

Path to **Righteousness**



Contact of Saints

Happy New Year



A HAPPY NEW YEAR

As the New Year dawns, let us resolve to fill it with the fragrance of noble deeds and thoughts to beautify this segment of our life with gem-like radiant qualities of mind and heart and to acquire the art of living with discrimination and discretion.

It is our earnest hope and prayer that the New Year brings peace and spiritual prosperity, to everyone.

Inspiration : Reverend Shri Atmanandji

Editor Publication Committee

Price : Rs. 10.00 Each

Rs. 8.00 Each (100 or More)

Type Setting : Bhagavatsing Zala

Publisher : Shri Jayanathbhai Shah, President

Shrimad Rajchandra Adhyatmik Sadhana

Kendra, Koba, 382 007

Dist. Gandhinagar (Gujarat).

Phone : (079) 2327 6219, 2327 6483/484

Fax: (079) 2327 6142

www.shrimad-koba.org

E-mail : srask@rediffmail.com

Greetings And Compliments Of The Season

Shri/Shrimati _____

Let this year be a healthy, loving, sacred, honest
and illuminating

May the New Year bring waves of happiness in the
ocean of your life.

May God make your New Year simple and
successful.

May this year be a tribute to life through the
well-being of others as well as of the society.

May this year be filled with the fragrance of
virtues.

May this New Year bring reciprocity of love, unity,
and happiness in your family.

These are our hearty wishes.

WELL WISHER: _____

ADDRESS: _____

DATE: _____

Publisher's Preface

It has been our tradition to present during the festive season a small bouquet of wholesome literature embodying elevating and enlightening ideas, and in pursuance of the same we feel great pleasure in putting this little booklet into your hands. The festive season greeting cards are seldom, if ever, preserved in our homes, whereas this little booklet will pass from hand to hand, and it will definitely invoke a true desire for noble living and promote moral well being. It will inspire in the readers an inclination towards development of virtues such as benevolence, peace, cooperation, tolerance, humility, and straightforwardness, which are rightly regarded as building blocks of righteous living.

We are sincerely thankful to Mr. Ashokbhai K. Bhatt for the translation of a portion of this Booklet.

It is hoped that people in this country and abroad who value culture more than wealth, spiritual progress more than material welfare, and benevolence more than self-interest will welcome this publication and make good use of it. May God grant us the wisdom and the will to study, to preserve, and to propagate such literature as it will lead to moral integrity and goodwill among all.

**Publication Committee,
Shrimad Rajchandra Adhyatmik Sadhana
Kendra, Koba.**

Think and You Will Get It

- (1) The first teaching of the saint is that you are in bondage due to your own fault. Your only fault is to believe yourself as owner of other things and forget your own self.
- (2) Association of the enlightened is of supreme benefit for the soul.
- (3) Compassion is the intrinsic nature of religion: Where there is no compassion there can be no religion.
- (4) Detachment is the perfect guide to lead us to enduring happiness.
- (5) All religious practices, austerities, and study of scriptures are to achieve only one goal; and that is to disregard all mundane matters and surrender at the holy feet of a saint (divine truth).
- (6) In the ever-changing world the association of saints is invaluable and incomparable.
- (7) Wise men constantly strive to avoid endless pain and sufferings of infinite births for the sake of trivial pleasures of this life.
- (8) Great saints advise us to keep constant vigil against adding new karma while undergoing the fruition of the past karma.

Shrimad Rajchandra

Run the Chariot with Great Care

This chariot of life runs continuously with fuel of thoughts and is governed by the soul. If it is carefully guided it will take you safely and happily to the desired destination of peace and happiness. Some rules that must govern the management of the chariot are given below and if these are followed scrupulously, the journey will be a glorious experience.

One should always keep in mind the graciousness of God who has given you the use of the chariot. He is the owner and you should not fail in acknowledging your indebtedness.

Please bear in mind that, like you, there are others on the road. Their safety and happiness should be your prime consideration. Travel with them in good fellowship and help them in their difficulties. If, on your way, you find elderly or afflicted fellow travelers, aid them in their hour of need.

You will encounter hurdles and hindrances - bumps, thorns, and misleading signs-in the course of your journey. Beware of all that distracts you or lures you away from the straight path leading to the predetermined goal. Beware of cheats and swindlers like anger, arrogance, and attachment, and do not give way

to tiredness, boredom and sloth.

It is a long Journey and you must provide yourself with good association and nourishment as well as the tools of vigilance to make the journey enjoyable and keep the chariot in good from.

If we drive the chariot with faith, discrimination, patience, and perseverance, it will arrive at the divine abode of eternal bliss sooner or later where there is no fear, no disease, no tension, and no worries.

- Shri Atmanandji (Koba)

Time for a Smile

Barbara Walters of 20/20 (ABC Television) did a story on gender roles in Afghanistan, several years before the Afghan conflict. She noted that women customarily walked 5 paces behind their husbands.

She recently returned to Kabul and observed that women still walk behind their husbands.

Ms. Walters approached one of the Afghani women and asked, "Why do you now seem happy with the old custom that you once tried so desperately to change?"

The woman looked Ms. Walters straight in the eyes, and without hesitation, said, "Land-mines."

Conversations with God

Venkataraman, who was born in the small village of Thiruchulli in Tamil Nadu, had a sudden spiritual awakening when he was sixteen. Consequently, he felt no interest in worldly affairs. He left home and went to live on mount Arunachala where he spent days in deep meditation and prayer. Soon he attained self-realization and came to be known as Raman Maharshi. Following the philosophy of non-duality of soul (Advait Siddhant) his saintliness brought him a great renown.

But, as always happens with remarkable personalities, there were many traditionalists and pretentious Pundits who were jealous of his spiritual greatness. One day a small group of his opponents came to him and said, "You are a fraud. No one in this world has seen God and you have been leading the gullible people on the wrong path. You only talk about uninterrupted spiritual practice and you claim that you talk to God for 3 hours everyday. Would you show where your God is? Your hypocritical talk of devotion and God will no longer fool us. Either you show us your God or confess your pretence, which is misleading the innocent people."

Their shouting disturbed the quiet of the mountainside and troubled the disciples.

