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## Panyas Udayvallabh vijay

# MIND YOUR

#### Panyas Udayvallabhvijay

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#### MIND YOUR MIND By PANYAS UDAYVALLABHVIJAY

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#### Ketanbhai D. Sangoi

1/12, Vaibhav Apartment, Shreyas Cinema Lane, Sanghani Estate, L.B.S. Marg, Ghatkopar (E), Mumbai - 86. Mobile : 9224640070

#### Milanbhai

Anand Trade Link Pvt. Ltd., 401, Span Trade Centre, Opp. Kochrab Ashram, Paldi, Ahmedabad - 380 006 Mobile - 9375035000

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#### Shashibhai

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### FOREWORD

Nobody can make an iron nail from a gold coin.

Similarly, nobody can make a gold ring from an iron bar.

There can be a difference in the shape of the raw material and the finished product, but there can never be a difference in the basic substance.

A given circumstance is a raw material. Normally, a state of mind arising from that circumstances is the finished product. However, the human mind is an amazing machine. It can manufacture a desired product from any kind of material. If the mind so desires, it can create from the iron slab of adverse circumstance, a gold coin of positive mental condition. If the mind so desires, it can create from the sparkling gold of prosperous circumstance, a pointed nail of unfortunate mental condition. We all are endowed with such a powerful mind. Hence it is very essential to decide the direction in which we should let this mind work. We need to be understanding and cautious in this matter. "Best out of Waste" is becoming the new trend of tomorrow's manufacturing practices. We can create BEST like happiness out of WASTE like instances and circumstances.

What determines our happiness or unhappiness is not the external circumstances or conditions but our mental attitude or reaction towards those circumstances. Mental Attitude is everything in life. Two persons can react very differently in the same situation. While one can become highly tense and anxious, other can still maintain a state of calmness and happiness while dealing with the situation. There is nothing in this life which can be called catastrophic or unbearable. Everything can be handled with serenity. No problems are permanent. Negative thinking weakens the mind and makes it restless and agitated. Convert every negative situation into positive one by re-adjusting our mental attitude. For this we need to increase our mental strength, tolerance, will power and faith in God.

Given in this book are various tips for working in this direction and achieving internal peace and stability of the mind. Nothing happens by chance or accident. Universe has a certain order and everything is bound by a relation of "Cause & Effect". For every effect there is a cause. Whatever is happening to us right now is because we have put certain *karmas* to operation in the past and unless all these *karmas* are gradually wiped out in the form of effects and no fresh *karmas* are generated by us, we will not be free and happy for ever.

Never curse your luck for misfortunes, but face reality boldly. We have made our destiny by our own deeds. Our past has shaped our present and our present will shape our future. Accept self responsibility for your life. If we accuse others for our sufferings, we are simply invoking a new chain of cause and effect and making matters worse. Remember that everything that happens in our life is for our good only.

In the apparently cruel and adverse looking circumstances is hidden the Infinite Mercy and Grace of God. That is why enlightened persons always thank God in problems and consider them as gift of God. If we learn to welcome problems, they will eventually lose their hold upon us and we will become their master instead of slave. Based on above understanding consider all problems as means to grow and remain level minded in success or failure, gain or loss, praise or insult, so as to stop any fresh bondage of *karma*. All negative emotions and attachments result in formation of deep impressions (*sanskaras*) in our subconscious mind which result in various biases and prejudices in our mind in favour of and against various things and reduce the mind's ability to see things in the true sense as they really are. In other words, emotions of like-dislike, love-hate, jealousy, revenge etc. should be gradually rooted out, resulting in an unbiased and detached mind which can remain calm, serene and balanced in all trials and odds of life.

It is possible to sculpt a beautiful sculpture of divine happiness even from the stone quarries of unfortunate, mammoth and difficult circumstances. What is required are several instruments, that are suggested in this book. They will be useful to all of us. If I can be instrumental in the happiness of the readers and through that insure my own policy of happiness, what more can I ask for ?

I am extremely grateful to all those revered ones who have provided me covert support to write this book and remember them with my deepest gratitude. Together with that, those who gave me direct support and to whom I am extremely indebted to, are *Param Pujya Acharya Vijay Muktivallabhsuriji*, who has forever inspired me with the greatest enthusiasm, *Panyas Hridayvallabhvijayji*, my younger brother and all the other *Mahatmas* of our group.

Panyas Udayvallabh vijay [Disciple of Pujya Gurudev Panyas Meghvallabh vijayji]

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#### **SMILE GLOWS, HAPPINESS FLOWS**

The *tripadi* given by *Bhagwan Mahavir* to his *ganadharas* (apostles) is like an alchemy that guarantees transmutation of any substance into gold. This gold producing chemical is amazing. The *tripadi* has given words the form of *aagams*, the supreme scriptures. An alchemy does not produce new metal, but can transmute base metals into gold.

The compassionate Lord saw the entire universe in his infinite knowledge and realized the pain and sufferings of all living beings. He saw ignorance to be the root cause of all sufferings. To dispel the darkness of ignorance and spread the knowledge of light, He gave the *TRIPADI*.

