities of every single moment have

become aberrated. This affected disposition has to be discarded and the natural disposition has to be nurtured. It is for this purpose that Srimadji has composed this *gatha*.

Brothers! Of the 142 *gathas* of '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*', all the *gathas* are very beautiful, contemplative indeed, but there are some which are very touching. This *gatha* is one of those. So if the *jiva* repeats this *gatha* often, he is bound to check his inner self. This does not happen normally. Everything else is checked. At home, in the office, in the society, in the organisations wherever you are attached, you check every thing and every activity, you go deep and check everything threadbare. But this is an invitation to ego and possessiveness. If you continue to do this, you will have to be born over and over again. Possessiveness is not helpful in any way. It may be out of attachment, out of selfishness or out of ego but it is devastating. Hence, stop checking the world and get down to checking your Self.

The world will progress on its worldly way. Whenever whatever has to happen to it will happen. You better look after your self. Of course, carry out all the duties that you can think of with an absolutely selfless attitude. But where even a little selfishness creeps in, or the attitude of feeding the ego arises, give up everything. That is the true understanding. That is also the wisdom. Think over. 'Where my soul is getting polluted, where the ego is trying to raise its head, I should not be interested there. I shall give up checking the world, and try to check myself'.

This idea of checking has been expressed beautifully in this *gatha*. As such, out of the many *gathas* in *Atmasiddhi*, this one I like the most. Brothers! Do repeat it often!

लहं स्वरूप न वृत्तिनु, ग्रहं व्रत अभिमान,
ग्रहे नहीं परमार्थने, लेवा लौकिक मान २८

How brimming this *gatha* is with beautiful thoughts! You could not recognise your own self! You could not realise who

was causing the aberrations in you. We had analysed this *gatha* in the earlier chapter too. Without identifying the affected attitudes lying within, we accepted *vratas* merely to feed our pride. But nothing came out of it! *Vratas* are very capable of breaking down the affected attitudes. There is strength in the *vratas*. But we have made them infirm. We have forgotten how *vratas* are to be observed.

Simply by going to the sages and getting avowed through *pratyakhyana* does not make a *vrata*. It is an internal development, and *pratyakhyana* is the boundary. In the farms, why do we find boundaries all around? For the safety of the crops. So that the cattle do not enter and ruin the crop. The boundaries manage to prevent the cattle from entering. But the birds that fly in the sky above notice the ripe crop and descend on the farms in flocks. How can they be stopped? The farmers place scarecrows in the middle of the farms. But the birds are wise, they recognise the scarecrow for what it is and ignore it. Why! Sometimes they rest on the scarecrow itself. So the scarecrow cannot save the crop from the birds. The next thing they do is to appoint a guard. Either from the household or a hired person. The guard has only one thing to do. All through the day he has to scare the birds away. He has to be very alert. He cannot settle down even for a chat.

Brothers! Acceptance of a vow to perform a *vrata* is like putting up a boundary to keep any enticement from entering the inner self. So, when a person is fasting with a vow, whatever be the tasty food that is placed before him, he will refuse saying, 'I am on fast today, I shall not eat'. Had it not been for the vow, the mind would have been immediately tempted and he would eat the stuff. Now when he is avowed, he will certainly not eat, but the mind would perhaps be drawn towards it. It is then that the reasoning awakens. In order to ensure that the bird-like craving for taste does not settle down within and lap up the grain-like

feelings, the guard-like reasoning says, 'It is for conquering this very craving for taste that you have gone on fast, so don't let these aberrations affect you'.

In the same way, like fasting, whatever other *vratas* one does, the guard of reasoning has to be always alert and should keep the aberrations at bay.

There should be a constant vigilance, a constant alertness, a vigil every moment of the self over the self. There should be a watch on the thought process within as to 'what is happening to me and when? Which way are my mind, my thoughts, my attachments running?' First place the boundary and then appoint the guard and then the self become its own guard. For guarding the world of our thoughts is nobody else's responsibility. The supreme Soul *Tirthankar* can know what our thoughts are. He can tell us these were your thoughts at such a time. He can tell us whether they were good or bad. But the responsibility of containing them is our own. Hence the alertness has to be of our self.

Hence, *vratas* are successful only when we have recognised our own attitude. Otherwise, having taken the vows of the *sadhu* or *shravak*, and if the consciousness that, 'my own internal attitude is likely to mislead me, I should be able to prevent it', is not there, then the *jiva* cannot progress on the path of spirituality. Hence, only those *vratas*, which revert the disposition to its naturalness, are acceptable. Otherwise *vratas* are not required. It is not because of the insistence of the *vratas* but because of the insistence of the natural disposition, that some *vratas* manage to revert the attitude to the natural form.

While discussing the third phrase of this *gatha* earlier, we have made a reference to *paramartha*. Let us consider it again here. *Srimadji* has said that the person who does not recognise his own attitude does not attain *paramartha*. Due to which, in

spite of receiving an advice from the *Sadguru* that can enable the attainment of the soul, it does not get absorbed within. The disregard for the *Sadguru* will keep the *jiva* away from his good words. In fact, the feeling of worldly pride and prestige will keep him from getting close to a *Sadguru*.

Brothers! What is the value of the prestige that is earned today? What brings you prestige? Pardon me for saying this, Brothers! But I have to say that however filthy be the attitudes lying within, even if one is terribly rotten inside, with ill-desires and passions boiling over, if he has some wealth to his account, he gains prestige. You start praising him, ‘Look, this is a great person in our community’.

How do you define prestige? Being attached to several institutions and having an annual budget of some four-five lakhs for charity? The society as well as the prestigious person himself know very well how shallow he is. A big zero in the name of principles and good conduct. You amass sins while earning your wealth and then divert it to charity. But of what good is this prestige? Tell me do you like this prestige? Why this farce? Why strut about wearing this false prestige? Is it to earn respect from the society? . . . No?

But Srimadji has not minced words here while saying what needs to be told such people. He doesn’t say - “Well, even if you have these qualities and if you have wealth, you are an *Atmarthi*!” “You have authority, so you are an *Atmarthi*!”

No, not so. “You may well have wealth and authority, but if you are caught in the web of false prestige and if you are not making any effort to get away from it, then you are a *Matarthi*”. Here, you cannot get false prestige. If at all you get, it is genuine. If there are the qualities of an *Atmarthi* in you, only then you are labelled an *Atmarthi*. Not otherwise.

Sometime back I happened to notice a reader's letter in the columns of '*Prajamat*'. His question was - "Of late the name of Moraribapu has become a rage in India and abroad. He renders Ramayana in a unique and wonderful style. The audience listens to him spellbound and with rapt attention. Not thousands but lakhs of people gather to hear him, leaving aside their work and business. In spite of all this, how many of the audience have improved their life? What an effort on Bapu's part! He speaks non-stop for six hours every day. He takes the audience on a journey through the emotions and the audience gets engrossed in them. He immerses them into practically all the emotions - laughter, pity, valour, detachment. Why! He manages to place a list of all the sins within, in your hands. Yet why is that people do not improve? Well, perhaps a few 50 or 100 people may have turned a new leaf but the rest all are just the same. Why don't they improve?" I do not know what reply that reader got to this question of his, but Srimadji has told us why this is so -

अहंभावथी रहित नहि, स्वधर्म संचय नाही;
नथी निवृत्ति निर्मळपणे, अन्य धर्मनी कांई

Why don't we improve? There is the ego lying within. A man says - "I admit what you say is right. I accept that you have managed to show me a true picture of my attitude. I admit I am as I am. But if I were to follow what you say and bring about a change in myself, would I not be called a washout? I let go of my habits just because you tell me? How can that be? How very useful are all these activities in feeding my beliefs! My ego alone gets me the respect amongst the councils, why should I give it up? Of course, once I let go of my ego, other attitudes are bound to go away, but then what will be my worth? It is like taking the venom out of the snake's fangs. Once you take the venom out of the snake, it is not very different from a worm. I do not want to be so. Ego may very well be like venom, but I shall store it."

Brothers! This is the answer! The true *Dharma* of the self is never recognised because the ego is not given up. And hence one does not resign from the *dharmas* of the inanimate, the mind, the senses and the body. Mistaking the affected disposition of passions etc., for the true disposition, one who remains engrossed in them, is a *Matarthi*.

Therefore, raise a boundary of *vratas* and learn the art of scaring away the birds above. Learn to analyse the attitudes for this. Brothers! The device for examining our attitudes is our *Pratikraman*! Many of us have not understood what *Pratikraman* is. Hence they wonder what is to be achieved by doing *Pratikraman*? Why, for that matter, the mind is not willing to do it even during the days of the *Paryushan* or even for one last day as *samwatsari*.

I am reminded of a young brother whom I once explained what *Pratikraman* stood for as he was keen on knowing, and after that he was in tears. He said, “*Mahasatiji*! Do pardon me! We had never understood *Pratikraman* in this way. As such we have severely ridiculed *Pratikraman* and those who observed it.” He continued, “We never wanted to attend *Pratikraman* even on *Samwatsari* days, but since the elders pushed us out for it, we would have to go. We went after sunset in the dark. While the others did the *kausagga* (काउसग) of 40 *logassa* (लोगस्स), we would place a *bhajji*, which we would carry in good quantity, in the hands of each one of them and then quietly escape from there. Then there would be a great ruckus. ‘Who did this? Who kept the *bhajjis*?’ But who would know?”

Brothers! Just imagine! What a situation! What a way of thinking! What mischief! What a great insult of *Dharma*! And why all this? Simply out of ignorance. But have you ever enquired - what is this *Pratikraman*? There is nothing extraordinary about it! It is an exposition of the natural attitudes of the human mind

and a channelisation of the activities resulting from these attitudes! Channelisation which refers to activities as excesses. Indeed how very relevant is this process of performing *Pratikraman*! At the outset, in the first *Kayotsarga*, while telling us why it is done, it is said - अतिचार चितवनार्थं करेमि काउसगं - I perform *Kayotsarga* to reflect upon my excesses.

Kausagga - *Kayotsarga* is for the recounting and contemplation of all ripples of attitudes that awaken in the mind in a whole day, whether they remain in the form of mental chain of thoughts, or appear as spoken words or get converted into action. One counts the type of excesses one after the other and recounts whether any of those was committed during the day. Thus, in all 99 aberrations for 99 excesses have been mentioned. It is possible that many of those may have been committed. You may not have committed many of those. It is not that all the people commit all the excesses all the time. But of course, there is a likelihood of having committed one or two excesses. Those have to be recounted.

And later in the fourth अवशावङ्क the 99 excesses of *jnana*, *darshan*, *charitra* and *tapa* are recounted aloud. At that time, the faults - attitudes recounted earlier have to be repented for. In doing so, we learn to check and verify all our attitudes daily. And if we keep checking, perhaps someday we may even learn to accept our own faults. Capitulation of faults is very much necessary, yet it is very difficult. It does not come about at all! For, owing to the practice of infinite time we have become 'habitual offenders'. These terms sound a bit harsh. But Brothers! No other term applies better to describe us.

But here acceptance is easier. For while performing *Pratikramana*, the capitulation we have to make, does not require to be told to anybody else. It is required to be done within. Although it hurts our ego, it can still be done.

Brothers! The thorn of ego is embedded so deep in our mind that it is difficult to pull it out. If a thorn that has pierced the sole has not gone too deep, it can be removed easily. But if it has pierced deep, then it needs to be probed with a needle, there is bleeding and so much pain. Why! It even makes you scream as it is pulled out. So a deeply embedded thorn can be pulled out only if you are prepared to bear all the pain. In the same way, the ego that is embedded in the soul also calls for a great tolerance if it has to be pulled out. And only then can there be a capitulation of our own attitudes or faults. That will be *Pratikramana* in the true sense.

Brothers! I would say, one who really wants to become an *Atmarthi* from *Matarthi*, one who wants to awaken the yearning for the *Moksa* and reach the category of *Moksa*-seekers, should understand every single thought of *Pratikramana* in a proper manner. With a proper understanding, and with a ceaseless faith and awakening, one has to perform the *Pratikramana* for one's own sins. Only then can the internal attitudes be truly understood and an effort made to eliminate them. In spite of having understood the true concept of *Pratikramana*, if you continue to live in total disregard for it, the high flowing talk about attaining the soul will not get you anywhere, will not elevate you.

Well, let us all understand our own faulty attitudes, contemplate upon them and try to eliminate them.

More in the next.

Good conduct turns obscure

The natural attitudes of the *jiva* who pursues the three-fold path are awakened. Although these attitudes are lying in the soul, the affected attitudes do not let the natural attitudes to come into experience. With the help of the *Agams*, and with the self-study of the scriptures, these attitudes are recognised by the intellect and subsequently with the help of faith the natural attitudes are awakened.

If the *jiva* in pursuit, loses track while trying to understand the meaning, he is bound to land up in a confusion. Srimadji has told us here the state of such a *jiva* -

अथवा निश्चय नय ग्रहे, मात्र शब्दनी मांय,
लोपे सद्व्यवहारने, साधन रहित थाय २९

First of all let us understand, the *NiscayaNaya* and *Vyavahara Naya*. In the Jain philosophy, the system followed for understanding a principle is the *Syadvada* system, which is also known as *Anekantvada*. In other words it is *Sapekshavad* and Relativity too.

Syadvada means thinking in various angles while trying to understand a particular object. There could be contradicting views involved. Yet there will not be an opposition. If an object is to be understood totally in various different angles, this system comes in extremely useful. In the terminology of logic, this approach is called *Naya*. In the Jain philosophical scriptures, there are many treatises on *Naya*. *Acharya Siddhasena* Diwakar, *Kalikar sarvajna* Hemachandracharya, *Acharya Haribhadrasuri*, *Acharya Samantabhadraji* and such other stalwart scholars have dealt with this topic at great length. We are not going too deep into it now.

Broadly, there are two types of *Naya*- 1. *NiscayaNaya* and 2. *Vyavahara Naya*. That view which describes the original true

form of the substance is *Niscaya Naya* and the view that describes the changes becoming manifest in the substance from time to time is *Vyavahara Naya*.

For instance, the Soul. The *Niscaya Naya* says that Soul is a pure, intelligent, indivisible, infinite substance. It is birthless and deathless. It is merely a pure permanent substance and not *deva*, human, animal or a creature from hell. Yet *Vyavahara Naya* says you are a human. That is to say, owing to the affected disposition of the Soul, it has adopted the form of the human. Thus the state of *deva*, *naraka* etc. are also the *Vyavaharik* states of the soul. Similarly, the identifications of race, gender etc., are also a result of *Vyavahar Naya*. In the path of the pursuit of soul, the description is in keeping with the *Niscaya Naya* concept and the advice is according to the importance of *Vyavahara Naya*.

In the Jain spiritual treatises, both approaches have been delineated. In *Samaysar*, *Niyamsar*, *Yogasar* and such texts, the description of the Soul and other five substances (षड् द्रव्य) is done according to pure *Niscaya Naya*, highly advanced *Niscaya Naya* as also *Vyavahara Naya*.

While describing the Soul, *Niscaya Naya* says, 'It is an indivisible, pure, permanent, infinite substance. It is bereft of any attachment or aversion. It is devoid of emotions. It is non-adhesive. These are the same qualities as we find in the true form of *Siddha*. Let us analyse one quality out of all these.

That the Soul is non-adhesive. Nothing sticks to it. This property of non-adhesion needs to be considered in the light of the bondage of Karma. The relation of *Atma* and Karma is from infinite time. Both have merged like milk-water or fire-iron. Thus more the weight of the Karma on the *Atma*, it tends to slide more and more downwards. It cannot rise up. But as the Karmas go on reducing, and the weight on the *Atma* reduces, there comes a progress in its state. This matter is explained through an example.

A pumpkin, which is coated with clay and thrown into water, tends to sink with the weight of the clay, in spite of its property of floating on water. However, with the water dissolving the clay, and the coating peeling off, the weight on the pumpkin reduces and it starts rising, and when all clay is washed off, it starts floating on the surface.

The relation of Karma and *Atma* is also similar. As the coating of Karma on the *Atma* begins to reduce, the *Atma* starts rising and at the end attains *Siddhi*. This is the view of *Vyavahar Naya*.

Now here, one view claims *Atma* is non-adhesive and the other view says the coating of the Karma leads the *Atma* to the worldly cycle. How can these two seemingly contradictory views be understood? But that is the *Syadvada* style of the Jain philosophy.

If according to the *Niscaya* view *Atma* is non-adhesive, it is equally true in the *Vyavahar* view that the *Atma* has a coating of Karma. The art of understanding this is required. We may think that *Atma* is animate and Karma is inanimate, how can the two be bonded? Perhaps inanimate particles could be bonded together, but animate and inanimate can never be bonded. Saying that *Atma* is bonded by Karma is merely figurative. In fact, the new Karmas get attached to the old Karmas. But they are instrumental in causing the affected disposition of the *Atma*. Hence it is referred to as the bondage of *Atma* and Karma.

When *Atma* and Karma are bonded, they do not merge, but only occupy the same space. The bond of *Atma* and Karma is like Milk and Water. If you consider this, water poured into milk seems as if it has merged with milk. Yet both substances retain their own properties. Milk does not lose its identity to turn into water, nor does water lose its identity to become milk. The independent identities of both substances remain constant. Same

is the case with Iron and Fire. If iron heated in fire looks as if it has caught fire, both the substances of iron and fire are independent there, they do not merge.

Drop a sugar-cube in a glass of water and it will soon melt and change the taste of the water. Not a drop of water in the glass remains without the sweetness of sugar. Yet both water and sugar retain their own properties. The formula H_2O of water remains as it is. It does not acquire the properties of Sugar.

Well, this is the way in which the old Karmas are bonded to the *Atma*. The area of space which the *Atma* occupies is the same where the Karmas remain and the new Karmas also occupy the same area. Thus the relation of *Atma* and Karma is that of occupying the same area, causative or instrumental.

Thus the *Atma* does not get converted to the atoms of inanimate Karma by losing its own natural disposition. On the contrary remains independent of them always. Hence it is non-adhesive. Yet having shared the same area, the *Jiva's* own disposition is affected by the Karma *pudgal*. Hence there is also the coating of Karma. This is the *Niscaya* and *Vyavahar* view for understanding the non-adhesive property of the *Atma*, the *Syadvada* style.

Now here, Srimadji, through this *Gatha*, explains what becomes the state of those who make an error in understanding the true form of *Atma*. For in *Niscaya Naya* it is proved that *Atma* is non-adhesive. No Karma gets bonded to it. When some *jiva* who understands only this as - 'whatever I do, whether I express attachment and aversion, whether I sin, or I behave in worst of the ways, nothing affects the *Atma*; since *Atma* is non-adhesive, there is no reason to worry at all', he begins to live in an affected disposition. A *jiva* with such a belief, does not accept the concept of *Samvar* suggested in the scriptures to contain the

flow and bondage of Karma. He does not understand the necessity of performing vows and *pratyakhyana* and gives it up altogether.

If the *jiva* absorbs *Niscaya Naya* in theory - only in words, but considers the *dravya-charitra* of *vrata* - *paratyakhyana* etc. which have been indicated as the means to attaining the true form of the *Atma* by *Niscaya Naya*, as rejectable, then that *jiva* loses everything and falls into the one-way track of sin.

Niscaya Naya also says that the ultimate aim of the *jiva* is *Moksa*. To attain *Moksa*, the total elimination of all Karma is expected. So in the process, some who do not properly understand *Niscaya Naya*, and presume that sin as well as virtue is *heya* and hence to be avoided, lose out on the *Punya* that is generated with good thoughts. But they too have not unravelled the mystery of what *Niscaya Naya* has to say.

When and where is *Punya* to be given up has not been understood. The effort towards the elevation of the *Atma* is but an effort to eliminate sins. If we look at the progressive steps of the *gunasthanas*, then a *jiva* progresses only with the subjugation, subjugation and reduction or elimination of *Mohaniya* Karma. *Mohaniya* is indeed in the form of sin, but whatever else the *jiva* goes on eliminating through *Nirjara* is also in the form of sin. Therefore, the *jiva* has to make the effort for the *Atma*, for the *Nirjara* of sin - *papa* alone. He does not have to bother to check whether the *Nirjara* of *Punya* is happening or not. When the *jiva* reaches the ninth *gunasthana*, the *Punya* formation stops by itself in the *bandha*. This work will be complete effortlessly when that stage is reached, but thinking that *Punya* is also rejectable, if the good deeds that lead to *Punya* are also given up then what is left for the *jiva*?

Think, Brothers! Examine the activities of your yogas through day and night! All the activities would be accompanied with the thoughts of one sin or the other out of the eighteen.

Perhaps occasionally there would be a fleeting good thought. But otherwise only sin and sin. Now the ones who have misunderstood *Niscaya Naya* say that if *papa* is a bond then *Punya* also is a bond. If one is an iron chain, then the other is golden. So thinking, if activities that lead to *Punya* are all cancelled, then what is left? *Papa*, or something else? Then do the philosophical scriptures which have asked to give up *Punya*, call *papa* as respectable? Oh, Foolish *jivas*! Try to understand at least a little of what the *Bhagwantas* who made the scriptures had to say!

They say that, good deeds do lead to *Punya bandha*, but that is not *Dharma*. We should not be stuck at *punya* by mistaking it for *Dharma*. The difference between *Punya* and *Dharma* is to be understood. *Punya* is *asrava*. Where there is *asrava* there will be *bandha*. Where there is *bandha* there will be worldly life. Therefore, not misunderstanding *Punya* as *Dharma*, it ought to be followed as long as necessary and then given up. So much, at least, should be your faith. Otherwise, the *jiva* who considers *Punya* itself as *Dharma* will perform his good deeds. But since he does not understand the next step of *Dharma* in the form of *samwar*, the cycle of the worldly life cannot be avoided. Where there is *samwar*, there is *Dharma*. *Nirjara* is achieved through *Samwar* and *Moksa* through *Nirjara*. This firm belief needs to prevail. Otherwise the *jiva* continues to perform good deeds several times over and still achieves no fruit, nor does he reach the destination. *Punya* makes it all convenient to proceed on the path to the destination, but it is *samwar* or *Nirjara Dharma* that enables the progress on that path. That can only be achieved through pure thoughts. The pure thoughts which are not aimed at the pure *Dharma* are like arrows shot without targets.

So Brothers! *Punya* is essential to give up *papa*. And to attain *Moksa*, it is necessary that *Punya* also goes. But it does not have to be given up, it dissolves naturally. While *papa* needs to be given up.

Hence Srimadji has said that the *jiva* who understands *Niscaya Naya* only in words, and does not get the essence of it, gives up the deeds of *Dharma* like good conduct -

लोपे सद्व्यवहारने, साधन रहित थाय . . .

And not understanding the means to attain the *Siddhi*, is left without means and wanders in confusion.

Pardon me, Brothers! But there are several people, who claim to have studied *Niscaya Naya*, but have not understood the essence that the sages have conveyed. How vulgar their language is! They tell those who perform *Samayik* that it is a good *asrava* and fit for giving up. "Let your *Samayik* go to dust", those who can utter such words, do we call them *dharmi* or *adharmi*? Do we call them sensible or daft? First of all, such words will never be uttered by one who has really understood *Dharma*, who has understood the *Atma*. The thought that he is superior and others are inferior will never occur to him. Secondly, he will not show disrespect towards such a great means as *Samayik*. The disrespect is in fact the proof of the theorem that 'half-filled pots will spill', it is but the display of the internal feelings of one who has understood nothing but feigns a knowledge of everything. How can *Samayik* go to dust? Perhaps the one who is performing *Samayik* may not be doing it with great thoughtfulness and so it may not be effective as *samwar*, but as long as he is performing *Samayik* isn't the activity of sin put on hold? If he were not performing *Samayik*, he would be indulging in some *arambh-samarambh* activity; so relatively has he not done a good thing in performing *Samayik*?

Of course, it goes without saying that we should perform the *vratas*, vows, *pratyakhyana* etc. with a proper understanding. If we perform them without understanding and be content at that, then we do not get the fruit of *Nirjara* from it. The *atma* will not lose any of the weight of Karma. If *Samayik* is to be performed, then there has to be equanimity in thought. If equanimity is not

being achieved then it will be lamented. Why, in spite of so much *Samayik*, is there still the imbalance? If he visits the temple daily for *darshan* and *poojas* and if not even an iota of detachment arises, in spite of beholding the idol of the *Veetaraaga*, if the attachment and aversion are not subjugated, then he will feel hurt. Alas! I pray to the *Veetaraaga* daily, yet why don't the passions in me subside? If good deeds, *vratas* and vows are being performed with such a feeling, then there will be a day when all those vows and *vratas* will result in *samwar*, lead to *Nirjara* and there will be *Moksa* at the end.

So good conduct is not to be lost, but to be understood and followed. Whatever device leads to the awakening of the pure form of the *atma*, *sadhana* has to be performed through it. In no field of life, can success be achieved without a device. When devices are necessary even, for the simplest of works, then to achieve the soul both external and internal devices are required. The internal devices are the awakening of the animate - knowledge, vision and conduct; the knowledge of the difference between *jiva* and the body. And the external devices are the *vratas* and vows.

Brothers! Did you know? Not only in the Jain tradition, but in other Indian traditions too, philosophy and religion have been discussed keeping the *atma* as the focal point. This is the speciality of the Indian philosophies.

Here, I shall say something - this itself is the major difference between Eastern and Western Philosophies. In the Eastern the *atma* is at the centre. The substances, principles, heaven and hell, karmas are all discussed around it, there is the discussion about the soul and the supreme soul and ultimately the discussion of the means to transcend from the soul to the supreme soul. Thus the Eastern Philosophy paves the way for the soul to reach the Supreme Soul. While the Western Philosophy only discusses the material world. What is a *jiva*? What is the world? What are they made of? What is the relation between the two? Well, that's

it. Nothing has been discussed there from the viewpoint of the thoughts of the Soul.

So now, Brothers! We have to attain the Soul and all the traditions of India have indicated the various *vratas* and vows as the devices required for attaining it. Whether Jain or non-Jain, whether believing in idol-worship or not, all have placed importance in the tremendous effort of achieving the Soul. Indeed, there is one thing we ought to understand that this tradition of these *vratas* and vows that is continuing, has not been set rolling by some ordinary person like me or you, but has been told by knowledgeable thinkers and able *sadhaka* souls. Hence there is no doubt that they are worthy of respect and worth following.

Yes, it is true that today people oppose rituals-*vratas* and vows. The case taken up by the learned ones among them cannot really be ignored. For, those who perform without an understanding are left with only the carcass, without life, on their hands. Today, rituals are performed aplenty, a lot of fasting and penance is performed, but all without the feeling, hollow. The ones who have forgotten the essence of the rituals, have been performing them without understanding and have thus degraded the value of the rituals. They have given rise to a disbelief in the minds of people. So such of those who perform rituals need to understand that *vratas* and vows are those by performing which, there is a transition in life, passions subside and the goal of the Soul is awakened.

So Brothers! It is thus necessary to understand devices and bring them into practice in life. Nothing is achieved by merely getting stuck with *Niscaya Naya*. But with *Niscaya Naya* as the goal, let us follow *Vyavahara* and awaken the pure form of Soul right here.

Now, more in the next.

Doesn't achieve the Supreme essence

The pursuit of the three-fold path leads to the attainment of the state of true form of the self without which the *jiva* is wandering aimlessly. Without the *Dasha* (state), *disha* (direction) cannot be attained. In the *Acharanga Sutra* - First *Shruta Skandha* : First *Adhyayana*, it has been said -

एवमेगेसि णो णायं भवइ, अत्थि मे आया उववाइए णात्थि मे
आया उववाइए के अह्वासि, के वा झो चुओ इह पेच्चा भविस्सामि।

Many *jivas* do not even know whether they have a rebirth or not, or what their *Atma* was in its previous birth and after death here what it will become in the next.

We too are in a similar situation. We do not know where we were in the previous birth and what we did there. Did we increase the affected disposition and expand the worldly life or did we go by the natural disposition and limit our worldly life? Not just that, here, after appearing in this life too, in spite of obtaining *satsang*, *satshravan* (good hearing), faith and all such yogas, where does this question arise to the *jiva*? Earlier, when born in unisensory or insect or animal species, there was no scope for this question and hence it was not even raised. But here, after becoming a human and in spite of having heard these matters so often, does the urge to know arise at all? Does the faith arise at all? Does it occur that - 'I should discover who I was, what I was, from where I did arrive and to where I am bound'.

You may say, "What is the need to know all this? What harm will there be if all this is not known? I am living here happily, enjoying the life. I am engrossed in the joy that I have found. There should be no problem even if I do not know!" Brothers! Think with a foresight!

Earlier this *Jiva* has travelled across one form of life after another, has always wandered. The wheel of life and death is

still turning, and the reason for that is lying within the *jiva*. Nobody gives us birth or death. We ourselves have been wandering taking birth and dying. We are the reason for a good form of life (*sugati*) or for a bad one (*durgati*). If these reasons are understood, then perhaps we could escape the bad form of life. After all nobody likes that life.

Bhagwan Mahaveer told King Shrenik, “You are to go to hell after death.” Shrenik refused. But in spite of there being such a misery in hell, he had to go. He had indulged in reasons that led to hell. So Brothers! If a *jiva* comes to know all those reasons because of which the *jivas* who had to pass through the lower form of life (*durgati*) were there, then he could avoid those and escape the lower form of life. So knowing is very much necessary. But how is this knowledge described?

ज्ञानस्य फलं विरतिः

First there is learning and upon learning if there is relinquishment, that is Knowledge. If in spite of learning, it is not percolating into practice, it cannot be called knowledge. Percolation into practice is the appearance of the knowledge state in our activity.

With us, while defining the animate state as different from the inanimate, a very important word has been used - ‘*upayoga*’. *Upayoga* is the activity of *jiva* with knowledge. Knowing is an uncommon virtue of the *jiva*. Except *Jiva*, no other substance has the capacity to know. Hence, the continuous activity of the *jiva* in the form of knowing is ‘*upayoga*’. Therein will be *Jnanopayoga* and *Darshanopayoga*. What is specially known is *Jnana* and what is commonly known is *Darshan*. Every *atma* is always living amidst these two *upayogas*.

Knowing is the natural disposition of a *jiva*. But upon knowing, the change that the *jiva* undergoes, is the *jnanadasha* - state of knowledge. When such a state of knowledge appears in

a *jiva*, whatever he knows will not remain without appearing in his practice too. A wizened wise-man acquires a knowledge of everything with his intellect. He accepts the words that the *atma* is *shuddha*, *buddha* and *niranjana* (pure, all knowing and spotless), but drops the activity which are a means to achieving it. He does not accept that good conduct alone is instrumental in bringing out the natural disposition of purity and knowledge in the *atma*. His state is like the Washerman's Dog who keeps running between the house and the river and can rest at neither. Describing this state, Srimadji says -

ज्ञानदशा पाप्मे नहीं, साधनदशा न काँई,
पाप्मे तेनो संग जे, ते बूडे भवमांही ३०

Those who have merely acquired information about the *Shastras* but in whom the state of knowledge has not awakened are *Shushkajnani*s (wizened wise). Such *jivas* have already discarded the *vyavahara* and not reached *niscaya* yet. Their life is like a sail-boat without sails. It cannot get a direction at all. To get a direction, both the state of knowledge and the state of means are required within. But if this state has not been achieved, the *jiva* going about with the support of inanimate words gets engrossed in the topics of inanimate senses. Although it keeps talking about aspects of knowledge, detachment and so on, it is incapable of letting go of even one topic of the senses. It keeps indulging in them. The urge to indulge goes on becoming stronger and it gets stuck in it.