Raman Maharshi said, "Dear friends, do you want to see God? You come tomorrow morning. I will clearly show God."

Next morning the critics came early morning. They were really not interested to see the supreme entity but they wanted to expose the hypocrisy of Maharshi.

The saint came out of his cave, and started walking down the forest. He asked the men to follow him. He led them to a small hut in a dark corner of the forest.

One critic said, "Does God live in such a dark hut?"

Raman replied, "Yes. You come with me."

Inside the broken down hut there was a worn out charpoy on which lay an old man and his wife. They were both afflicted with leprosy and unable to move. Raman had brought some rags and medicines for them. He diligently washed their bodies, applied the ointment and covered the ugly sores with bandages. After the dressing was over, he turned around towards his opponents and said: "Here you see my Gods. And now I am going to converse with Them."

Those men who were waiting to slander Raman Maharshi earlier were deeply touched by what they saw and they asked for his forgiveness.

Family Members

Some times we see people getting embarrassed by the so-called unsophisticated behavior of their family members. They keep on apologizing about their lack of class and manners or about their drawbacks to outsiders.

- ❖ My wife can't speak proper English; she doesn't know what's happening in the world, so I avoid taking her out or introducing her to my friends and business associates...
- ❖ My parents can't eat with a spoon and fork, so I don't take them to restaurants...
- ❖ My husband is working as an ordinary clerk, so I feel awkward when I introduce him to my rich friends...
- ❖ My brother is mentally challenged, so I don't feel like going out with him...

More than love and devotion for a family-member, it is very important to understand and have a healthy respect for the other person's life-style.

Here is a real life illustration:

An old man, staying in a small south Indian town came to visit his son in Bombay. The son, in his early thirties, is a successful businessman living with his wife and son. The father, having

spent most of his life at his birthplace, hardly understood a splatter of Hindi or English, forget Marathi. But he didn't care. 'I have come here to spend a few days with my son and his family. I don't have to go out and socialize with the city people.' he reasoned.

But the son is very excited about his father's rare visit to Bombay. He wants to make the best of it. He and his wife want to show him around the city. And yes, the son enjoys those evening hours too, when he and his father go out and sit in a good bar, sipping their favorite drink.

Last week he was in a very good mood. 'Let's go to a five-star hotel's bar tonight.' He told his father. It was a beautiful evening. Talking about everything under the sun they had a few drinks. As usual they were offered some salad, peanuts, wafers etc. as accompaniments with their drinks.

The father being almost toothless was not much interested in eating. But that day when they got up to leave, he simply took a handful of roasted Chana and stuffed it in the fold of his Dhoti. He might have thought about munching on them, sitting in the car, or whatever. Unfortunately while walking in the lobby, he missed a step and stumbled. Down he went, scattering the Chana on the plush carpet.

Is that an embarrassing situation?

'Never again will I take my old man to such hotels.' - a likely reaction?

Not from this son. Gently, with a smile, he helped his father get back on his feet. Instead of feeling irritated or angry, he was amused. He found the whole incident very funny. Laughing, they both went home and on the way they decided to return to the same place the following Sunday. The old man liked the place and liked the Chana too.

A few days later, at a friend's place they both described this event and made everybody laugh.

'Weren't you embarrassed?' Somebody asked the son.

'Oh, come on now' replied the son. 'He is my father. He talks in his native language, prefers to wear a Dhoti, even to a posh city hotel, takes Chana from the bar to eat later, does whatever he feels like.... So what? Why should I feel embarrassed with his nature and habits? Nobody has a right to stop him from doing whatever he feels comfortable with, as long as it is not harmful to others.'

'What about the staff in the hotel?' He says, 'They should be concerned only with their bills and tips. I am concerned about my father's happiness.' The wife too totally agrees with the husband on this issue. She feels there are other

qualities in her father-in-law to feel proud of.

The son says, 'A seventy plus old man doesn't want to change his life-style now. He likes the way he eats, dresses, or talks. In his eyes there is nothing wrong with the old ways of living.'

He adds, 'Everybody has a right to live as per his wish. Now at his age, why should he be forced to learn to eat with a fork and knife, if he doesn't want to? I will feel bad if he is doing something morally wrong or indulging in some harmful activities. But otherwise it is fine. I am not going to try to change him at this stage. He is my father. I love him, I respect him.'

Most people have this fear of other peoples' opinions and comments. What would others say? They think and try to alter their own way of living. They don't think how happy his family member would feel if he gets an opportunity to go to some swanky restaurant or a fun-filled party. Your wife, mother, father, little sister, and old aunt...all those people depending on you for their happiness.

If you don't fulfill their desires, who will? They are what they are. We are what we are. We don't have to change ourselves to please strangers. Doing that would be a life long misery.

Yudhishthira's Dharma

The great battle was being fought on the plains of Kurukshetra between the armies of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. That war was a righteous war, that is to say it was fought with strict observance of the rules of war. One of the rules was that the armies after fighting during the day would rest for the entire course of the night and the hostilities would then cease till next morning.

One night Sahadeva, the youngest of the five brothers, noticed that his eldest brother, Yudhishthira, was changing into a civilian dress and a mask to hide his identity.

Sahadeva asked, "My dear brother, you are the idol of truthfulness for everyone. Why are you hiding your identity?"

Yudhishthira replied, "Every night I go to the battlefield with a disguise."

Sahadeva asked with curiosity, "But the hostilities end after the sunset. Then, what is the purpose of going to the battlefield?"

Yudhishthira said, "There are the wounded warriors lying there in great pain, unattended, in dire need of water. Nourishment, medicines, loving care may relieve them from pain and sufferings. I go there to give them whatever

comfort I can before they die.”

“Are you going to nurse those enemies who fought against you for the entire day?” Sahadeva asked.

“Sahadeva, the friends and enemies are alike while serving the wounded and afflicted ones. Serving the afflicted is our most important duty.” Yudhishtira said.

“You are completely exhausted after the all-day fighting in the field. Why would you nurse the enemy soldiers who tried to kill you in the battlefield during the day? Aren’t there other ways to offer services?” Sahadeva asked.

Yudhishtira replied, “We should always abide by our Dharma and perform our moral duties even when engaged in warfare. Our prime moral duty is to serve our fellowmen.”