The gandhars absorbed Lord Mahavir's flow of thoughts and knowledge and transformed them into words and scriptures in the form of *Aagams*, which became a connecting bridge between the Lord and all beings. The *Aagams* act as a guiding force to liberate the soul from the bondage of *karmas*. Thus the *Aagams* are said to be the most valuable scriptures for self purification and attainment of ultimate objective of internal infinite happiness. A beautiful gift created from the fascinating *aagams*, is the revered *Aachaarang Sutra*. The way treasure trove of thoughts that are reflected in every sentence of this holy scripture, you may feel like calling it *Vicharang sutra* also.

The Aacharaang Sutra has used a beautiful shloka, (a couplet), to depict the state of the universe. If you want to portray the meaning of this shloka <u>अड्रे लोए</u>, then you have to present the entire universe as engulfed in flames. The chemistry of the world, that has entered into the new millennium, is very pathetic. There is a fire of unhappiness and also a fire of happiness.

Some are unhappy because of ill health. Some are unhappy because of lack of wealth. Some are dejected as they have no position in the society. Some are depressed as they have no fame in the market. Some have problems related to the house, some have problems with their spouse, whereas some have problems in meeting their daily expenses. Some are upset as they are childless; Some are upset as their kids are disobedient. Some are happy with their son, but upset about their daughter-in-law. Some are satisfied with their son and daughter-in-law but are unfortunate not having a grandchild. In spite of having a big family, some are worried due to financial crisis. While some of them have abundant wealth, but no successor to look after the wealth. Some are blessed with wealth and complete family but are suffering immensely due to poor health. Some are upset about their looks, some about their voice and some about their handwriting.

Some are afflicted by lack of intelligence, while some are distressed by lack of talent, some find their house small, some feel that they have less clothes, some find their furniture bad, while some find their family selfish.

Some are unhappy about not having a car, some are unhappy as their car is old, while some are unhappy because someone else has a better car !

Just as the flag fluttering on the temple shrine announces the

presence of God inside, the smile on a person's face reflects the joy over-flowing in his heart. The happiness reflected in the smile and its scarcity and immense value is expressed by using this special phrase **"a Million Dollar Smile"**. The commercial value of a smile on a person's face is expressed using this phrase. Who would be foolish to commit a mistake of selling off such a precious smile for the sake of an insignificant loss or a worthless trouble ? Of all the articles and parts of the temple, its flag is the lightest in weight. The smile on a person's face is extremely light, yet it carries a lot of weight in a person's life. The smile on a person's face cannot be destroyed or stolen. It reflects the inner happiness of a person.

Today laughing clubs have emerged at many places. Laughing therapy has become a new faculty in the sphere of health and welfare. However, this therapy involves artificial laughter. Unlike plastic flowers, a genuine smile is like a blossoming natural flower.

The smile on a person's face is very precious. It is difficult to attain the same, and even more difficult to retain it. How long would a drop of water that falls on the ground last ? Even if nobody wipes it off, it will evaporate in due course of time. The smile on a person's face is just like a drop of water falling on the ground. The greater the heat of difficulties, the sooner it evaporates.

You need so many things to retain this smile. Good health, loving and caring relatives, enough wealth and so on. If everything is convenient, then this smile will last. If anything from amongst these goes topsy turvey, this smile will immediately fade away. **When the breeze stops blowing**, the flag still hangs and does not fall down, though it stops flying. Similarly, when the breeze of happiness collapses, our life hangs on the pole, it carries on with dullness without any meaning. The beauty of the flag lies not in merely hanging but in flying. The purpose of our life too is not merely hanging around, but living with contentment and happiness at all times.

When the freedom struggle was initiated against the Britishers who ruled our country for centuries, the freedom slogan that echoed in the country was **"Freedom is my birth-right"**. Since infinite times this soul which should be experiencing the nectar of eternal bliss is under the bondage of its own *karmas*. We should remember the valorous slogan coined by Shri Lokmanya Tilak in this new context, **"Happiness is my birthright"**.

Let me present a poem that is like a soothing balm to a person who is enwrapped in depression and unhappiness :

The Sun rises up and sets down the way The Moon grows, glows and moves away The ocean vast, faces tides low and high Hey human ! problems and pleasures stay together, Don't sigh !

There was never a single incident in *Bhagwan Rishabhdev's* son, Emperor *Bharat's* life when he had to cry. After the *nirvana* of *Bhagwan Rishabhdev*, *Indra* had taught *Bharat* to cry to give vent to his inner grief. Today will we have to teach people to laugh?

There are thousands of languages in the world, but smile is a universal language which even a baby can speak. Why can't we make it our language?

There is an interesting phrase that introduces us to the beauty and power of the smile : **A smile is a curve, that sets everything straight.** If a person cannot produce one sweet line on his cheek, three straight lines are formed on his forehead!

If there is smile on a person's face, you can gauge that he is happy at heart. The main instruction given by the photographer in a studio is : "please keep a smiling face". Here keeping a smiling face means having a cheerful heart. Inner happiness which can be read on the face is called a smile.

Mental happiness is the real wealth of life. Happiness is a precious ornament of the mind. The tranquility of the soul is a sign of happiness in this life and the reason for a superior state of birth (*sadgati*) in the next life.