It believes practice to be totally discardable. So it misguides the gullible people saying that the activity of *Dharma* leads to bondage of Karma. Brothers! Let us ask those who say that *Samayik*, *pratikramana*, fasting and penance are all reasons for binding Karma, whether *pujas*, salutations, devotion and self-study are also reasons for binding Karma or not? What do we say to a person who talks without really understanding? What sort of Karma-bondage? The common man will believe that

Karma *bandha* is equivalent to *papa-bandha*. He is unaware that within the purview of Karma-bondage, the *Punya-bandha* is also included. Now when it is said that all *Dharma*-activity leads to Karma-*bandha*, it implies that there is bound to be *Punya-bandha*.

If while doing this *Dharma*-activity, there is no awareness of the soul, then there is *Punya-bandha*, and if for as many moments as you are stationed in the awareness of the soul, there will be karma-*Nirjara*. In fact, all this activity is only for achieving *Nirjara*, but so long as the *jiva* cannot settle in the awareness of the soul, it binds *Punya*. The *jiva* has to strive towards remaining in the awareness of the soul for longer time and attain *Nirjara* through the means of all *Dharma*-vows and *vratas*. But it is not right, even if *Nirjara* is not attained, to discard practice believing that it leads to karma-*bandha*. But gullible people believe that this has been said by the learned one, and whatever the learned one says cannot be false. Hence practice should be dropped. Thus by giving up the practice, they are left without the means.

Brothers! How can there be devoted practice without the means? And how can the ultimate success be achieved without devoted practice? In practical life too, if something has to be achieved, means are essential. Why! Even if one of the means is short, the work will not be done as it should be. My sisters here are all expert cooks. If everything else is available and there is no stove, can anything be done? An what happens if the required vessels are missing? Thus for a work to be completed whatever and how much ever material is required, should be available. Similarly, if *atma* is to be achieved then the means to do so, both external and internal, are a must. If we toe the same line as the ones who say that practice is worth discarding and do so, then *Srimadji* says, it is as good as tying a weight around the neck and sinking to death. Both the weight and the self sinks. Brothers! Those who get into the company of such wizened wise also sink.

So beware! Be on the look out! Do not get into such bad company! You may even lose sight of the shore. For -

ए पण जीव मतार्थमां, निजमानादि काज,
पाप्मे नहि परमार्थने अन्-अधिकारीमां ज ३१

Such a *jiva* is not fit for attaining the *paramartha* - the supreme essence. Hence he is a *matarathi*. He does everything to feed the ego of the self. He would have adopted the means of *Dharma* and all the rest, but the intention would only be to feed the feeling of 'I am something'. And in spite of this he calls himself a *Dharmi*. There is so much ego lying within that it keeps raising its head every now and then, and yet we show off to the world saying I have no ego at all. The human who tries to project his humble countenance is filled with ego down to the bones.

Ah! A man expresses his own anger. He tells everybody - "I have a great anger. Once I am angry, I do not care for anybody". He is not much bothered about people knowing about his anger, but he goes about hiding his ego. He is very careful that nobody should know, and hence even pretends to be the humblest of all. But deep within the feeling that 'I am somebody' is never forgotten.

Brothers! This ego is the one that makes the *jiva* wander. We not only express it in the usual activities of life, but even when we learn something in the field of *Dharma*, we go about day and night harping about the same with pride. We tell everybody and keep feeding our ego. Such *jivas* are not worthy of attaining the *paramartha* - the supreme essence.

Moreover, the speciality of an egotistic *jiva* is that they keep comparing themselves with others. He keeps on with the effort to prove to himself and to others that he is much above the others.

There were three tailors in France. All three had their shops on the same street in Paris. There always would be a keen contest among them all, in which sometimes one would lead, sometimes

the second and the third at yet other times. They would always keep thinking up new ideas in competition.

Once one of them got a bright idea and on a fine morning he put up a sign board on his shop which read - 'The Best Tailor in France'. When the other two tailors reached their shops in due course, they noticed the board and were jealous. "Alas! He has become the best, now what? How can our business run?" The second fellow found a solution the next day. He put up a board too - 'The Best Tailor in Paris'. Now seeing this the third one turned green with jealousy. "Where do I stand now? Who will turn towards my shop?" His mind was busy with this problem and he thought, "The first one is the best in France, the second says he is best in Paris. I should be one up on them." So the next morning he too put up a board in beautiful letters - "The Best Tailor on this Street". He had surpassed the other two.

Brothers, Think! What sort of thinking worked here? You may say, "*Mahastaiji!* This is the way in business. Otherwise you cannot lead." Okay, let's not talk about business. Let me ask you, if we could put up such boards, what would we do?

Over whom and how many would we try to prove ourselves better? Even now, wherever we go, there amidst all those present, we try to prove ourselves better than others; that 'all the rest are okay, but none like me'. Well, in whatever field you are interested, wherever you think you are somebody, don't you believe you are the best?

In the field of *Dharma* too, it is the same story. Some say, 'nobody can do the way we do the rituals'. Some others say, 'nobody is as strict with the vows as we are'. Yet others say, 'The way we express devotion is unparalleled. Ah! None can generate the feelings that we do in our *Bhakti*'. Ridiculous! Who are you to compare feelings? Can you read others' thoughts? Thoughts are an internal thing, not something that can be measured from outside.

Similarly those who perform *Swadhyaya* say, 'The *Swadhyaya* that we perform is wonderful!' Do you know what they do? Some 10 - 20 Brothers and Sisters get together to read a Spiritual Text and say, 'Look at our *Swadhyaya*! How we do it!' Do they really know what *Swadhyaya* means? That in which there is the search of the self, there is the realisation of the self. As the search goes on deeper, it becomes a self-study. When the self steadies within itself, experiences the state of self-realisation, that is *Swadhyaya*. How can we see a Soul which is trying to experience its own true form? Is it something that can be seen? It is being experienced within. It cannot be related to others. So when they say, 'What we do is *dharma*', it is nothing but external ritual. Besides they take pride and say, 'what we do is right'.

It was because of this that Srimadji had to say that this *Jiva* too is a *Matarthi*. He might well be doing the *Dharmic* rituals, but still he is a *Matarthi*. And such a *Jiva* has no right to achieve the supreme essence - *paramartha*. Brothers! Before achieving anything one has to acquire the rights to it. Without right nothing can be had - be it in the worldly field or in the dharmic field. Only so much as one has a right to, can be received. Ah! If you want acceptance and status in the social circles, you need the ability for it.

Today, who is respected in the society? The rich one! Who would care if you had no money? Nobody would care. But if the same person were to get money, they would flatter him. And again if he were to lose money, nobody would even ask him, 'Brother! Have you eaten or not?' For they say,

नाणां वगरनो नाथियो ने नाणे नाथालाल

that is, in any field if anything is required, if anything is to be achieved, then the respective qualification is necessary.

Here it is the case of attaining the supreme essence. Who can attain the *paramartha*? One in whose inner feelings the desire

to attain *Moksa* has awakened. But merely by enrolling your name or by becoming a member of some group-community, one does not become a *Mumukshu*. Those are merely names of various paths. *Mumukshuta* - the desire to attain *Moksa* is an internal state which needs to be awakened within. No tag or label can do it for you.

Just as so many of you sitting here may be members of Lions' Club. So there is a Lion prefixed to your name, which is indicative of that organisation. But with the Lion prefix added, do you really become a Lion? Just let us see your Lion-like qualities! Have you become courageous like the Lion? Or are you scared of the dog too? What happens when you are walking down the street and a dog starts running after you? Just ask your self. Where goes the Lion prefix? You will say, "*Mahasatiji!* We are very timid from within, it is just that we are attached to the Lions' Club and so we get called Lions. Rest is all a farce".

Dear Brothers! Do not feel hurt! But it is the same for the desire to attain *Moksa* - *mumukshuta* or for the status of a Jain. One does not become a *mumukshu* or a Jain by merely joining a sect or community or by simply following their ideology and customs. *Mumukhsu* is the one in whose soul nothing - no hope, yearning, greed, lust or desire - except the desire for *moksa* remains, that is to say, one in whom the only desire to attain *moksa* subsists in the severest form.

So Brothers! Srimadji says that only the *Mumukshu jiva* is eligible to attain the *paramartha*. But *Mumukshuta* will not arise until the *Matarthi*-ness goes. And unless *Mumukshuta* arises, *Paramartha* cannot be attained.

Hence, pitying such *jivas*, Srimadji has shown them their faults, and indicated the true path. The *jiva* who understands will attain the path.

Rest, in good time.

It is the misfortune of the Matarthi . . .

The pursuit of the three-fold path removes the timeless faults in the *jiva* and provides him the true understanding. The *jiva*, immersed in the mire of activities, has been making many mistakes from the view of the *Atma*, and that is why the *jiva* is wandering.

In the practical field of life no mistake can be entertained. So there a person is always alert. Perhaps, a mistake that occurs in miscellaneous works may not raise a major problem. But if a mistake occurs in the eyes of the Society, then one has to bear the brunt of the criticism from the entire Society. Why! Sometimes one may even be ostracised! One has to be very alert so that no such thing occurs.

Well, where there is a fault, the results cannot be true. If you work out a problem in Arithmetic and you do not get the solution right, then you immediately understand that there has been an error in the method of calculation, and do it all over again. Similarly to ascertain that the answer is right, you make a cross-verification, and when all is okay, you know you are right. Brothers! One who has arrived at the correct solution, has the correct method, not otherwise. Brothers! All these practical illustrations hold equally good in the spiritual field too.

In spite of having heard the voice of the *Tirthankar* himself in the *Samosarana*, this *jiva* remained unchanged. He had to be born again in this fifth era. Having been born here there were the same miseries of *adhi*, *vyadhi* and *upadhi*. The only reason for this is that there was a fault in the way he pursued the *Tirthankar*; the method must have been wrong, hence the solution was not right!

Even at present the *jiva* is repeating the same faults. In spite of gaining the means like the opportunity of a *Sadguru*, and *Satsang*, he is making the same mistakes. That is why the goal of the soul is not awakened at all. For this very reason, Srimadjji

is indicating the qualities of a *Matarthi* and where all he has gone wrong.

In the third *gatha* at the beginning, two types of *jivas* have been mentioned - 1. Ritualistic (*Jada Kriyavadi*) and, 2. the ones professing the wizened wisdom (*Shushkajnanavadi*). Then the faults of the Ritualistic *jivas* have been mentioned - namely, believing an *Asadguru* to be *sadguru*, attachment with family guru, negligence in spite of the opportunity to be with *Sadguru*, imagining the true form of the *Jineshwar* in his external appearance alone, believing the diversions like the *Deva* form of life, to be *Shrutajnana*, and insistence that the appearance and the path chosen by himself are the ones that will lead to liberation. Following the *Niscaya Naya* only in words, giving up of good conduct, the non-attainment of *Jnanadasha* or *Sadhanadasha* and above all the ego - these are the faults of the Wizened Wise. It is due to these faults that these *jivas* have not been able to attain the true path.

Having enlisted the various faults of both these types of *jivas*, now *Srimadji* tells us where the two have gone wrong, in one *gatha* -

नहि कषाय उपशान्ता, नहि अंतर वैराग्य,
सरळपणुं न मध्यस्थता, ए मतार्थी दुर्भाग्य ३२

Sages with compassion simply shower pity on such unfortunate *jivas*. The pure hearts of the Sages are filled with compassion when they see the *jivas* who are lost due to the rise of their earlier Karma. And they say this is the misfortune of the *matarthi*.

Brothers! When and in what do we believe our misfortune to be? If we do not get the pleasures and comforts of the material world, wealth, children and family, fame and success, then it immediately makes you feel - "How unlucky I am, what cursed luck, that I have not got this and that! The achievement of material and worldly comforts is good fortune!" These are the beliefs, and these things make us cry on many occasions by remaining

elusive. But let me ask you, do you ever shed tears with these thoughts - “The yearning for the soul never arises in me! I do not get a regular opportunity of *Satsang*! I do not get the reasons that would awaken my true self” or “I am unable to create such *upadana* that my true self could be awakened!”. Have you ever been bothered deep within for these? If not, then safely believe that you are unlucky. Even after getting the material things or wealth as much as you want, you are still very unlucky. The misfortune will not pass unless the pain arises within and you will not be able to get the company of the Sages.

Srimadji has tried to explain to such unlucky *jivas* the various types of shortcomings that hurt. He therefore says that in such *jiva* the passions have not subsided. Much as he may detach himself, much as he may perform vows and *vratas*, he is unable to give up the reasons that generate passions. He gets drawn away by all the reasons that come and changes according to them, for he does not know that, “Passions are not my true form. I am a dispassionate, detached Soul. Passions come as reasons but I should not mix with them”. Such a determination has not occurred in him. Only when he accepts that passions are worthy of rejection, can the strength of determination awaken in him and that strength will subjugate the passions.

Brothers! One has to put in a tremendous effort to conquer the passions. In the trying fields of life, one has to remain undeterred in the face of reasons that arise at every step. There will be reasons for anger etc., yet if the determination that, “I do not want to mix up with these”, always remains within the Self, then one does not succumb to them while leading the life, as the Self is alert and gradually the passions subside. But who can maintain such alertness? Only the one in whose Soul the urge to discover the Self has awakened. In whosoever it hasn't awakened they all are in the category of *Matarthis*. If we are not engaged in the effort to subjugate our passions then it should be understood that our name also appears in the same list.

When he says नहि अंतर वैराग्य here, Srimadji is specific to ‘inner detachment’. He weighs every word with extreme care before placing it. We get many who observe external detachment, but people within whom an aversion has arisen towards indulgence are rare! Even if indulgent *jivas* practice detachment, the attachment within them does not diminish. Sometimes it so happens that some Brother has the habit of eating *Khiwam* with *Paan*, and for some reason he takes up a vow of not eating it for four months. Well the vow was taken in some inspired moment. But if the interest within is not dried up it begins to bother and the Brother returns to us, saying, “*Mahasatiji*! The vow is of four months and so far only four days have passed. How am I going to live through it? So *Mahasatiji*! Please, release me from the vow!”

Now, good Brother! Does *Mahasatiji* help you perform or provide release from the vow? Can the vow be sent running? So he says, “*Mahasatiji*, this is possible! You give me some other vow in place of this one!”

Thus, even we are put into difficulty. For we do not force any vow upon anybody. He must have taken it for some reason of his own, and now its a burden upon us!

Brothers! What is this? It is the *jiva*’s indulgence. So if external detachment is tried it does not work. It leads to trouble. If true inner aversion has awakened then detachment comes in naturally. One does not have to be told. Why! He himself will not realise when and how a particular thing was given up. It is not just the matter of indulgence, but how can a *jiva* engrossed in the sensual pleasures, possibly get detached. Not just eating and drinking, but dressing, covering, walking, strolling and so on, are subjects that appeal so much to the mind.

In the name of social etiquette, one keeps collecting the means of feeding the passions. The end of the feeling of indulgence is never visible. As long as the interest in indulgence

remains, the interest in detachment does not arise within. If you let go of one interest then another better interest will arise within.

Brothers! Many people keep asking whether it is essential to become a saint to follow *Dharma*. Can one not follow *Dharma* being attached in the worldly life? Well, one can, that is not to be denied. But consider your ability. Living in the material world, with the demons of indulgence surrounding you, can you remain aloof? If you really can, then even being a householder you can pursue *Dharma*. But how many such *jivas* can there be? Hence, in all the *Dharmic* traditions of India great importance is attached to giving up the material world. When the ascetic way - *sanyas* - is accepted, one naturally gets into an atmosphere where the passions do not get encouragement, and one who has knowingly accepted the restraints, goes on improving the ability of Self through consistent devoted practice of *Jnana* and *Darshana* and ultimately attains the Soul!

Do understand that merely donning the garb of an ascetic - *sadhu* - is not the complete success of the devoted practice - *sadhana*. It is but the beginning of *sadhana*. The restraints have to be accepted because the scope and chances of doing *sadhana* are available more easily in this attire. And gradually the inner self gets immersed in the emotion of detachment.

But a person who merely talks about these things and considers such restraint as worthy of rejection, cannot overcome the feelings of indifference within and loses the life - *bhava* - in the indulgence of passions.

Matarthi is not straight-forward. The pre-condition for becoming an *Atmarthi* is straight-forwardness. Where there is straight-forwardness there alone is *Dharma*. It is said in the *Shastras* -

सोहि उज्जुय भूयस्स, धम्मो सुद्धस्स चिद्धई

Dharma can remain in a straight-forward heart alone. You cannot be a revered - *santa* - until the thread - *tanta* - is cut. Only

the one who has a child-like innocence can become a saint. The word *Nirgrantha* points towards this secret. The foremost indication of straight-forwardness is that a straight-forward person looks at the shortcomings of the Self and the virtues of the others. Well, this is the simplest indication. Ask your Self whether you do this or just the reverse. Is the joy of looking at the virtues of the Self and the shortcomings of others matched even by the joy of eating sweets? As long as such narrow-mindedness remains, straight-forwardness cannot remain within. Only the one who is capable of absorbing virtues has the right to attain *Dharma*.

Only the one, who has the greatness of intellect, subjugation of passions, conquest of the senses and equanimity, is capable of attaining the path of *moksa*. Rest is all wallowing in the miseries and dragging about in the material world. Brothers! If the stick is straight it climbs to the pinnacle of the temple along with the flag. But if it is crooked, the only place it goes in to is the stove. Similarly, only such *jivas* in whom there is straight-forwardness, no deceit, absence of feelings for the material world, reach the highest state of self-progress. But those materialistic people who raise an objection at the drop of a hat, are not fit even to observe *Dharma*.

Dharma is a later issue, these crooked people put many others into trouble in the normal walks of life too. Say anything to them and they will take it in the wrong sense and get set for a fight. They never try to understand a straightforward matter in a straightforward way.

In a small village of Kathiawad, an old man was sitting in the village square. A youth was passing by and he asked the old man with a straightforward intent -

“Why, Old Man! Seated, aren’t you?”

“Ahoy! If you say so, I shall stand up!”

Now look! Had he asked to stand up or spoken with affection? But do such *jivas* understand? Why! Once I had a similar experience. A lady came from out-station for *Darshan*. With a view to express welcome, I asked,

“Aha! So you are here for *Darshan*?”

“Why! Am I not supposed to come?” pat came the caustic retort, and I was stunned. ‘My dear Aunt! I merely asked so you should not feel that nobody cared for you. Why once, who is going to object even if you came half a dozen times?’ Look, there are people even with such a mentality that if you say anything to them naturally, they will misunderstand it.

Brothers! Doesn’t this happen in your life too? And how many fights and enmities for such reasons? And how far does it all go? What a great loss for want of just straightforwardness! How poisoned does life get? Just think, if in material life the lack of straightforwardness wreaks such havoc, then what it could do in the spiritual path! How much damage it could cause! Hence, the lack of straightforwardness has been mentioned as the indication of a *Matarthi*.

The last indication of a *Matarthi* has been mentioned as the absence of equanimity. Equanimity is a very high quality. A person with equanimity has subdued passions and an impartial intellect. There is equipoise in his life. Whatever the circumstances, there is very little anxiety in him. Only a person sans anxiety can understand the truth and practice it in life; can remain stable and progress in the journey towards infinity.

Who is said to be equanimous? When there are two parties over a dispute, with both stuck on their own arguments, with no solution available, and with a likelihood of a conflict, an impartial umpire is invited to satisfy both of them. Someone who listens to the arguments of both parties, and without leaning towards any one of them, delivers justice is an equanimous one. Like a Judge in a Court.

The other word for equanimous - *madhyastha* - is '*tatastha*' (तटस्थ). The banks of a river are called '*tata*' (तट). One who is standing on the banks (तट) is *tatastha* (तटस्थ). Such a person is not touched by water. Neither does the coolness touch him, or if the Sun has warmed the water, neither does the warmth of the water touches him. He does not get drawn into the flowing waters. The ripples rising on the surface do not affect him nor does he have the fear of drowning into a whirlpool in the deeps. A person standing on the banks of a river knows everything about the river, yet nothing about the river affects him. There are no odds or evens.

It is just that! A person, standing with his nature on the banks of the worldly feelings, is neither affected by the worldly temptations nor the good or bad reasons. He does not get transformed into the results of attachment and aversion. Not just that, even in practical life he will speak only when he thinks it is fit to do so and will keep mum if there are chances of a mishap. He goes beyond such situations. The equanimous person is conscientious. In all fields of life, he always places the prudent intellect in the forefront and as a result in the spiritual path when he is able to analyse between the animate and the inanimate, the *Bheda Vijnana* dawns upon him.

But here, Srimadji says that it is the misfortune of the poor *Matarthi* that such virtues of self-search do not abound in him. And as such he is always embroiled in thoughts of attaining the material world. Yet Srimadji is confident that if the understanding arises in a *Matarthi jiva*, he too can observe his own shortcomings, eliminate them and become an *Atmarthi*. Hence, Srimadji says -

लक्षण कह्यां मतार्थीनां, मतार्थ जावा काज,
हवे कहुं आत्मार्थीनां, आत्म अर्थ सुखसाज ३३

From Gatha 24 to 33 Srimadji has highlighted the indications of a *Matarthi*, so that a *Matarthi jiva* may awaken. How can somebody who does not even know where he is, be told that it is essential to walk the good path? Having been told all this, a person whose future is determined, will certainly begin introspection to see 'where my attitudes, my beliefs are wrong? I am in a maze and it is most essential that I get out of it.' Once he awakens, he will himself begin to abhor his own attitude and nature. Perhaps in the householder's state, he may be known as a *Shravak* or a *Mumukshu* or perhaps having abandoned the material world he has become a *Sadhu* but he may be on the wrong track, then to warn him to stop his blind run, it is essential to make him understand his situation, and once he understands he will not remain without repenting. It is for this reason that one such soul-seeking *Acharya* has sung -

ठगवा विभु आ विश्वने वैराग्यना रंगो धर्या,
ने धर्मना उपदेश रंजन, लोकने करवा कर्या,
विद्या भण्यो हुं वाद माटे, केटली कथनी कहूं,
साधु थईने बहारथी, दांभिक अंदरथी रहूं।

When a wayward *jiva* attains the nature of understanding his own true form, then he will himself be unable to bear the way he is living, the way he is deceiving people at present. As a result he confesses before the Soul and the Supreme Soul. He begins to regret and then gradually turns to the right path.

It is only for the benefit of such *jivas* that Srimadji has told us the indications of *Matarthi* here.

Having told us these indications, he also tells us about all the virtues that an *Atmarthi* is made up of - the virtues that are instrumental in attaining the development of the soul, which are the means for attaining the infinite bliss and which are the greatest fortunes of a *jiva*.

So now, what the abilities of an *Atmarthi* are, what strong feelings are attached to his belief-faith, will be a topic that follows.

... living in obedience!

The pursuit of the three fold path helps attain the unrestrained bliss of the soul. The material happiness attained through *Punya* may occasionally disappear, there could be a break in between, sorrow may appear even after happiness is attained. But the spiritual happiness attained after a devoted pursuit is bound to help you attain the infinite unrestrained true form of the Self.

Here, in the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*', it has been said that only such a *Muni*, who is engrossed in the tremendous effort to attain that unrestrained bliss, can reach the status of a *Sadguru* -

आत्मज्ञानं त्वां मुनिपणुं, ते साचा गुरु होय,
बाकी कुळगुरु कल्पना, आत्मार्थी नहि जोय ३४

A *Sadguru* is absolutely essential on the path of spiritual pursuit. An *Atmarthi jiva* is in search of such a *Sadguru* who is a self-realised saint, who has experienced the soul himself and is capable of guiding others on the path of experience. Swami Vivekananda was in search of such a *Guru*. And after having met several saints, his heart rested with the self-realised Saint Shri Ramakrishnadeva whom he accepted as his *Guru*.

Here too, in the *Gatha*, the same idea is conveyed. Saintliness (मुनिपणुं) is possible only where there is self-realisation. Those who have not accepted the separate identity of the soul and the body, cannot be called learned, for sainthood appears only after self-realisation occurs. In this *Shastra* itself, where the five indications of a *Sadguru* were listed, there the very first one is *Atmajnana* - self-knowledge, self realisation. In the fifth chapter of the *Acharanga Sutra* too, it has been said -

जं सम्मं ति पासह, तं मोणं ति पासह, जं मोणं ति पासह तं सम्मति पासह

Where there is purity (सम्यक्त्व) there is *Muni Dharma*, and where there is *Muni Dharma*, there is purity.

A person may have very well become a *Muni* in external appearance, but the sainthood that needs to appear within will not appear unless the Right Faith is realised. In the gradual progress on to the *Gunasthanas* too, the same has been said about the *jiva* living in falsehood from infinity, in whom the *Munidasha* (sainthood) in the form of *Sarvavirati* (total detachment) will arise only after the purity (*samyaktva*) first touches him. No *jiva* can reach the sixth *gunasthana* without attaining *Samyaktva*. *Gunasthana* is the state of the *jiva*'s soul that is progressing gradually. It is not a flight of steps or a qualification where you can skip a few steps in between and climb straight to the top. Gradually, as the Karmas decline, as they are eliminated, the true form of the purified Soul begins to appear. Hence, a *jiva* has to first learn the *Bheda vijñana*, only then will the Sainthood occur. It has never happened that a *jiva* who has been living in the falsehood for infinity has straight away attained the *Munidasha*.

Munidasha is the inner-soul. The learned have mentioned three types of souls based on the various states of the Soul. The outward soul, the inner soul and the supreme soul. *Anandghanji Maharaj* has described these states -

आतमबुद्धे हो कायादिके ग्रहयो,
बहिरातम अधरूप, सुज्ञानी
कायादिकनो हो साखीधर रह्यो,
अंतर आतम रूप सुज्ञानी . . . सुमति . . .

One who is not conscious of the true form of *jiva*, who believes the body itself to be the soul, who is stuck in the wrong notion that 'body is my self' and whose every activity is centred around the body is called '*bahiratma*' - the outward soul. Indeed, believing the body to be the Self, and not knowing that all substances are separate from the Soul, his attachment on those separate substances does not diminish. His idea of his own happiness is in those other substances, and all his efforts are

directed towards obtaining happiness from those other substances. This perverted view keeps him from understanding the truth. As such his '*mithyatva*' is not dispelled. Since '*mithyatva*' remains, the attraction towards passions does not diminish. All his activities are centred around the indulgence in passions. *Anandghanji Maharaj* has said in yet another place -

सयल सोसारी इन्द्रियरामी

All worldly *jivas*, that is *jivas* with outward souls, indulge their senses. As a result every passing moment they are bound by sins and the infinite world goes on expanding. Such *jivas* are at the '*Mithyatva Gunasthana*'. Where there is *mithyatva*, there is ignorance, and that is bound to make the *jiva* straggle. When the tremendous effort of the *jiva* emerges and he moves from the darkness of *mithyatva* towards the light, then he is touched by '*samyaktva*'. The self awareness that 'I am not the body but an animate substance apart from the body' occurs to him.

With the attainment of *samyakdarshan*, the *jiva* enters the state of '*antaratma*' - the inner soul. Until now the activity was directed towards the body, he was attached to it. That view changes and he becomes a witness for the actions of the body, mind, senses and so on. He remains in the body only as a witness, not mixing with the joys and sorrows of the body. He does not consider that joy or sorrow as his own. Whatever discomfort, pain, joy or sorrow that is happening is in the body. I am different from the body. I am not the body. Thus when he becomes aware of the body being a separate substance, he will be free from the idea of own happiness in an alien substance. The firm belief that own happiness is within the self, not in another substance or person, will prevail. The attachment towards all passions will be lost as a result. He remains engaged in only the thoughts of the Soul.

Anandghanji has said -

मुनिगण आतमरामी रे
 मुख्यपणे जे आतमरामी
 ते केवल निष्कामीरे . . . श्री श्रेयांसजिन

While progressing beyond the fourth *gunasthana*, into the sixth, seventh, eighth until the twelfth, whichever *gunasthana* the *Muni* settles into, there except for the engagement with the Soul, there will be no other state and the stability and seriousness of that state of engagement with the soul goes on heightening which takes unto the state of *Kevaljnana*.

All the states before attaining *Kevaljnana* are those of the feeling of the inner soul. The great dispassionate, analysing souls which reside from the fourth to the twelfth *gunasthana* are all involved with the thoughts of the soul alone. The knowing - seeing state of the Soul which is understanding, seeing the entire world merely as a witness, becomes manifest in the activity of every single moment. This state of the inner soul is itself being a *Muni*.

Now the third is the Supreme Soul state. How is this state? In the words of *Anandghanji Maharaj* again -

ज्ञानानंदे हो पूरण पावनो
 वर्जित सकळ उपाधि, सुज्ञानी;
 अतींद्रिय गुणगणमणि आगर,
 एम परमात्म साथ, सुमति . . . सुमति . . .

One who is swaying in the state of incessant feeling of joy of the constant infinite knowledge; whose all worldly joys are sublimated from within; who is devoted to the totally pure, absolutely stainless state of the Soul; who is naturally free of the *upadhis* like this entire world, and along with it this body; who in spite of being in the body is unaware of its existence; and due to experiencing the extra-sensory happiness and a state beyond the senses, in whom all the valued virtues of the Soul are

physically manifest, such omniscient *Prabhu* is the *Paramatma* - the supreme soul.

This is the ultimate and supreme state of a *jiva*. Since infinite time this *jiva* is stuck in the state of the outward soul, but his ultimate goal is the state of Supreme Soul. The bridge that takes across is the state of inner soul. It is impossible to attain the state of the Supreme Soul without experiencing the state of the inner soul. Indeed, the state of the inner soul is the state of tremendous effort. Unless and until the tremendous effort of the Self has not manifest itself, there is also a scope for other options. Hence, for a *jiva* in search of the *Atma* - an *atmarthi jiva* - it is essential to have a great able *sadhaka*, who has attained the state of the inner soul as his *Sadguru*. If he is not found, then the inspiration for the path of the tremendous effort is not received.

Hence the *atmarthi*'s faith towards a guru rests in such a *Muni*, and he continues to dedicatedly remain in the refuge of the *Muni*'s *charan* (feet). But the *atmarthi* is not stubborn. All *jivas* should insist that truth prevails, but where the insistence for untruth comes, the *jiva*'s downward journey begins. Therefore, Srimadji says that *atmarthi jiva* should not cling on with a false attachment, feeding his sense of attachment by believing the traditional family *guru* to be his *guru*. Of course, if this *guru* too is living in the *Munidasha*, then he may be believed. But the stubborn attitude that I shall not let go of my tradition, should not be adopted by the *Atmarthi*. For an *atmarthi* is devoted to virtues and not to persons. On whosoever the *Munidasha* has dawned, he alone is an *Atmajnani* - why was it said so?

In our tradition, a *Muni* has to abide by five *Mahavrats*, five *Samitis* and three *Guptis*. The first among the *Mahavrats* was that of abiding by Non-violence. In that the feeling of *Irya* was told and the first of the *Samitis* was termed *Irya Samiti*, which teaches how to walk. The *Prabhu* had ordered that when a *Muni* walks he should walk looking down with an eagle-like sight. He

should be always alert while treading the path that no *jiva*, from uni-sensory - *ekendriya* (एकेन्द्रिय) to penta-sensory - *panchendriya* (पंचेन्द्रिय), is trampled upon, is disrespected; he should be alert for its safety.