“But why do you have to alter your appearance to serve the wounded soldiers?” Sahadeva asked.

Yudhishtira replied “If I don’t go in a disguise, the wounded may be disconcerted and embarrassed on being served by me. They may not feel comfortable and may refuse to accept my services.”

As Yudhishtira walked out, Sahadeva gazed at him in full veneration and awe.

The Power of Non-Violence

Dr. Arun Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi and founder of the Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence, in his June 9 lecture at the University of Puerto Rico, shared the following story as an example of practicing non-violence in parenting:

"I was 16 years old and living with my parents at the institute my grandfather had founded 18 miles out side of Durban, South Africa, in middle of the sugar plantations. We were deep in the country and had no neighbors, so my two sisters and I use to always look forward to going to town to visit friends or go to the movies.

One day, my father asked me to drive him to town for an all-day conference, and I jumped at the chance. "Since I was going to town, my mother gave me a list of groceries she needed and, since I had all day in town, my father ask me to take care of several pending chores, such as getting the car serviced.

When I dropped my father off that morning, he said, 'I will meet you here at 5:00 p.m., and we will go home together.' After hurriedly completing my chores, I went straight to the nearest movie theatre. I got so engrossed in a John Wayne double feature that I forgot the time. It was 5:30 before I remembered. By the time I ran to the

garage and got the car and hurried to where my father was waiting for me, it was almost 6:00.

He anxiously asked me, 'Why were you late?'

I was so ashamed of telling him I was watching a John Wayne western movie that I said, 'The car wasn't ready, so I had to wait.' Not realizing that he had already called the garage.

When he caught me in the lie, he said: 'There's something wrong in the way I brought you up that didn't give you the confidence to tell me the truth. In order to figure out where we made mistake with you, I'm going to walk home 18 miles and think about it.'

So, dressed in his suit and dress shoes, he began to walk home in the dark on mostly unpaved, unlit roads. I couldn't leave him, so for five-and-a-half hours I drove behind him, watching my father go through this agony for a stupid lie that I uttered.

I decided then and there that I was never going to lie again. I often think if he had punished me the way we punish our children, whether I would have learned a lesson at all. I don't think so. I would have suffered the punishment and gone on doing the same thing. But this single nonviolent action was so powerful that it seems as if it happened yesterday.

That is the power of non-violence."

A Story of Love...

It was a busy morning, approximately 8:30 am, when an elderly gentleman, in his 80's, presented to have sutures (stitches) removed from his thumb.

He stated that he was in a hurry as he had an appointment at 9:00 am.

I took his vital signs and had him take a seat, knowing it would be over an hour before someone would be able to see him.

I saw him looking at his watch. Since I was not busy with another patient, I decided to evaluate his wound.

On exam it was well healed, so I talked to one of the doctors, got the needed supplies to remove his sutures and redress his wound.

While taking care of his wound, we began to engage in conversation.

I asked him if he had a doctor's appointment this morning, as he was in such a hurry.

The gentleman told me no, that he needed to go to the nursing home to eat breakfast with his wife

I then inquired as to her health. He told me that she had been there for a while and that she was a victim of Alzheimer Disease.

As we talked, and I finished dressing his

wound, I asked if she would be worried if he was a bit late.

He replied that she no longer knew who he was, that she had not recognized him in five years now.

I was surprised, and asked him, "And you are still going every morning, even though she doesn't know who you are?"

He smiled as he patted my hand and said, "She doesn't know me, but I still know who she is."

I had to hold back tears as he left, I had goose bumps on my arm, and thought, "That is the kind of love I want in my life."

True love is neither physical, nor romantic. True love is an acceptance of all that is, has been, will be, and will not be.

A Legacy for Your Children

You go through painstaking efforts to leave plenty of money to your children for their financial security. But do you have the same concern for leaving behind a rich religious legacy of faith and devotion? Money may help their daily needs for this life only; however, the inheritance of true religion will ensure their spiritual well being and happiness of this life and the next.

Value of Life

Ready or not,
someday it will all come to an end.

There will be no more sunrises,
no minutes, hours or days.

All the things we collected,
whether treasured or forgotten,
will pass to someone else.

Our wealth, fame and temporal power
will shrivel to irrelevance.

It will not matter what we owned
or what we were owed.

Our grudges, resentments, frustrations,
and jealousies will finally disappear.

Our hopes, ambitions, plans,
and to-do lists will expire.

The wins and losses
that once seemed so important
will fade away.

It won't matter whether
we were beautiful or brilliant.
Even our gender and skin color
will be irrelevant.

So what will matter?

How will the value of our days be measured?

What will matter is
not what we bought, but what we built;
not what we got, but what we gave.

What will matter is not our success,
but significance of our existence.

What will matter is every act of integrity,
compassion, courage, and sacrifice that
enriched, empowered or encouraged others
to emulate our example.

What will matter is not our competence,
but our character.

What will matter is not how many people we knew,
but how many will feel a lasting loss
when we are gone.

What will matter is how long we will be
remembered, by whom and for what.

Living a life that matters,
doesn't happen by accident.

It's not a matter of circumstance but of choice.

**Let us choose to live a life
that can matter.**

The Cookie Thief

A highly-educated professional woman bought some cookies and a book at an airport and sat down to read and nibble while waiting for her plane. Soon she noticed that a man sitting next to her casually took a cookie from the bag in between them. The lady was shocked but remained silent, seeing, as this man, without the slightest sign of shame or gratitude, quietly helped himself, matching her consumption cookie for cookie.

When there was only one cookie left, she watched in amazement as he picked up, smiled at her as if he were being gracious, and broke the cookie in half. He ate one half and gave her the other. She congratulated herself for maintaining her cool and saying nothing to this rude cookie thief, simply astonished at the nerve of some people.

Later, when she was settling in her seat on the plane, she rummaged through her purse and discovered the bag of cookies she'd purchased, still unopened. The moral message is contained in the closing stanza:

"If mine are here," she moaned with despair,
"Then the others were his and he tried to share."

Too late to apologize, she realized with grief,

that she was the rude one, the ingrate, and the thief.