People do not like if there is a crease on their clothes. They do not like it at all if there are wrinkles on their face. They are extremely cautious and ensure that there is no crease on clothes nor any wrinkles on face. How cautious are they to ensure that there is no crease on the mind which is more precious than clothes and body?

You can evaluate a person's thoughts from his behavior and his facial expressions There is a nice quote in *Sanskrit* in this context : आकृतिः कथयति गुणान् ! In other words we can say : **Face is the mirror of a human-being.** 

Though a rose blossoms on the rose shrub, it fills the whole surrounding environment with its sweet fragrance. Similarly, when a person carries a smile on the face, he makes the whole environment light and peaceful.

To protect the towering buildings against the hazard of earthquakes, the modern engineers use instruments like slider ball-bearings in its pillars. Due to this, the building may shake a bit but will not fall down in an earthquake.

Similarly it is necessary to train the mind in this manner, so that it attains balance and stability. You should train the mind in such a way that if someone writes an essay on our mind, he would title the essay as "Mind : A garden like status".

Bogged by various adversities which attacked him simultaneously, a depressed and defeated man decided to end his life. He started planning to execute his decision. He left home with a resolute intention of committing suicide by jumping in front of a running train, passing by the heart of the city. He had to walk on the main street of the city for 1.5 to 2 kms to reach the railway tracks.

Before leaving home he kept one exception to his resolution to commit suicide : on the road to the railway tracks, if he met passers-by and if he found a beautiful smile on even one person's face which reflected his immense inner state of happiness, he would change his decision to commit suicide and return home. The logic being, smile signifies that life is worth living and it would help him to restore his faith in life.

Let us forget what happened to that person, but let us ask this question to ourselves : if I would have met that person on the road, would I have been instrumental in re-kindling his faith in life ?

The answer to this question will perhaps give a CT scan report of our whole life in our hands.

#### GLORY OF OLD AGE

Many years ago we has gone to pay obeisance (vandan) to poojya Saint Acharya Bhadrankarvijayji. He was around 95 years old then. He was not keeping well and could hardly eat. Yet he was extremely cheerful. He used to spend most of the day reading scriptures. He had to strain his eyes to read and was able to hear with great difficulty.

We paid our obeisance to him, inquired about his health and then sat down in front of him. One amongst us asked him casually, "*Pujya Saheb* ! now you may be facing great difficulty in reading and hearing, isn't it ?" He smiled softly, closed his book, sat upright and replied to us by raising a counter question, : "During old age people's eyes, ears and limbs become weak. Tell me why does this happen ?"

We realized that he was only too keen to answer his own question. Hence we remained silent and moved closer to him with enthusiasm, to listen to his reply. He made an amazing point : "Look ! Eyes, ears, tongue, etc. are called senses of knowledge (*gnanendris*), because we get to see, taste, smell, touch and hear the words through these senses. Our limbs are called the senses of actions (*karmendris*), because we can perform various activities using them. Old age means a condition of retirement from external feelings and activities and the act of going within. To ensure that the senses stop running and wandering outside, in due course of time, nature only calms down the tempting nature of the senses. Nature is trying to warn us that you have seen a lot; through the senses,

achieved a lot; now be introvert, be a mate of your soul. Now embark on a journey where you are cut off from all your senses of outward knowledge and you go within to discover your true self. In this journey you will discover that the source of True and infinite Happiness (*ananda*) is our soul and we have no use of our external senses to find real happiness. This enlightenment helps us to appreciate nature and accept the state of old age." We were enlightened about this amazing chemistry related to the state of old age.

How will you define the state of old age? - poor vision, hearing impairment, breathing difficulties and fatigue while walking. As we understand, the state of old age is only a sum total of weaknesses and dependencies. The state when you cannot do anything is the state of old age, isn't it? By defining thus, you are insulting old age.

Old age is one such precious asset, that is not acquired by anyone with haste. A beautiful state that can be achieved only after completing at least six decades of our life and after а journey through so many purusharthas, cannot be just devalued lightly. We will have to learn to see the state of old age from some positive angle. Don't think that the state of old age is merely longevity depicted in numbers. Along with it, is the longevity of experience. You should think at least ten times before humiliating an old person with rich experience, by calling him as `बुहा ' or `डोसा' as experience is a very valuable asset. Experience can be compared with a beard. The beard does not grow unless you are grown up.

If someone questions, "what can you do during the state of old age ?" we should raise a counter question in reply, "what is it that you cannot do during the state of old age?" Many expert players contribute to society by coaching others after their retirement. In this manner, can't a man share his experiences of incidents in his life and the lessons learnt from them with the new generation ? The routine of a `period of activity' followed by a `period of sharing experience' is an established norm.

Sometimes as a youngster you might have taken blind risk and faced punishing consequences, which you may have repented. You (the elder generation) can make the present generation cautious about the same as you have already faced it. You can also explain them the significance of destiny by recounting your own experiences, where though you had planned everything meticulously and yet things went haywire. At the same time, they should not get depressed if proper planning sometimes does not work. You can also teach them the importance of hard work and not to rely entirely on destiny. You can lay a strong foundation for the bright future of your grand-children by constantly nurturing their thought process and character building.