A *Muni* walking on a road, walks to the order of the *Prabhu*. If he remains fully alert as to avoid disrespect to any *jiva*, should we presume that the *Prabhu's* order has been followed appropriately? Yes, with such precaution being taken externally, he is naturally judicious in the Soul. Indeed all souls are equal. The supreme soul resides even in uni-sensory and other *jivas*. So if a *Muni* notices only the *Atma* in all living *jivas*, and if the line of thought flows within that this *Atma* is all set to become the *Parmatma* - the supreme soul and as a result an equitable view arises within, that all souls in this Universe are equal, then we may accept that the *Prabhu's* order has truly been brought into practice.

Why! One who has an equitable view towards all *jivas*, on seeing an ant moving hither - thither, will immediately think - 'It is not known when the Soul residing in this tiny body will move into the state of the Supreme Soul. Today it is an insect, tomorrow it may become a human and attain liberation, while it is likely that I may remain wandering in this world. When *Bhagwan* Mahaveer went through the bhava of a 'flea' on the quilt of a shepherd, did the shepherd know that the soul which has now appeared in that lowly insect form, will one day attain the state of the Supreme Soul?

So, Brothers! The observance of the *Muni's vratas* brings about such a state in the soul. From the experience of his Self, he realises that all Souls are equal and hence he is an *Atmajnani*. That is it! If such a state of *Atmajnana* is there in one's own *kulaguru* - the family guru, then he should be accepted. Otherwise he should be abandoned, a true guru sought and there should be total dedication in his refuge.

प्रत्यक्ष सदगुरु प्राप्तिनो, गणे परम उपकार,
त्रणे योग एकत्वथी, वर्ते आज्ञाधार ३५

Human life is attained when the accumulation of infinite *Punya* bears fruit, and a *Sadguru* is found with the awakening of *Punyanubandhi Punya*. An awakened Soul understands the worth of the chance of a *Sadguru*, and gratefully holds the supreme favours of the *Sadguru*, in his heart. When the extremely benevolent *Guru* guides the disciple on the path, the disciple does not forget the effort put in by the *Gurudev*. There is a constant feeling of awe in the disciple towards the *Gurudev*. He thinks, “*Gurudev*! I had been wandering because I had not found you so far. Now comes the end of that wandering. You have indicated the path that will lead me to liberation. Now, I shall offer all my three yogas at your feet. Nothing more to it, yes nothing more.”

Meera has also sung -

मोहे लागी लगन गुरु चरननकी (२)
चरन बिना मोहे कछु नहीं भावे
जग माया सब सपननकी . . . (२) . . . मोहे
भवसागर सब सूख गया है
फिकर नहीं मोहे तरननकी . . . (२) . . . मोहे
मीरा कहे प्रभु गिरिधर नागर
उलट भयी मोरे नयननकी . . . (२) . . . मोहे

Devotion of the *Guru's* feet with mind, body and speech. Not to stray away from the feet at all. Neither mind nor the body wants to remain without the presence of the *Guru* even for a single moment. In just a moment, all the attractions of the entire world begin to seem like dreams. The way of looking at the world has transformed. The worldly values are forgotten. All the passions of the body and the senses have dried up on this account. How powerful is the proximity of the refuge of the *Guru's* feet!

The trouble of birth that had been bothering from several births has been tided over. That's it! No more bother! Just one merciful look from the *Gurudev* has dried up the vast ocean of this material world. Aha! How unparalleled and unearthly is the might of the *Gurudev*! And Meera's eyes are shedding tears in memory of the limitless grace of the *Gurudev*. The heart is striving to reach out through the tears. In the end Meera says, the ultimate resting place for this *jiva* is at the *Gurudev*'s feet. Now there is no need to go anywhere or do anything. That worldly ocean, to swim across which we went through all this struggle, has itself gone up in vapour. Now there is no worry. I shall remain at the feet of the *Guru*.

Brothers! This is how the *Atmarthi* feels within. When the *sadhaka* pining for the refuge of the Guru's feet, attains it, then how long will it be before he offers his complete self at the feet? *Gurudev* has awakened the soul! *Gurudev* has helped to recognise the soul! *Gurudev* has helped to experience the soul! *Gurudev* has lit the lamp with a lamp! *Gurudev*, all this is yours! My body, mind and wealth all stand dedicated at your command. What an achievement the *sadhaka* has to make!

The own mind, speech or thought, or the own ego are of absolutely no consequence. Not even the eyelids move without the desire of the *Gurudev*. Such a supreme dedication awakens in the heart of the *Atmarthi*. He doesn't have to do. The very attitude of his self becomes naturally so that all activities begin to happen as if at the command of the Guru. The *Atmarthi* even says, "I have handed over all that was mine. Now there is nothing that is mine. Not even my command over myself. Hasn't Kabir said -

मेरा मुझमें कछु नहीं, जो कछु है सो तेरा
तेरा तुझको सौंपते, क्या लागत है मेरा

Only when extreme humility appears within, when modesty awakens, do such feelings get expressed through the language. Not otherwise. Brothers! One who is modest, will not be affected by the ego, however great be his achievement. *Ganadhar* Gautam remained a servant at the feet of *Bhagawan* Mahaveer in spite of having attained four *jnanas* and several *labdhis*. Why! Even Mahaveer himself does not say in his sermon that 'I have attained *kevaljñana* and I say this with the might of knowledge'. But he says that I bring you nothing new, the same form of the principle that has been told, as it has been told, by infinite number of *Tirthankars*. This is extreme modesty.

Unless modesty awakens, the importance of the *Gurudev* will not be understood, and the feelings of dedication at his feet do not awaken. Hence, before becoming an *Atmarthi*, before becoming a *Mumukshu*, the ego that resides within the nooks and corners of the self has to be searched out and bade good-bye. Only then all the activity of all the *yogas* can get dedicated to the *Gurudev*!

Here *Srimadji* has told about the superior capability of the *atmarthi*. An *atmarthi* does not merely mouth the praises of the *Gurudev's* benevolence, but he is willing to attend to the orders with mind, body and speech. However difficult then that order may be, but to a capable *jiva* it seems like a light flower. Where there is attraction, interest, affection, everything is naturally simple. The *Atmarthi* has accepted *Dharma* at the order of the *Guru*. As such to his mind there is nothing difficult. He naturally executes the orders of the *Guru*. Then for him liberation is not far off.

The special capabilities of the *Atmarthi* will be told later.

The same at all times . . .

Only that *jiva* who has become totally dedicated at the feet of the *Sadguru*, who remains in total obedience in the unity of the three yogas of mind, speech and body, can devotedly practice the path of three gems.

The various ways of devoted practice have been mentioned in the scriptures. The very purpose of the rendition of the scriptures is to show the true path to *jivas*. Amongst us the scriptures (शास्त्र) are also known as (सिद्धान्त) '*Siddhanta*'. The meaning of the term *Siddhanta* is that which is the original and everlasting truth. That which is a thing proved at all times. That which remains the same at all places, at all times, is *Siddhanta*.

In the '*Atmasiddhi Shashtra*', there is a rendition of the path of *moksa*. *Moksa* being the everlasting truth, neither its form nor its path get altered. To explain this, Srimadji says -

एक होय त्रण काळमां, परमास्थनो पंथ,
प्रेरे ते परमार्थने ते व्यवहार संपत ३६

The path of supreme essence means the path of *moksa*. The path of devoted practice of knowledge, philosophy and conduct is the same, in all *kshetras*, at all times; there cannot be a variation in it. It is likely that sometimes, in some *kshetra* the yoga of devoted practice may be scarce. As in the *Bharat - Airavat Kshetras*, the period being the fifth *ara* of the *avasarpini*, due to the deficiency of the *dravya*, *kshetra*, *kala*, *bhava*, the *upadana* of the man cannot reach that state of preparedness where he can make the tremendous effort unto the attainment of *Kevaljnana*. But in this period, the *jiva* certainly has the capability to reach the sixth or seventh *gunasthana*. So this progress, that is the reaching of all these stages such as the fourth *gunasthana* of attaining truth through giving up *mithyatva*, and then the stage of *Munidasha*, followed by *apramatta Dasha*, can be achieved

in much the same way as was done by the *jivas* in the fourth *ara* during the times of *Tirthankar Prabhu* - with the same tremendous internal effort, the same erosion of Karmas and the same *upashama*. There is no change in them either due to *ara* or *kshetra*. It is not as if in the days of the *Tirthankar* one had to put in less effort and now it demands more tremendous effort. Of course, if the period is superior, the circumstances internally - externally become more conducive, for a quicker move towards the tremendous effort. There is no difference otherwise.

These days there are many who praise the greatness of the *Mahavideha Kshetra*. They say that if one reaches *Mahavideha Kshetra* after death then one can attain *moksa*. Well, that is true, for there, now as always, the feelings that prevail are like those in the fourth *ara*. There is a possibility of the yogas of *Tirthankars* and *Kevalis* to occur. That is to say, the way of devoted practice for *moksa* occurs earlier. It is just that we now have the fifth *ara* going, otherwise when the fourth *ara* is on, there is no difference between *Mahavideha* and this earth. The devoted practice that can be done there, can also be achieved here. In the past, infinite number of *jivas* have reached *moksa* from this *Kshetra*, and they will do so in future too; there will be no change in that.

As such the path to *moksa*, which is in the total elimination of attachment and aversion, is the same at all times in all places. In the words of Srimadji -

“There are no two ways to *moksa*. All those great men who in the past attained the eternal peace in the form of *moksa*, did so on only one path, are doing so in the same way in the present, and will do so in the same way in future. On that path there is no variance, there is no deviation, there is no arrogance, there is no sect or non-sect, there is no belief or non-belief. It is a straightforward path, it leads through death and it is stable and naturally in the form of peace. That path is in existence at all times. Without absorbing the essence of that path, nobody

attained *moksa* in the past, nobody is attaining it in present, and nobody will in the future.”

Shree Jina has told us of thousands of acts and has given us thousands of pointers only to give us that path; and if those acts and pointers are followed for attaining that path, they will succeed; if the path is forgotten and merely the acts and pointers are absorbed, they are all futile.

The way in which *Shree* Mahaveer went across is also the same way *Shree* Krishna will go. The way in which *Shree* Krishna goes across, is the way in which *Shree* Mahaveer has gone. When this path is attained, wherever you are, at whatever time, in whatever status, in whichever yoga, it will be an experience of the pure, everlasting, infinite extra-sensory pleasure of the true state. This path is probable from anywhere. In the absence of appropriate material, even the greats have also got stuck while attaining this path, they will get stuck and had got stuck.

What is the path of *moksa* - *Mokshamarg*? The true devoted practice of the *Ratnatray* is itself *mokshamarg*. The path on which there is a devoted practice of *jnana*, *darshan* and *charitra* is *mokshamarg*. In the scriptures, it has been told in two ways. Devotedly practising *jnana*, *darshan* and *charitra* as independent concepts is *Vyavahar Mokshamarg* and experiencing them as unified in form is *Niscaya Mokshamarg*. Srimadji has also said in his ‘*Moolamarg Rahasya*’ -

ते त्रणे अभेद परिणामथी रे,
ज्यारे वर्ते ते आत्मारूप;
तेह मारग जिननो पामियो रे
किंवा पाय्यो ते निज स्वरूप . . . मूळ मारग . . .

एम् देव जिनंदे भाखीयुरे,
मोक्षमार्गनु शुद्धस्वरूप . . . मूळ मारग . . .

In the *Vyavahar Marg*, *jnana*, *darshan* and *charitra* are all believed to be separate and hence they were called *Ratnatray*. But *Niscaya Naya* calls all these three as uni-form. What was learnt with *Jnana*, that is, the fact that, the true form of *Atma* is unbroken, unaffected, impassionate, and full of *sat-chit-anand*, is learnt with *Jnana*. After having learnt this, experiencing the uniformity, indesctructibility, the impassinate and joy-filledness of the soul within the soul, strongly believing, realising it is *Darshan*. And when this experience remains flowing continuously, incessantly, unfailingly and the soul is being used only to experience the self, it is *Charitra*.

When a *jiva* reaches the all pure stage of such *Charitra*, then it is the *Jnana* of the enjoyment of the own true form, its *darshan* and experience. The three terms which have been separately told for the understanding of the simple *jiva*, are truly united - one and the same in the state of experiencing the Soul. And the experience of this, just this unity is the path of *Jina*, the path of *Moksa*, the path of attaining the ultimate goal. Thus the *Jinadeva* has told of the pure true form.

This path of *Moksa* as told by the *Jineshwar* is in the *Niscaya* form and is based on experience. The great poet Banarsidas says in his '*Natak Samaysar*' -

अनुभव चिंतामनि रतन, अनुभव है रसकूप;
अनुभव मारग मोखकौ, अनुभव मोख सरूप।

That which is as invaluable as the *Chintamani* gem, which is the reservoir of the supreme nectar, which is the path to *Moksa*, that experience by itself is the true form of *Moksa*. The state of incessant experience of the totally pure *Atma* is itself *Moksa*. There is no other *Moksa*.

The tremendous effort in the life's span of activity, to attain such an experience or to address *Niscaya Naya*, has been called *Vyavahar*. While *Niscaya Naya* is based on experience, *Vyavahar*

Naya is activity based. But what should be the activity that goes on under the banner of *Dharma*? It is very important that we know. That is why in this *gatha*, the last line reads -

પ્રેરે તે પરમાર્થને તે વ્યવહાર સમંત ૩૬

- that religious activity, those observances which become inspiring for the supreme path, the *Moksa marg*, alone are respectable, none others are.

Be it a *Sadhu*, be it a householder, but the result of the *vratas*, observances being performed by oneself should be the experience of the soul. The state of experience will occur only when the passions, binding for infinity, get depleted and then gradually the other passions too begin to wane and abate. Whether the external behaviour has measured up to the ideal is reflected in the way the passion-free feelings develop, the self begins to steady within, gets absorbed within, the external view gets shut out, the complex that the self is superior and others are inferior gets avoided and a friendship on an inner plane develops with all *jivas*.

The external observances may be in the form of *mahavratas*, in the form of fasting, in the form of *poojas-archanas* to the *Prabhu*, in the form of devotion or *swadhyay*, but if after doing them there is a false belief that ‘what we are doing is right and all others are wrong, we alone are on the path of *moksa* and since the others are not doing what we do, they are misguided’ then such act is also the reason for being tied down.

Brothers! In life there are such bitter experiences. You sometimes come across staunch *kriyavadis* who would not even agree to be seated on the same level as other *sadhus*. He will insist on an elevated seat for himself and lower seats for the others whom he considers inferior. Such things! Oh Lord! If a higher or lower seat could get you *Moksa* then the insects and *jivas* residing on mountain tops should have got them by now. Then not the traveller resting below the tree but the crow perched

on top of it should be venerable! Not just that, only such elevated *jivas* are authorised to take *ahar* - food - from the *shravaks*, none others! You pity such *jivas* carrying these beliefs. What childishness! What should be the state of the poor childish *jivas*? Should this be called *Dharma*? Is this *Charitra*?

Why! Many *jivas* who while speaking of *Niscaya Naya* have picked up some devotion, they proclaim some terms which they have held on to and consider themselves elevated and others as inferior. They claim that the true *Dharma* is only with them, and all others are wrong. They spread the idea that only they have the contract of true *Dharma*. Tell me! Where is the *Dharma* here in the fifth *kala*? Those *jivas* who call themselves *Samkiti* - equitable - live in the fear of losing their *samakit* - the equanimity - by merely saluting others with folded hands. Where should you categorise such people whose equanimity is so fickle?

Those who do this are misguided. They haven't been able to subjugate their attachment-aversion. They can call themselves great only by comparing themselves with others. But there is not enough 'self' appearing in them which can prove their greatness without resorting to anything else. Brothers! Those *jivas* who have got immersed in their activity with knowledge and understanding are like the flower of 'keveda' - it may be lying in a corner, but the fragrance spreads everywhere. Their subjugated affected disposition and the state of meeting the true disposition of the self indicates their greatness.

Hence, only if the activity is directed to the goal of *Niscaya Naya* with the understanding of the *Syadvada* principle propounded by the *Sarvajna*, and if that activity is helping in a steady progress of the state of the Soul in him, only then he is right, otherwise wrong. Not only wrong, but one pursuing such *Vyavahar* can neither perform pure activity nor can reach the *Niscaya*. Hence, in *Uttaradhyayan Sutra* it is said -

धम्मज्जियं च व्यवहारं, बुद्धेहिं आयरियं सया।
तमायरन्तो व्यवहारं, गरहं नाभिगच्छई ॥ १।४२ ॥

A learned *Sadhaka* follows *vyavahar* with the goal of pure *Dharma*. One who so pursues *vyavahar* cannot become the subject of criticism. *Vyavahar* should not be for *vyavahar* alone but must be in consonance with *Niscaya*. Many ignorant *jivas* believe that performing renunciation, fasting, *poojas* and devotion is itself *dharma* and that it will fetch them to *Moksa*. But Srimadji has told earlier that - अटके त्याग विरागमां, तो भूले निज भान - those believing that external activity is itself the entirety, are in gross misunderstanding. They cannot attain the soul. That is why Anandghanji Maharaj also says -

वचन निरपेक्ष व्यवहार झुठो कह्यो,
वचन सापेक्ष व्यवहार साचो;
वचन निरपेक्ष व्यवहार संसार फल,
सांभळी आदरी कांई राचो . . . धारा।

According to the order of the *Jineshwar*, if *vyavahar* is observed as external *Charitra*, then it being in accordance with the *Jinavachana*, the *Nijapada* can be attained. But if the religious observances are being followed with disresepct to the *Jinavani*, as mere religious activity, then their result will be nothing but *sansar*. Anandghanji Maharaj takes pity upon such people and as such says 'why do you get engrossed in such contrary behaviour listening to ignorant people? It will not offer a good result.' That is to say the *vyavahar* that does not help attain the essence of the Self, which is not with the goal of self realisation, that *vyavahar* is wrong and its result can only be *sansar*. Hence, the *vyavahar* that sets the path of *parmartha*, which makes that path free from obstacles, that *vyavahar* is approved by the sages and that alone is worth following.

What the *atmarthi jiva* is in search of with belief in such feelings and engrossed in *vyavahar* with the goal of *niscaya* will be discussed in the next.

. . . Searches Sadguru yoga!

The pursuit of the three-fold path is itself the penance for the realisation of the Self. *Atma* is in the form of *Jnana*, *Darshan* and *Charitra* and to fully manifest this true form of the self, these three are the means through which the penance has to be performed.

The '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' tells us about the calibre of the pure and good thoughts of an *atmarthi jiva*. An *Atmarthi* firmly believes that only such a *Muni*, whose external - internal ties have been severed, is a *Sadguru*. Whosoever has severed the internal ties, his external ties automatically get severed. And as a result the *Munidasha* arises naturally. Only such *Nirgrantha Muni* can become an exponent of the path of the pursuit of Self.

Indeed, if such a *Guru* is found, an *atmarthi* will be prepared to dedicate himself with all the three yogas at his feet. The uniqueness of the path of Supreme essence rests in him. Therefore, he strives to attain the *Pratyaksha* yoga of the *Sadguru* who indicates the track to walk on that path. No person other than a *Nirgrantha Muni* has the ability to make us truly realise the path of the *Jineshwar*. Hence,

एम विचारी अंतरे, शोधे सद्गुरुयोग,

काम एक आत्मार्युं, बीजो नहि मनरोग ३७

Understanding the total futility of the strength of inanimate substances that the intellect has identified or the attraction that the senses have found in passions, the *Atmarthi jiva* now embarks upon a search of the *Sadguru*. In our country, not only in the past, but even today there are such gems of Saints, who for the pursuit of the Self, have searched for a *guru* for years together. To find a *Guru*, they would have traipsed about for years in forests and mountains, faced endless difficulties. They would not have rested peacefully until a *Sadguru* was found. And when a *Sadguru* was found, they would have made their own life worthwhile by pursuing the Self with his blessings.

It has been an old tradition in our country that whosoever awakens to the goal of the Self, would first of all search for a *Sadguru*. For the Indian psyche considers the importance of a *Sadguru* in the pursuit of the Self, as unsurpassable. There can be no progress without *Sadguru*. Several experienced saints in our country have spoken at length about the greatness of the *Sadguru*. As such, even a person who seems most ignorant does not remain without a *Guru*. He may not understand much, but certainly knows that -

गुरुदीपक गुरु चांदलो, गुरु मुज प्राण आधार;
पलक एक न विसरुं, गुरु मुज तारणहार . . .

An able saint Kabir too has sung the greatness of the *Guru*. He firmly believed that not a step could be put forward without the *Guru*. Once the *Guru* shows the path and you begin to move on it, then you are through. Not only that, the attainment of the truth in the form of the principle of the *Atma* cannot be possible without a *Guru*. Kabir says -

सद् गुरु सत् का शब्द है, जाने सत् दिया बताय;
जो सत् को पकडे रहे, तो सत् ही मांहि समाय . . .

Sat is the absolute truth, the supreme principle. It is a formless principle. Its form is invisible. If there is any visible form to it, then it is the *Sadguru*. The Supreme Soul does not come down to show you the path of *Sat*. He introduces you to the *Sadguru* who is like his angel. If you hold on firmly to the *Sat* that is shown to you by the *Sadguru*, then you yourself take the form of *Sat*. Hence, go into the refuge of *Sadguru*. In Marathi philosophical literature too, these very feelings have been expressed more clearly -

अनाम्याये नाम कैसे घ्यावे? अरूण्याये रूप कैसे देखावे?
हे चि जो सांगे स्पष्टभावे, तो चि सद् गुरु

The one who can tell us clearly the name of the Nameless *Atma*, the form of the Formless *Atma*, is a *Sadguru*. Srimadji too, has at many places sung the praises of *Sadguru*. In his poetry

by name “*Kaivalyabeej Shun?*” there are several references to the serving at the feet of the *Sadguru*. He says -

बिन सद् गुरु कोय न भेद लहे
जब सद् गुरु चर्न सुप्रेम बसे
गरुदेवकी आन स्व - आत्म बसे

How come the one who has sung such praises of a *Gurudev* does not have a *guru* himself? In this present life, he never served at the feet of a *Guru*. Then how did he understand the true necessity of a *Guru*?

This question is quite natural. An alert *jiva* is bound to come up with this doubt. But the answer too is available from his very life. The influence on the soul with which he was born, had begun to show in his very childhood. The fierce turmoil that awakened within him about the principle of *Atma* at a mere age of seven, and the awakening of the feeling of Self without anybody's direct inspiration, indicate that Srimadji had earlier, in his previous births, made an unparalleled tremendous effort to attain that influence. Such a wonderful flowering of the Self without any apparent reason, would be impossible without a strong previous influence. That means, not in the present but somewhere in the past he has served the *Sadguru* with an unwavering faith and become eligible for the *Guru's* grace which granted him the capability that lasts over several births. Not just this, Srimadji may not have accepted any one great person as *Guru*, but has on several occasions saluted them with the devoted feelings towards great *satpurushas*. In his letters, he has saluted the *Satpurushas* at many places. It means his soul was always dedicated at the feet of the *Satpurushas*.

The great sage Ramana Maharshi, of this age, who always used to be immersed in the bliss of his soul, had never found a *Guru*. The experience of the soul that occurred to him at a young age was so deep that he never came out of it. After the Self realisation that occurred without any effort, that state was growing with every passing day. It was not necessary to make effort even for that growing state. Somebody once asked of him, “The age-old tradition of the

guru-shishya alone can provide stability to the path of devout practice. You too are a great *sadhaka*, how is it that you have not identified a *guru* yet?" Then the *Maharshi* had cited the example of *guru* Dattatreya and said that he had twenty-four gurus. *Guru* Dattatreya had absorbed a lot from the substances prevalent in this universe. He had himself obtained something from the nature of these substances. Whether the sky, the river, the mountain or the wind; the inspiration drawn from all such substances had taken his saintly life to its pinnacle. He used to say that if we moved around in this world with our eyes open, there are springs of inspiration flowing everywhere. And Dattatreya had accepted all these as *Guru*.

Maharshiji has said : "I have abandoned home and come here because of the strong attraction towards Arunachal Mountain, and this mountain *is* my *Guru*. The many mysteries lying in Arunachal have provided me a strong inspiration. As such, what appears to you all as an inanimate mountain, is to me a living thing." Brothers! The *Maharshi* immersed in such feelings has sung long praises of the Arunachal Mountain.

On hearing such things, a lay man gets confused. He cannot understand that something other than a living great man can also become a *Guru*. But this is the case of accomplished sages. The feeling of the Soul active in their heart, being out of this world, we cannot understand their discussions or speech. But in reality such sages are extremely humble. Why! One gets to see much more humility in such sages, than what an ordinary person is likely to acquire in his direct interaction with a great *Sadguru*. That is the wonderful eligibility in them!

Well, here we were trying to say what an *Atmarthi jiva* is in search of. Simply, none of the worldly discoveries entice him. Such a discovery might well turn out to be a cause of momentary happiness, but in effect leads to sorrow. Hence, let us make such a discovery, whose effect can go along with us for many births.

The Karma philosophy believes that the virtues and sins of *jiva* go along with him. Why! There were times when in some

countries the list of things going along was pretty long. It is said that when a King or Emperor or a wealthy person died, along with him, not only the riches, gold and silver would be buried but also living servants, so that they may serve him wherever he went after death. It was believed that whatever was buried along with the dead would remain with him in the next birth too, and thus there would not be a problem of any sort. Such customs prevailed for a long time, and were discontinued with some realisation, only in recent times.

Brothers! This was and is sheer ignorance. The things buried along would turn to dust in it. They would not go along. But the Karmas in the form of virtues and sins do go along. I could go a step further and say that whatever impressions get accumulated on the soul in this life, they are carried on to another life and get awakened there. They may be good impressions or bad impressions!

The search here for a *Sadguru* is for this very reason. If the tremendous effort that is put in for the attainment of the supreme state with the direct inspiration of a *Sadguru*, does not bring you liberation in this very birth, the impressions of those feelings are carried on the soul, and in another birth, those impressions fetch the yoga of best penance, with a little or no effort. Like in the case of *Srimad Rajachandraji* and *Ramana Maharshi*!

Hence, in the last two lines of this *Gatha*, *Srimadji* says that an *Atmarthi Sadhak* is in search of a *Sadguru* only for the sake of *Atmartha*. There is nothing wrong with his psyche. Brothers! Physical illnesses can be noticed immediately. One can feel what pain there is and others too can sense it. If one has fever, then one feels it without being told about it, and if somebody touches that one then he too can feel it. The treatment too can be quick. But the illness of the mind is such that it can neither be understood nor explained, cannot be expressed and is unbearable.

Here *Srimadji* says, “No, the *Atmarthi*’s mind is absolutely pure. There is no illness of the mind. But such a *jiva* cannot bear the

external state of the Soul. Hence, if there is the effect of external feelings lying in some corner of the Soul, the *Sadguru* is certainly required to get rid of it. Identifying and serving a *Guru* is not for feeding the illnesses of mind such as worldly prestige, fame or status. A true *Atmarthi* looks upon all these things as illnesses. Brothers! Be it a child of 3 or 4 years or a grown up man, everybody wishes to root out the illness at the earliest. Nobody wishes that the illness should grow. They take immediate steps to cure it.

An *atmarthi* feels that worldly prestige, status and fame are all like illnesses. He is working to get rid of them at the earliest. He feels all this is the play of the *Pudgal*. Anandghanji Maharaj has said-

कबहीक काजी, कबहीक पाजी, कबहीक हुआ अपभाजी
कबहीक जगमें कीर्ति गाजी, सब पुद्गलकी बाजी
आप स्वभावमें रे अवधु सदा मगनमें रहना . . . आप

What hasn't the *jiva* achieved in this wandering of the 84 lakh species - of birth? He has got the powers of the *Deva* or has been revered in the human world on becoming a King - Emperor or a Lord. He has suffered the unlimited sorrows of the hell and the netherworld and has fooled the world with the meanest of the acts as a human, and sometimes earned name and fame by doing something which is good in the eyes of the society. He has indeed achieved fame, status, respect but all these are the games of the *Pudgal*. *Papa* and *Punya* are both *Pudgal*. Both are degenerative, both false. Hence, not wading in them, but being immersed in the bliss of the Self is our duty.

So, Brothers! The understanding of *Atmarthi jiva* is not for achieving respect or status, but to inspire the search of a *Sadguru* for the purpose of attaining Self realisation.

How well prepared is the soul of the *Sadhaka* for pursuing the realisation of the Self, when he returns with a *Sadguru* after searching for him, is to be seen later.

... there resides Atmarth!

Only such a *jiva* in whom the craving for liberation has arisen can pursue the three fold path. Srimadji has called those *jivas* as *Atmarthi* who want to merge with their Self.

We are analysing the characteristics of an *Atmarthi jiva*. Thinking about the ability that rests in the *Atmarthi* pleases our mind. Ah! What an interest! What faith! The powers gained are being utilised for the benefit of the Soul : the search for *Sadguru* and the motive of the search - awakening of the worthy state of the Soul and through that its purification - *Shuddhi* and then attainment - *Siddhi*.

Now Srimadji tells us how ideal the internal state of an *Atmarthi* is -

कषायनी उपशान्ता, मात्र मोक्ष अभिलाष,
भवे खेद प्राणीदया त्यां आत्मार्य निवास ३८

The identification of a *Samyagdarshani* Soul is through these five characteristics - *Sama*, *sanveg*, *nirved*, *anukampa* and *astha*.

In this *Gatha*, the virtues that form the ground for these characteristics have been mentioned. The subjugation of passions is *sama*, *shama* or *upashama*. The total destruction of passions happens only at the end of the twelfth *gunasthana*. But here we have a *Sadhaka* who is just at the beginning of his pursuit. Hence, he has to understandingly, thoughtfully, awaken the search for the Soul, and under the refuge of the passionless form of firm faith, subdue the passions, dilute them, burn them out, and pacify them. In the ashes of simple and straightforward beliefs has the fire of passions been put out. But this ash is so powerful that it does not let the heat of the fire be felt.

It is not that such *jivas* do not ever have a flare up of passions; but they are vigilant, and they do not get involved in the *udaya*. Sometimes there is a lapse in the vigilance, and the *udaya*

manages to draw him into itself. But he has developed the awareness, the ability to turn back from it. When the situation arises where there begins an involvement in awakened passions, the *Atmarthi* thinks, 'Passions are not my true form. I am a passion-free, spotless Soul. Changing to forms of anger and the like is getting the disposition affected. Affected disposition brings in *Asrava* and in its wake the links of *Bandha* chain begin adding up. Hence, as I am not the form of passions that arise within due to anger and such feelings, I have to remain within my self. The *udaya* that has set in is bound to mature and end in its time and the Karmas will be dissolved'.

Whether or not a *jiva* experiences the Karmas that have arisen, they are of a withering nature and will certainly wither away. It is not necessary that all the Karmas that arise need to be experienced, need to be felt. Even if they are not felt, their *Nirjara* goes on. We have often heard in the lives of great men, that they were engrossed in the true disposition of the Self, enjoying the inner bliss, and hence they did not stray from their path in spite of any provocation whatsoever. They did not mix up in the *udaya*. They did not even turn and look at the Karmas. The miserable Karmas got eroded and went away.