Lesson to learn :

Being sure is not the same as being right. Certainty without humility can lead to self-righteousness that distorts our view and understanding of the world and of people.

Humility does not require that we be equivocal or doubtful of our deepest convictions about religion or right and wrong. What it asks of us is that we hold and even advocate our beliefs without dismissing the possibility that others may be right too, or as in the cookie case, instead.

TV and Children

In the past parents were held to be the major influences on the children. As they grew up, friends of the family would come up with comments like. 'This boy takes after the mother and that one is a copy his father.' But the way the children are hooked to TV channels, the day is not far when we may hear comments like "This boy takes after Zee TV and that one takes after Star TV.

Today's TV channels are aggressively attacking the young minds and causing serious damage to the cultural wealth. The terrorism of the obscene and violent TV programmes is more dangerous than any religious fanatics.

Choice of a Successor

The mind of Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, had achieved an even balance of devotion, knowledge and renunciation. He attached great importance to chanting the name of the lord and to inner purification.

One day he called his son and said that, while attending to other business, he had inadvertently left out the daily sweeping of the floor of the hall where people came for chanting and prayer. "Will you please go and do the cleaning before the people arrive?"

The young man, who had just come out of the bath, didn't want to do the cleaning work, as it would soil his fine dress. Besides, he was averse to doing a menial job. He replied, "Father, after my bath I would like to go and pray. Please ask Angad to clean up the hall."

Nanak then asked his disciple Angad to do the job. Not with standing his recent ablutions and change of dress. Angad went to the hall and painstakingly and maliciously cleaned it. After doing the work to his satisfaction and to his master's approval, he went to bathe again.

The next day Guru Nanak was to announce his choice of a successor. The common tradition

was to appoint the son as heir apparent. But when the congregation assembled, to everyone's amazement Nanak announced the name of his disciple Angad. When someone asked the guru why he had overlooked the claims of his son, he said, "One who will not clean up a hall to protect his fine clothes cannot be expected to undertake the task of cleaning up a social order."

The next day the Guru was to announce his choice of a successor. The common tradition was to appoint the son as heir apparent. But when the congregation assembled, to everyone's amazement Nanak announced the name of his disciple Angad. When someone asked the guru why he had overlooked the claims of his son, he said, "one who will not clean up a hall due to the fear of soiling his clothes cannot be expected to undertake the task of cleaning up a social order."



Evil's Household



Greed is the father of sin.

Violence is the mother of sin.

Malicious mind is the sister of sin.

Non-truthfulness is the brother of sin.

Pride is the son of sin.

Desire is the daughter of sin.

Deceit is the wife of sin.



The Boy and Old Man

A little boy wanted to meet God. He knew it was a long trip to where God lived, so he packed Twinkies and a six-pack of Root beer and he started his journey.

When he had gone about three blocks, he met an old man. He was sitting in the park just staring at some pigeons.

The boy sat down next to him and opened his bag. He was about to take a drink from his root beer when he noticed that the old man looked hungry, so he offered him a Twinkie. He gratefully accepted it and smiled at him.

His smile was so pleasant that the boy wanted to see it again, so he offered him a root beer. Again, he smiled at him.

The boy was delighted! They sat there all afternoon eating and smiling, but they never said a word.

As it grew dark, the boy realized how tired he was and he got up to leave, but before he had gone more than a few steps, he turned around, ran back to the old man, and gave him a hug. The old man gave him his biggest smile ever.

When the boy opened the door to his own house a short time later, his mother was surprised by the look of joy on his face.

She asked him, "What did you do today that made you so happy?"

He replied, "I had lunch with God."

Before his mother could respond, he added, "You know what? He's got the most beautiful smile I've ever seen!"

Meanwhile, the old man, also radiant with joy, returned to his home. His son was stunned by the look of peace on his face and he asked, "Dad, what did you do today that made you so happy?"

He replied, "I ate Twinkies in the park with God."

However, before his son responded, he added, "You know, he's much younger than I expected."

Sometimes we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.

Golden Maxims

1. Those who never err are the all-knowing sages.
2. Those who never repeat an error are the wise ones.
3. Those who do not justify an error are the clever ones.
4. Those who never acknowledge an error are the foolish ones.

The Promise

My wife called, 'How long will you be poring over that newspaper? Will you come here and make your darling daughter eat her food?'

I tossed the paper away and rushed to the scene.

My only daughter Sindu looked frightened. Tears were welling up in her eyes. In front of her was a bowl filled to its brim with Curd Rice. Sindu is a nice child, quite intelligent for her age. She has just turned eight. She particularly detested Curd Rice.

My mother and my wife are orthodox, and believe firmly in the 'cooling effects' of Curd Rice! I cleared my throat, and picked up the bowl.

'Sindu, darling, why don't you take a few mouthful of this Curd Rice? Just for Dad's sake, dear. And, if you don't, your Mom will shout at me' I could sense my wife's scowl behind my back.

Sindu softened a bit, and wiped her tears with the back of her hands.

'OK, Dad. I will eat - not just a few mouthfuls, but the whole lot of this. But, you should...' Sindu hesitated. 'Dad, if I eat this entire Curd Rice, will you give me whatever I ask for?'

'Oh sure, darling'.

'Promise?'

'Promise'

I covered the pink soft hand extended by my daughter with mine, and clinched the deal.

'Ask Mom also to give a similar promise', my daughter insisted.

My wife slapped her hand on Sindu's, muttering 'Promise', without any emotion.

Now I became a bit anxious. 'Sindu dear, you shouldn't insist on getting a computer or any such expensive items. Dad does not have that kind of money right now. OK?'

'No, Dad. I do not want anything expensive'.

Slowly and painfully, she finished eating the whole quantity. I was silently angry with my wife and my mother for forcing my child to eat something that she detested.

After the ordeal was through, Sindu came to me with her eyes wide with expectation. All our attention was on her.

'Dad, I want to have my head shaved off, this Sunday!' was her demand.

'Atrocious!' shouted my wife, 'A girl child having her head shaved off? Impossible!'

'Never in our family!' my mother rasped. 'She has been watching too much of television. Our culture is getting totally spoiled with these TV programs!'

'Sindu darling, why don't you ask for something else? We will be sad seeing you with a clean-shaven head.'