However while you advise, counsel and instruct the new generation, please keep in mind the commercial theory of "demand and supply", so that the difference between warning and nagging is kept in mind, and your own peace of mind is not disturbed. In this way, the state of old age is a platform for doing good to others.

The state of old age is a beautiful phase, where the scope of whatever you could have done during your entire youth is completed, and there is ample scope for doing whatever you could not do during your busy schedules when you were young. Due to the hassles, anxiety, running around and the burden of responsibilities involved with an active work life, there may have been many important activities which could not be pursued. The state of life where you have ample free time to pursue those activities is old age. Reading spiritual books, attending spiritual discourses and undertaking various benevolent activities which could not be pursued while you were leading an active life, can all be fulfilled during this golden opportunistic period called old age.

Shri Shantichand Zaveri who was a pearl trader in Mumbai handed over his entire business to his sons at the age of 55 years and renounced the world with a firm determination to spend the remaining years of his life to attain his own selfrealisation. He took *diksha*, renounced the world at Sawarkundla and became the disciple of *Gurudev Bhuvanbhanusurishwarji*. He was renamed as *Pujya Muniraj Shobhanvijayji Maharaj Saheb*.

Even at the age of 87 years, we have observed his daily rituals very closely since the past few years. Though now he cannot travel extensively (*vihaar*) nor go outdoor for *gochari*, yet he continues to perform his indoor spiritual practice by reading scriptures, meditating and seeking happiness from the divine nectar of bliss, sip by sip. We feel embarrassed despite our young age, when compared with his awful gorgeous old age. He reads the scriptures for hours together every day. He will mark the important lines with a pencil. Thereafter he will note the important points in his diary. Once I asked him jokingly : "what will you do now with these points that you have noted?" He smiled and replied : "if I have noted the points they will be useful to me during my old age, isn't it ?". Then he laughed and quoted an amazing saying. He said : **"That man is old, whose mind is weak".** I found this definition of old age very refreshing as we always associate old age with physical weakness. But as I contemplated, I realized that I received the true description of old age from an 87 year young man. **A man is what his mind is. A person whose mind is weak is an old man.** 

The point that the saint made is true – isn't it ? A person who cannot mould himself as per the circumstance, is mentally weak and that is true old age. Old age where you need to be supported or led can come even in the fourth decade of your life, and it is possible that you may not face such an old age even in the eighth decade of life, as your mind is strong.

We now understand the significance of the rituals of reading spiritual books, learning and understanding the scriptures, chanting the mantras or meditating while sitting in the crosslegged yogic postures like *Padmasana*. These activities help you remain lively, smiling and the time flows smoothly.

Many years ago, we were at the *upashraya* in Sion, in Mumbai, during *chaturmas*. I noticed one old man listening to my discourses deeply engrossed every day. He would listen, make notes, read, think and gain some elevation also. He was more than 70 years old. His name was Ishwarbhai. Very rarely a person would take as much advantage of retired life as him. Apart from listening to discourses, he had cultivated a keen interest in reading as well. This interest helped in making his retired life very interesting. His addiction for reading was remarkable. He used to spend six hours every day reading the scriptures.

While reading if he came across any important point, he would mark it and share it with a person for whom it would be useful and specifically ask him to read those pages. Two cupboards at his house were filled with spiritual books. He would point at them and tell me ;

"these books are my best friends. They have taught me a lot."

It is a myth that old age is a phase of life where one cannot do anything. In reality, old age is that strong phase of life, where those difficult activities that could not be performed earlier, could be completed. Today old age is a mixed phase of complaining and sulking. The reason being that despite a change in the physical state, man is not ready to change his mental state. *Shankaracharya* has explained in great detail about this mental state in his book "*Charpat manjari*" :

The body is wrinkled and the head is bald, The teeth are out and the hand holds a stick, The hearing is strained and the legs are tired, The vision is impaired and the hope is belied.

This mental state is described in *Ratnakar Pacchisi* also, a prose composition in Sanskrit by Jain Acharya :

## The remainder life reduces, but the tendency to commit sin doesn't

The hope of life diminishes, but the longing for sensual pleasures doesn't

I will yearn for medicines, but ignore the healing power of religion

Engrossed in desires, I create homes that have no foundation.

Why is old age considered so undesirable ? Is it because physical energy is diminished ? or because sensual pleasures are gone ? this is a million dollar question which man must ask himself. Just as the sailor has to row the boat as per the force and direction of the wind, every man has to direct his mind based on his circumstances. But the tragedy is that although a person matures in age, he does not mature in wisdom.

The Sun emanates maximum heat at noon. In comparison, the Sun's power is much less at dawn and at dusk. The rising Sun is peaceful due to lack of experience and the setting Sun is peaceful due to experience. What is relevant to the Sun is relevant to an individual also. Running after sensual pleasures is not good at a very young age nor is it good at a very old age. In the olden days, people used to wear white clothes after they reached a certain age. White clothes reflect simplicity, peace and relaxation. When rice is served at lunch, we must understand that this is the last serving and lunch will now

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come to an end. When the white flag is swirled during a war, it means that the war is now coming to an end. In the same manner, once you get grey hair, you must realize that sensual pleasures should now come to an end.