Why! Even in practical life we would have experienced that if somebody is bent upon exciting us with an attack of harsh words, and if we make up our mind that 'I shall not get excited at all', and do not react, then how long can the other person go on alone! He tires out and goes away, loses. In the same way, Brothers! Our Karmas too are no different. They keep arising; not even for a moment does the process of their rise stop. They keep coming at a non-stop speed. But the *Atmarthi jiva* who is prepared to remain a witness, merely looks at them. Does not get mixed up with them.

So the first virtue is subjugation of passions. Once the passions are subdued the self will be at peace with itself and whatever provocation comes up like anger, pride, affection or

greed will not affect at all. But what happens to the *jiva* who has not understood? Look at our perverted intellect! If good instigation comes our way, if reasons that lead us on the path of elevating our soul come our way, we are quick to throw them out, leave alone letting them touch us. We see them off before they arrive. How many are there who would take up the lucky chance to spend time with saints or listen to scriptures, treating them as means to achieve the benefit of the Soul? Very few *jivas*! On the contrary there are many who reject good means and many who accept bad ones. Thus in the water-wheel of this world - samsar, not a single container remains empty. It fills up, spills, and then fills up again. There is not a moment's respite. As a result the passions do not get diluted.

Atmarthi jiva has subjugated his passions. He has understood the true form of the Self. I am the spirit - animate and the body is inanimate. The entire spread of this material world is inanimate. The spirit will find happiness in spiritual thoughts alone. It cannot seek happiness from the inanimate, and its effects. The most valuable inanimate thing in the world and a recognised status in the society as a result of the effects of *Punya*, these two can never be the means of my happiness. Hence, within such an *atmarthi jiva*, there lies no desire or craving or wish other than *Moksa*.

Ordinary people keep burning in the rage of various desires day in and out. A person believing in the principles of happiness in social appreciation, keeps living in the false feelings of wealth, prestige, status, pride etc., and his spirit, mind, and intellect are always busy in achieving and enhancing all these. The raging fire of desire is so great that anything you add to that gets reduced to ashes. It demands more as you keep adding. There never was a satisfaction and there never can be."

The fire of desire is like the human stomach. How much ever food you send into the stomach, it never is satisfied. In just

three-four hours it gets empty and demands again. There is no such solution that when once the stomach is filled up then it will not demand anything again ever. Oh! Just think this over! How much have you eaten until now? Is there any count? Let us do some calculation. Assume you eat four *chapatis* a day. So that will be 120 a month. A 1,440 in a year and now try multiplying this figure by your age. Look! If you are 50 then it is 72,000 *chapatis*, if 60 then 86,400 and at 70 they will number 1,08,000! How much have we poured into this stomach! And besides how many other items? We have emptied stores together into this stomach, and yet it is not satisfied. Not only this, we have indulged in all that is there to be enjoyed in this world through the five senses. And yet we act as if we have not had anything at all. There is not a burp of satisfaction. This is the web of infinite desire.

So long as there are such desires lying within, *Atmarth* will never awaken. The *Matarthata* is not leaving and hence Srimadji has said, 'Pluck the feelings of wishes and desires from your inside and throw them out, only then will the flow - *vega* - of your thoughts, which is presently in the wrong direction, take the right direction, and only then *sanvega* will awaken. Only when there is a rein on the indulgence will the desires die out, not otherwise. But the *jiva* living in ignorance does not let go of the indulgence, and by learning a little prayer and chanting begins to think of himself as an *atmarthi*.

If an *atmarthi* is also going along as the wind blows today, how do we accept him as one? Today there is a competition among the rich families. What wealth one shows off, the other has to show off a little more. I have heard of ladies from such rich families spend Rs. 10 - 15,000 on a saree they wear. And once worn in one wedding it cannot be repeated in another, so they need another costlier one worth Rs. 20,000. This is the blind spectre of social prestige! This is how it has been going on and the society is moving on the path of descent. Every such malaise leads to another, but the *jiva* does not understand!

It is alright with such *jivas*, but I have seen one such lady, who used to be called *atmarthi*, was the leader of her pack, but would not give up even one of her cosmetics. She would always be busy with efforts in making her body beautiful! How would some one have awakened feelings of *Moksa*, if there is such attachment with the body, if desires are not quenched? Where there is thought of the material world, there cannot be a thought of *Moksa*. Both can never be together. So the name tag that she carried as *atmarthi* was also false! Pardon me, Brothers! Since this is a discussion on the characteristics of *atmarthi*, it is necessary to reveal the truth. Hence, it is necessary to state how ugly is the inner state of such name-sake *atmarthi jivas*.

So, then *Atmarthi Jiva* is above all the feelings for inanimate, hence he has no desire other than the ultimate result of the spiritual existence - *Moksa*.

In spite of infinite births and deaths the *jiva* has not achieved anything. He is now wearied of the journey through one life to another. He has wandered endlessly, yet he is still at square one. Whether he enjoyed the happiness of a good birth or suffered the hardships of a lower *gati*, he remembers nothing. Believing he has never experienced any happiness or sorrow ever, he now harbours the perpetual, endless desire of going into the *Deva gati* with an intention of enjoying unending happiness, and since he does not want sorrow at all, he is determined not to go into the lower births like in hell. But in spite of this, he does not pursue the good intentions that would make him eligible for a higher birth, nor does he abandon the evil intentions which contribute to a lower birth. As a result he holds on to a desire of a higher birth and keeps wandering in the lower echelons.

But Srimadji says here - The *Jiva* who has understood the wandering through births, the *jiva* who has experienced the loss of the Soul's bliss having gone there, such a *jiva* now desires from deep within, 'I neither want a good nor a bad birth. I am

wearied of the wandering. I now want go back to my own residence and live there forever.' He has therefore, sought refuge with the *Gurudev*. The *Gurudev* too says -

ले के धरमकी नाव तेरे घर तुं चला जा . . .

Now I shall not wander about here and there. The state of the supreme, pure true form of the Soul is my residence. I have to reach there and attain infinite rest. Thus an *atmarthi jiva* is totally disheartened with wandering in this material world. If the world is not required then the reasons for the world are also not required. There is also a total rejection of those and when such a state arises within a *jiva*, the feeling of disillusionment - *vairagya* awakens and only then can he realise the Soul. The great Poet Banarasidas says in his play '*Samaysar*' -

कहै सुगुरू जो समकीती,
परम उदासी होई;
सुथिर चित्त अनुभौ करै,
प्रभु पद परसै सोई . . . २

The *Sadguru* says that the *samyakdrishti jiva* alone, who with a total detachment from the feelings of the material world, experiences the Soul by stabilising the mind, can attain the position of the supreme soul.

For every soul who has tasted the Jain culture, the material world represented by the births and deaths itself has become the reason of sorrow. Gajasukumar's detachment awakened, and he was filled with an absence of feelings within. He realised the meaninglessness of the material world and requested his mother to permit him to accept a vow. The mother's heart cried out, no doubt, filled as it was with affection, but knowing the better path, allowed the prince. She also advised, "Son! You have made me cry, but in future do not make any mother cry!" Saying so she bade him farewell. The mother wishes that her son perform such penance that he be liberated from this material world for ever.

And Brothers! This son proved his mother true. He got liberated for ever from birth and death cycle. This is the state of detachment - *nirveda* - in both mother and son!

The fourth virtue of an *atmarthi* is said to be compassion, mercy. Compassion for all *jivas*, animals, elements and nature. An *atmarthi jiva* whose inner eyes have opened up, whose inner sight is activated, looks upon all *jivas* as having a similar *Atma*. He knows all to be pure, true to their form as the *Siddha*. As such, the attachment or aversion exhibited by any *jiva* is not his true form, but that is the result of his ignorance. Such ignorance can only be looked upon with pity. The ignorance of such a *jiva* cannot lead an *atmarthi* to attachment or aversion. Therefore, howsoever the behaviour, speech or thinking of other *jivas* may be, they do not perturb the mind of an *atmarthi*. But with a feeling of friendship there arises love towards them. Similarly the sufferings of those *jivas* due to *adhi*, *vyadhi* and *upadhi* leads to pity.

Atmarthi jiva enjoys the awakened self every moment. As such the *atma* is fully alert that it does not get bound anywhere, does not get defiled due to *papa* or get tainted due to passions. Such an awakened feeling of pity - *bhava daya* -, naturally showers upon other *jivas* with a feeling of compassion - *anukampa*, which means there is also pity in action - *dravya daya*.

Thus with these four virtues of an *atmarthi*, *astha* or faith arises naturally. Only the one who has faith in the true form of his self can nurture such virtues. He cannot be without faith as these virtues have appeared in the pursuit of the true form of the self.

How an *atmarthi* equipped with the ability to acquire the virtues of *Sama*, *sanvega*, *nirveda*, *anukampa* and *astha*, gets deeper into the pursuit of the Self will be explained later.

Unless the jiva takes to penitence . . .

The pursuit of the three-fold path occurs only after the eligibility arises. Pursuit of *Moksa* is no ordinary activity that could be undertaken and accomplished whenever desired. It requires a particular kind of eligibility.

Generally people believe that everybody has the right to follow *Dharma*. Even the worst sinner or lowest of the men may also follow *Dharma*. Can a person of such nature understand *Dharma* at all? Broadly considering, this simple statement sounds alright. But first what needs to be considered is - what is *Dharma*? If *Dharma* is believed to be external ritualism, then everybody can do it. But that is not true.

The religious observances which come into practice through the differentiation of *Dravya*, *Desha* and *Kala*, are but the external form and they do not necessitate any great eligibility. With *Dravya* any *tapa*, *tyaga*, *darshan*, *vandan*, *puja* or *bhakti* can be performed and with *Kala* it can be done for any length of time. There may be differences, there need not be uniformity in them. Even the person performing can be of any type. But where the *bhava* matters, where there is *bhava Dharma*, there *Dharma* is *atma Dharma* - of the Soul alone. The true form of the natural disposition of *Atma*, nothing short of that. Hence, here there is no scope for differences.

Attaining *atma* through *atma* is *Dharma*. For that a special eligibility is certainly required. Without it one does not have the right to realise the *atma*. Hence, Srimadji has described the characteristics of *matarthis* in the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*'. He is trying to say that before doing *Dharma*, one should check the grade to ascertain whether one has acquired the eligibility to the right of understanding *Dharma*. If yes, then very well! If not, then acquire it.

Only in the pages before these, we have seen the particular characteristics of an *atmarthi*. Only the *jiva* with these characteristics - subjugation of passions, demolition of all desires other than that of *Moksa*, a deep detachment from the material world, and an inside filled with compassion - becomes eligible to understand *Dharma*. The same matter is continued -

दशा न एवी ज्यां सुधी, जीव लहे नहि जोग,
मोक्षमार्ग पामे नहीं, मटे न अंतर रोग ३९

The state described above getting woven into the natural disposition can be termed as eligibility. *Dharma* itself is very natural. Where there is artificiality, *Dharma* does not touch at all. In a flower made of paper, there can be appearance, color and form but there cannot be the characteristics of a flower. It may be a flower made out of the best paper and it may be costly too, yet there cannot be the characteristics of a flower in them. But a real flower, even if it has grown in the wilderness, even if it has grown on its own without anybody looking after it, always has its natural characteristics. Brothers! *Dharma* is the natural disposition of the *atma*. *Dharma* can be understood only when the eligibility required in the soul to achieve this natural disposition, appears and takes the natural effect. *Dharma* is the state of natural true disposition of the *Atma*.

The sad thing about us is that the affected disposition takes shape in us very easily. There is no effort required for that. Effortlessly those effects keep appearing. Why! Even if not outwardly visible, the feelings of attachment and aversion keep arising inside. It does not take a concerted effort of an hour for either attachment or aversion to appear. But *samata* - equanimity does not arise even after performing *Samayiks* not just once but many times in a day. Victory over senses eludes even after much penance and renunciation. Not even a particle of *veetaragta* - state of being bereft of passions - appears even after *swadhyaya* and *bhakti*. It takes a tremendous effort over many births to

awaken the natural *bhava* and even then there is a slip up and affected feelings do not realise where the slip up occurred. The effect of affected disposition of the infinite number of *jivas* in this vast universe continues endlessly.

Brothers! Why so? Our own true form is miles away and the result of interaction with the alien is so close! Well, the only reason is that we have never ever thought of settling down in our natural disposition nor have we become determined to come out of the affected disposition. But a *jiva* in whom the *atmartha* has awakened, that is, a *jiva* who is active only in the realisation of the soul, is in the effort of achieving the natural disposition. Such an eligibility has arisen within him.

The path of *Moksa* cannot be achieved by one in whom such an eligibility does not appear. And a *jiva* who has strayed from the path, who is wandering hither- thither, cannot even recognise a precious stone lying close by. *Atma* has to be attained through *atma*. Nothing else needs to be done. If only this is understood, if somebody who can explain this is found, then the effort to merge with the Self could be done. The wandering is the result of not having found a *Sadguru*, to explain this. Kabir says -

भटक मुआ भेदू बिना, कौन बतावे धाम ?
चलते चलते जुग गयो, पाव कोस पर गाम !

Alas! The fool has wandered aimlessly until now because he did not find a 'bhedu' (*Sadguru*). Who else but a *Sadguru* can guide to the abode of the Self? Ages have passed in wandering, but the abode could not be found. Today I realise that the 'village' was but a furlong away from where I started.

How very true! Its not even a furlong away. We have wandered this universe for infinite time. In comparison this furlong is insignificant. The 'abode' is so close that you just have to resolve and you will be there.

Brothers! A *jiva* whose eligibility does not materialise even after finding a *Sadguru*, cannot achieve it. So many ignorant people keep saying, 'We do not have the grace of our *Guru*. He does not offer us anything.' Not just that, the ineligibility that lies within, even makes them say that the *Guru* is partial. He gives to somebody who is a favourite and does not give me anything. They make such allegations on the *Guru* but the fools do not know that grace is forever flowing from the heart of the *Sadguru*. If your receptacle is broken, if you cannot hold it, then how can you get it? Get the receptacle ready, and then you just cannot but get it!

Hence Srimadji says that unless there is eligibility, the *Moksa marga* - the path to *Moksa* cannot be struck, and unless you find that path, the malaise inside cannot be removed. If at all this *jiva* has a malady of the most severe sort, it is in the form of the bewildered self. The Self is unable to recognise itself. The mistaking of bodies etc. for the soul, is a great misconception. 'Who am I' is not known. In Srimadji's words -

हुं कोणं छुं क्यांथी थयो, शुं स्वरूप छे मारुं खरुं . . .

The *jiva* is ignorant of this. There is not as much knowledge of the Self as there is about the external form of the self and the relations of the inanimate. Why! Even in deep sleep, if somebody calls you by name, you wake up. You realise both that you have been called, and by whom. You recognise both. You recognise many things in the entire Universe. Some have such a keen memory that they do not forget some person they have met years ago. That recollection is fresh as ever, but the *jiva* has an illusion in recognising the self. Unless that illusion is cleared, how will it occur that 'I am the Soul' and I have to understand *Dharma* to attain my Self?

If I do not know who I am, then how will I know what I ought to do? Indeed, even if this *jiva* is observing external

religious rituals, but has forgotten the Self, then he is not on the true path. The ascetic Kamatha, who harassed Lord Parshwanatha, goes through the severe penance of five fires. In the blistering afternoon heat of the *Vaishakha* month, Kamatha sits on a plain outside the village, with a wood pyre on all four sides. He is experiencing the heat from five directions, making the body suffer great rigours. But, he has forgotten the world of the Soul, the Soul is untouched. The efforts are limited to misguiding the *jivas* of the world into mere bodily rituals.

Brothers! How can the illusion of the Soul be removed even with such heating of the body? How can the path to *Moksa* be attained? Therefore, Srimadji while describing the state of an *atmarthi*, has told us how the eligibility is, of a *jiva* desirous of the *Moksa marga*.

Now, what a tremendous effort such a *jiva* can put in, will be taken up next.

Sadguru's advice is reassuring . . .

The pursuit of the three fold path is the transition of the *atma* into the form of knowledge, in the form of the faith and into the form of the conduct. The absorption of all these three in a concurrent thought by the *atma*, is the accomplishment of the pursuit.

How essential the appearance of that state is for such a pursuit has been told before and the tremendous internal effort has been termed as imperative for that. As the Soul gradually stabilises in the true form of the self, the affected disposition gets dissolved on its own. It does not need to be abandoned.

Our effort is on in the wrong direction. We are making an effort first to stop the fickleness of the mind, the affected thoughts like anger and such. But unless the *jiva* stabilises in the *Darshan guna*, the *charitra guna* does not appear. The sentiments of anger etc. are aberrations of conduct. Hence, the internal effort is to dispel the *mithyatva* and for settling in the Self. Unless there is stability in the true self, an outwardly ready *jiva* may well be satisfied that he is understanding the *charitra*, but his affected disposition does not leave him.

A *Sanyasi* while once returning after bathing in the river Ganga, was touched by an untouchable - *chandala*. That he was touched by an untouchable became a big issue as if the sky had fallen. And the *Sanyasi*'s soul which should have been quiet and peaceful, was turbulent with anger. There was a give and take of harsh words and then fisticuffs. The *Sanyasi* was frail and the *Chandala* was hefty. The *Sanyasi* had his bones broken. With great difficulty he extricated himself and came back to his hermitage and his attendant deity appeared. The event had been insulting. Anger and ego within had not yet been subjugated. He started abusing the deity. 'How is it that you did not come to my rescue?' The *deva* said, '*Maharaj*! I had indeed come there, but

could not identify you.' 'How is that?' 'There were two *chandalas* - one by birth and another by ignorance!'

Brothers! The affected disposition like anger etc. are the form of *chandala*. When these take over the charge of your head, all consciousness is lost. *Atma*, which is supposed to be in the form of knowledge, turns into the form of anger. As if *atma* and anger have merged into one. Hence, keeping this transition of the *atma* in view, the scriptures have mentioned eight types of *atma*. Although, in fact, all *atmas* are just the same. There is no difference of any sort in them. It is said -

एगे आया

Atma is one. The infinite number of *Atmas* in the universe are all one from the view of the true form of their self. The siddhas and the worldly lives have the same fundamental state. The difference becomes manifest in *jivas* with Karma, and hence they are said to be eight types - 1. *Dravya atma*, 2. *Kashaya atma*, 3. *Yoga atma*, 4. *Upayoga Atma*, 5. *Jnana Atma*, 6. *Darshan atma*, 7. *Charitra atma* and 8. *Veerya atma*.

All souls are *Dravya atmas*. When the *jiva* transits into the disposition of anger and other passions, and say takes the angry form, it is called *Kashaya atma* at that time. Similarly, when it transits due to the effect of the yogas of the mind, speech and body, then it is *Yoga atma*. When it transits into the *upayoga* form, it is *upayoga atma*. And thus, when it transits into the forms of *jnana*, *darshan*, *charitra* and *veerya*, it is named accordingly.

Here, the internal state of the *atma*, which has taken the affected disposition of anger etc., is also like anger. So long as the *Atma* is in this affected disposition, the eligibility of penance does not arise in it, and the *Moksa marga* is elusive. But the *jiva* who has, through a concerted effort, attained the introvert state which is the eligibility for attaining natural disposition, is an

eligible - *supatra jiva*. How such a *jiva*'s internal effort takes shape, is described by Srimadji -

आवे ज्यां एवी दशा, सद गुरुबोध सुहाय,
ते बोधे सुविचारणा, त्यां प्रगटे सुखदाय ४०

When the *Atmarthi* state arises, one begins to like *Sadguru*'s advice, to find it interesting and pleasing. In the company of the *Sadguru*, a keen inquisitive nature awakens to absorb his good advice and whatever self-beneficial speech the *jiva* hears, he memorises it. The urge to hear it again and again awakens. Every pore of his feels the pleasure on hearing it. The heart dances with delight and whatever has been heard with such noble feelings immediately reaches within.

Brothers! What is the good of having heard, if it does not reach within! People do hear a lot, but do not let it touch them within. What is the greatness of the person who sits for a *Katha* - service - but does not let the *Katha* sit in him? It is like the story of the two statuettes. Both looked identical, very beautiful, but one was genuine and the other an imitation. The genuine one was worth a fortune and the fake was not even worth two bits. But the clever Minister identified them with the help of a wire. In one of the statuettes the wire went straight to the stomach when introduced in to the ear. In the other, it came right out of the other ear. Now tell me which was the genuine one? Can you? Yes, the first one was genuine and the second one fake. Brothers! Where do we fit in? Genuine or fake? We have to assign a value to ourselves! In Mumbai a brother told us once, '*Mahasatiji!* Whatever you say, but -

बे कान मळ्या छे सीधा शा माटे ?
सुणी सुणीने सीधुं फेकी देवा माटे !

What a blunder the creator of this body has made! Had he placed one ear higher and the other lower, then whatever we heard would not have escaped. Brothers! You hear the saints

often but do not carry anything with you! Why so? Why only here? You go into the market, you have to conduct business. When you start from home you decide that today there has to be 'so much' business and there should be 'so much' earning. Brothers! I ask you, do you ever start with the thought, 'I am going to the market, but I shall not conduct even a single paisa worth business'? 'Not even if I get it' have you thought so at any time? No, such a person would be considered mad in practical life. Then if you come here to take away nothing, just walk away after hearing, then what should it be taken for? What should you be called? Where do we stand? Which category do we fit into - *matarthi* or *atmarthi*? Think it over.

Srimadji says that the pure words of the *Sadguru* which an *atmarthi* absorbs, go straight within and beautify him. These words generate good thinking in him. Not merely thoughts but good thoughts.

The mind that man has got with this body, always thinks. The thought process does not stop even for a moment. Soon after birth, there may not be comprehension but there are thoughts. There may well not be an expression for lack of words or ability, but the thoughts continue incessantly. We need to separate our thoughts - the good and the bad - that flood our mind. The thoughts coloured by the feelings of attachment and aversion are always the bad thoughts which not only are bad for the self but for others too.

The majority of our thoughts are about our interests, our liking, our loved ones, or our involvement. They also feed our base instincts. Such thoughts are away from the feelings of the Soul. They do not do any good to the Soul, on the contrary they are damaging. Hence, these thoughts are called bad thoughts. Unless the advice of the *Sadguru* dampens the heart, there is no chance of good thoughts arising. There will be thoughts of

widening the material world, how will the thoughts of liberation arise in it? For the *jiva* has thought a lot, but has not realised even until now that 'It is necessary that I should think for the soul too'. When this is understood, then with the yoga of the *Sadguru*, good thinking begins.

But Brothers! What a sad state we are in! What our thoughts absorb and from where! Just from where we need to absorb the good, we pick up the wrong and lowly path to feed our bad disposition.

Today is *Janmashtami*! What do you do today? A luncheon with porridge. Many of the sisters have made an observance, many are fasting. But Brothers! I ask you what will you do? Will you do what Lord Krishna did, or what the Pandavas did? They had done a lot in their lives, what have you absorbed from it? Living apart everything else, you learnt gambling. Tonight, you will gamble all night. Why! Many of you brothers and even some sisters, will gamble through out this month of *Shravana*. But why? Do you have an answer? Krishna gambled, the learned Pandavas gambled, then we are but ordinary men; why not us? And besides, we are not as foolish as the Pandavas, nor have we lost our sense, that we will go and place our wives at stake. We have never done so, and we never will. This is but some entertainment. An enjoyment for a while!

Pardon me, Brothers! But why did you have to take the refuge of such lowly entertainment? Could you not find an ennobling entertainment? Or then would there not be any fun in it? If you do some *satsang*, devotion, *swadhyaya*, listen to something good, these will not only provide entertainment but will also entertain the soul and prove useful for the *jiva*. It is a fact that the mind-frame of the man, whose mind is attracted by lowly entertainment, is also lowly. Is it becoming to pursue such lowly disposition?

Brothers! Before you imitate Sri Krishna, take a look at his life. It is said that he entered the waters of Jamuna to vanquish the Kaliya serpent. He had to struggle to vanquish the 1,000 hooded cobra. If he cut out one hood, another appeared elsewhere. There seemed no end to it. But ultimately he overpowered the Cobra! What is this? It is symbolic. Sri Krishna set out to vanquish the infinite number of evil feelings lying within. As the effort went on, the feelings arose with a bigger strength. When one was vanquished, another would arise. We all know from experience that thoughts keep arising one after the other and do not let us rest in peace. Why! They will make us mad. The evil thoughts make us forget our family, respect, prestige, *Dharma*, and every thing else, to take us on the path of misconduct. Even after a man grows old, he cannot escape the slavery of such evil thoughts. So, Sri Krishna had vanquished such thoughts. Brothers! Today the first thing you should do is to rein in your thoughts, and may be then you could pick the cards for gambling.

The flute that rests on the lips of Sri Krishna also tells us something. Radha once was jealous of this flute, for it managed to rest on the lips of Sri Krishna all the while. What was in it? Radha asked the reason, and the flute said, 'Just look at me! I am empty from top to bottom, I am hollowed out. There is nothing in me that is mine. Hence, I get the privilege of resting on the lips of Sri Krishna.' Radha understood. Brothers! Only those who rout the ego from within have the right to remain close to the Prabhu, not others. As long as there is ego within, the Supreme Soul will not step into the temple of your heart. Kabir also says the same thing -

यह तो घर है प्रेम का, खालाका घर नाही;
सिस उतारी भूहि धरै, तो पैठे घर मांही . . .

The path of the Lord's love is not simple. It is not your aunt's house that you enter without asking. Here you have to remove and lower you head. Only then can you enter the house.

Only then will you get the love of the Lord. So, only if you abandon the ego will you get the Lord. This is possible only for the brave.

हरिनो मारग छे शूरानो, नहीं कायरनुं काम जोने;
परथम पहेलुं मस्तक मकी, वळती लेवुं नाम जोने . . .

How will the cowards win over the ego? And if they win Hari (the Lord) will certainly enter the temple of the heart.

‘मैं’ था तब ‘हरि’ नहीं, अब ‘हरि’ ‘मैं’ नहीं

Well, if the ego goes, the Lord finds a way to enter! So Brothers! Krishna’s flute teaches us to be free from the ego. This day you should recognise your ego and make an effort to get rid of it.

The third aspect about Krishna’s life was his wonderful humility! In his childhood he has gone to Sandipani *Rishi* for his schooling. Both rich and poor students study together and do the jobs assigned by the *Guru*. Even in pouring rain if he was asked to bring in firewood, he would go and get head-loads of it. In spite of being a Prince, he was not ashamed of running for the errands of the *Guru*. He had learnt that *Guru*’s order is *Dharma*. There was no ego clashing. Brothers! Think! People who have done such things get to be revered in this world. Today there are thousands of his temples in Bharat. He is even revered outside Bharat.

The most special aspect of his life was the way he served *Dharma*. He earned himself the *Tirthankar Nam Gotra*. In future he will attain the status of *Tirthankar*. Should we learn serving the Jain tradition from his life? We may not reach the stage where eligibility to attain the state of *Tirthankar* could be achieved, but could we at least not lead a life improved with good conduct? So Brothers! I specially say today, that before gambling in the name of *Janmashtami*, take a look at Shri Krishna’s life. First

determine to acquire one virtue from his life and then decide whether or not to gamble as a result of the evil thoughts.

Srimadji said that an *Atmarthi jiva* absorbs the advice of the *Sadguru*. Therefore a stream of good thought that is true thinking arises in him. Thoughts which lead to contemplation. Everybody thinks, but to turn them into the form of contemplation on the true path, is a different story. Where there is contemplation there is a churning. If having heard an advice about the Soul, it is churned within, then it throws out the nectar of self-experience and that nectar is the power that lends strength.

In the contemplation of the *atmarthi sadhaka*, the chanting of 'I am the soul' goes on day in and out. I am the Soul in the pure true form, the perpetual substance of incessant life form. This thinking takes him towards the state of experience, that experience which is the means of true happiness. Hence Srimadji has said that good thoughts that generate happiness arise. If man remains stuck in the mess of evil thoughts, then he will become a cause of sorrow. The fruit of evil thoughts can never be good. Like the thought shall be the bond of Karma and like the Karma shall be the result. Therefore, we have to repeatedly assess our thoughts and if there is any lowly element in it, we should remove it and learn to harbour *satvik* thoughts. For that, the advice of the *Sadguru* has to remain within. That state has to be achieved.

Thus the *jiva* who has achieved this state finds the path and progressing on this path leads to attainment of the goal at the end.

Where and when? This will be dealt with later.

Where arises good thinking . . .

The pursuit of the three-fold path happens only after good thinking arises. Good thinking is the contemplation about the *Atma*. When the self begins to contemplate over the Self, only then will it be understood that the three gems are my true form. Such a realisation will awaken the urge in a *jiva* to attain *Moksa*. Only then will he work for the devoted practice.

As long as there is love for the affected thoughts, as long as there is contemplation on only those thoughts, the *jiva* will be active in obtaining, safeguarding and enjoying substances. It does not occur to him to get out of it. In spite of the company of the *Sadguru*, he treads the wrong path and hence cannot know his true self.

'*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' tells us here that when an eligible *jiva* finds the company of a *Sadguru*, that precious moment becomes a fortunate means of blossoming *Nandanvana* in his life. An *atmarthi* is in search of such a good opportunity solely out of his interest in the Soul. When it is found, it does not take long for the seed lying in the soul to sprout.

In our history, there have been many saints whose entire life was turned about after just one moment of *Sadguru* yoga in their life. The iron is hot indeed, but it takes shape only when the hammer of Guru's grace strikes. Then in the regular company of this *Gurudev*, the *jiva* improves his own digestive ability with the help of the bitter yet restorative medicine offered by the *Sadguru*, and then digests the advice. As a result, the good health in the form of good thinking arises in him.

Srimadji tells us as to what happens with the awakening of good thinking -

ज्यां प्रगटे सुविचारणा, त्यां प्रगटे निजज्ञान,
जे ज्ञाने क्षय मोह थई, पामे पद निर्वाण ४१

With the awakening of good thinking, the resultant true form of the Self is realised. The self knows the Self, the self experiences

the Self. This experience, this acquaintance happens within, not outside.

There is a great difference between the acquaintance with the Soul and the acquaintance with all substances of this material world other than the Soul. The acquaintance of external substances, people or places is at the intellectual level. If we happen to know a person, then we know his name, address, caste, occupation and his relations with others. Going a step further, we also know what his social status is. If he holds any special powers, we know about them too. But all these identifications are through our intellect.

Perhaps, if we have friendship with some body, if we are attached with affectionate feelings with him, then the acquaintance reaches the heart. We know each other heart to heart. The fibre of attachment that binds us makes us experience happiness or sorrow. In spite of all this, there is no soulful experience in it.

The feelings of the acquaintances that have reached the levels of intellect or the heart are not so deep as those of the experience of the Soul. For experiencing the soul, one has to isolate from everything including the body, senses, mind, intellect, heart and touch the deepest level of the Soul. The realisation of the self can occur only when this level is touched.

Similarly we have felt the experiences occurring at the level of body and senses. We have felt the external joys and sorrows. But the feeling of the soul is such that having experienced it, there remains a sort of satisfaction and permanent happiness, which the *jiva* relishes. He does not have a bother after enjoying it. After relishing this there would not remain any sort of dissatisfaction or the experience of sorrows. Whereas after the experiences through the senses, there is dissatisfaction. The shadow of sorrow looms large behind joy. Hence Srimadji says -

पश्चात् दुःख ते सुख नहीं

Those who believe that there is happiness in experiences of the senses, need to realise that any sort of joy derived from the passions is followed by the sorrow of hopelessness, dissatisfaction, or disinterest. In fact it never happens that the experience of the worldly pleasures is incessantly joyful. Even while experiencing such joy, there are moments in between when the thoughts of sorrow, the feeling of sorrow do occur. Joy is not permanent there. Hence, all these experiences are ultimately leading to sorrow.