'No, Dad. I do not want anything else', Sindu said with finality.

'Please, Sindu, why don't you try to understand our feelings?' I tried to plead with her.

'Dad, you saw how difficult it was for me to eat that Curd Rice'. Sindu was in tears.

'And you promised to grant me whatever I ask for. Now, you are going back on your words. Was it not you who told me the story of King Harishchandra, and its moral that we should honor our promises no matter what?'

It was time for me to call the shots. 'Our promise must be kept.'

'Are you out your mind?' chorused my mother and wife.

'No. If we go back on our promises, she will never learn to honor her own. Sindu, your wish will be fulfilled.'

With her head clean-shaven, Sindu had a round-face, and her eyes looked big and beautiful.

On Monday morning, I dropped her at her school. It was a sight to watch my hairless Sindu walking towards her classroom. She turned around and waved. I waved back with a smile.

Just then, a boy alighted from a car, and shouted, 'Sinduja, please wait for me!' What struck me was the hairless head of that boy. 'May be, that is the in-stuff', I thought.

'Sir, your daughter Sinduja is great indeed!'

Without introducing herself, a lady got out of the car, and continued, 'That boy who is walking along with your daughter is my son Harish. He is suffering from leukemia.' She paused to muffle her sobs.

'Harish could not attend the school for the whole of the last month. He lost all his hair due to the side effects of the chemotherapy. He refused to come back to school fearing the unintentional but cruel teasing of the schoolmates.'

'Sinduja visited him last week, and promised

him that she will take care of the teasing issue. But, I never imagined she would sacrifice her lovely hair for the sake of my son! Sir, you and your wife are blessed to have such a noble soul as your daughter.'

I stood transfixed. And then, I wept. 'My little Angel, you are teaching me how selfless real love is!'

Let us remember this story the next time we think that kids are too young to know anything.

Wealth and Virtues

Wealth is like a flashlight.
Virtue is like a light bulb.

A flashlight illuminates only in one direction.
A light bulb illuminates in all directions.

Happiness of wealth spreads in one direction,
only for limited individuals, and only for this life.

Happiness of virtues spreads in all directions,
for many individuals, and for this life
as well as the next lives.

Prayer To God

O God....

...Do not give me wealth if I become greedy and can't use it for selfless purposes.

...Do not give me power and strength if I become egoist and can't utilize it to protect helpless and distressed lives.

...Do not give me intelligence if it leads me to achieve name, fame and success, but prevents me to reach you.

...Do not give me a smooth and happy life if I forget to remember you in that ease and comfort.

The question is : Am I ready to do this from the bottom of my heart?

Smart Teacher

Four high school boys afflicted with spring fever skipped morning classes. After lunch they reported to the teacher that they had a flat tire.

Much to their relief she smiled and said: "Well, you missed a test today so take seats apart from one another and take out a piece of paper."

She waited for them to sit down. Then she said: "First Question: Which tire was flat?"

Just Laugh It Away

It would be a rare day in our lives if we could live 24 hours without having to deal with some type of disappointment. The chances that our expectations will not be met each day by individuals, governments, businesses, clients, vendors, organizations, family members and the like are very likely.

In fact, as we mature through the life cycle, it seems we are likely to be let down in some way by at least a simple majority of the people we come in contact with.

Did you ever stop to think why you are disappointed so often? Is it just happening to you or everyone around you? Are you wondering if your expectations are too high? Are you doing something wrong? Maybe! Have you taken the time to understand that you will be disappointed often and that you must be prepared to deal with disappointment?

Because we are given the natural ability to freely choose our actions, it means that we are also free to make mistakes and learn from them. So, disappointments and mistakes will forever be a part of the human experience. To wish that others should be perfect, when dealing with us, is a wish that cannot come true. For even you have made mistakes

and will continue to make more in the future.

However, being prepared for disappointments and being persistent in overcoming the obstacles they present will make us a stronger and more determined individual. We need a strong character to make it in the fast paced world that we live in. We must know what we want from life and plan carefully to acquire it. We cannot let others not meeting up to their responsibilities stop us from meeting yours.

It took me a long time to realize that we cannot change the people around us if they don't want to change. You cannot change the clerk in the store who is doing a lousy job. You cannot change the contractor who always breaks his promises to perform. You cannot change your boss who is always losing his temper. You cannot change a family member to do things the way you think is right.

But the one person who we can change is our self! We can change how we react to disappointment. It is within our power to laugh at the chain of events that occur during a day rather than be angry and disgusted.

It is within our power to have the determination of an ant, which finds a way to accomplish its mission, regardless of the obstacles it faces. Our reaction to disappointment is where

our power lies.

And whether we want to admit to it or not, it is us who chooses how we are going to react. No one can make us react a certain way. Everything depends on what we want. Many times reactions are learned. If your father slammed the phone down when he was angry, you may have learned to do the same thing.

The peaceful alternative always exists; it just has to be consciously chosen. But why choose to react peacefully? What are the benefits?

Well, to begin with, if we want to live a happier life, it is best to choose a peaceful reaction to life's disappointments.

If you want to be happy—prove it! If we are constantly yelling and upset about how someone else messed up, then our proclamations of wanting to be a happy person are just hot air.

When we choose peaceful reactions, not only will we have a happy mental life, but we will also have a healthier physical life.

Our bodies are like chemical factories that are more powerful than any pharmacy on earth. The body translates every emotion into chemicals that have measurable, observable effects. Joy, love, and contentment bolster our physical being, while negative emotions like anger and stress cause all types of harm and imbalance in our bodies.

So imagine this: We live in a world where mistakes are made and will always be made. Would it be logical if every time someone makes a mistake, or causes some disappointment, for us to choose (through our emotions) to mentally and physically harm ourselves? What will we achieve by that? We should not harm anyone, let alone our self.

Living happily does not mean that everything around us must be perfect. It means choosing to be happy in spite of the fact that it will never be perfect.

Disappointments will always come our way. We must try to be more prepared for the disappointments. We must choose to be happy! We must have the mindset to laugh it off and persist to overcome any disappointment.

Time for a Smile

Two men were out golfing. As one was ready to take his shot, a funeral procession drove by the golf course. The man stopped what he was doing, put down his club, and took off his hat and placed it over his heart.