The appearance of grey hair leading a man to the path of renunciation has become a thing of the past now. Thanks to hair-dyes ! **To want to look young is an indication of internal un-fulfillment of sensual pleasures.** If a book titled "For The Young Ones" is launched, all those above 40 years will also be seen crowding the book store. Even those who have entered *vanaprasthashram* i.e. an age for gradual retirement, also dislike guidance regarding old age. They feel that there is still a lot of time left.

The great poet Kalidasa had in the initial *shlokas* of the first section of the *Raghuvansh* described the family tree and predecessors of Rama very beautifully. While penning the adjectives used for the family tree of King Raghu, he has given the entire guidance for the activities associated with old age.

"Towards the end of their life span, what did the kings whose kingdoms extended right upto the shores of the oceans do? They used to renounce the world during their old age. Through their spiritual practices and attainment of self-realisation, they would vindicate their old age. Instead of giving up the body voluntarily through the practice of yoga, today the body is discarded on death, resulting from diseases after the indulgence of sensual pleasures". As per one survey, the true lovers of television are people who are in their twilight years. If these people would give even half their

time spent before the T.V. to understand the scriptures, their old age would be so rich and dignified. When a powerful enemy like death can strike anytime, whose shelter should one take ? television's ? or scriptures' ?

We all understand that there is a time limit for having lunch and it is improper to sit longer at the lunch table. This rule applies not only to food, but this is a standard rule applicable age-wise for all the spheres of sensual pleasures.

After a whole day's labour if you can be stress free and sleep well, it is the sign of a healthy body. Whereas in the twilight years of life, being free from sensual pleasures and going deep into the realms of spirituality are the sign of a healthy mind. **Even otherwise, indulging in sensual pleasures is contrary to the true nature of the soul. Hence such indulgence has no place in the realms of spirituality. And old age is such a state where indulgence in sensual pleasures is harmful even to the body also. Hence at this age you have to abandon the longing for fulfillment of sensual pleasures.** Nature also facilitates the abandonment of such cravings, by weakening the body.

The five senses that we are born with become weak as old age approaches. The eye-sight, hearing, etc. become weak while the limbs which help to perform activities get tired easily. The sharpness and intensity of all the senses diminish. These are the times when it is necessary to reduce your desires to see external things or know about them, to speak or to listen and

to run around. At these times, mother nature only facilitates the activity that can be done in relaxation. This is such a wonderful act of the routine of the time cycle. To describe old age in saint Narsinh Mehta's words : **"The door-post of the house appears to be as tall as the mountain, and the outskirts of the village appear as distant as a foreign country".** 

You have to change the gear to reduce the speed of the car, rotate the regulator to reduce the speed of the fan or to decrease the heat of the gas- burner. But human body is amazing. When the time comes to reduce the intensity of the senses, it reduces automatically with the old age. The teeth also try to convey this message before falling off : "now give up the cravings of eating and chewing". But man, a slave of indulgences, instead of accepting this signal gracefully, dips the *khakhra*, (the roasted roti), in tea and makes it chewable. Then, man is not chewing the *khakhra*, the demoness called lover of sensual pleasures is chewing the man. Saint turned King Bhartruhari correctly said : भोगा न भुक्ता वयमेव भुक्ता : we are not consuming the pleasures of life, but the pleasures of life consume us.

Old age is not a phase of physical rest, but one of withdrawing from indulgence in pleasures. Nature is giving that indication by slowing down the limbs and diminishing the power of the senses. When the vision blurs, instead of considering that as a signal for turning his vision inwards (towards his soul), he continues to stress his eyes to read the worthless newspapers and watch the useless television. It is as if his eyes are now embedded in the newspapers and television. Sometimes I feel the discoveries of Science to be insignificant (purposeless). Science is also so goal-less. It invented equipments to see the distant objects, to see the objects in the sky, to see beneath the earth and in the ocean beds, but did not develop anything to see within oneself. If you see spiritually, old age presents a golden opportunity to set up the apparatus to see within.

#### If you are awakened, will gain If not, alas ! all in vain !

You may call it a man's tragedy or his stupidity, he considers the opportunity to devote time for spiritual pursuit as a sorrowful weeping state. If he experiences difficulty in seeing or hearing, he considers that akin to difficulty in breathing.

We have often been at Jambli Gali, Borivli *upashrya* in Mumbai and stayed there once for *chaturmas* also. One old man named Jaadavjibhai would sit the whole day in a corner of this gigantic *upashraya*. He was more than 70 years old. He would enter the *upashraya* at 5 a.m. at dawn and leave at 9.30 p.m. in the night. In the afternoon he would go for an hour only for his one and only one meal for the day. This *shravak*, (follower of Jain religion), would in a day, do 10 to 12 *samayiks*, (sitting steadfast for 48 minutes and contemplating on the soul or reading, learning scriptures, meditating or chanting mantras). An amazing aspect was that he could not hear at all.

Once I wrote on a piece of paper and inquired :"you must be facing trouble due to lack of hearing, isn't it ?". The reply he gave me then is still etched in my memory, even after a

decade. He had replied :"I do not have any trouble because of my hearing impediment. It is others who have to face the trouble". Then he smiled a little and clarified thus :"Look, Due to my hearing impediment, I do not have to listen to useless and senseless talks. It is after listening that we start thinking over it. Since I can't listen, I don't have to think about useless things anymore. If there is anything important for me to know, others spend enough time and efforts to make it clear to me. Hence because of my deafness, my troubles have been reduced while that of other people may have increased".