Besides, the experience of the senses only reaches the mind. It cannot go deeper. Mind is inanimate. How can the joy born under the inanimate - *jada* - offer any happiness to the animate - *chetan*? The happiness of the *chetan* appears out of *chetan*. Therefore, only when one gives up the refuge of the sensory mind and reaches up to the soul, can there be knowledge of the self, and this knowledge offers happiness free from sorrow.

Knowledge of the self is the recognition of the Self by the self. Acquaintance with the self, experience of the self, stabilising within the self. All these are stages of gradual progress. How far a *jiva* gradually reaches enjoying the bliss of the Self! It is like a chain. First of all there is the state of *atmartha* within, then is the *Sadguru* yoga, with the help of *Sadguru*'s yoga there is good thinking, good thinking leads to knowledge of the self, waning of attachment - *moha* - due to knowledge of the self, and as a result - *Nirvana*. Thus the ripened fruit of the state of *atmartha* is *Moksa*. Therefore, the importance of true faith is unparalleled. Srimadji has repeatedly saluted such - *Samyak Darshan* - true faith.

I bow to the good *samaritan* - *Samyak Darshan* which has in a moment converted that knowledge which for endless time had been occurring in the life-resultant form into life-liberating form.

The *jiva* has the power to know. Knowing is the true disposition of the *Atma*. It knows through the means of senses etc. But this knowledge, being the cause of attachment and aversion, has until now been leading to the increase of the worldly

attachment. The *jiva* assigns good or bad to whatever he knows and naturally attachment and aversion are born out of that. Attachment and aversion are instrumental for this material world. Therefore, by gaining knowledge the *jiva* has increased the material world. But when the *jiva* becomes introspective, experiences the self, that is, when *Samyak Darshan* is attained, a sort of revolution occurs within. The knowledge that for infinite time had made you wander the world, itself turning in direction, in just a matter of a moment becomes the instrument for detachment from material world. The feelings that were being nurtured until now are rooted out in one act. This is the wonderful power of *Samyak Darshan*.

Further detailing the speciality of such distinguished *Samyak Darshan*, Srimadji says -

Samyaktva says to *Kevaljnana* - I can work until the *jiva* reaches *Moksa*. And you too can do the same thing; there is nothing more special that you can do, then why should I be inferior to you? Not only that, even to achieve *you*, I am required.

Here it is indicated that *Samyak Darshan* is the most valuable first stage in the progress of a *jiva*. *Dharma* begins only after *Samyak Darshan*. The tremendous effort that is required for attaining *Moksa*, does not emanate from within until *Samyak Darshan* is attained. Therefore, *Samyak Darshan* is the fundamental means that leads to *Moksa*. Moreover, no *jiva* attains *Moksa* before attaining *kevaljnana*. Therefore, *kevaljnana* is also a means for *Moksa*. Yet, here *Samyak Darshan* says that if I am not there, you can never come. Therefore, the prime importance is mine. Here let us understand the difference between *Samyak Darshan* and *Kevaljnana*.

Samyak Darshan is 'proper' knowledge. But here the *atma* and *jnana* are different. While *kevaljnana* is complete knowledge. Where the *atma* itself takes the form of knowledge all the while. *Atma* and *jnana* do not remain separate.

Brothers! This dialogue is not to underrate *kevaljnana*. But the secret remains that unless the seed of *Samyak Darshan* is sown, the fruit of *nirvana* cannot be got. The enjoyment of sweet and tasty fruit is thanks to the seed. If there were no seed, there would be no fruit, hence while enjoying the fruit, it is necessary that the appreciation of seed be kept in view. This seed is itself *Samyak Darshan*, knowledge of the self. In Srimadji's words -

वह केवल को बीज ग्यानी कहे

With the occurrence of such knowledge of the self, the attachment begins to dissolve. That is, the true effort which results in the dissolving of attachment, begins after attaining the knowledge of the self. Effort put in before attaining the knowledge of the self brings in very little fruit. In our scriptures this has been called *akama nirjara*. The effort before attaining *Samyak darshan* is not totally futile, as for the *jiva* who has been *mithyatvi* from infinite time, the effort to attain *samakit* has to be made in the *mithyatva* state itself. Had the effort of *mithyatva* state not offered any fruit, no *jiva* could ever have achieved *samakit*. But this is not so! The effort of *mithyatva* state itself is instrumental for the achievement of *samakit*. Of course, it is true that if nothing is done for the achievement of *samakit* and other observances are done, then there is not much to be gained from them. But the same or even lesser effort put in after achieving *samakit* brings in much more fruit. The *nirjara* of karma happens in bulk and the progress of the soul is quicker. That is why *Samyak Darshan* is considered wonderful and great. This is the first step on the ladder to *Moksa*.

Even after *Samyak Darshan*, *kevaljnana* is attained only after a severe penance. *Bhagawan* Mahaveer was born with such great eligibility. *Samakit* and three *jnanas* were with him. But *Mohaniya* karma was also there, and he had to fight it. How long did it take? Twelve years and thirteen fortnights! Brothers! Think over! What did Prabhu do for this length of time? Historians say he performed such and such a penance. We have the figure of Prabhu's penance. We have counted the observances

of *Chattha*, *Attham*, *ardhamasi*, *masskshaman*, *charmasi*, *chhamasi* etc. But did *Prabhu* do just this? No! We have only established the arithmetic of what his body went through externally. What was happening in the modification of the *Atma*?

How great would have been the state of attachment within him! It took him such a long time to reverse it and to attain a state of detachment. Brothers! Consider this! A person whose unparalleled strength was experienced in his childhood itself, by not only humans but also devas. The devas were compelled to call him not merely *Veer* - courageous - but Mahaveer. They had to accept defeat at the hands of *Prabhu* and became servants at his feet. How did the Soul who possessed such unparalleled strength of the body and mind, who was gifted with fearlessness and courage, whose every pore reflected compassion and tenderness, how did such a strong soul have to wage such a long war with his self? How arduous is this? If the body and mind had to bear tribulations and trials, what would the *Atma* have suffered? And passing beyond all these he totally destroyed the state of attachment.

Brothers! Srimadji has said in the *Gatha* that - ते ज्ञाने क्षय मोह थई पामे पद निर्वाण - How simple it sounds, doesn't it? The knowledge of self was achieved, it destroyed attachment and *Moksa* was attained. This sounds as if 'there was fever and he died'. But no, it is not so simple. Even when just the penance of one Lord Mahaveer is considered, it seems so difficult. But many such *jivas* have attained *Moksa* and all of them were required to put in so much or even more effort. We are unaware of the history of the penance of many great men. But they all have attained *Moksa* only with a tremendous effort.

When such an effort appears, the decadence of attachment begins and the *nirvana pada* is reached. The state upon reaching which the *jiva* feels accomplished. There is nothing left to be done. Such an ultimate state is the state of *nirvana*.

Everyone has to attain a status if they want to become happy. But what status? Brothers! What would you say if I asked you? How honourable it would be to be at the helm of some big organisation, or to be a minister? And if you are not there, what a craving there would be to reach it! What intrigue! What dirty politics! Attaining this status, brings respect and honour. But I shall say, you attain nothing by reaching such status, you only lose. When you attain that status, you get honoured, you get a garland - *har*. Does this thought cross ever your mind - I am holding a losing account in life and this is yet another loss - *har* - defeat! The moment the ego bloats upon wearing the garland, that is one step downwards. And then to feed this ego there is the sequence of unending attachment and aversion. There the downfall is drastic. So now tell me, what will you call this status achieved - a step of progress or an indication of downfall? Brothers! This status drags the *jiva* into affected disposition. Hence, a craving for this status is not desirable. You all very well know, how great a loss a person greedy for status in political or social fields, is doing to his *atma*. In the name of service, he is only after worldly prestige! Look at his state, if that is not found. How terrible! Therefore, here in the *Adhyatma Shastra*, all these have been termed as affected disposition and suggested to be discarded. Remaining engrossed in affected disposition is to be avoided at all times. Such a *jiva* cannot attain *atmartha*.

Here the progress of the *Atmarthi jiva* is valued. He gains authority over the status of *nirvana*. Well, we have brought in authority here too. But this is the authority of the self over the Self. Not the reign of others over the self. There have been many *Siddhas* in the past, then do they gain an authority over the new *Siddhas*, owing to their seniority? No! All are free in all ways! Contained in the Self! In nothing else! A *Nirvana pada*, where such unparalleled bliss of the Self remains always, which is the ultimate goal of the *jiva*. Attainment of *Nirvana pada* as a result of good thinking, and thereby a period to the tremendous effort. The next thought in due course . . .

From the dialogue of the Guru and Shishya

The pursuit of the three gems is possible only for those who have experienced the self. A *jiva* sans the experience of the self, may be going through many observances in the name of *Jnana*, *Darshan* and *Charitra*. But that effort of his would be futile.

True effort is that which leads to the ebbing of attachment. But the ways of awakening the *Samyak Dasha* have been told in the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*'. When the *Dasha* - that state arises, *disha* - the right direction is found, and to attain both these *Dasha* and *Disha* - position and direction, this *Gatha* says -

ऊपजे ते सुविचारणा, मोक्षमार्ग समजाय,
गुरुशिष्य संवादथी, भाखुं षट्पद आंही ४२

The characteristics of *Atmarthis* were described in several earlier *Gathas*. The state of thinking that they are in was also shown. Now, the six terms which form the core of this *Shastra*, for the awakening of that state of thinking and for understanding the path to *Moksa*, will be told through a dialogue of *Guru* and *Shishya*. A doubt arises in the mind of the *Shishya* - disciple. He places it before the *Guru* and the benevolent *Gurudev* clarifies it.

Why would *Srimadji* have adopted the style of dialogue here? In truth, he has himself raised the doubts and himself offered the clarifications. Yet it seems that this style must have been adopted to show how strong the curiosity of an eligible disciple is and the sort of doubts that can arise in his mind while trying to understand the Soul. The disciple is not posing any counter arguments out of disbelief, but in spite of having an unwavering faith in the speech of the *Veetarag*, the thoughts of the principle have not stabilised in his heart. Hence, only to strengthen his own faith, he is presenting his doubts.

Brothers! Who gets a doubt? Every body except two! One who is totally ignorant, who has not even heard of the word -

principle, who does not ever have the awareness in his mind that there is something to be known, will never get a doubt. The other one is all knowing, to whom all the substances in the Universe seem so clear and present. Who is himself omniscient. There, there is no scope of a doubt. Excepting these two, those who are neither totally ignorant nor all knowing, are likely to get doubts. And among them too, those who have become eligible for the path of the Soul, they get doubts only pertaining to the substance of the soul.

When such an eligibility awakens and doubts get clarified in the refuge of an experienced *Guru*, the stream of thoughts in the disciple flows with joy. He manages to unravel the deep secrets of the *Agamas*. In the tradition of our country, there has always been a discerning awareness among the great sages of not passing on knowledge in the absence of eligibility. Why! A disciple might be very much eligible, the *Gurudev* might have a good mind to pass on all knowledge to him, and he would even do it! But if somewhere on the way, the eligibility were to fail, then the effort in pursuit of knowledge would be left incomplete.

An unparalleled character in our history, is the *Muni Sthulibhadra*, who taught the material world lessons of both *bhoga* and yoga. Once a stalwart *bhogi*, when he took to the path of renunciation, he became an equally great *Yogi* too. At the awakening of the feeling of detachment, he took up the vow at the feet of *Muni Sambhutipijayji* and began a severe penance along with the pursuit of the three gems. Disciple-hood had taken over his feelings. With a wonderful humility and with a sense of total dedication he was enjoying his stay at the *Gurukul*.

The *Gurudev*'s heart too leapt at the joy of having found an eligible disciple. *Sthulibhadra*, who had lived with a dancer for twelve years and indulged himself neck-deep in passions, dropped his attachment with the material world like a snake-skin in a moment. He was swaying in the stream of thoughts resulting

from good conduct being filled with a never-before detachment. *Sambhutivijayji's* heart was filled with great joy, having found such a great disciple. There was an unbroken flow of knowledge from his soul towards *Sthulibhadra*.

Sthulibhadra got engrossed in the pursuit of knowledge in the refuge at the *Gurudev's* feet. He was learning one treatise of the older ones after the other. The treatises of the older ones are filled with deep secrets. *Sthulibhadra's* sharp intellect and keen understanding mastered the deep secrets of the *Agamas*. Everything became distinctly clear and elaborated to him like a drop of oil on water. Along with *Jnana*, *Sthulibhadra* also attained the unmatched strengths of *darshan* and *charitra*. Having attained stability, the pursuit was progressing at a fast pace.

With the awakening of the strength of his soul, he made many substances of this material world appear on an experimental basis. *Muni Sthulibhadra* was now endowed with many *labdhis*, big and small. Yet the stoical *Muni* was deeply engrossed in the pursuit of the Soul, without worrying about them. Upon seeing this, the *Gurudev's* heart was choked with emotions.

He exclaimed in joy - Aha! This disciple's greatness has made me proud! I am gratified to have such a disciple. And then the *Gurudev* gave the disciple, the very deep knowledge of the nine *purvas*. The ocean of knowledge began to churn within the disciple.

In the process of the pursuit, in spite of not having any desire to attain them, *Labdhis* were already acquired. Truly, when the devoted practice begins to grow more introspect, the *Karma nirjara* begins to happen in bulk on one hand and on the other a glow of *punya* collects. As a result, the *sadhaka* becomes endowed with *labdhis*, which to an ordinary person, seem like miracles.

Such a great *labdhi-dhari*, with an intention of further enhancing the presence of his soul, with the permission of his *Gurudev*, went away to the mountains to get engrossed in a deep penance in the solitude of a cave. He had no awareness of the surroundings. Forgetting everything he became engrossed in the Self. The state of the *Muni*, swinging on the swing of the Self, would go for a moment dabbling into the *apramatta* thought or would slip back into the *pramatta bhava* at the next moment. Thus the lamp of the pursuit of the Soul was aglow in his heart. In the deserted jungle, forlorn region, amidst the roaring of wild animals, the serene *Muni* was in the meditation of the Self.

एकाकी विचरतो वळी स्मशानमां,
 वळी पर्वतमां वाघ सिंह संयोग जो;
 अडोल आसन, ने मनमां नहीं क्षोभता,
 परम मित्रनो जाणे पाय्यो योग जो . . अपूर्व . . .

Such a devoted *Muni* was engrossed in his Self. And about the same time, two colleague *Sadhvis* of this *Muni*, came to meet the Acharyashree. They came in and paid obeisance at the feet of the Acharyashree, and enquired about his health and welfare. They were also blessed by the darshana of the other *Munis* present. But they did not find *Muni Sthulabhadra* anywhere around. When they went to the *Gurudev*, and politely asked him, he ordered, “Go! *Muni Sthulabhadra* is meditating in a cave on the mountain near here. Go and see him!” Both the *Sadhvis*, started on the trail towards the mountain, carrying in their joy-filled hearts, their long cherished desire.

There, the *Muni* had just come out of his trance. The resulting train of thoughts which had stabilised in his Soul, began to explore the external material world and the *Muni* with his extra sensory powers managed to see that two of his colleagues from yesteryears were coming up to see him. The feeling of affection lying in some corner in him began to throb and the *Muni* made a mistake. He had looked down from the pinnacle that he had

reached. An ego that he had attained so many *labdhis* began to rise deep within him, and the *chadmasta dasha* had played its part.

When the *Sadhvis* had reached the mountainous terrain, they searched in the direction told by the *Gurudev* and found the cave. But instead of finding the meditating *Sadhu* there, they found a full grown lion. Ferocious looking with eyes that seemed to be burning with anger. The lion was at the mouth of the cave. The *Sadhvis* were perturbed and stepped back. They were gripped by fear. The cave seemed to be the right one, but there was no *Muni* but a lion in it. Apparently some mishap must have occurred. The *Muni* must have fallen prey to the lion. So thinking both the *Sadhvis* turned back, their hearts heavy with fear, sadness, hopelessness and sorrow, and slowly trudged back to the *Gurudev's* feet.

“*Gurudev!* We found a wild lion in the place of the *Muni!* Where could the *Muni* be? What could have happened?” they cried out. The *Gurudev* pacified the *Sadhvis* saying, “*Devanupriye!* The *Muni* is very much there. It was the *Muni* himself. It was not the lion, but the *Sadhaka*. But he had slipped. The affection for you and the pride of his achievements were responsible for his fall.”

And then the *Gurudev* was himself sad. The momentary ineptitude shown by his best disciple had arrested the widening horizon of the *Jinashasan*. Anticipating the impending storm, *Gurudev* was very perturbed. In due course of time, *Muni Sthulabhadra* came in. Paying obeisance at the feet of the *Guru*, he rendered the account of his achievements. The straight-forward disciple also told how he had used his *labdhi*. There were no secrets. But the *Gurudev* went into a poignant silence.

Later when *Sthulibhadra* prayed for more knowledge at the feet of the *Guru*, the *Guru* said, “Son! There is now a hole in the

vessel, it cannot hold anything.” That was it! The flow of knowledge pertaining to the tenth *purva* was stopped. It went no further. Brothers! History proclaims that *Shri Sthulibhadra Muni* was the last *Dasha Purvadhari*. There has not been a *Purvadhari* with more knowledge after that.

Look! An eligible - *patra* - *jiva*, does attain powers through devoted practice, but if those *labdhis* are used in a selfish moment, then it does not take long for the *patra* to break. How very alert the soul has to be! Once eligibility is attained, in order to retain it, it becomes necessary to be alert that not a single wayward step is taken. If the earthen pot, after it emerges from the kiln, is carelessly thrown around, it is bound to develop cracks. How essential it is to handle it carefully! Well! It is the same with this *Atma*’s eligibility for *atmartha*; you cannot afford to be negligent either before or after it is ready.

Muni Sthulibhadra had a natural clash with his ego, and he had to forego the *Purva Jnana* beyond the tenth *Purva*. A minor outburst of the mind gave history a different turn! Brothers! *Prabhu* has allowed the *Labdhidhari Munis* to use their *labdhis* only when they need to safeguard the *Dharma*. Only under such adverse circumstances does the *Muni* ward off the imminent danger on the *Dharma* through his *labdhi*, not otherwise.

The eligibility in the life of *Sthulibhadra* gave him a lot, he earned a lot and the arising of the stored Karma brought a defect in his eligibility and put a period to his achievements.

Let us think, keeping in view both these situations, that the unparalleled ability of the disciple opens the gates of the *Guru*’s heart. And the flood of *Jnana* gushes into the heart of the disciple. A lamp lights another lamp. A link gets tied to another. And this is the way our knowledge of the *Agamas* reaches us.

It is for this reason that *Srimadji* too has tried to tell us what he had to say through the dialogue of *Guru - Shishya*. As a result

we have this wonderful *Shastra* with us today. Just as the curiosity of *Ganadhar* Gautam about the principles fed the curiosity of the entire congregation around *Bhagawan* Mahaveer, and as a result we have the tradition of the *Agamas*. In the same way, *Srimadji* has offered us this *Shastra* on account of the curiosity of his eligible devotee - shishya *Shri Soubhagyabhai*, in which beyond this point, the six *padas* will be described.

The other thing is that, when *Sthulibhadra Muni* erred a little, his progress stopped. Now, we have already been errant and if we were to err more, what would be our fate? It is difficult to imagine. If somebody who has progressed so far could also err, then we are more likely to err, and as such we need to be more alert. We need to learn acquiring eligibility looking at *Sthulibhadra's* eligibility and looking at his shortcoming, learn to save ourselves from it.

Brothers! In '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*', what is to be mainly described, are the six *padas*, which we shall do hence forth. But *Srimadji* has built up a background - fundamentals through 42 *Gathas*, so that all would become able to understand these *padas*. It is most essential that the fundamentals are clear. Only on a clear background can clear lines be engraved. We have to engrave the picture of a complete man - *purna purush* - on the *Atma* taking one line at a time. Hence, first of all let us make our background plain and clear.

Soul exists . . .

The pursuit of the three gems is for attaining *Moksa*. The *jiva* who performs this devoted practice becomes liberated from all the ties of the material world forever.

This same analysis has been done in the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*'. In the prologue, after stating the *Sadguru*'s greatness and the need to avoid being wayward, the characteristics of *Matarthis* to avoid *matartha* and the characteristics of *Atmarthi* to attain *atmartha* have been related. Now it comes to the main substance. The six *padas*, to explain which this *Shastra* has been composed, are all mentioned in but one *Gatha* -

‘आत्मा छे’, ‘ते नित्य छे’, ‘छे कर्ता निजकर्म’ ,
‘छे भोक्ता’, वळी ‘मोक्ष छे’, ‘मोक्ष उपाय सुधर्म’ ४३

The first *pada* - '*Atma* is there'. Why was this taken as first? Unless the existence of *Atma* is accepted, there will be no value to the pursuit. Since there is *Atma*, there is its pursuit! If there were no *Atma*, then for whom should there be a devoted practice? Hence, first of all there needs to be the belief that *Atma* is there.

A majority of people are unwilling to accept the *Atma*. Among them, the human who accepts the powers of the material world to be everything, who is blinking under the glaring influence of science, does not believe in the existence of *Atma*. Where there is no faith in the existence itself, there all questions about the *Atma* become meaningless.

The scriptures mention the case of King Pardesi. He would not hesitate in sinning for he firmly believed that *Atma* did not exist at all. Since there is no *Atma*, there can be no *papa - punya*, and in the absence of *papa - punya* there can be no attainment of heaven or hell; thus being totally atheistic he was fully immersed in the world of sin. Moreover, he was inquisitive, and so to prove that what he believed was true he had tried various ways to search

for the *Atma* in the human body. He buried a convict awaiting death sentence in an air-tight chamber and tried to observe how his *jiva* came out of it. But there was no breach in the chamber and yet they found the convict had died. Similarly, another convict was first weighed and then hanged to death, and weighed again. Both weights recorded were same. So it was proved there too, that *Atma* was non-existent. Had there been an *Atma*, the weight of the body should have reduced after the *Atma* left it. But the weight did not reduce. A third convict's body was cut to innumerable pieces and a search was mounted for *atma* in every piece; but they could not find *atma* in any piece.

Thus, through all his efforts the King proved that there was no such substance as *Atma* in the body. His belief was all the more stronger now. Since he did not believe in sin and the fruit of sin, his life came to be spent in sinful activity.

However, later he came to realise and began to believe in the existence of *Atma*. His life underwent a change and he embarked on the path of devoted practice. He was successful in attaining equanimity - *samata* yoga. Here, the methods adopted by King Pardesi were certainly not agreeable, but his curiosity for knowing the substance of *Atma* is indeed remarkable and praiseworthy.

In our country, there used to be a sect called Charvak. Today it does not exist as a sect. The people of that sect did not believe in the existence of *Atma*. 'This is the first and last life. There is no rebirth, no *papa* - *punya*, no heaven or hell. There is no karma, no fruit of karma, nothing at all. And hence, there is no sense in the practice of dharma in the name of *atma*. Just live in enjoyment, as long as you live. Enjoy even if you have to borrow for it. You need wealth to enjoy the material pleasures of this life. If you do not have wealth, borrow it, and if you do not find it that way, then plunder it and indulge in bhoga. How can you enjoy after the end of the life?'

The viewpoint of people who do not believe in the existence of *atma* becomes purely materialistic. There is nothing left in the name of devoted practice. Hence by saying, “*Atma* exists”, Srimadji has expressed his faith in the existence of *Atma*. Moreover, it is not that ‘if there is *atma* it is or might be somewhere in the universe’. But that ‘I am the *atma*’, my existence is in the form of *atma*, not in body form; ‘I am the *atma* alone’ absolutely independent of the body - that such firm belief should develop, that which is in energy form should manifest itself in character, and a complete personal faith in the true principle should awaken - hence this first *pada*.

The second *pada* - ‘it is perpetual’. *Atma* has an existence and it is a substance with perpetual existence. It is a permanent substance, not given to decay. One who believes the body itself to be *atma*, and treats the loss of the body as the loss of the soul - has been called ‘*anatmavadi*’ - non-believer in the soul and one who believes *atma* to be a totally independent substance is an ‘*atmavadi*’.

Both *atmavadi* and *anatmavadi* do accept the existence of life - *chetan*. But *atmavadi* accepts the perpetual existence of the *chetan*, while *anatmavadi* merely acknowledges the existence.

The spirit - *atma* never dies. It is indestructible. The body is inanimate, it gets destroyed. Body is merely a transition of the inanimate and transition is never stable. What transforms i.e. changes every moment, is transitory. Body is also transitory and hence it is destructible. *Atma* is an independent substance and its quality is indestructible and hence *atma* is permanent. Further, *atma* is in the form of energy. Science too has proved that energy cannot be destroyed.

Since *atma* is everlasting there is a scope of *Moksa*. *Moksa* is remaining in a state of perpetual bliss for infinite time. If *atma*

were to be destructible, then there could not have been a permanent blissful state for it. Thus only with the awakening of faith that *atma* is perpetual will the pursuit of *Moksa* have some meaning.

The third *pada* is '*atma* is a doer'. And a sufferer of the fruit of karma. It is a doer of karma. It is a doer of its own karma. It does the karma itself and suffers its fruits by itself. One does not have to suffer for the karmas of others. Further, nobody orders karma to be done. The self does the karma on account of attachment - aversion - ignorance.

Here the mention is made only broadly from the view of *Vyavahar naya*. Let us consider later what the doer and sufferer status of *atma* really means.

The fifth *pada* says, '*atma* has a *moksa*'. It has become the doer of karma, also the sufferer. But after this, *atma* also holds the ability to liberate itself from everything. If the *atma* puts in an effort, it can cut through the bonds and attain *Moksa*. There are other faiths who believe that in the universe there is only one Supreme Power - *Brahma Tattva*, and that no jiva can ever reach the state of that Supreme Soul. But under the Jain practice the ultimate transition occurs into the Supreme substance.

However sinful and degraded a jiva may be, but if he awakens and if he manages to put in a true effort, he can get totally liberated from this material world and transit into the Siddha form. This is the speciality of the Jain tradition. Therefore, the most important *pada* in this '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' is this fifth one. If it is understood with faith that *atma* has a *Moksa*, then the jiva can make an effort in that direction.

Moreover, here, in the Jain tradition, once *Moksa* is attained, there is no need to be reborn. The *atma* has to remain there in a permanent state for eternity, enjoying the bliss of its own true natural form. While many religious traditions believe that after

Moksa is attained, the *jiva* has to be reborn into this material world for suffering the miseries. This belief discourages a *jiva* from putting in a proper effort. 'If, in spite of a tremendous effort, after going through numerous adversities, the liberation that is attainable is only temporary, and if there is again going to be the same wandering, then of what good is this liberation? One might as well remain where one is. Let us enjoy and go through the births and deaths!'

Brothers! The concept of liberation in the Jain tradition is based on the path indicated by the omniscient, *Veetaraag* Supreme Soul. As such there is no scope for doubt in it and it is the ideal path to pursue. Here the effort applied in the field of the *atma* never goes waste. As and how the effort is applied, it takes one closer to *Moksa*. This belief itself brings an awakening in the *jiva*, inspires an effort and ultimately the *jiva* attains *Moksa*.

The last *pada* is 'the means to *Moksa* is *sudharma*'. When the faith in all the five *padas* is awakened in the *atma*, the last *pada* now says, 'There is *Moksa*, the *jiva* can get liberated, so there must be the means to do it'. With what effort can the *jiva* attain *Moksa*? So the simple reasoning here is that if the *jiva* is in bondage, then he has a chance to reach *Moksa*. So to attain *Moksa*, the bonds have to be snapped, and the way of snapping those bonds is the medium to *Moksa*. The path to *Moksa*. In the *Gatha* the means to *Moksa* have been stated as '*sudharma*'. '*Sudharma*' is the dharma of the self. The pure true form of the *atma*, the feeling of *jnata - drsta* - knowing - seeing, is itself the *dharma* of the self. If one has abandoned the *dharma* of the self and indulged in attachment and aversion, that is the bondage. If one goes in the opposite direction he gets free from the bonds, gets liberated.

There is a fable among the ones in Panchatantra. There were many wild animals in a large jungle. Among them was the king of the jungle - Lion, reigning with terror. Once he started in search

of prey. He wandered a lot but could not catch any prey. The pangs of hunger were getting stronger in the stomach. The Lion was in agony. About that time he saw a mouse. A beast like Lion does not generally kill such tiny creatures. They too have a pride of their own. Since they are strong themselves, they prefer to meet their match. But what to do? Hunger was burning in the stomach.

He raised his paw to kill the mouse. But the tiny mouse was very wise. He spoke in a pleading tone, “O King of the Jungle! What will you get by killing me? This tiny body of mine is not going to meet your hunger. Let me go!” But the Lion could not bear the hunger. He said, “No! I am going to kill you.” But the mouse appealed, “O King of the Jungle! Do let me go, I can be of some use to you some day!” The Lion thought, “Of what good will this tiny thing be to me?” And so the so called cruel Lion took pity of the mouse and let him go.

The mouse became a friend of the Lion. Every day, he would come and play a little with the Lion and go away. So it was when he came one day and found the Lion stuck in a net, looking pathetic. The more the Lion tried to escape the net, the more entangled he got. The mouse asked, “What is this? Who did this to you? Aha! You are only stuck in the net! Not to worry, I shall get you free!” And then the mouse set about biting the net and slowly cut through it. He got the Lion free! That tiny mouse had got a great beast - the King of the Jungle - freed!

Brothers! Think! Who cut the net? The sharpness of the mouse’s teeth. *Sudharma* - *Swadharma* - does much the same thing by freeing the *atmas* stuck in the bonds of material world. There is no tool sharper than *Swadharma*.

And the other thing - the mouse had affection for the Lion. That feeling of affection made him take up the task. Brothers! We have to free our own *atma*, so let us love our *atma*. We have

showered a lot of affection on other worldly *jivas* but not loved the self. If we begin to love ourselves how long before we set ourselves free! In the Acharanga Sutra it is said -

पुरिसा तुममेव तुमं पित्तं, किं बहिया पित्तं पिच्छसि ?

O Soul! You are your own friend. Why do you desire a friend from outward? If the *atma* trudges the good path, awakens the self, becomes conscious of the self, experiences the bliss of the self, then it is a friend of itself. Treading on the true path the soul reaches the goal of *Moksa*.

So Brothers! Let us love the *atma*, the self, and cut our own bonds.

Here the six *padas* were dealt with in brief. Henceforth, the eligible disciple raises doubts about one *pada* after another at a time and the *Sadguru*, with great lover, offers the clarifications in a tone steeped in the essence of experience.

But before that the next *Gatha* deals with how these six *padas* correlate with the other faiths of our country.

. . . Six faiths there are,

The pursuit of the three gems makes the *atma* pure and enlightened. The *atma* which had got stained from infinite time becomes clean. And that *is* the accomplishment - *siddhi*. There are no magical powers - *labdhis* to be acquired by attaining *siddhi* on the spiritual path. The fundamental true form of the *atma* is the goal to be reached.