His partner was moved by this and said, "That's the nicest thing I've even seen you do!"

The man looked back at him and said, "Well, that's the least I could do after 20 years of marriage..."

The King's Regret

Soon everyone in the town of Patan came to know that the great scholar saint, Hemchandracharya was no more. Rich and poor, learned and illiterate, hundreds joined the funeral procession, which was led by the devotee Kumarpal, the ruler of the kingdom.

When the mortal remains of the sage were placed on the sandalwood pyre and subjected to the flames, Kumarpal's eyes were filled with tears. Never before had the people seen their ruler crying like a child in plain sight of one and all. His minister came up to him and politely said, "Your majesty, you must give way to grief like a common person. We have lost a great man, but everyone who is born is bound to die one day and great men are no exception. Besides, our guru's spirit is still with us as the soul does not die."

Kumarpal tried to compose himself. After he had recovered, he said, "I am not weeping over my mentor's death, for he had to pay his debt to nature just like any other man."

"Then, way do you shed these tears?" the minister asked.

"You know that a Jain monk is forbidden by canonical law to partake food at a king's palace.

Our revered guru could go to the house of a poor farmer and get alms from him." The king continued with a tear-choked voice, "Never could I offer him a glass of water. Why didn't I give up my royal seat? If I had, I could have the benefit of offering alms to our pious guru. I am now repenting for my ill fortune."

Book Changes Life

Books have been known to lead to great movement in thought and bring about great changes in our lives. Here is an example of such a change.

Werner Karl Heisenberg, when he was nineteen worked as a guard in a factory. One day he picked up an old copy of Plato's 'Timaiyas', a book of philosophical dialogue, at a bookseller's shop. He found it fascinating and this led to a keen interest in the atomic sciences. He applied himself from then on to a serious study of physics. At the age of 26, he obtained professorship at Laipxing. His study and research led to the quantum theory and for this he was awarded the Nobel prize for physics in 1932.

Single-minded devotion can bring miraculous results. This is equally true in spiritual practice as it is in science.

Pearls of Wisdom

1. Love does not seek to dictate, demand or domineer: submission and surrender is the nature of love.
2. The little profit that you reap, through another's distress, Will one day make you weep, and rob your happiness.
3. Having reached the top of a ladder, one must be thankful to the lowermost step of the ladder.
4. For children, instances of goodness and heroism have a character-building influence.
5. When everyone acts with due consideration for others we shall have heaven on earth.
6. Fashions tear more clothes than actual wear.
7. That woman is a good wife who turns her husband to a righteous path.
8. Greatness of soul is reflected in humility of speech.
9. Not largeness of the house but largeness of the hearts will make families live together.
10. Not increase of income but decrease of wants brings happiness.
11. Labels do not always indicate levels.
12. The true yogi is the one who lives for

others.

13. Avoid temptations and accept inconveniences: that's how you'll always be cheerful.
14. Give children no fences, no boundaries; give them the earth and sky to roam in.
15. Cleanse the body with a bath, the mind with good thoughts, wealth with benevolence, and the soul with prayer and meditation.
16. Wealth without restraints is like a mad bull that will some day knock you down.
17. Offer insults when living
And flowers when dead:
How do we treat our parents
In these enlightened times?

The Power of Love

- 1 Love is that mystic tonic that makes an enemy into a true friend, a wicked man into a good man, a good man into a holy man, and a holy man into an image of God.
- 2 Love is the tool of the strong. Hate is the weapon of the weak.
- 3 Love has a soothing effect, as it leads to devotion; attachment has a burning effect, as it leads to passion.
- 4 If faith demands courage, love demands sacrifice.

Gandhi's Loincloth

Even a small incident may alter a man's entire course of life. This is well illustrated by the episode in which Mahatma Gandhi decided to give up a formal dress.

After his return from South Africa, Gandhi decided to travel through all parts of India to acquaint himself with the living conditions of his countrymen. During his travel he came to a village where a poor lady came to see him. Her dress was so badly torn and dirty that Gandhi thought that she must be too lazy to wash and patch her clothes. Gandhi scolded her, saying, "you must not wear such dirty cloths. Why don't you wash them? You must cultivate personal cleanliness and learn good hygiene." The woman did not utter a word for a while. At last, she gathered her courage and said, "It is not my fault that I am not dressed decently. I do not have any rag other than what I am wearing now. How can I take this off to wash it in the river with all the other bathers around me?"

Gandhi had never come across any instance of such extreme poverty before. He resolved then and there to give up dressing formally and took to wearing only a loincloth. A little incident led to a momentous change!

The Making of Life's Mansion

An old man, when he grew very weak, went to live with his son. His limbs shook and his sight was failing. When the family sat down for dinner, the old man's hand shook as he raised the spoonful of beans to his mouth and they spilled on the ground. When he picked up the glass of milk, it spilled on the table.

The son's wife made a cynical face and suggested the old man had better have his meals on a tray in his room. From the next day the old man was served his meals in his room. But the son's wife flared up again when china plate and dishes broke. At last it was decided to serve his meals in a wooden bowl.

For a few days the grandson observed not only the mess made by the old man but also the fuss made by his mother.

One day the boy sat down with a little piece of wood he found in the yard and started scraping it with a chisel. When his father saw this, he asked him what he was going to do. The boy replied with a smile, "Daddy, I want to make a wooden bowl for myself so that when I grow old, I can eat out of it." The boy's parents realized their mistake and from that day onwards the old man ate at the table with them. They also realized that all events and experiences of early years are the foundation blocks to build a child's life and character.

Let Go, Let God

In the Japanese Zen tradition of Buddhism there have many saints renowned for their equanimity of mind. This is the story of one such saint named Bokuza. When Bokuza was a little boy, he lived with his mentor. One day while he was dusting the room of the master, a beautiful clay statue fell on the floor and was broken. The boy stood aghast.

This was such a beautiful statue. It was used for worship for many generations.

He was filled with dread since his guru practiced his meditation while sitting in front of this icon that was now broken. He put the pieces together and placed it where it belonged. When his guru came for the prayer, he asked him why people die.

"They die when their time comes," said the master, "Time determines everything: when you are born, when you reach maturity, when you grow old, and when you die."