Jaadavjibhai completely ignored his hearing impediment and continued to spend the whole day reading spiritual books and performing spiritual rituals for twelve whole years. We never heard any complaints from Jaadavjibhai such as : "Nobody listens to me at home".... ; "Now I have no hold in any matter".... ; "Nobody is looking at me"..... "Nobody has time to sit with me" ..... It is correctly said : **your family resides in you**. It is said in the Jain *Aagam* called Aacharang Sutra : अप्पा तुममेव तुहं मित्तं, किं बहियमित्तमिच्छसि। "Dear One! why don't you only become your best friend ?"

A youth who is fond of sensual pleasures, in his thirst for such indulgence, invites old age in his young age only. He becomes sick even before he grows old and literally drags his time. While a person who is spiritually inclined, enjoys his old age also.

Since we have learnt to live in the external world only, when there is a hearing loss, our internal chaos increases manifold. Just ponder on that what have you achieved from the words that you have heard so far? Affection or turmoil ? The

percentage of these two is very clear. We hardly hear what is useful, and after hearing also tend to forget the same. But we hear a lot that is useless. Not only that, we continue to remember it till we have our sanity. If our `*Karnavati*' (name of a train and here also implies sense of hearing) is going to speed in the wrong direction, then don't you agree that the phase when hearing is hindered, will be the one where turmoil will reduce and as a result affection will increase?

Till this age in life, many problems have been created due to seeing and hearing. Now when there is a problem with vision and hearing, how long does it take to consider it as a blessing and pacify our mind ? Blindness, deafness or any other disability is definitely painful. But what is wrong if we inculcate a positive view-point to save the mind from being depressed due to the negative impact faced by the loss of senses ?

Today man has become an expert in making provision for his old-age. The government and society have also instituted several schemes to take care of the senior citizens. He keeps planning to take care of all situations, from losing a house owned by him upto a situation where even his own child refuses to stay with him. But what will he do when his own body does not support him ?

He has not made any plan about a worthwhile retirement. Retirement can come in two ways : sequentially and accidentally. As age advances, the cells become weak and gradually as his capacity to work reduces, a person retires. This is sequential retirement. Due to illness, fracture or any such reason, if he has to take unexpected rest for some time,

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it is accidental short term retirement. One should plan for both these types of retirements.

You should inculcate a liking for things that you desire to do during your retirement, from your young age itself. Our problem is that we have not cultivated a liking for those activities which will make our retirement meaningful and the interests that we have kindled during our active younger life cannot be pursued during our retired life due to lack of energy or opportunities. Due to these factors our retired life becomes extremely boring and dependent, resulting in a dissatisfied mental state.

After laboring hard continuously for four decades, if a person cannot have his own house, what is the result of these efforts? There is no fun in staying in a rented apartment for a long time. It is not good for your status and there is definitely no security. Just one notice from the landlord and you will face sleepless nights. **External activity and running after materialistic pleasures is like living in a rented house. Where will you stay when you will have to vacate this rented house due to sequential or accidental retirement ?** 

The kings and emperors of the past used to stay in palaces, but they used to maintain an additional underground house near the palace, accessible through underground tunnels. During sudden unexpected enemy attacks, they could retreat to this house and remain secure. And yes ! What is important is that this underground house was constructed along with the construction of the palace. It was not possible to construct such a house after the attack. An idea of what have you gained in life is dependent on what you have gained at the end of your life. **We can infer that a person who is unable to spend his retirement days wisely must not have known how to spend his active life**. A student who has not worked hard for the entire year, will perspire the most, although he would have hardly written anything in the examination hall.

#### **ILLNESS – A BLESSING IN DISGUISE !**

In the present age there is a hue and cry about shortages. Somewhere there is a shortage of food grains, somewhere there is a shortage of water, somewhere there is a shortage of petrol, somewhere there is a shortage of cooking fuel, while somewhere there is a shortage of money. But the one shortage that is the topmost in the list is the shortage of time; because while other things can be borrowed, nobody can borrow another's time. You can pass cross-entries for money but not for time. Today, there is so much shortage of time that even a free person remains very busy.

There are many activities that need to be performed, we desire to perform them, the opportunities are also available, yet we are unable to perform them. The reason being, shortage of time. Man wants to listen to divine music and *satsangs*, discourses, but there is no time to listen. The students are so much buried under the burden of studies that they do not even have the time to go on a tour during their holidays. The business community is so much engrossed in their business activities that they have no time to look up at anything else !

Let me throw some light on what lessons can an illness that occurs sometimes in life, teach you. That an illness gives pain is not the true character of illness, because pain is experienced often in many other ways also, even without falling sick. The true character of an illness is that it gives you **free time.** It is as if a person having a severe shortage of time has suddenly won a super lottery of time. During illness you have just ample time, ample idle time and ample rest. You would be able to rummage through and read many good books which you couldn't read earlier due to lack of time. A person who could not find time to talk to his own family members, now requests to his friends and guests to come turn by turn to meet him, to help him share his time. A life which is marked with a complete shortage of time is suddenly endowed with so much time that he can distribute it generously due to **an illness which is a blessing !!!** 

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The total time that a person could devote in a span of a whole month for prayers is now devoted every day during illness. Due to illness a patient can establish a deeper connection with God. There is so much hope and expectation in the gaze towards God. The bridge of prayers is so beautifully laid. On one end of the bridge is pain and on the other end is God ! A patient sleeping in bed willingly shows his faith in God.