Whatever we are today, is not the reality, it is the acquired unreal form. However well-to-do, powerful one may be, one may well carry the label of a Rich Lord, or may have attained a prestigious status in the society, it is all unreal. It is not your true form, it is not the real state. All this has been acquired several times. There is nothing new to it. What you have acquired, is also acquired by many other *jivas* in the universe. Whatever happiness or sorrow you found, whatever progress or decline you made, all that keeps happening and has happened in the sequence of the world. But whatever that could not be achieved in the state of the soul, doing that is called devoted practice - *aradhana*.

The analysis of the six *padas* done in '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' is only to explain the pertinence of this *aradhana*. This analysis is quite similar to the principles put forth by other faiths in India. Srimadji says -

षट्स्थानक संक्षेपमां, षट्दर्शनं षण तेह,
समजावा परमार्थने, कहां ज्ञानीए एह ४४

All the postulates considered by the six faiths of Bharat, get accommodated under these six *padas*. Whatever is considered keeping *atma* as the centre, cannot be anything other than these six *padas*. Hence Srimadji says that in analysing these six *padas*, we will acquire the knowledge of the six *darshanas* - faiths.

In Bharat there are six prominent faiths. They are - 1. *Vedanta*, 2. *Jain*, 3. *Sankhya*, 4. *Yoga*, 5. *Naiyayika*, and 6. *Bouddha*.

All faiths other than the Jain are *ekantavadi*. While the Jain faith is *anekantavadi*. Looking at a postulate from only one angle is *ekantavada* while taking a view from various angles is *anekantavada*. There are infinite possibilities in each substance. Evaluating a substance by considering all its possibilities is *anekanta*. Assigning any substance a particular label without considering its various qualities amounts to doing injustice to it. But saying that in this aspect it is so-and-so and in the other aspect it is so-and-so brings forth the complete form of the substance. It is necessary to view a substance in as many angles as there are to it. It is the speciality of Jain philosophers that they look at every substance from the viewpoints of *dravya*, *kshetra*, *kala*, *bhava* and simultaneously have a regard for the aspects of *asti* 'is' and *nasti* 'is not'.

This concept of *anekanta* is not limited to discussions of the scriptures but proves equally true even in the practical fields of life. Like the definitions of big and small, tall and short, good and bad are all relative. If there are two tables, one three feet high and the other five feet high, the latter is then taller than the former. But when another table that is eight feet high is placed next to the five feet high table, the latter becomes the shorter one although earlier it seemed taller. So the table in the middle has both tallness and shortness in it. In one table itself, there appear two contradictory qualities. Normally it would seem that what is tall is tall and what is short is short. How can there be both in one? But in practice this is what happens. Everybody knows about it and nobody objects to it. The *anekanta* concept itself is that two seemingly contradictory qualities are identified in one substance and yet they coexist without any protestation.

When Jain philosophy considers the concepts of other faiths, keeping this view in consideration, they become acceptable even in the Jain view. The great scholar Shri Haribhadrashurishwarji, in his treatise '*Shaddarshan Samuccaya*', while discussing all the six philosophies in an impartial manner, has mentioned the concepts of those respective faiths.

Many *Vedanta* and *Sankhya* followers consider that *atma* is free, it is impeccable. *Atma* cannot ever be in bondage. There is no possibility of bonds in it. *Atma* is pure *brahma*. This belief of theirs is due to the *ekanta* view. Jain *darshan* through its *niscaya naya* believes *atma* to be *shuddha*, *buddha* and *nirlep*. There is no stain on its true pure form, no bondage. So this belief of *Vedanta* and *Sankhya* is acceptable to Jain philosophy through *niscaya naya*. But beyond that the Jain philosophy through the view of *vyavahar naya* believes *atma* to be the doer of karmas and the sufferer too. Therefore, *atma* gets bonded as well as tainted.

The Yoga philosophers do not believe in a multitude of *atmas*; they say there is only one soul in the entire universe. Just as there is only one Moon in the sky which reflects in the many vessels containing water and appears to be many, the seemingly many *atmas* in various bodies are only the images of the Universal *Atma*. This concept of *ekanta* has been accepted by the Jain philosophy from the viewpoint of the true form of *atma*. It has been said in the scriptures that '*atma* is one'. Jain philosophy believes in the existence of infinite number of *atmas* in the Universe. Yet when it is said that '*atma* is one' the view is of the fundamental true form of the *atma*. Whether it is the *atma* of a *Siddha* or of any big or small creature in the world, the fundamental true form of all *atmas* is identical. The qualities of *astitva*, *vastutva*, *nityatva*, *prameyatva*, *agurulaghutva* etc. are there in all *jivas*. Therefore, from the view of *niscaya naya*, all *atmas* are one in the *jiva* form. But beyond that there is the

independent existence of all *atmas* and hence the Jain philosophy also accepts the being of an infinite multitude of *atmas*.

The *Yoga-naiyayikas* consider Ishwar to be the Creator of the Universe. The Jain tradition does not believe that any one Ishwar created this Universe, but they believe the soul itself to be the Supreme Soul. All *jivas* have created their own inner and outer material world. It is accepted that whatever and however the self is, whatever he suffers, whatever he has acquired, all that is due to the external manifestation of the transition of the substance of *atma* lying within. Therefore, the infinite number of *atmas* of the world have created an infinite world and all those *atmas* being in the form of *Parmatma* - supreme soul, they can be called Ishwar. This view matches with that of the *naiyayikas*. Moreover, the inanimate world is without beginning or end; it is not created when somebody makes it. Jain philosophy believes the world to be self-made.

The Buddhists do not accept the eternity - *nityatva* - of *atma* and consider it to be impermanent. They say that all the substances of the world are but impermanent. No substance can remain for a period longer than a moment. Every moment the substance gets destroyed and every moment created again. Thus along with all substances *atma* is an impermanent matter. Jain philosophy, from one viewpoint, also believes that the *atma* is impermanent. This is owing to its *anekant* concept. The *atma* is eternal from the view of the substance of its fundamental form but all the substances that are there are all transient. The transition due to the effect of every moment keeps happening. Besides, the transition is always momentary, hence it is decadent. What does not remain stable is transition. Since *atma* is a substance, transitions develop and decay in the *atma* too. From this viewpoint *atma* is impermanent. Thus from the viewpoint of transition the concept of the Buddhists is acceptable to Jain

philosophy. From the viewpoint of *dravya* - substance - Jain philosophy believes that *atma* is eternal.

The Naiyayikas believe *atma* to be *kutastha nitya* - unchangingly eternal, that is, in which there will never be any change. It will remain as it is forever. But Jain philosophy, even after accepting the eternal nature of the *atma* according to *niscaya naya*, also believes *atma* to be impermanent and transitory according to *vyavahara naya*. These transitions are into both natural and affected disposition.

Consider this very important question in depth! We are humans - what is that? We have heard ever so often that the human life is the most superior and most difficult to attain. The belief that being born as humans is a great thing, is strongly embedded in our minds. But I say human life is the result of the aberration of the *atma*. Therefore, being born human is not the best thing! Would you accept this statement? Brothers! It does sound startling! 'What is this? All scriptures have said that human life is the best and how come you say it is not?' Of course, compared to the life forms in *deva*, *naraka* or *tiryancha gatis*, the human life may be better, but the *atma* has to wander through the births only when it is tainted and affected by karma. And the human form of life is also a part of this wandering, hence it is an aberration. *Atma*, in its own true form is neither human, nor *deva*, *naraki* or *pashu*. It is but the soul in the pure eternal form. Then how can an aberration be termed superior? Therefore, the human life form which seems superior from one view, is an aberration from another. But yes, this was only the matter of the affected disposition of the *atma*. In spite of this, from the *vyavaharik* viewpoint it is a fact that human life form is superior.

The Naiyayikas believe the *atma* to be eternal, which is acceptable from the viewpoint of the supreme pure *niscaya naya*.

So the Jain philosophy accepts various faiths from various viewpoints, and there lies the achievement of its *anekantavada*, the proof of its pertinence. And therefore, the other faiths of India get accommodated in this broad view of the Jain philosophy. The *Syadvada* style of Jain philosophy holds the unique ability of accepting the principles acceptable to other faiths. In the same way, beyond the acceptance of the other faiths, Jain philosophy also goes much deeper into the principles and brings out other truths about them. It is therefore, that the great benevolent yogi Anandghanji Maharaj, who had forayed deep into all *darshanas* in addition to Jain *darshan*, strikes a balance of the six *darshanas* with the help of the philosophy put forth by the *Veetaraag* -

षड्दर्शनं जिन अंगं भणीजे, न्यास षडंग जो साथे रे
नमि जिनवरना चरण उपासक, षड्दर्शन आराधे रे . . . २

The six *Darshanas* - Sankhya, yoga, Bouddha, Jain etc. - are parts of the *Veetaraag* Supreme Soul. The installation of these six parts must be done with a proper understanding. Those who are the followers of the *Veetaraag* Prabhu are the true devotees of the six faiths. The first among them is -

जिन सुर पादप पाय बखानो, सांख्ययोग दोय भेदे रे
आतम सत्ता विवरण करतां, लहो दुग अंग अखेदे रे . . . २

Sankhya and Yoga *darshanas* are like the two legs or the fundamentals of the Jain *darshana* that is in the form of Jineshwar Bhagawan. Both those *darshanas* accept the supremacy of the soul and are hence without sorrow. We should accept these two philosophies.

As we discussed earlier, both *Sankhya* and *Yoga Darshanas* believe in the existence of *atma*. They believe infinite *atmas* to be all separate. They also believe that the *atma* is pure, inert and non-sufferer. Jain *darshan*, while believing in the eternal power of the *atmas*, also accepts their separate identity. From *niscaya naya* point of view, Jain *darshan* also accepts *atma* to be inert

and non-sufferer. Thus Sankhya and Yoga support the beliefs of Jain philosophy. The weight of the body rests upon the legs. The tree of the body is standing upon the roots of legs. Only if the legs are strong will the body-tree be able to stand. Both these philosophies are very close to Jain philosophy from the viewpoint of *Niscaya naya* and hence they have been called the legs of the Jain philosophy.

भेद-अभेद-सुगत-मीमांसक, जिनवर दोय कर भारी रे
लोकालोक आलम्बन भजिये, गुरुमुखयी अवधारी रे . . . ३

Sugata i.e. *Bouddhas* who believe all *atmas* to be separate and *Mimamsakas* who believe all *atmas* to be one, are the two arms of the Jineshwar. They seem to form the support for *loka* and *aloka*. These can be understood only in the refuge of the Guru.

Jain *darshan* from the view of *dravyastika naya* believes all *atmas* to be one, i.e., considering the true form all *atmas* are alike. And from the view of *paryayastika naya* believes all *atmas* to be separate. The transitions of all those are different at different times. From the Jain philosophy's view, the *Mimamsaka Darshan* is *dravyastika nayavadi* and the *Bouddha darshan* is *paryayastika nayavadi*.

All the substances in this *loka - aloka* can be thoroughly understood with the help of these two *nayas*. Two hands that are on the body are more active, they put in more effort. They rove over the entire body and do all things for the body. Many other activities are carried out by the hands. In just the same way, the aforesaid two *nayas* enlighten us fully about all substances. Indeed, these two *darshanas* are acceptable to Jain philosophy from the viewpoint of one *naya* each.

लोकायतिक कूख, जिनवरनी, अंशविचार जो कीजे रे,
तत्त्व विचार सुधारस धारा, गुरुगम-विण किम पीजे रे . . . ४

The atheistic Charvak *darshan* is like the stomach of Jineshwar *deva*, but from one aspect alone. The nectar of philosophical thought cannot be tasted without surrendering to the Guru.

We have learnt earlier that Charvak *darshan* does not accept *atma* etc. How can such an atheistic *darshan* be equated with Jineshwar *deva*'s stomach? The reply to this is - Jain *darshan* accepts five proofs - *pramanas*. Before arriving at an inference about any substance, it adopts various methods of evaluation. Among them - 1. *Pratyaksha*, 2. *Parokhsa*, 3. *Agama*, 4. *Anuman*, and 5. *Upmana*, are the five proofs that the Jain philosophers apply while arriving at any conclusion. The Charvak followers accept but one of these, namely the Sensory Direct Proof. That is, they accept only a minor portion of the Jain concepts. From this view, they are similar to Jain philosophy.

Whatever you pour into the stomach, it does not retain anything with it and gives away everything to the body. In the same way, The Charvak followers have retained only one aspect of the philosophy and given up all the rest. Hence, they have been taken as one part of the stomach of Jineshwar *deva*. And lastly -

जैन जिनेश्वर उत्तम अंग, अन्तरंग - बहिरंगे रे

अक्षर - न्यास घरा आराधक, आराधे घरी संगे रे . . . ५

Jain *darshan* has been equated with the most superior part of the body, i.e. the head, both internally and externally. An *aradhaka jiva* places the teachings of this philosophy in his mind and practises devotedly along with his Guru.

It is not as if Shri Anandghanji Maharaj has termed Jain *darshan* as the most superior part because he was a Jain. But Jain *darshan* is an *anekantavadi* philosophy. It considers all things from all angles. In considering all viewpoints, it absorbs

other thought processes also within itself. It is a philosophy that absorbs truth.

The position of the head is topmost in the body, it is superior. The head alone operates all other parts and limbs of the body. It holds the body in rein. If the head is upset everything gets upset. In the same way, Jain *Darshan* is not unilateral, but *anekantavadi* - multilateral. It equates and then accepts all philosophies after looking at them with an impartial viewpoint. Jain *darshan* does not insist stubbornly upon 'we alone have the truth'. But there is an acceptance of all possibilities. It is therefore, that it has received the highest position. So from this view, striking down any one philosophy is like striking down the organs or limbs of the Jineshwar. It is for this reason that no *mumukshu atma* ever strikes down any *darshan*.

Here we have considered very briefly how the six *darshanas* get accommodated into Jain *darshan*. For this is a subject of philosophy. It can demand a very detailed analysis. But there is no point in doing that here. It is just to indicate the generosity, the magnanimity with which Jain *darshan* accepts other philosophies. Anandghanji Maharaj concludes -

जिनवरमां सघळा दर्शन छे, दर्शनि जिनवर भजना रे,
सागरमां सघळी तटिनी सही, तटिनीमां सागर भजना रे . . . ६

In Jineshwar, so to say in *Jinadarshan*, all *darshanas* get encompassed. The various *darshanas* may or may not encompass *Jinadarshan*. Like the ocean where all rivers get absorbed, but the river may or may not accommodate the ocean.

Rivers get merged to unite with the ocean. They become part of it. While the ocean might enter into the estuary of a river only at a very high tide, not otherwise.

Thus Anandghanji Maharaj, by accommodating six *darshanas* into Jineshwar's *darshana*, has introduced us to the generosity of Jina *darshana*.

Acharya Shri Siddhasena Divakar of the 4th or 5th century of the Vikram era, has mentioned in his treatise called 'Sanmati Prakaran' that one who believes in the six *padas* of 'atma exists' etc., is a *samakiti* and one who does not is a *mithyatvi*. Thus the concept of these six *padas* has been coming along from the very beginning. We had earlier noted that *Acharya Haribhadradasurishwarji* too had analysed these six *padas*.

Here, many would be confronted with the doubt that *Srimadji* was a householder, then how can the *shastra* composed by him be accepted? But *Srimadji* has merely explained to us in simple words what the great *sadhaka* sages *Shri Siddhasena Divakar* and *Shri Haribhadradasurishwarji Maharaj* have mentioned earlier. He has not said anything of his own. Therefore, there is no reason why we should not accept this *shastra*. He proved the attainment of these six *padas* through his own practice and that is why he came to be known as *Prayogaveer*.

Indeed these six *padas* are for the person interested in knowing the *paramartha* - supreme essence. The sages have told these for the benefit of those in whom the yearning for *paramartha* has arisen, and they are to be understood with an impartial view. Brothers! Let us also be interested in *paramartha* within ourselves. Our self should swell with such curiosity that the *jiva* who has until now only involved with the *swartha* - self-conceit of the material world but has not been inspired to go beyond it into the *paramartha*, should manage to come out of the narrow shell of *swartha* and march towards the great world of *paramartha*, now that there is an opportunity of such *satsang* and *satshravan*.

Having established this background, *Srimadji* now proceeds to analyse the six *padas* of *atma*. If we listen to them and bring them into our belief, we can make the necessary effort towards attaining *Moksa*. So it continues . . .

... there is no separate existence!

Whoever pursued the three gems, managed to attain *siddhi*. There cannot be *siddhi* without *sadhana* - devoted practice. *Sadhana* has such powers that it burns the infinite number of karmas on the soul and purifies it altogether.

Aradhaka jiva has a firm belief in the existence of *atma*. Here the *atmarthi* has several doubts about the existence of *atma*. He is eligible and curious. Since he is anxious to know the truth, he humbly and simply places his doubt before the Guru. He requests the Guru to clarify his doubts. The *atmarthi* asks -

नथी दृष्टिमां आवतो, नथी जणातुं रूप,
बीजो षण अनुभव नहीं, तेथी न जीवस्वरूप ४५

The disciple says : “*Gurudev!* You are always explaining about the *atma*. But how can one accept the *atma*? For *atma* is not visible to the eyes. There is no form, shape or color visible. In the same way, *atma* cannot be experienced with any of the senses.”

This doubt is but natural. Until now we have only known and seen only such substances as can be seen with the eyes. The entire world spread around us can be seen with the eyes. There is no substance known, which can be seen without the eyes. Therefore, only that which can be seen with the eyes is believable, and nothing else. Indeed, many qualities of many substances can be experienced through the other senses.

Word cannot be seen with the eyes, it can be heard through the ears. Of course! If the word is written down, it can be read and understood. But any spoken word has to be heard with the ears. So the knowledge of words occurs through the ears. Either fragrance or stench cannot be known by seeing or hearing. But can be understood if it is experienced through the nose. So smell can be experienced through the nose. If there is any substance lying before you, you may see it with the eyes or smell it with the nose. But the taste that it carries can be experienced only

with the tongue. Unless it is kept on the tongue, its taste cannot be understood.. So taste can be known through the tongue. And touch, weight, heat, cold etc., cannot be experienced through any other senses. Only when these substances come into contact with the skin, can they be felt. There is wind, but it cannot be seen or heard. Only when it touches our body do we realise whether it is hot air or a cool breeze blowing.

Thus the substances available in the world can be known with the senses. Many things are understood with the mind and we learn all about the world with the help of these powers. But there is no form of *atma* that is visible. *Atma* cannot be heard, it does not have a smell, it is not possible to place it on the tongue and taste it and neither can it be understood through touch. In the same way, whatever thinking we may do with this mind, *atma* does not come in the clutches of the mind. Thus *atma* is not liable to be experienced either through the senses or through the mind. *Atma* has not been identified with any means until now. Therefore it seems as if there is no separate existence of a substance by name *atma*. And hence,

बीजो पण अनुभव नहीं, तेथी न जीवस्वरूप ४५

But the *Shishya* is respectful. He remains within the say of his *Gurudev*. Therefore, he again asks the *Gurudev*, “I have never found *atma* anywhere, but you say ‘*atma* exists’, so then whom do I take as *atma*? This is another doubt in my mind :

अथवा देह ज आत्मा, अथवा इंद्रिय प्राण,
मिथ्या जुदो मानवो, नहि जुदुं एंघाण ४६

‘*Gurudev*! What is the harm if we believe this body itself to be *atma*? Where is the need to believe any *atma* that is separate from the body? For if a *jiva* is living, it is with this body. Whatever activities and feelings of joy or sorrow occur, they are experienced as happening in the body. Talking, walking, roaming, eating, drinking and all such activities are done by the body itself.’ The

shishya is unaware of extra sensory - *atindriya* feelings. Since he is living like any common man in the experience of the gross feelings of the senses and the mind, he is being inspired to believe the senses etc., to be *atma* and has raised these questions. Yet, the fact that he is desirous of acquiring the extra sensory knowledge - *atindriya jnana* - is apparent from his curiosity.

Indeed, have we seen anybody's *atma* anywhere? What we call as *jiva* or *atma* is actually addressing his body. We see a human, animal, bird or insect living and moving about, and we say this is a *jiva*. This is only out of belief. But we have only seen the body, not the *atma*; we accept body itself as the *atma*.

If not so then we take the senses to be *atma*. You say that the characteristic of *atma* is knowledge, and isn't the knowledge of all things in the world acquired through the senses? Whichever sense fails, the knowledge pertaining to its subject is not gained. If a man loses his eyes, then the knowledge of things seen through the eyes is also terminated. If the ears stop hearing, then the knowledge of sound cannot be gained. Thus whichever sense fails, the knowledge pertaining to its subject is not gained. And *jnana* is the characteristic of *atma*, hence senses - *indriyas* - are the *atma*.

Well, if we do not treat the body or the senses to be *atma*, then at least the breathing can be believed to be *atma*. For a sick person may lose control on all his senses. He may even lose consciousness. Yet so long as he continues to inhale and exhale, we believe he is living. Therefore, breathing is the indication of his life. So it should not be incorrect to consider breathing as *atma*.

We are being stubborn in trying to assume something other than these three. For body, senses and life are but the three options. There can be no indication other than these of the existence of *atma*. Therefore, it is only prudent to accept one of these three as *atma*.

Brothers! Here the disciple has expressed his doubts. The *Gurudev* will offer clarifications later. But do consider! How

curious the disciple is! How deep he has delved into the subject of *atma*! How much must he have contemplated! We have heard so many times, but have we ever thought? It has been said in the Agamas and we have heard from the *Gurudev*, so we believed that *atma* exists. But have we ever gone deep into the subject and thought, ‘What the agamas and the sages say is true. But when will I think about analysing, examining with my intellect and then reaffirm my belief?’? Even if this were true, if the concept were assimilated after contemplation, it would never budge from my faith. Faith then settles deep within, and ultimately you will truly experience it.

But what is our state? Whatever the sages say, is all truth. We do not even wait to ask the *Gurudev* what this means. If the sages have said it, it must be true! Indeed, what is there for us to think about? No, this will not do. We at least need a mental ground to know their implication, to understand the intention, aim and essence of what the sages say. Otherwise it is blind faith. Let me see, you are faced with some good orator who does not believe in the existence of *atma*, and he convinces you with logic that there is no such thing as *atma* in this world. His logic could be entirely overwhelming and he convinces you with strong arguments, would you not then accept that there is no *atma*? There is a great strength in logic. It can prove truth to be false and vice versa whenever desired.

Hence, Brothers! Like this inquisitive disciple, let us also go deep into the stated principles and contemplate. Only then can we understand the truth in its true form.

Here the inquisitive disciple could not experience the soul through the senses and the mind, so he said there is no soul, and if it does exist then we should take either body, senses or life as the soul. How can we accept the separate identity of something that has no existence apart from these three? After placing these doubts before the Guru, the disciple goes on to raise some more doubts in this regard. Let us look at them now . . .

... hence there is no atma!

The *jiva* in pursuit of the three-fold path is inquisitive. His urge to know the Self is forceful and he also puts in a tremendous effort on this path.

The *Atma* can be realised only when the amount of effort put in for the attainment of the self is more special than the amount of effort put in for the achievement of material things in the material world. We have already put in a lot of effort into the material world, now it is time to turn back from there. If you continue to put efforts on this same path, then you will not be left with much choice but to be born as crows and dogs.

You may have made tremendous material achievements but they are not going to be permanent after you get them. Be it the empire of an Emperor or the riches of the Lord Indra, but after an enjoyment for thousands or lakhs of years, there will be a time when these will go away from you. There may be many achievements of this material world, but they are all decaying in nature. They never belonged to anybody nor will they ever.

While the spiritual achievements, if they have been made in a proper way, will never leave once attained. But Brothers! The hunger for spirituality needs to be felt. You may have suffered from the pangs of a hungry stomach or hunger for wealth - prestige! You may have experienced the agitation on account of the hunger for passions of the senses and the mind!

But have you ever felt how the agitation of hunger for spirituality is like? Have you ever regretted not having attained spirituality? Has your life seemed worthless for not having attained it? Has the deficiency been felt? If you have experienced these feelings then know that the *jiva* is moving towards the eligibility of realising the Soul.

Srimadji calls only such *jiva* who is yearning for Self Realisation as *Atmarthi*. The *atmarthi* first attempts to know the Self after submitting to the *Gurudev*. Here the inquisitive disciple raises doubts about the soul. The disciple is a believer. He has raised the doubts only with an intention of further strengthening his beliefs about the Soul.

He says, 'Since the *Atma* cannot be apparent to the senses, there is no *Atma*. And if there is, it is to be believed as one of these three - body, sense or life. In the absence of any other indication, there is no separate existence of the *Atma*. Now in the same subject again, he raises a doubt in another form -

वळी जो आत्मा होय तो, जणाय ते नहि केम?

जणाय जो ते होय तो, घट पट आदि जेम ४७

Gurudev! If there is *atma* it has to be visible. All substances that exist are tangible. They can be felt. Thus if *atma* exists, it should also be tangible. Just as a pot - (घट) - or a cloth - (पट) -. Both these are visible. Here by referring to *ghata-pata* all the inanimate things of the world have been symbolically indicated. That is to say that all inanimate things of the world are tangible, for they exist. They have a form. They have the characteristics of colour, smell, taste, feel etc.

The same matter has been mentioned in our treatises on Logic. In the discussions on theism - (अस्तित्व) - and atheism - (नास्तित्व) - it has been said that a substance which has no existence anywhere in the world can never be seen. To understand this, the simile of '*Akashkusum*' has been offered. Just because '*Akashkusum*' does not exist, it cannot be seen. *Akashkusum* is the 'flower of the sky'. A flower can grow on a tree, a shrub or a vine, but where none of these exist, there in the sky, how can the flower alone grow? It is not there hence it is not tangible.

Here the disciple too says the same thing that the substances like *ghata-pata* can be seen because they exist, so should the

atma be seen if it exists. In today's scientific age, most people have such a thinking. They say, 'we will believe what we can see. We will not believe what we cannot see'. But they do not know that there are many things that cannot be seen by the eye yet they have to be accepted either with faith or through their effect.

There is an anecdote. Our past President Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was a great philosopher. He not only had a knowledge of the philosophies of India but had also studied world religions.

Once a group of students came to meet him and began a discussion on philosophy. Indian philosophies always have the aspect of Soul. If any philosophical topic were to be discussed, it would certainly involve the soul. There was a discussion on the Soul. One of the students said, "Sir, we do not believe in the soul at all! You say so many things about the Soul, but we would believe only if you could hold the *atma* in your hand and show us!"

"Brothers! That *atma* exists is a truth coming down the ages. Your believing or not believing does not wipe out the existence of *atma*. It is an eternal truth."

"No, Sir! We are not going to get cowed down by your eminence and accept your statement. Show us the *atma* in your hand and we will believe!"

"Okay, now tell me! Is there an intelligent student among you?"

"Oh yes! But why?"

"Look! That *atma* is a substance can be understood only by a very intelligent person."

"This fellow amongst us is very bright. He can understand any principle immediately. He always stands first in the class."

“Look, Brothers! I do not know this friend of yours. But I shall believe because you say so. So now do this. Remove his intellect and place on this table here, so that I can also remove my soul and place it next to it!”

“Whoa! What do you say, Sir! Is intellect something that you can remove from the head and keep somewhere? Or is it something that can be seen with the eye?”

“So what is it then? How can I know intellect?”

“Sir! It is something to be experienced. This friend of ours experiences it and as a result of his intellect we see his strengths. But intellect can never be removed or seen.”

“That’s it, my dear Children! I too have been saying that *atma* is a thing to be experienced. The self can experience it. And as a result of the *atma* being in the body, we can see the activity that occurs in the body. Talking, walking, eating, drinking, movement and all our life is the result of the *atma* being in the body. Do you understand? *Atma* is not something that should be pulled out and seen on your palm.”

And Brothers! The students realised and left. So that is to say that all things are not tangible to the senses. But the disciple has a doubt in his mind so he insists, ‘If the *atma* is visible like the *ghata-pata* then I would accept it. And with all the arguments that I have posed, *atma* is not proved. So now there is only one thing left to say in this regard -

माटे छे नहि आतमा, मिथ्या मोक्ष उपाय,
ए अंतर शंकातणो, समजावो सदुपाय ४८

O *Gurudev*! With all this logic I believe that *atma* does not exist. When *atma* itself is not there, then what *bandha* and what *Moksa*? And then what for the tremendous effort? If *atma* is there then it has a *bandha* and if there is a *bandha* - bondage

there has to be a resort to the solution of *Moksa* - liberation. But when there is no *atma* then there is nothing left to do now.

O Benevolent *Gurudev*! Who else but you can resolve this doubt that is in me? That is why I have come with this appeal at your feet that please resolve my doubt! The eligible disciple has an unwavering faith in the *Gurudev*. He believes in the *Gurudev*'s ability, that my *Gurudev* will not let any doubts linger in me.

The disciple is not stubborn to say, 'What I believe is the truth!' Brothers! There are many who come with their doubts but also come with a stubborn attitude that, 'I shall pose my questions but shall not accept the answers offered. What I believe is quite right. I just want to ask for the sake of it.' It is difficult to convince those who already have an answer ready along with their questions. In truth, such people come not to understand but to test. They are faultfinders not inquisitive ones. So that is stubbornness. Persons with such thinking can never acquire a knowledge of the principles.

Here the disciple is curious. He has raised a doubt out of his curiosity. He has not come with a stubborn attitude. He apprises the *Gurudev* of his doubt submitting himself humbly at his feet, and seeks the clarification of the doubt.

The disciple has full faith in the *Gurudev*, 'My *Gurudev* is capable, he is a *sadhaka*. He is not only in search of *atma* but he has also attained self realisation. So he has a firm belief that *Gurudev* will certainly resolve my doubt.

Now let us see how the *Gurudev* proves the existence of *atma* and how it settles into the disciple.

It appears due to familiarity with the body . . .

The pursuit of the three gems is possible only for those who have properly understood the path to *Moksa*. A wayward *jiva*, keeps wandering in a daze and hence the devoted practice does not occur to him at all.

In the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*' we are discussing the doubts of a contemplative and able disciple. The rising urge to know who his self is, has brought the disciple to face the *Gurudev*. The disciple is enlisting his doubts one after the other. Just to understand one principle of *atma*, how variedly the disciple has placed his doubts before the *Gurudev*. The *Gurudev* too with a similarly superlative benevolence, is desirous of clarifying the doubts of the disciple.

He is pleased within, upon hearing the doubts of the disciple. He is pleased with the disciple. A doubting disciple becomes worthy of benevolence! How come? A person who raises doubts has to be ignorant! Should there be affection or neglect for him? The *Gurudev* thinks - 'I have assumed that the worthy disciple is in command of knowledge. How deep he has contemplated over a fundamental concept like *atma*! He must have certainly gone deep into contemplation over the *atma*, for him to get such logical doubts.' The *Gurudev* is therefore, prepared to offer the clarifications.

In spite of such doubts, and in spite of the state of contemplation, the disciple is making a mistake somewhere. He is perplexed, that is a reason too. Hence, having read the depths of the human mind, and knowing which manoeuvre would work, the Guru makes the first attack on the mistake that lies within the disciple. He says -

भास्यो देहाध्यासथी, आत्मा देह समान,
पण ते बन्ने भिन्न छे, प्रगट लक्षणे भान ४९

Through the words of the Guru, Srimadji says that the *jiva* has been repeating a mistake from eternity. It is because of this mistake that the *jiva* is wandering in this material world. Had the mistake been eliminated then the wandering would have stopped. But because the mistake was not corrected the *jiva* is struggling. This mistake is the *dehadhyas* - the attachment with the body.