"Guruji, the statue broke today by my mistake." Bokuza said.

"Always bear in mind that whatever happens follows a destined course. Neither grieve nor rejoice and in all events and circumstances keep thou a composed mind," the master said, and added, "Let go the events that are insignificant. And as for major occurrences that affect you, Let God determine the destiny."

Noble-Mindedness

When his son asked for twenty rupees, the man recalled that earlier that week he had given him the same amount. He knew his son was well behaved and had not yet given him any cause for anxiety. He was regular at school and brought excellent reports, but the man wanted to find out what the boy did with the money. So, after handing out twenty rupees, he asked his servant to follow him and report what the boy did. The boy went to a slum where poor families lived. There he met another boy who was dressed very poorly. Together they went to a bookshop, and when they came out the poor boy was carrying a parcel of books and his face was glowing with joy and happiness.

The servant on going back to his master reported what he had seen. When the boy returned home, his father hugged him and said he was fortunate to be blessed with a son who observed the golden rule to put him in the place of others.

That boy who showed such generosity of spirit was none other than the great national leader Chitranjanjan Das who came to be known as Deenabandhu or friend of the poor.

Existence of God

In a barbershop, as the barber began to work, he began conversation with the customer. They talked about so many things and various subjects. They eventually touched on the subject of God.

Barber: I don't believe that God exists.

Customer: Why do you say that?

Barber: Well, you just have to go out in the street to realize that God doesn't exist. Tell me, if God exists, would there be so many sick people? Would there be abandoned children? If God existed, there would be neither suffering nor pain. I can't imagine a loving God who would allow all of these things.

The customer thought for a moment, but didn't respond because he didn't want to start an argument.

Just as he left the barbershop, he saw a man in the street with long, stringy, dirty hair and an untrimmed beard. He looked dirty and unkempt.

The customer turned back and entered the barbershop again.

Customer: You know what? Barbers don't exist.

Barber: How can you say that? I am here, and I am a barber. And, I just worked on you!

Customer: No! Barbers don't exist because if they did, there would be no people with dirty

long hair and untrimmed beards, like that man outside.

Barber: Ah, but barbers DO exist! What happens, is, people don't come to me.

Customer: Exactly! That's the point! God, too, DOES exist! What happens, is, people don't go to Him and don't look for Him. That's why there's so much pain and suffering in the world.

Discipline

Ramprasad 'Bismil', the young revolutionist, was given a death sentence. On the morning of the execution day was to take place the warden came to wake him up and found him already engaged in his daily drill of stretching exercise. The official was surprised and he asked the prisoner, "What was to be gained by doing the exercises when shortly you are going to die on the gallows?" Ramprasad, while he went on with his workout, said that since human life is governed by ideals and corresponding rules and duties, the arrangement should not be broken or suspended as long as one lives.

We know that it is not unusual for common folks to change their routine or plan of action for paltry reasons. But here was a man who, with masterly self-discipline, kept to his scheme of life even while facing death.

True Love Alters Not

This is the story of a loving couple. For ten years after their marriage they had no child. A son was born to them in the eleventh year. Both husband and wife were overjoyed with the presence of the little one, and took good care to protect him from injury and illness.

One morning two years later, as the man was leaving home for work, he suddenly remembered that he had left a bottle of a dangerous drug on the floor of his room. But, since he was in hurry, he asked his wife to put it away. Now it so happened that the wife, busy with chores in the kitchen, delayed going to the room. When she finally went there, she saw the two-year-old toddler was having severe convulsion with foam at the mouth. The empty bottle lay by his side.

She immediately rushed the child to a hospital, but he died soon after. The sorrow of losing her only child was now mixed with fear as she awaited her husband's arrival.

The man, when he entered the ward, was most distressed and did not speak a word to his wife. However, after saying a silent heartfelt prayer at his son's bedside, he came and stood near his wife, looked at her with love and compassion, and said, "Blaming ourselves for what has happened is of little use, for it will not bring back

our son. It will only sour our lives. Best it is to surrender us to God's will. At this sad moment, I would like to do all I can to lighten your burden of grief."

So, instead of indulging in mutual accusation, they comforted each other in the hour of sorrow.

Freedom From Anxiety

- (1) Examine what is worrying you. Investigate into the causes of the anxiety and if you find no rational basis, stop worrying.
- (2) Take a liberal view of others behavior and adopt a constructive attitude towards critical opinions.
- (3) If there is a serious predicament or impasse, try to resolve without tension.
- (4) In spare time, engage your mind in reading, painting or listening to music.
- (5) Do not attempt what you cannot execute. Do not make commitments you cannot fulfill.
- (6) Associate with people who have a cheerful disposition and a positive attitude.
- (7) Guard against forming addictions as a way to forget worries and tension.
- (8) Have total faith in God and in the power of a heartfelt prayer. Pray everyday.
- (9) Learn to carry out your daily routine with love and joy.

Crave No Forgiveness

The great thinker was on his deathbed preparing to depart this life. All his life he had devoted to thinking about ways and means for improving the condition of mankind. Not a word, not a line, in the book of his life needed to be blotted or scrapped, and now he lay quietly waiting to meet his end.

It is not uncommon for elderly folk to gather around a dying person with advice and instruction about correct forms of ritual to be followed to sanctify the death. In this instance, an old lady approached the thinker and said, "This is the time when you should confess all your sins and seek forgiveness."

The thinker gently replied, "Madam, I have never deviated from the straight righteous path the divine wisdom showed me. I have always done His will. I have not caused injury to any fellow being. I can die with a clean conscience without seeking forgiveness of God or anybody in this world."

That thinker was none other than the American philosopher Thoreau whose thoughts served as a source of inspiration for Mahatma Gandhi.

Check Your Health

- (1) Do you feel true hunger at regular hours everyday?
- (2) Do you get into dreamless sleep soon after you go to bed? Do you wake up fully refreshed?
- (3) Do you have easy regular bowel movement?
- (4) Do you feel warm on the feet, cool in the head, soft in the abdomen and clean and fresh on the tongue?
- (5) Do you wish to have your relationships sweet and pleasant?
- (6) Does pressing on the navel cause no pain? Are the nasal passages free and open?
- (7) Do you perform your daily tasks with interest and enthusiasm?
- (8) Can you sit erect as long as you wish? Can you bend to hold your toes?
- (9) Does your chest protrude further in front than your abdomen?
- (10) Can you concentrate on a job? Can you control your mind? Does your mind have good thoughts?