*Kunti,* the mother of the *Pandavas*, always prayed to God and asked for continuous torrent of difficulties. The secret reason behind this prayer was that these were not difficulties for her, but a golden opportunity to remember God and establish a close connection with Him.

Compare the way of remembering God (prayers) in ordinary circumstance with that during difficulties and analyze the chemical reactions in the brain. You will surely realize that the depth of emotion is stronger, the tone of surrender is louder and the tuning of prayer is more intense during difficulties. Thus, the path which helps to create a bridge with God, as if he

is your best friend since ages, is an illness which is a blessing.

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Man who is continuously active during his life and accumulates *karmas* is absolutely unconcerned and carefree about the results of his *karmas*. When he is ailing, he has an opportunity to think about the cause of his ailment. What could be the result of mindless eating and extravagance, which are not only against the preaching of *Dharma* but even against our body's nature ? You are bound to fall sick ! The outcome of uninhibited sensual pleasures is unlimited illnesses.

Before crying and complaining when ill, just take a look at your past and rewind the cassette of the deeds and violent actions committed by you. You have shown no mercy on the small mosquito or bed bug by wiping away their entire team using "All Out". Instead of suffering a small mosquito bite, you have made the entire specie of mosquitoes suffer. Then you have to bear with the bites of illnesses, isn't it?

You are using so many things whose manufacture involves violence. When you thoughtlessly used beauty products, perfumes and shampoos that were manufactured by performing heinous experiments on delicate rabbits and monkeys, is there any surprise that your body then becomes a store house of diseases.

When someone back-answers, you generally never forget to raise your hand to slap or spank and then shout at him. Now,

the consequence of what your hands did is to be paid by your heart. The actions of your own hands have hit your heart. Then whose fault is it, if not yours?

You never hesitate to rip off a person verbally when you find that he spoke negatively about you or behaved a little erratically. Then why would your *karmas* hesitate to rip you off?

At home you have killed mosquitoes, bed-bugs in the bed, termites infecting furniture, lizards found in the windows, doors and attics and killed so many tiny creatures while driving a vehicle. You killed ants and cockroaches in the kitchen, ate foods that contained countless germs, like vegetables growing underground, honey, ice and so on, that are prohibited by our religion. Your violent tendencies have graduated from killing lice in the hair to killing (murdering) the embryo in the humanbody (abortion). All this pertains only to the present life and that also only to the extent that you can remember. Beside these, are the violence committed in this life which you do not remember, and the violence committed in your past lives. Whether you suffer from third stage of cancer or whether both your kidneys fail, the pain that you are suffering now, is much less than the pain that you may have inflicted upon others. The opportunity and understanding to purify the soul that has become impure by the sins committed mindlessly, in the pure river of repentance, are possible only during the enlightened moments of illness. That, which provides an opportunity to look at the sins that we have committed, with the feeling of repentance is an illness which is a blessing.

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While we boast about performing complex tasks but start shivering when inflicted with a petty illness, then we really need to worry about our endurance. Our capacity to remain calm is based on our tolerance levels. An estimate of our tolerance level is gauged only during our illness.

If the pain caused by a small boil or a cut is unbearable, if a simple fever causes the temperature of the mind to remain higher than that of the body, if malaria, flu, typhoid and pneumonia which affect the body, affect the mind also, then you already have a report card of your endurance against major illness which may strike you in the future.

Even when affected by an ordinary ailment , we behave in a particular manner to gain sympathy. If anyone comes to visit us, we keep talking about our illness and keep describing our pain as if we are only waiting for the visitor to ask us "how are you doing ?". Even after we are cured, we keep giving a report of the illness that we were affected with and the pain that we suffered. Just as you do not want the illness to be back in your body, is there any need to bring it back on the tongue? It may not be possible to completely eradicate illness from our mind or body, but it is certainly within our power not to give it a seat on the swing of our tongue. In reality by continuously describing in detail and exaggerating the pain that we suffered due to our magnified illness, we are only begging for sympathy. This can be termed as a Sympathy stunt of a weak mind. During these times your tolerance levels get correctly measured !

Many are born with very low endurance levels. If someone advises them to endure they will give a spontaneous reply :

"Only a person who suffers knows what it is to bear !" There is no other remedy for an illness than to increase the capacity to bear it patiently. The haemoglobin or white cells content in blood are measured by conducting a blood test. But the quantum of tolerance cells, i.e. the strength of our endurance levels are observed during the test called illness. The universal flag of inner peace is hoisted on the pole of endurance. A flag which is hoisted on a weak pole faces a big risk. Hence you should test the strength of your pole i.e. your endurance level. The true estimate of our endurance level is given by our **illness which is a blessing**.