What is *dehadhyas*? There are two words *deha* and *adhyas* here. Of those, the word *adhyas* = *adhi* + *as*. *Adhi* is a prefix. It has two meanings : one, inside and two, above. The word *as* is derived from the root *stha* - *tishtha*. It means to sit. Therefore, the word *adhyas* means 'to sit within, or above'. Here, by combining it with the word *deha* - body, the meaning derived is 'to sit in the body'. That is attachment with the body. The deception that 'I am the body' is *dehadhyas*.

At first there is *abhyas* - a study, and then there is *adhyas*. Something that you study deeply i.e. memorise repeatedly, are acquainted with repeatedly, that is *abhyas* and not forgetting even for a moment the continuity of this *abhyas* is *adhyas*.

The biggest *adhyas* that is there in a *jiva* is for the body. It can forget a lot of other things. But it has never forgotten that it is a body. What is the reason? This *jiva* has taken infinite births until today. In every birth a body was always there. Eyes, ears, nose, tongue may well not have been there. Sometimes there may have been two, three, four or five different senses but there never was a birth where he had to remain without a body. Therefore, the *jiva* has developed a familiarity with the body. The *jiva* has been living with the body for infinite time now. It does not for even a moment forget the body and this memory remains even while asleep.

If a mosquito bites in the middle of deep sleep at night, it registers immediately. The soul realises that the body is hurt.

The body may be lying asleep but the *atma* learns of the troubles of the body, that is to say even in that state the *dehatma* attitude is not overcome. Thus due to the familiarity with the body for infinite time, it is now an *adhyas* that ‘I am the body’.

Now the question arises that didn't the *atma* ever live without the body in this infinite time? In reply, the scriptures say that the time gap while the *atma* travels from one body after its death to another is very short. If the *atma* were to go at a normal speed, it would take only one moment, i.e. one moment it would be in this body and in the next moment it acquires another. Therefore, it remains without a body only for a fleeting moment. But if it were to go in a round-about way, i.e. taking a few turns on the way, then it would remain without a body for 3 or 4 moments, before acquiring the next body. Thus at most, the *atma* would be without a body for maybe four moments. Yet the miniscule *tejas - karmana* body is all along with it. In the flow of eternal time four moments are absolutely insignificant. As a result the *atma* has developed an attachment with body. With the state of eternal memory that ‘The body and I are the same’, the *atma* has presumed the characteristics of the body to be its own. Believing the relatives of the body to be its own relatives, the *atma* has lost the consciousness.

But body is not the *atma*. The consciousness that ‘I am the Soul separate from the body’ is lost. O Disciple! How can the body be the soul? The characteristics of the body and the soul are openly different. In Srimadji's own words :

देह जीव एक रूपे भासे छे अज्ञान वडे,
 क्रियानी प्रवृत्ति पण तेथी तेम थाय छे ।
 जीवनी उत्पत्ति अने रोग, शोक, दुःख, मृत्यु,
 देहनां स्वभाव जीव पदमां जणाय छे ।
 एवो जे अनादि एक रूपनो मिथ्यात्व भाव
 ज्ञानीनां वचन वडे दूर थई जाय छे ।

भासे जड चैतन्यनो प्रगट स्वभाव भिन्न,
बन्ने द्रव्य निज निज रूपे स्थित थाय छे ।

It is due to ignorance that the body and the soul seem one, and as a result, the various activities - like illness, sorrow, misery, although they belong to the body have been misconstrued as those of the soul. However, it is not so in fact. The characteristics of both the substances are absolutely different and will remain so.

The characteristic of *atma* is *chetan* - spirit. The feeling of knowing and seeing. Body is *pudgal*, inanimate. Its characteristics are degeneration, degradation, demolition and destruction. The characteristics of *atma* cannot be in the inanimate. Similarly, the characteristics of the inanimate cannot be in the *atma*. Both substances are altogether independent. Whatever objects come before the *atma*, it gets to know them all. Whereas the inanimate would not know anything even if things were lying before it for thousands of years; because knowing is not the quality of the inanimate.

This body is made out of a group of atoms. The body which is a *skandha* - group of infinite atoms, is prone to getting degenerated, withered, worn out and destroyed. If we have seen the strongest of the bodies withering and wearing out, it is due to this characteristic. While, even after the body withers and wears out, the soul residing in it does not wither or decompose. It remains just as it was. There appears no difference in it whatsoever.

Indeed, body is in the form of inanimate. *Atma* is formless. Inanimate things are apparent to the senses. But *atma* cannot be sensed through the senses. We have only seen the body, not the *atma*. Therefore, Srīmadji tells the disciple, 'Brother! You have acquainted with the body from eternity and got attached to it, and have believed that I am the body itself. As a result you are not prepared to accept that the *atma* is different from the body.

But the characteristics of both are different, and how can two things, whose characteristics are different, be one?' To clarify the same matter further, the *Gurudev* explains the difference of the *atma* and body in another way -

भास्यो देहाध्यासयी, आत्मा देह समान,
पण ते बन्ने भिन्न छे, जेम असि ने म्यान ५०

O Disciple! Due to your attachment with the body and out of ignorance, body and soul have appeared the same to you, but they are very different. The sword hanging from the man's waist, appears to be but the scabbard. But there is a sword in the scabbard and the two are different. Merely because the sword has gone into the scabbard, they appear to be one. The sword even seems to be golden, as Kavi Banarasidas says -

खांडो कहिये कनककौ, कनक म्यान संयोग;
न्यारौ निरखत म्यान सौं, लोह कहैं सब लोग . . . ।

Due to the contact with the golden scabbard, the sword is also said to be golden. But when it is separated from the scabbard and seen, it is but steel. In spite of remaining in the golden scabbard studded with gems, the sword does not turn into gold. It remains its own self. It may well be outwardly known as golden, but it does not forsake its own form and merge with the scabbard. Banarasidass adds -

ज्यों घट कहिये घीवकौ, घटको रूप न घीव
त्यों वरनादिक नाम सौं, जडता लहै न जीव . . .

Just as we say a pot of ghee. In fact, the pot is earthen or of some metal, but since it contains ghee, it is called a pot of ghee. In the same way, *jiva* is also known by the name, color or creed of whatever body it stays in. But these characteristics of the inanimate do not come into the self. It always remains different from the inanimate, because the *atma* is altogether different from the soul.

It is therefore, that the *Sadguru* says, ‘You talk of believing *atma* to be the body because of your attachment from eternal time. Like the deer - *mriga* - in the forest, parched and thirsting for water - *jal*, struggles to locate it. The fierce summer sun is spouting fire. The burning rays of the sun falling on the earth, pass through the pockets of air in the sandy regions. Flowing air creates an impression of water. The thirsty deer runs after it believing it to be water, but the water keeps moving farther and farther away. It remains out of reach. That is *mrigajal* - mirage.

The appearance that body itself is *atma* has been created because the activity of the body has been presumed to be that of the *atma*. But just as the *mrigajal* is merely an illusion and not water, the body too is not the soul. Body is inanimate, soul is animate - the characteristics of both are very different. There is not an iota of inanimate in the animate nor vice versa. They are different owing to their different characteristics. The soul with karma cannot remain without a body. As such there is a feeling of the support and the supported between the two. All things in the universe have a feeling of the support and the supported with the sky. The sky is the support and the substances remaining under it are the supported. Same is the way in which the body and dweller of the body - *dehi* - are related. Having offered a support to the dweller the body becomes the support and the dweller that is the *atma* becomes the supported. The substances under the sky are not like the sky but are altogether different. In the same way, the soul dwelling in the body is not in the form of the body but altogether different from it.

The disciple had a doubt - whether the body itself is the *atma* - to which the *Gurudev* has offered clarification and explained that body and soul are different, that the body is not the soul and that the soul has an independent entity.

The other doubts raised by the disciple as regards the existence of the soul are now clarified.

That which is the unbounded experience . . .

The devoted pursuit of the three gems awakens the infinite and eternal strengths of the *atma*. The infinite eternal strength of the *atma* is its infinite quality. When all these qualities appear in all their purity, the *jiva* attains infinite bliss; experiences the infinite strengths.

To attain these infinite strengths a tremendous effort is called for. First of all the *jiva* should know that ‘I am the soul’, he should experience it and then believe in it. That is the true effort.

Here, such an inquisitive disciple, in spite of the thought of the existence of his self awakening in his mind, is riddled with doubts. He has to stabilise in the faith in himself. He is a seeker of knowledge who harbours the feelings of detachment from external disposition and attachment towards the true disposition of the self. That is why he is seeking refuge with the *Sadguru*. Not just that, he has submitted himself.

The total dedication in all three *yogas* of the disciple pleases the *Gurudev*, and he opens the treasure of knowledge that is within him.

He first explains the disciple where he has gone wrong, like all other common *jivas*; generally all humans believe the body itself to be the soul. They are not aware at all that there is a soul apart from the body. But here the *Gurudev*, in addition to explaining the reasons for this misunderstanding, also tells how the fault can be remedied.

Body and soul, owing to their characteristics of inanimate and animate, are different indeed. Both have an independent existence. Both have their independent strengths. From the example of the sword and the scabbard, it is indicated that the body and soul are separate. The sword may remain in the scabbard for hundreds or thousands of years, yet it cannot change into the

scabbard. Similarly, the soul has been residing in the body from infinite time, yet it does not take the form of the body, it remains in the form of the Soul.

Having thus made the disciple aware of his mistake, the *Gurudev* now answers the questions raised by the former. The disciple had said - नथी दृष्टिमां आवतो, नथी जणातुं रूप. Interestingly, here by saying ‘नथी दृष्टिमां आवतो,’ - that ‘it is not visible’, the disciple has accorded a greater status to the eyes among all five senses. Even considering practically, the absence of other senses than the eyes in the human body does not create many problems. But without the eyes life seems empty and incomplete. Without sight, man becomes dependent. Therefore, the disciple too has taken the eyes to be the greatest and raised his doubt keeping them in view.

But philosophy has something else to say in this matter. After giving it a thought, it seems as ‘if all other senses may be relied upon but not the eyes. Eyes mislead, invoke fear, show that which does not exist in a substance. Eyes are greatly responsible in turning the attention away from the soul.

If we were to think on the negative aspect, a blind person is more pure and straightforward than a deaf and dumb. The reason being that eyes influence the other senses to a great extent. As a result of which, the person who can see becomes a sinner, remains passionate all his life, and invites the lowly life at the end of which is a total ruin. Therefore, a silence of the eyes - restraint - is more essential than a silence of speech.

Thus, because the eyes play a major role in the life, the disciple was inspired to discover the soul through the eyes. He says - ‘The soul cannot be seen with the eyes, nor can any form of the soul be seen with the eyes. Hence there is no *atma*.’ While trying to clarify this doubt, the *Gurudev* says -

जे द्रष्टा छे दृष्टिनो, जे जाणे छे रूप,
अबाध्य अनुभव जे रहे, ते छे जीवस्वरूप ५१

A faint smile breaks upon the face of the *Gurudev*. He says, 'O Disciple! Who can know or see the one who himself sees all and knows all? We look at the substances in the world with our eyes. But there is another substance in our body which knows the eyes and sees them. And that is the *atma*.

Atma is *swa - par prakashak*. It knows itself and at the same time knows everything in the world that is to be known. Therefore, the eyes through which the world is seen, those eyes and the world both are seen with the *atma*. It has also been said-

ज्यां दृश्य छे त्यां दृश्य-दृष्टि उभयनो दृष्टा य छे
निज - पर प्रकाशक आत्मनी चैतन्य सत्ता प्रगट छे . . .

Knowledge is the characteristic of *atma*, not of an inanimate. We, who are used to looking at the broader aspect of things, believe that 'I have seen and learnt with the eyes'. But eye is an inanimate thing. It is only a means. It does not have the capability of knowledge. An eye too can see only when there is a soul in the body, and when the utilisation of the knowledge of the *atma* is linked to the eye, it can see the things. The eyes saw, but it was the *atma* which understood. Eyes are like the window in a house. If a person standing at the window gets a view of the outside, what did the window have to do? The one who sees is the person, the window is but the means. Similarly, when we see something with the eyes, the one who experiences that 'I have seen so and so with the eyes' is the soul and eyes are merely the means. *Atma* sees the substances just as it sees the eyes in the body. Among all the senses of the human body, the eyes are the most powerful medium. A man standing on the peak of a mountain can see up to the far horizon with his vision. The rivers and streams, the mountains and forests, the meadows and the trees, the birds and the humans all get accommodated into those tiny pupils. Therefore, the vision is greater than the visual. The scientific laws say that when light / sunlight falls on things, they get reflected into the human eyes, and then the eyes can see them.

Let us assume that the sunlight falls on some beautiful thing, and that thing got reflected in your eyes. But if you are not there, who will know about it? Brothers! It means that somebody who sees the vision is sitting inside. In whose absence the eyes are not eyes but mere holes. That is, the one who sees is the self alone. Vision is his strength, eyes are his medium and rest is all a visual.

The life force of the *atma* that enlightens the self and the others is always present in it. When the *atma* becomes introspect, it knows itself and when it looks outward it sees things with the means of the senses and mind. Similarly, without the means of the senses or mind, it can also see the worldly things with the *Manahparyaya Jnana*. In the same way, when *Kevaljnana* occurs, the *atma* is introspective no doubt, but all the substances of the world get reflected into it. That is, the *atma* does not necessarily need any senses or the like to either know the self or the others. Therefore it has been said that the *atma* is the one who sees both the vision and the visual. As such, the *atma* itself cannot be seen with the eyes.

How does one experience the *atma* within oneself? All our experiences until now have been with the help of external feelings and substances. Our entire life is filled with external experiences; let us look one-by-one at all the experiences until now and then let us see if there is anything left out as we move.

We play with twenty-three subjects of the five senses every day. 'I hear, I see, I smell. I taste, I touch.' These are the experiences of the five senses. Along with these, 'I think' is the experience of the mind. Now let us consider. 'I do not hear' - if the strength of the ears is lost, doesn't the 'I' remain? Similarly, if the eyes lose their light, if nothing can be seen, if the sense of smell is lost, if the tastes cannot be identified and say if at the extreme, let's say, the body suffers a stroke and the entire body is invalidated, the bodily sensations may not be experienced,

but even then does the feeling that 'I am' remain? You may well not be aware of 'who I am', may not even have the ability to know, but the awareness remains that 'I am alive', and 'if I exist, it is not as the ears, eyes, nose, tongue or touch, but independent of these'.

Similarly, if you are thinking in the mind, then the phrase used is: 'To my mind it seems . . .'. Now 'my' and 'mind' are two separate terms. Mind is different from the one who refers to it as 'my mind'. So mind also is not 'I'. I am some thing other than the mind.

Further considering 'I' - am I the one as the world identifies me? People call me 'human', so am I human? If I were human, then I should remain human always. But it is not so. I am born a human, but when I die, then what people call as human remains here. But the 'I' in it goes away. When a death occurs, the body does not go away. It remains here, yet people say, 'He is gone'. So the one who goes away is not human, it is somebody else. Hence 'I' is not human.

And if I am not human, then I am not in the form of relations that are established with relatives as a human. The close relatives like Parents, brothers and sisters who accept a relation with me, is not 'I'. 'I' am neither in the form of man or woman. Even that remains here, and the 'I' in it walks away.

Thus, if I were to eliminate all feelings felt through external experiences and look upon my self in exclusivity, then one experience remains and that is 'I am'. Moreover, this experience occurs to all *jivas*. Whether they are knowledgeable or ignorant, everybody is aware that 'I am'. The knowledgeable progresses from the experience of 'I am' to 'I am the soul'. The ignorant is unaware of this. Even a child is also aware of this feeling of being, of existence. For this experience is one that is without any hindrance. No one can hamper the feeling of this experience.

A *jiva* does not hinder anybody in any way, nor does it get hindered by anybody. That is why Srimadji has said that, 'that which is the unhindered experience, is the true form of the *jiva*'. There are six substances which occupy one '*pradesh*'. Of these only the self is animate, the other five are all inanimate. Therefore, *atma* alone is the one who can see. The inanimate has neither vision nor does it see. Yet the inanimate substance has colour and other characteristics which give it a form, as a result of which the *jiva* is misled and places attachment in it. Other substances are all in the form of energy - they are formless and as such the *jiva* does not get attached to them.

Jiva can know a substance with form. The *jiva* itself is formless. That means the person who sees is formless and the visual is with form. The feeling of unity among them is the material world. But if we give it a deeper thought, then the characteristics of both animate and inanimate are different. Therefore, the material world is merely an unfathomable illusion between the vision and the visual. Swami Shri Sahajanandji has, therefore, said -

दृश्य तो झेर छे जीव व्याकुळ करे,
दृश्यमां दृष्टि जोडे न महात्मा . . .

If the *jiva* gets attracted to the visual, its effects are like those of poison, they create bewilderment. Therefore, a *sadhaka* in devoted practice removes his vision away from the visual and places it upon the one who sees.

Srimadji also expresses the same feelings in the following *doha*, that *jiva* is formless and the inanimate is with form. The characteristics of both are totally different. In spite of this, if the formless spirit - *chetan* - who can see, had an illusion of being with a form, if it showed the madness of accepting it, it is indeed the greatest surprise which can hardly be described. How is it that the *atma* in spite of being formless, wanders as a slave for

eternity in various forms of life and yet does not find it like a bondage?

ग्रहे अरूपी रूपीने, एह अचरजनी वात;
जीव बंधन जाणे नहीं, केवो जिन सिद्धांत . . .

The *Gurudev* consoles the disciple. Child! The *atma* that is not visible to the eyes is itself the one who sees and knows all. Further, the ultimate realisation that 'I am' which is left over after gradually eliminating all external feelings; the sensation of the senses may well not be present, but the experience of the soul is eternally present - that itself is the true form of the *jiva*. And even after knowing it through mind, intellect and senses, the only way to discover it is through self experience. Therefore, the doubt that has arisen in your mind that - ते छे जीवस्वरूप - is not proper at all.

The disciple was satisfied. More clarification was offered for the other doubts which he raised after bowing his head at the feet of the *Gurudev*. That will follow.

... but Soul is aware

The devoted pursuit of three gems breaks through the path of material world and places the *jiva* on the way to *Moksa*. The path that needs to be traversed to reach this goal is long and full of thorns. It is full of hurdles and hindrances. If one remains steady on this path and also gets the blessings of the Guru, one can certainly reach the goal. That is the reason why the traveller asks for succour -

मेरी धीरी है चाल, और पथ है विशाल
हर कदम पर मुसीबत है अब तो सम्हाल
पैर मेरे थके, ये चले ना चले
मुझको तेरा इशारा सदा चाहिये . . .
आसरा इस जहाँका मिले ना मिले
मुझको तेरा सहारा सदा चाहिये . . .

The *sadhak* can remain steady and progress on the path of devoted practice only with the guidance of the *Gurudev*. Such a *sadhak* is anxious to attain spirituality. Therefore, he has placed with all humility and in a child-like way, his doubts before the *Gurudev*. The disciple is inspired to believe the senses to be the *atma*, thinking that the senses rule everything and as if the entire life is dependent on the senses. He has not noticed the inanimate nature of the senses. But the learned *Gurudev* explains what the reality is, how far the senses are useful and how *atma* and senses are related and thus uproots the doubt that had remained in the mind of the disciple. *Gurudev* says-

छे इंद्रिय प्रत्येकने, निज निज विषयनुं ज्ञान,
पांच इंद्रिना विषयनुं, पण आत्माने भान ५२

Every sensory organ can absorb its own subject. Each of the organs has a different subject. Ears can hear sound. Eyes can see form. Nose can experience smell. Tongue identifies tastes and skin can feel touch. This is what we say practically and this is how the practice goes.

Here every sensory organ has been restricted to one subject. Each of the organs cannot absorb any subject other than its own.

Like the eyes are supposed to see, observe form. Eyes can do this job very well. Powerful eyes can see up to a great distance. The eagle flying in the sky, has eyes that can see objects lying on the earth. Many humans have eyes that can see the most minute of things. But this strength is limited to seeing alone! However strong the eyes may be, they cannot absorb sound. If the eyes were to be active and there were to be no ears, then even a nearby sound cannot be heard. A book can be read with the eyes, but eyes cannot hear a sound that can be absorbed only by the ears.

Similarly, a man without eyes may exclaim in appreciation of the pleasant notes of music coming from a flute. But if he were to be asked, ‘What does a flute look like?’, what can somebody, who has never seen it, say? How much would he understand if we were to perhaps explain the size and shape to him? Who knows? By the same token, he may be able to absorb the subjects of other sensory organs in a proper way. Many a time it is noticed in a person whose eyes have failed, that his other sensory organs are more alert. He can identify a person by merely hearing the footsteps. Yet, the work of identifying form and colour which the eyes do, cannot be done by a person without sight.

A person blind from birth may acquire much knowledge, but he can never identify colour. The job of identifying colour is that of the eyes, which no other sensory organ can do. Same is the case with the sensing of smell, taste and touch. In spite of each sensory organ being alert in absorbing its own subject, it cannot absorb the subjects of other sensory organs.

It is evident from this that the capacity of the sensory organs to absorb a subject is very limited. Now if the senses are to be believed to be the soul, then it will be a great misnomer. For the power of knowledge is all encompassing, of a great magnitude. It does not have any limits. It is unlimited. There is infinite knowledge in the *atma* and at the same time there is infinite capacity to know all that infinite which is worthy of knowing. Now if sensory organs were to be the *atma*, then its capacity to

know gets limited. Then the characteristic of knowledge is also limited. Its not just that, but the characteristic of knowledge is unbroken - joint, while the organs can know only their own subjects, and none other. One sensory organ does not know the subject of the other. Then knowledge becomes severed into pieces and several. Thus from all viewpoints sensory organs are not the *atma*. If all five senses were to be the *atma*, then what about the activity that goes on with the mind and intellect? What about the organisation that works in the body? And in the same way, what about the spirit that organises all this activity? These questions remain without answer.

Indeed, the fact that needs to be considered is - who has the information of the knowledge being acquired through the sensory organs? The form seen by eyes is recognised by the *atma* that is residing within. It is the one who says, I saw this form, I know this form. Thus the one who knows all the subjects that are absorbed by the sensory organs is the spirit in the form of knowledge that rests within. If this were not to be, then if an object were to go out of sight, there would be no recognition that 'I have seen this object'. Eye can know only by seeing. If at a given moment eye is not seeing the object, then how would it know? But it is not so. What object the eye sees once is memorised in *atma*'s knowledge. Thereby, the eyes, although closed after seeing an object, cannot see it anymore, but the *atma* remembers it.

Words heard years ago are remembered today. The one who spoke those words is not present, yet the words are remembered verbatim. Similarly, smell, taste and touch is also remembered. Therefore, it is proved that the sensory organs are merely the means, the media. They do not have the know-how of absorbing knowledge or memorising. But the *atma* remembers all the subjects absorbed by these organs. The organs too are media required for acquiring knowledge, only until the *atma* develops either *avadhi*, *manah paryaya* or *kevaljnana*. After these knowledge forms are developed, then the *atma* does not need

the assistance of the sensory organs. Without the organs, the *atma* acquires knowledge about objects, mind or the universe.

Indeed, what is said in the *gatha* - छे इन्द्रिय प्रत्येकने निज निज विषयनुं ज्ञान - every organ has knowledge of its own subject - is merely figurative. In truth, the sensory organs are inanimate. They cannot on their own absorb any subject.

We all would have experienced the situation where, as we walk along a way, many things come in our view, but we do not see them all. Why! The best of your friends may pass by in front of you, but you do not notice. How does this happen? The eyes were there of course, but if I were to say in your words, 'My attention was elsewhere'. Or perhaps you were so busy in seeing or hearing something or immersed in some thought, that you failed to notice somebody passing by. In other words, our use of knowledge was at that time not connected with the eyes. It was with the mind, hence eyes did not see.

Thus with whichever organ the use of knowledge - *jnanopayoga* - of the *atma* is connected, that organ alone can absorb a subject, not any other. Therefore that which acquires knowledge is the *jiva's jnanopayoga*. The organs are mere empty boxes, mere means. They are incapable of acquiring knowledge themselves. In fact, they themselves do not know if they have acquired knowledge or not, for they are inanimate. Knowledge is the characteristic of *atma* and not of the inanimate.

Thus sensory organs cannot be believed to be *atma*, nor can *atma* be absorbed through them. When the organs are inanimate and incapable of knowing even inanimate objects, how can they absorb the animate - *chetan - atma*?

Therefore, the *atma* that is beyond the organs, is neither absorbable through the organs nor is it in the form of organs.

The *Gurudev* is progressing gradually eliminating the doubts of the disciple one-by-one, and the disciple's mind is experiencing joy. Now, more specific matter in the next.

Manifest form of the spirit . . .

The pursuit of the three gems gives the *jiva* the ability of discretion. The *jiva* knows the *chetan* as animate form and the *jada* as inanimate form. Once such discretion awakens, the *jiva* naturally turns in towards the natural disposition of the Self.

Just like boiling water on a stove immediately begins to revert to the coolness, which is its natural disposition, the moment it is taken away from the stove, or the fire under it doused. In the company of fire, water had become hot, but the moment it leaves that company, it tends to cool off. In the same way, *jiva* in the company of affected disposition begins to take the effects of that influence; but the moment it parts company with that affected disposition, the attachment and aversion begin to taper off, and the *jiva* begins to settle down in its own natural disposition which is its natural form.

In order that he could experience the natural true form, the disciple places the confusions of his mind before the *Gurudev*. The *Gurudev*, while explaining that the body, senses and life are but inanimate, says-

देह न जाणे तेहने, जाणे न इंद्रि, प्राण,
आत्मानि सत्ता वडे, तेह प्रवर्ते जाण ५३

Atma is spirit. Body, senses and life are but inanimate. Then how can they know the *atma*? Knowing is the characteristic of *atma*. It is indeed, free from everything. No other substance but the *atma*, is capable of knowing.

मैं स्वतंत्र निश्चल निष्काम,
ज्ञाता दृष्टा आत्म राम . . .

Knowing and seeing is the job of the *atma*. Howsoever tiny the body may be, but it stays there and knows indeed. If a mosquito sits on our hand and if we stretch the other hand to catch, it immediately flies off; it does not get caught. Why? Because it has an *atma* in it. Of course, it is in the *trasa yoni* and

therefore it knows that it is facing trouble. It realises that the stretched hand can also kill it. Therefore, it does not get caught, it flies off. In the same way, whether small or big, whichever *jiva* or insect, animal or bird you see, has adequate knowledge for itself. And it manages self-defence. Through its knowledge, it also searches and locates essential substances and places etc. for life. All that is thanks to the spirit that abounds in it.

Howsoever powerful an inanimate thing may be, indeed, even a book in which knowledge is written, will not know even if somebody tears it or burns it. That is why, in the Mughal era our precious treatises were burnt down. Even a little child can lift and throw it away. That's because it is inanimate. It is not capable of knowing. Thus all the inanimate things in the world are without the capability of knowing.

Body is inanimate. It is merely a collection - *skandha* -of atoms and therefore it does not have in it the knowledge, which is the characteristic of the spirit - *chaitanya*.. We have also seen that the sensory organs are inanimate. They are not capable of knowing without the help of the *atma*. Even, life - *pran* - i.e. respiration is also *pudgal*. We absorb the *pudgals* of the respiratory category along with oxygen and release the same *pudgals*. *Pudgals* are inanimate and hence respiration is also inanimate. So the body, senses or life cannot experience the *atma*.

In fact, these three do not even know each other. The body does not know how many senses it has. The senses do not know in what part of the body they are, whether they are capable or incapable, whether they are effective or not. Why, the body does not even know whether it is breathing or not, how many times it has inhaled and how many times it should. Nothing is known. Breathing does not know in what part of the body it is functional. Thus all the three are inanimate, all three are ignorant of themselves and oblivious of the others. None of them know each other. Like I said earlier, the inanimate does not have the ability to know.

Not just that, the body, senses and life do not have independent strength. They are inactive. Only as long as the *atma* exists in the body, are they active. The moment the *atma* leaves the body, the movements of the body, the activity of the senses and the process of respiration all stop. It is commonly understood that the moment respiration stops, the man is dead. But it is not so. The respiration stopped because the *atma* left the body. The departure of the *atma* from the body and the ceasing of respiration happens simultaneously and hence we do not realise it. Respiration is merely the indication of the presence of the *atma* in the body, it cannot hold the *atma* in the body. If it were to be so, then with the help of Oxygen bottles, man could have lived for hundreds of years. But all these actions are meaningful only until the *atma* remains, not later. So respiration is also inanimate, active only as long as the *atma* remains. Later it is inactive.

Thus *atma* is the only animate - spirit. Rest is all inanimate. Except the *atma*, nothing else is of any worth. In this verse, these feelings have been beautifully rendered :

હું તો આત્મા છું જડ શરીર નથી (૨)
 શરીર મસાણની રાખનો ઢગલો, પલમાં બિચરે ઠોકરથી . . .
 મુઝા વળ એ શવ પૂજો બાલો, જ્ઞાયકતા નહીં સુખદુઃખથી . . . હું તો . . .
 સ્પર્શ ગંધ રસ રૂપ શબ્દ અને જાતિ વર્ગ લિંગ મુઝામાં નથી . . .
 ફિલ્મ બેટરી પ્રેરક જુદો તેમ દેહાદિક ભિન્ન મુઝાથી . . . હું તો . . .
 સૂર્ય ચંદ્ર મણિ દીપ કાન્તિની, મુઝા પ્રકાશ વળ કિમ્મત શી . . .
 પ્રતિ દેહ જે શોભનિકતા છે તે મારી જુઓ વિશ્વ મથી . . . હું તો . . .

The poet says, I am the soul. I am not the inanimate body. The ultimate transformation of this body will be only into a mound of ash. It will go into the crematorium, and like a log along with other logs, will burn and turn into ash. It will not take long in getting strewn all over. One blow and the ash gets spread into the atmosphere.

Ah! For how long are the joys and sorrows of this beautiful body? Only as long as 'I' that is the *atma* is dwelling in it. Once

‘I’ leave it, whether you worship it or burn it, it does not matter at all. It is but a carcass. It will not have the disposition of knowing. Well, if there is a big man in status, he is addressed to with great respect and honour only until the *atma* is in him. Once he dies, he too is a carcass.

The *atma* says, ‘There is no colour, smell, taste, touch or sound in me at all. In the same way I do not belong to any caste or creed. I have not adopted any gender. I am different from all these. The dry-cells that energise the torch-light of life are separate. The torch is not the cell nor the cell is the torch. But the cells work while being within the torch-light. Thus the dry-cell that energises this body is different. In the same way, I am the *atma* and the body etc., are all different from me.’

Well, what is the value of the *atma*? There are so many things in the world. So many things whom we find very useful. Why! Many of them are priced in lakhs and crores, but what are they for? Only because there is *atma*. Brothers! Assume for a while, that in this entire universe, there is no *atma* - spirit at all; only the inanimate world. What then will be the price of the inanimate thing? Nothing at all. It is but all dirt. The intellect is active only because there is the *atma* in the body. The intellect evaluates the inanimate thing. The body and senses are active with the pulsating of the *atma* and can therefore enjoy the things. So the value of all the things in this entire universe is dependent on the mere existence of one *atma*.