If the answer to each question is 'YES', you have a clean bill of health. Thank God.

Thoughts to Contemplate

If you worry, you didn't pray.

If you pray, don't worry.

As a child of God,
prayer is like calling home every day.

Blessed are the flexible,
for they shall not be bent out of shape.

When we get tangled up in our problems,
be still. God wants us to be still.
So He can untangle the knot.

Do this math daily, count your blessings.

Silence can be misinterpreted,
but can rarely be misquoted.

Laugh every day.
A hearty laugh is like inner jogging.

The most important items in our home are
the people living with us.

Growing old is inevitable,
growing up is optional.

There is no key to happiness.
The door is always open.

A grudge is a heavy thing to carry.

God wants spiritual fruit,
not religious nuts.

We do not remember days,
but we remember moments.
Life moves too fast,
so enjoy your precious moments.

Faith is the ability
- not to panic.

It's all right to sit on our pity pot
every now and again.
Just be sure to flush when you are done.

The goals and dreams we are seeking require
courage and risk-taking.
Observe the turtle; it only makes progress
when it sticks out its neck.

Be more concerned with your character
than your reputation.

Your character is what you really are,
while your reputation is
merely what others think you are.

Time for a Smile

About 3:30 in the morning, a wife wakes up to find she is alone in the bed and she can hear her husband crying uncontrollably.

She gets up and starts to look for him. He's not in the bathroom, living room, or in the kitchen.

As she passes the laundry room, she hears his faint sniffles coming from the basement. She turns on the light and goes downstairs to find him.

Finally, she finds him huddled in the corner, rolled up into a ball, and crying hysterically. She runs over to him and asks why he is crying.

He says, "Do you remember when we got married twenty years ago?"

She looks at him and says, "yes".

He says, "Well, a couple of months before that, your dad said that I could marry you or go to jail."

She says, "I already know that. I don't see what the problem is."

He says, "Don't you see!! I would have gotten out today!"

Friends and Friendship

- Friends listen to what you say; best friends listen to what you don't say!
- Friends are those rare people who ask how you are and then wait to hear the answer.
- If you can buy a person's friendship, it is not worth it.
- Anyone can give advice, but a real friend will lend a helping hand.
- A friend is someone who reaches for your hand but touches your heart.
- A friend is never recognized till he/she is needed.
- Friends are those who speak to you after others don't.
- A friend is one who puts his finger on a fault without rubbing it in.
- You will never have a friend if you must have one without faults.
- Friendship is a responsibility, not an opportunity.

Now, let us check ourselves:

- **If you were another person, would you like to be a friend of yours?**

Time for a Smile

Lawyers Always Win

A Mafia Godfather finds out that his deaf bookkeeper has cheated him for ten million bucks.

His deafness was considered an occupational benefit, and why he got the job in the first place, since it was assumed that a deaf bookkeeper would not be able to hear anything he'd ever have to testify about in court.

When the Godfather goes to shakedown the bookkeeper about his missing \$10 million bucks, he brings along his attorney, who knows sign language.

The Godfather asks the bookkeeper: "Where is the 10 million bucks you embezzled from me?"

The attorney, using sign language, asks the bookkeeper where the 10 million bucks is hidden.

The bookkeeper signs back: "I don't know what you are talking about."

The attorney tells the Godfather: "He says

he doesn't know what you're talking about."

That's when the Godfather pulls out a 9 mm pistol, puts it to the bookkeepers temple, cocks it, and says: "Ask him again!"

The attorney signs to the underling: "He'll kill you for sure if you don't tell him!"

The bookkeeper signs back: "OK! You win! The money is in a brown briefcase, buried behind the shed in my cousin Enzo's backyard in Queens!"

The Godfather asks the attorney: "Well, what'd he say?"

The attorney replies: "He says you don't have the guts to pull the trigger."

Time for a Smile

Two friends met in a Bar after work and one said to other, "Great Switzerland, great. You have given me the most happy and pleasant moments of my life."

The second friend asked, "That is strange; you have never been to Switzerland." The first friend said, "Yes, but my wife has gone to Switzerland now."

Householder's Prayer

O God!

Please teach me how to live a righteous life in difficult circumstances.

Please teach me how to stay calm to maintain inner peace when everything is going wrong.

Please teach me how to continue my sincere efforts when the goal appears to be extremely difficult to accomplish.

Please teach me how to absorb the useful comments when harsh and abrasive criticism is coming from all directions.

Please teach me how to hold the strength of discrimination when crowded by worldly temptations, praise, and flattery.

Please teach me how to peacefully and patiently await your blessings when I am drowning in the darkness of difficulties, my faith is dwindling, and my mind is sinking in disappointment.

SHRIMA RAJCHANDRA AdhyATMIK SADHANA KENDRA, KOBÄ

Inspired by Reverend Shri Atmanandji

Aims & Objectives

To promote, establish and protect the sublime cultural and spiritual values of life.

To initiate & enhance the study and research of Spiritual Scriptures and Non-Absolutism.

Promoting education in Divine Music.

To train selected aspirants so that they become good disciplinarians.

To propagate noble ideas in the society through various means like inspiring spiritual literature, Yoga shibirs, studies of spiritual scriptures, sessions of Satsanga and audio-visual-media, so that some selected aspirants are inspired to live an ashramite way of life.

To promote and support public health activities by arranging occasional diagnostic, blood donation and allied camps.





**I am the Soul,
Your obedient Soul,
True friend of you all.**

- Pujya Shri Atmanandji



SHRIMAD RAJCHANDRA ADHYATMIK SADHANA KENDRA

(Conducted by Shri Satshrut - Seva - Sadhana Kendra)

Koba - 382 007, Dist. Gandhinagar. (Gujarat)

Tel. : (079) 23276219, 23276483/4 Fax : (079) 23276142

www.shrimad-koba.org E-mail : srask@rediffmail.com