The beauty of all bodies whether big or small is only as long as there is *atma* in them. The blooming flower is beautiful because there is *atma* in it. But a flower without the *atma*, shrivels and dries up. Then it is not called flower but dirt. We try to decorate the body with ornaments; but the ornaments will offer a beauty only until the *atma* remains. Once the *atma* leaves, and if the carcass is decorated it does not look good. It may be for mere custom that you might decorate the dead-body. Thus the

beauty of all the animals of this world is because of the spirit. Once the *atma* leaves, the body begins to degenerate, it stinks and deforms. Even if the dearest person loses the *atma*, his place is not in the home, but in the cemetery.

Thus the beauty of the body is the *atma*, and only when *atma* resides in the body, is there any activity of the body. Thus it is established that *atma* is different from body etc., and not in the form of the body.

Now the disciple had said while raising his doubt -

मिथ्या जुदो मानवो, नहीं जुदुं एंघाण

To this the *Gurudev* replies -

सर्व अवस्थाने विषे, न्यारो सदा जणाय,

प्रगट रूप चैतन्यमय, ए एंघाण सदाय ५४

Child! You are unable to see any indication of the *atma*, but the characteristic of the *atma* is the spiritual presence that is absolutely apparent and totally different from others.

The *jiva* with a body, experiences all the states of the body. At birth there was the state of infancy, then childhood, then youth, then adulthood and at the end old age. All these transitions take place in one body alone. The transitions occur and also get destroyed. When the infancy passed came the childhood, and thus each state goes on getting destroyed and the experience of the following state gets enhanced.

Through all these transition states, one thing remains and that is *atma*. In fact it is *chidrupa*, permanent and of the disposition to know. Hence it has experienced all the states. Brothers! We remember the childhood or youth even today. The events that transpired in those times and the life lived in those days is all recollected. So all these states are subject to destruction and *atma* alone is eternal. The states underwent transition, but the *atma* remained the same, for *atma* was not in the form of the body. It was independent of all. Had it not been so, the *atma* would have got destroyed along with the various states that

passed. But that did not happen. The transitory states were of the inanimate not of the spirit. The inanimate is perishable and the animate is non-perishable. Hence the *jiva* has to leave the company of the inanimate -

वपु विनाशी तुं अविनाशी;
अब है किन को विलासी;
वपु संग जब दूर निकासी,
तब तुम शिव का वासी . . .
आप स्वभाव में . . .

Vapu that is the body is a perishable nature and *atma* is non-perishable. Only when the *jiva* leaves the company of the body will it become '*shiva*' - liberated. Thus it is totally different from the body.

Just as it is different from various states of the body, it also remains different in and from the three states of sleeping, dreaming and awakening.

Even during deep sleep, the *atma* knows that the body is sleeping. That is how when we wake up, we say, 'I had good sleep today. Never realised when it was day. I had very sound sleep'. The *atma* has experienced good sound sleep and therefore it remembers after awakening.

Indeed, when we dream in the sleep, we say so on awakening. That is the one who dreamed and remembered it is the *atma*. Dreaming is a different state and the one remembering it is also different. Even in the state of awakening, the witness to all happenings of every moment is the *atma* again. Thus it is in all the three states and different from all of them.

Therefore, the *Gurudev* says here - O Disciple! The one who remains apart from all these states, and knows them is the *atma* with the characteristic of spirit - *chaitanya*. This indication of its spirit, the ability to know, always remains with it. The characteristics of the inanimate may change, may get destroyed, may even get lost but the indication of the spirit always and

forever is unchanged. The *jiva* does not lose its spirit even when it is in the *nigoda*.

So Brothers! We are the spirit and the spirit is always there within our body. This we should not forget. What Srimadjji has explained here in the *gathas* is so simple that it can be easily understood even by the layman. We have all experienced various states of the life and at the same time have experienced that ‘we’ that is the one knowing it all, is always different and separate. Without any major effort or practice, we have experienced the presence of the *atma* in this body. As a result, the faith in the fact that *atma* exists has been strengthened.

The *Sadguru* has acquainted the disciple with the *atma*, body, senses and life along with their respective individual characteristics. As a result of which the faith of the disciple has been strengthened.

Since *atma* is minuscule, it is not apparent to the bodily eyes. There are two ways of knowing an indirect substance -

1. *One's own superior knowledge* - that is the acquisition of the specific knowledge which enables one to know an indirect substance like the *atma*, or
2. *the words of one with such knowledge* - it is necessary to make at least one indirect substance manifest before him, so that the *sadhaka* can stabilise himself in the *sadhana*. The superior soul - *Tirthankara* too brought about the *jati-smaran* i.e. the recollection of previous births, in his disciples which led them to the knowledge of the eternal existence of the *atma* and they became engrossed in the practice of attaining the true and pure form of the *atma*. Just as Meghakumar.

The clarification of the doubts of the disciple is in this same direction. More doubts which the disciple raised on this very topic will be dealt with later.

Respect not the Knower . . .

The devotion of the three gems is possible for a *Sadhaka* with curiosity to know the supreme principle. One who has the curiosity to know the supreme principle most certainly has the urge to know the Self.

कोऽहम् - '*Koham*' - Who am I? And - सोऽहम् - '*Soham*' - I am it. These two words are like the two eyes of the philosophy that is based upon the Soul. In the first term, there is an urge to know about the existence of the Self. And in the second term, there is the direct realisation of the existence of the Self. '*Soham*' is the statement of the science of logic, beyond the necessity of proof and the essence of present knowledge.

The disciple asked : 'What is the identification of the Soul?'

The *Acharya* replied : '*Soham*'. The body is free from ego, for 'I do, I did and I shall do' are all indications of the Soul - chetan.'

In '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*', the disciple with the curiosity to know the Soul, is desirous of knowing it by whatever means possible. That is why, he places all sorts of doubts before the *Gurudev*. He says that all the substances in this world can be seen with the eyes. Any substance that exists with a form, can be directly obtained or in today's world can be made available through the various means at our disposal.

However far these substances may be, they can be recognised; then how come *Atma*, which is the closest than anything else, cannot be known?

But perhaps, the disciple does not know that these eyes can recognise substances which are far away, but it is difficult to know a substance that is nearby. For instance, the *kajal* in the eyes. It is so close to the eye, in fact it is resting in the eye itself and yet the eye cannot see it. To see the *kajal* applied in the eye, a mirror is required. In the same way, this soul is on one hand invisible to the bodily eyes and on the other hand is filled in every atom of the body. Hence, the bodily eyes are not useful

for seeing it. There has to be some means within. That is to say, *atma* itself can see itself.

To the disciple who believes that those things that can be seen with the bodily eyes exist and those that cannot be seen do not, the *Gurudev* says,

घट पट आदि जाण तुं, तेथी तेने मान;
जाणनारने मान नहि, कहिये केवुं ज्ञान ५५

O *Devanupriya*! You have seen, known and experienced the worldly substances with your eyes and other senses, and therefore you believe that these substances exist. But I ask you, who is it that is saying, 'I saw this substance, and known it.' 'I see this substance and am knowing it.' 'I shall see this substance and shall know it.' Who is this 'I'? Is it the knower or somebody else? The body does not by itself have this feeling of 'I'. When the tongue is being used to say 'I', then our aim of saying 'I' is not referring to the body but some other power other than the body. That is the knower.

The knower is the Soul itself. As mentioned earlier, none other than the *atma* holds the ability to know, and hence the knower is the *atma*. O Disciple! What sort of knowledge is yours? You do not believe in the one who knows and you believe in those substances which were known through this one. If you do not believe in the knower, then substances cannot be known at all. But substances are known, and thus it gets proved that *atma* exists.

Brothers! The body cannot know, yet out of the practice of infinite time, we have come to believe so. We have done all activities believing the body to be the totality, and hence the sinful activity has increased. Therefore, it is essential to abandon the thinking that body is the soul.

The Emperor of Greece, Alexander was about to proceed to India with an irrepressible ambition of conquering the world. His Guru Aristotle was a philosopher. He was sad because of Alexander's destructive ambitions. Alexander could not to be

convinced. So he said to Alexander, “Alexander! You are going to India. Bring me back something that I want from there.”

Alexander wondered, ‘what can it be that is not available in my country?’ He says, “O Sir! What is it that is in India and not here?”

“Alexander! The civilisation of India is very old, and that of Saints. So bring me a saint from there.”

“Sir, I am amused by what you say. The saints of India are naked, they roam around with an exposed body. What will you do with a saint who does not even have one shell of his own?”

“Just get me one, will you!”

So Alexander started. Brothers! It is a matter of pride for us that we are born in this country. No other country has produced as many saints as this our own. The culture here is such that great saints can be born here. Oh! Its not a matter of *Satyayuga*, but even in these times, saints are immersed in devotion in nooks and corners of our country. You and I may know some four or five of them, but there are saints in every iota of this soil. From Himalaya to Kanyakumari, there are saints moving about every where. The saying ‘*Bahuratna Vasundhara*’ - बहुरत्ना वसुंधरा - the earth of many splendours seems to be true of India.

Aristotle knew that only on the noble soil of Bharat were the saints with a swagger of the soul and naked bodies to be found. No other soil has that strength, that aura, that purity which could induce a saint to be born there. I do not mean to say that no where else in the world were saints ever born, or that they are all evil. But here in spite of such corruption and lechery, there happen saints who are in search of the soul.

Alexander came to India. There was war and on the way back he remembered that his Guru had asked to bring back a saint. He ordered his men. They fanned out in search and at a quiet spot they found a Yogi in bliss. There was not cloth on his body, nor a shelter above him. He was in deep meditation under a tree. What do

Alexander's men know of meditation? Being the servants of a great Emperor, they shouted with an arrogance in their voice -

“O Saint! Come. Alexander calls you.”

But the saint was in deep meditation. He did not hear anything. The soldiers repeated once, twice, thrice but how does the saint hear? He was immersed in the bliss of his soul. Since they were not to return without the saint, they sat down in waiting. After a while, the meditation was over, and the saint opened his eyes. Seeing this, the men said again, “Come, you come with us!”

“Who are you? Where do you want to take me?”

“Oh, Alexander has called you, Come!”

“Alexander! What animal is this Alexander?”

“What! Do you not know? Alexander - conqueror of the world! That Alexander at whose feet roll the crowns of great Kings and Princes!”

“Go, tell your Alexander! I do not go anywhere! I am in myself. Why should I go anywhere?”

“Oh, Come! Do you know what happens if you don't?”

“Let what has to happen, happen. I shall not come!”

Alexander's men returned. They wondered, ‘what sort of a man this was. Does he not have a care? One whom Alexander calls for is blessed. And this fellow says - Let what has to happen, happen.’

Brothers! This was a saint of Bharat, who had really achieved ‘fakiri’. They say, - फिकर की फाकी करे उसका नाम फकीर - one who is not worried about worry is a Fakir. He never went. The men went and told Alexander, “O Lord! We told your name but this Saint did not come along!”

Alexander was shocked to hear this. ‘Never before has anything like this happened! He does not come here in spite of mentioning my name.’ Alexander's ego was hurt. He immediately started for the saint. He reached the saint, a lean

man down to his bones, but with a bright face. Soft eyes and detachment. But proud Alexander's eyes could not notice this. He spoke with great arrogance, "Saint! Come along with me to my country! I shall take you!"

"Why? What will you do with me there?"

"Ah! Look at my powers! You are lying here naked, there is nothing with you! Come with me, I shall keep you like a King. Come, I shall make you happy."

"Hark! I have seen such power. Its lowliness could not attract me. Let matters be! You proceed, I do not want to come!"

Alexander was angered at hearing this. 'Such guts, to speak before me! A nobody making such arguments! How can I bear this? Such is this saint?' He spoke in anger, "Saint! I do not wish to hear anything! Come with me!"

"And if I don't?"

Then beware! There will be sorry repercussions. Don't you see this sword of mine? It spares no body."

And the saint started laughing. He laughed and laughed. Alexander was surprised. 'Whoa! This fellow faces death and can still laugh! An unknown person stands before him with a sword and he has no fear! Even courageous warriors turn pale at the sight of death. Even one who has killed many becomes helpless in the face of death. And this frail saint, who might fall off if I just pushed him, is laughing.' Alexander, mellowed down a bit, and asked, "Why do you laugh? Are you not scared of death?"

"No. Whoever you may be, however your sword may be, it cannot kill me."

"What! Are you made of something special that my sword cannot kill you?"

"No, its not that I am made of something different. But the 'I' in me cannot be killed. Yes, you might hurt this body, cut it into pieces, but what do you kill in it? I do not die because the body dies!"

Alexander had not heard such language before. He had not even dreamt that the body and the 'I' living in it are two different entities. He was no doubt, the disciple of the great philosopher Aristotle. But had never heard such things.

Brothers! I had told you once earlier that the depth to which the aspect of *Atma* has been studied in Indian philosophies, the amount of research that has been done, cannot be matched by any other philosophy. That was how Alexander had never heard of the matter of body and soul being separate. He could not understand what the Saint was saying. He asked, "Saint! What are you saying? I do not understand your words!"

"Brother! It is nothing new. What seems unusual to you is known to every young boy of Bharat. The body and soul are separate!"

"Soul? What is a Soul?"

"Alexander! The spirit that is in you, that which makes you say 'I shall kill you' is your 'I' the Soul."

Alexander was a brilliant man. He had never heard, yet he began to think, 'Although it is difficult to understand, it appears that I can feel the 'I' in me. Even in me there is my 'I' speaking. And Alexander was a changed man. He bowed to the Saint. His hands folded naturally. Humble feelings arose. He said, "Sir! I do not follow what you say but it is very nice to hear. So please tell me more!"

The Saint saw that Alexander was softening. He was sitting there with a willingness to understand, and understand he will. So the Saint said, "Brother! You say, I shall kill you. Then you can kill this body, not me."

"Then are you not the body?"

"No, I am separate from the body, I am the soul. I can understand whatever happens in this body. But having

understood, whether or not to feel the injury to the body is my option.”

“Is that so? Sir! How can that be?”

“That is, O King, that is how it is! The soul does not consider the body as its own. Body is inanimate and the inanimate follows the characteristics of the inanimate. ‘The body is to itself and I am in my spirit.’ Once such feeling arises, the pain of whatever happens to the body need not be suffered! *Atma* is death-less. It does not die at all.”

“Then the lakhs of people that I killed until now, didn’t their souls die?”

“Yes, Alexander! You killed many. But they are all death-less. Hence they have not died. But owing to your arrogant ambition of conquering the world, you have harboured cruel feelings in the act of killing, and that has brought upon you sins in great magnitude!”

“Sir! What is the effect of that?”

“Well, you live this all here and die, and then after death there is the extreme misery of hell!”

“Then will I have to bear sorrow?”

“Yes, there is no doubt about it! The undying spirit carries with it its own sins and virtues and it has to suffer its fruit. Brother! You have committed great sins. You will have to suffer!”

And Brothers! Alexander understood. What his teacher Aristotle had intended to do by taking a Saint to Greece, had happened right here, in the company of this Saint. Alexander placed his sword at the feet of the Saint and vowed not to kill anybody thereafter.

Having learnt the essence of many lives from the Indian Saint, Alexander turned sensitive like a flower and returned.

Brothers! What the Saint told Alexander, is what Srimadji is trying to explain to us, that the knower is sitting within the body, and he is separate from the body. The existence of the knower is as true as the existence of the substance known.

But then to explain, why body is not the soul, he says -

परम बुद्धि कृश देहमां, स्थूल देह मति अल्प;
देह होय जो आत्मा, घटे न आम विकल्प ५६

If body is to be believed to be the Soul, then this question does not arise. For Knowledge is the characteristic of the soul. It never separates from the soul. It can never be separated. Heat from fire or sweetness from sugar can never be removed. And if it is removed, then fire does not remain fire, it turns to ash, and sugar does not remain sugar. Thus knowledge too cannot be removed from the soul.

Now, by believing the body to be the soul, it should appear that a hefty body should have more knowledge and a lean body should have less. Knowledge should be equal to the body. Although this means that elephants and rhinos should have more knowledge than men, but it is not so. It is not true that a 300 Kg man has so much knowledge as a rule. On the contrary, sometimes it is noticed that even fat men are absolute idiots and a lean person has great knowledge.

Srimad Rajachandrajji who gave us such a great treatise like '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*', was so frail and weak in the body, yet he had great knowledge. He had even brought along the knowledge of his earlier births. In the same way we have seen so many great sages who in spite of a frail frame were known for their immense knowledge.

Therefore, it is proved that body is not soul. The body does not have the characteristic of knowledge. But the soul which sees and understands is separate from the body and is all powerful.

Thus *Gurudev* clarified the doubts of the disciple about the Soul. Now more details later.

Doubting the Soul . . .

Only that *Jiva* who is aware that he is himself the spirit- animate, can pursue the devotion of the three gems. The feelings of devotion can arise only in *chaitanya* (animate) and not in *jada* (inanimate). *Jada* and *chaitanya* are both totally different. Those characteristics which are in the *chaitanya* will not be in *jada* and vice versa.

From the physical point of view, there may well be many similarities, but the specific ability of knowing the existence of the Self is different in both. In '*Natak Samaysar*', the great poet Banarsidas has very clearly explained the characteristics of *jiva* and *ajiva* -

समता रमता उरधता ज्ञायकता सुखभास
वेदकता चैतन्यता ये सब जीव विलास . . .

Equanimity, engrossment in the true form of the Self, elevation in to the true disposition of the Self, knowing, feeling the infinite bliss, sensitivity to happiness and sorrow, constant animation - all these are characteristics of the *jiva*.

तनता मनता वचनता जडता जडसम्पेल
लघुता गुरुता गमनता ये अजीव के खेल . . .

Taking the form of body, mind and speech, inanimate state which also results in the inanimate, lightness, heaviness and momentum - all these are characteristics of the *ajiva*.

This same matter is told by Srimadji in the '*Atmasiddhi Shastra*'. The misconception in the disciple that body is the soul, creates in him doubts about the existence and the independent existence of the *atma*. This is the major mistake of the *jiva*. Unless and until *atma*'s difference from the body and the like is understood, true faith does not arise. Due to the awakening of *darshanmoha* the true form of the Soul does not become apparent. That is why the benevolent *Gurudev* explains the same matter in various different ways. He says -

जड चेतननो भिन्न छे, केवळ प्रगट स्वभाव;
एकपणुं पामे नहीं, त्रे काळ द्वयभाव ५७

Son! As has been told earlier, the true disposition of both animate and inanimate is clearly different. Where the disposition is different, there the substance is also different. The meaning of disposition itself is the existence of the Self. The two whose existence is identified by their varying true disposition are bound to be different. Fire is identified by heat and water by its cool. Both have totally different dispositions and hence their existence is also different.

Indeed two opposing substances, in spite of remaining together forever, can never become one. This is the same of large substances or small substances. For instance, if in a large vessel large and small fruits and seeds were to be added - Coconut first, then apple, followed by lemon, then areca-nut, then pepper, then mustard and finally poppy seeds. If the vessel is thus filled and kept for a long time, they do not become one. It may be easier to later separate the larger fruits but the smaller ones may prove difficult. Why! You may feel played out by the time you separate the mustard and poppy seeds. But they can certainly be separated. They do not become one.

Similarly the *atma* has been occupying the same space along with the inanimate body and inanimate karmas from infinite time. But it has not become inanimate and in the same way the inanimate body and karmas have not turned animate. In Srimadji's words -

जड स्वभाव जड परिणमे, चेतन चेतन भाव;
कोई कोई पलटे नहीं, छोडी आप स्वभाव,
जड तो जड त्रण कालमां, चेतन चेतन तेम;
प्रगट अनुभव रूप छे, संशय तेमां केम ?

The same matter has also been told by Shri Sahajanandji -

क्षीर जल न्याय अनादिथी, तुज संबंध जड साथ;
पण तुं - तुं जड - जड सदा, सौ - सौ निज - निज नाथ . . .

Thus the *Gurudev* suitably solved all the doubts of the disciple and convinced him that the disposition of *jada* and *chaitanya* are totally different. The existence too of both the substances is different, and is prepared to remain so forever. Therefore *chaitanya* - animate

is the *atma*, rest all the substances are *jada* - inanimate. You are *chaitanya atma*. Your existence is different from all else.

Having explained thus far, if there were any doubt remaining about the existence of *atma* in the mind of the disciple, the *Gurudev* further says these meaningful words -

आत्मानि शंका करे, आत्मा पोते आप;
शंकानो करनार ते, अचरज एह अमाप ५८

The disciple had said : ‘Hence there is not *atma*’ and presented all his doubts, and as such had believed that there is no *atma*. The *Gurudev* solved the doubts of the disciple one by one through proper foresight, meaningful arguments and impressive speech. *Gurudev* has a knack of unravelling the deepest of the mysteries of philosophy in a simple way. The speciality of Srimad Rajachandrajī’s words is that he can explain the most difficult and mysterious principles in a simple and lucid manner. This quality is apparent in all his literature.

Gurudev tells his disciple, “Brother! I am greatly surprised. You say, ‘Therefore there is no *atma*’, then who is the one deciding so? Who, indeed, is the one doubting the *atma* itself? Who is the one experiencing ‘I’ and ‘mine’? If you think, you will surely understand that none else but the *atma* can have such a feeling.”

Indeed as a rule, only of some thing that exists in this world, does the doubt about its existence or non-existence arise. Had a substance named *atma* not been in this universe, then the doubt about its non-existence would not have arisen. So it proves that *atma* exists. How amusing it is that the self is doubting itself! Have you ever seen or heard a person saying so - “Brother! Please come here! See if I am or not!” If a person is asking so about a thing or another person, it sounds right. But if a person asks so about himself, then people call such a person a madman. He gets categorised as a fool. In the same way, O Disciple! This *jiva* has become *pudgalanandi* (पुद्गलानंदी) - blissful in its attachment to *pudgala*, has got so deeply involved with the

pudgala that he has forgotten his self. He does not know what the true form of his self is like. He becomes a laughing stock by raising the doubt 'Am I or am I not?'.

This is like accepting the image that is seen in the mirror but not accepting the existence of mirror. If the image in the mirror is accepted, be it that of the body or of any thing, then that in which this image is being reflected - namely the mirror, is assumed to be accepted. For the reflection is not in space. It needs some shiny surface. It could be a mirror, metal or water; but without such a thing there cannot be a reflection. Such a thing gets accepted along with the reflection.

O Disciple! The 'you' that you are doubting, is sitting right within you. The attribute of knowledge that is in it is itself raising the doubt. Had the *atma* not had the quality of knowledge, it would not raise any kind of doubt nor would it be curious. Whatever be the inanimate thing, it cannot raise a doubt or a question. The inanimate does not have the quality of knowledge. Therefore, the one who has raised the doubt is itself the *atma*. It is an animate substance which has done so through its quality of knowledge, try to understand this.

This is like a man who has lost his memory, doubting about himself or forgetting himself. Have we not heard this one - Ten friends went out on a stroll. They went a great distance roaming. There came a wide river on the way. Water was up to the banks, it was the rainy season, water was rising and floods were likely. But they were young and adventurous. All ten of them jumped into the river and swam across to the other bank quickly. They thought, 'We had entered the river with its water rising, let's hope none of us got left behind. Let us count'

One of them began to count. One, two . . . and reached nine. There was no tenth. Another said, 'You do not know how, let me count', and he counted nine too. Thus all counted and they counted only nine. They looked at each other. 'Oh, oh! Who was lost from amongst us? Just can't make out. The count is not ten, and can't

figure out who was lost. Didn't even see anybody flowing away with the waters. What do we do now?' They were really worried.

An old man was passing by. He saw the young men standing around with worry writ large on their faces. He asked, 'Brothers! What is the matter?'

'Oh, Uncle! Ten of us stepped into the river and one of us was lost.' The old man asked, 'Are you sure? Did you see him flowing away?'

'Well, that is the problem! We are unable to understand. There were ten of us when we started and now there are nine. Can't make out the one whom we lost'.

The old man was wise. He said, 'Wait, let me count', and he counted and found ten of them. He said, 'Ah, Brothers! You are ten'.

'What! Are we ten? Uncle, when we counted it was only nine'.

'Count again, let's see!'

One of them counted again, and again there were nine. The old man said, 'You fool! You are leaving out yourself. Were there ten including you or without you?'

'No, no, ten including me.'

'Then include yourself! You are counting all others and forgetting yourself.'

Brothers! While rejecting the existence of the *atma*, the ignorant *jiva* also makes a similar mistake. It only accepts things that are visible to the eye. *Gurudev* also says the same thing, 'You accept the pots and pans and but do you not accept the one who knows them?'

The disciple realised his folly, and went deep into contemplating over the principles told by the *Gurudev*. What he tells the *Gurudev* on coming out of his thought, forms the opening pages of the next volume.

Contemplation upon the Self

I am the Soul.

Sat – Chit – Anand . . . I am the Soul.

Sat – Chit – Anand is my true form.

***Sat* . . .**

Sat is existence. I am a substance with existence.

A permanent – eternal – indestructible substance.

I shall always remain . . . I cannot ever be destroyed.

I was in the past, I am in the present, and . . .

shall be in the future. I am imperishable.

The body is perishable. I have neither birth, nor death.

What is born is the body . . . and what dies is also the body.

I am neither born nor dead.

The body is neither of me, Nor am I of the body.

I am a complete *chaitanya* substance . . .

Independent of the body. I am the Soul.

***Chit* . . .**

Chit is *chaitanya*.

Chit is knowledge. I am in the form of knowledge . . .

In the form of the Knower . . . The Knower of the entire world.

But my natural disposition of knowledge . . . has turned
passionate and is being scattered . . . wasted from infinite time

. . . in trying to know the entire outside world . . . through the
medium of mind and intellect.

I can now know my Self . . . only if I withdraw my
involvement . . . from the worldly substances . . . and free my
characteristic of knowledge . . . from all passions . . . and
stabilise it in the effort of knowing the Self.

I want to know my Self. I want to believe in my Self.

I want to experience my Self. *Sat – Chit – Anand*

Anand . . .

Anand . . . Bliss

Bliss is my true form.

In every single space in my atma . . . there resides infinite joy.

I want to experience my joy.

Believing in joy is my natural disposition.

There is no sorrow in me. I can never become sorrowful.

No person, no power, no situation in this world . . .

Can ever make me sorrowful.

I have to stabilise in my Self . . . breaking through. . .

the ignorance, the illusion that I am sorrowful.

Only if I encompass myself, stabilise myself within

my Self . . . intent upon avoiding this sorrow . . .

can I know my Self, believe in my Self.

Hence, for some more moments . . .

I shall further concentrate . . .

Further delve deeper . . .

To contemplate upon the Self.

I am the Soul.

I am the Soul.

Aum – Shanti – Shanti – Shanti!

Contemplation upon the Self

I am the Soul.

Sahaj Swarupi Atma – The Soul naturally in its own true form
... dense with *chaitanya*. ... I am naturally in my true form.
My true and pure form is not artificial.
That is to say, nobody has created my true form.
Nobody has sculpted me ... nobody has built me.
I was not formed by anybody's making.
I am self generated. I am in my natural form.

My form as knowledge ... is my own fundamental nature,
My true original form.
Similarly, the life energy - *chaitanyata* ... That abounds in
me, is also natural. Nobody has infused *chetana* into this Soul.
The Soul is life itself, in its fundamental form.
It has not turned *chetan* from *jada*.
Neither has it turned *chetan* on account of *jada*.
It is not a substance deriving out of some other.
It is *chaitanya* itself, within itself, in its own way.
All the visible inanimate substances of this world ...
Are made by somebody, are created by somebody.
What is made, is also destructible.
Where there is creation, there is also destruction.
I was never created, as such I am indestructible.
I naturally AM.
The infinite characteristics abounding in me ...
are also natural.
The *chetan* substance of mine ...
and the transitions of the characteristics of Knowledge etc.,
are natural too.

What is artificial, unnatural ... is Attachment and Aversion.
They are the passions ... they are the aberrations ...

they are the affected disposition.

Rising above all these . . . I am of the natural disposition . . .

I am of the naturally blissful state . . .

I am in the naturally knowing state . . .

In my true original form.

My existence is not supported by anybody.

My retention is not at anybody's mercy.

I am an entirely self-reliant . . .

Absolutely independent substance. I am natural

My characteristics are natural

The transitions in my natural disposition . . .

Are natural too.

In the transitions of the affected disposition . . . there is the involvement of the ripened Karmas.

Whereas in the transitions of the natural disposition . . . there is nobody involved.

I am such a self-reliant, independent substance . . .

The *sat-chid-ananda* substance . . . The Soul.

This contemplation . . .

delving into the depths of the mind . . .

stabilising in the Soul . . .

to attain the Soul.

Only contemplating upon the Soul.

I am the Soul.

I am the Soul.

Aum Shanti! Shanti! Shanti!

Contemplation upon the Self

I am the Soul.

Inactivity - *akartapana* . . . is my natural disposition - *svabhava*.

There is no activity in me.

This Soul . . . in its true original form is inactive.

If the *atma* remains engrossed . . . encompassed within itself . . . in its true original form . . . It is inactive.

If venturing out of its true form . . . mistaking the affected disposition to be its own . . . it begins to transform, then . . . It becomes active, a doer - *karta*.

The feeling of being a doer, that . . . I develop attachment, I harbour aversion . . . are the activities of the *jiva*.

By transiting through good and evil thoughts . . . the *jiva* becomes the doer of *papa* and *punya*.

The good and evil thoughts are not mine . . . neither are the *papa* and *punya*.

I AM aloof from all these.

In the transitions of the pure state of the *atma* . . . there is neither *attachment* nor *aversion* . . . neither is there *papa*, nor *punya*.

Aloof from all these . . . dense with *chaitanya* . . .

I am the Soul.

I am the Soul full of *jnana* and *darshana*.

For all those moments, when . . . I am stable within my Self, withdrawn from the involvement with the material world . . . withdrawn from the involvement with the affected disposition, I am inactive - *akarta*.

I want to manifest . . . my eternal inactive state.

Hence, if I abandon the feeling that I am the doer.

If I abandon the feeling of possessiveness in the *para* . . .
If I sway in the state of *jnana darshana upagyoga* . . .
Then I shall be able . . .
To manifest the state of my true original form.

Hence, if I know my self,
If I recognise my self,
If I experience my self,
If I stabilise within my self,
If I encompass myself within my self
I shall attain my true *sat-chid-ananda* form.

For a few moments more, . . .
becoming more peaceful . . .
becoming more engrossed, . . .
only contemplating upon the Soul.

I am the Soul.

I am the Soul.

Aum, Shanti! Shanti! Shanti!

Silent delineation . . .

The unwavering, true experience of 'I am the Soul' . . . the excellent progressive detachment in the *Sadhaka* state . . . the *Upadhyaya* mode absorbing the unravelled mysteries of the voice of *Veetaraaga* . . . followed by the *Acharya* mode, as if representing the *Arihants* . . . various modes being attained one after the other in the *Sadhaka* state . . . with the tearing-off of the veil of *moha*, the transparent crystal-like brilliant state of *Arihant* . . . attainment of complete progress of the *atma* while in the body . . . and then the *Siddha* state in the form of freedom from the bondage of the body . . . the gradual progress of the *atmic* state . . . the sparks emanating from the developed *chetana* flying in all directions . . . the glow of the *atma* in the form of attainment of the supreme state of the six statements . . . the glow of the soul encompassing the soul as if saying 'I am the Soul'.