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Death means end. This is a wrong notion. In reality death means beginning. After death, a brand new life begins. During a test match when the batsmen return to the pavilion at the end of the day, it is not called an end of the match. Next day they again return to the stadium with renewed vigour to continue the match. How the new day would be ? Would it be a stress-free or tension filled day? This would be decided on the basis of the performance of the previous day. Based on the last few moments of this life, the poem of a new life is composed. Hence it is of paramount importance to maintain equanimity during the last few moments of life. Death means immense suffering. Death means a big separation. Even great stalwarts have failed to maintain calmness at the death bed. Before playing a difficult match, players insist on organizing practice matches. One should consider an illness to be such a practice match and learn to play it peacefully before death. If the equanimity at death gets a practice session called illness, then

you may hope to perform best to look sparkling in death. In this manner, getting a chance to give a glorious practice of maintaining equanimity at death (*Samadhi mrityu*) **provided by illness is a blessing**.

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During illness we often say this spontaneously, "Enough ! God, please don't give such pain to anyone". What does this indicate ? From our pain is born a compassionate temperament. When a plaster on fractured bone compels you to stay bed-ridden for three months, you are filled with maximum sympathy for patients who have suffered fractures, since you have met with the same fate.

When a person who has once spent many nights on the streets, or on a thin mattress spread on the floor, hungry or half-fed, becomes rich, he has a soft corner for genuinely poor people. There is a beautiful saying : "an injured person alone knows the pain of another injured person". In a nutshell, this shows that when we are in pain, our mind becomes very concerned towards others suffering in pain. The thing which makes a note-worthy contribution by ploughing the harsh land of our heart to make it soft and which enlarges the canvas of our compassion, **is illness which is a blessing**.

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You have taken great pains to look after your body. That body is so feeble and week ! For the sake of decorating your body, you have disfigured your soul. But that body is such a traitor ! Due to the love for the body, you never hesitated to resort to violence of all sorts, and always feared while performing any

penance. But this body is so selfish ! It looted as much as it could, but at the end will drive the soul out with whatever you have worn (your *karmas*). This body is such a thug ! The mask is removed from the face and the true identity of your partner from birth (i.e. your body) is revealed only during illness. Exposing the true facts and cautioning you with an early warning by giving you true wisdom, **is illness which is a blessing.** 

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If a person from whom you have to collect your dues doesn't pay, you go again and again to him to collect your dues. But he refuses to pay you. Finally he agrees to make a conditional payment : "Look ! I will not give you the payment directly, I will pay it to the person whom you owe money". Though we do not like this compromise, yet for once we will accept it. Though we do not get any money in our hands, yet this arrangement gives us a secret happiness that some of our debt is repaid.

When the body is affected by a disease or there is a sudden ailment, the above way of positive thinking would be very useful. Although illness is not a happy occurrence, the possibility of facing such misery later in your life is also at least partially washed out. When you are ill, your *karmas* are wiped off and hence that debt is repaid. It is good that you were affected with the disease now, when you still have reasonable endurance. If you would have been affected when you would have not cultivated such an understanding, or were ignorant, you would have been bounded by more *karmas*. A debt-ridden person who does not have an understanding, accumulates greater debt. That which gives you an opportunity to endure

with understanding and become free from the bondage of *karma*, **is illness which is a blessing.** 

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We have often heard that just as the clothes are separate from the body, the soul is also separate from the body. The concept of them being different is a theory. Illness is a practical of this theory. While analyzing the achievement of the great scientist Edison who invented the electric bulb after breaking approximately 36,000 bulbs, someone had said : "after 36,000 failures Edison achieved success". Edison expressed his disagreement with this statement. He clarified : "Just as you cannot ignore the results, you cannot ignore the efforts as well. My every experiment led me sequentially towards final achievement and hence my every attempt was a success or a step forward towards success. I have gained from every experiment. It is a different thing that people gained only from my last experiment and hence they saw only the last experiment as a success, but to my mind my every attempt was extremely precious".

To gain the realization that the soul and the body are two different things is extremely difficult, but during an illness you can make an attempt to gain that realization. It is possible that after several failed attempts like Edison you may gain the enlightenment. But you should give the recognition to each attempt as leading you towards your success. Hence if you think in this direction, a beautiful opportunity to realise the difference between the body and soul is given by **illness which is a blessing.** 

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Illness comes suddenly and disturbs a lot of planning done for the future. You may have planned your holiday for a special trip, but land up spending them lying in the bed. Money reserved for celebrating a special event or for a special purpose may be drained down in medical expenses. Planning made for spending time for spiritual practice may have to be spent relaxing. Things that are planned cannot be accomplished and many things that we could never imagine occur for no apparent reason. The feeling of uncertainty of circumstances and experience of the unforeseen are enabled by **illness which is a blessing**.

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The mind is forever wavering, but is the body also any stable? The body is sometimes at the window and sometimes at the door, sometimes in the bed and sometimes in the car, sometimes in the house and sometimes in the shop, sometimes in the city and sometimes abroad .....but during an illness a person's entire universe revolves around his bed. In the scriptures, there is a reference to a penance called *sanlinata*. A yogic posture where the mind, body and soul are all still and where a person accommodates himself in a small space without making any movement is *sanlinata*. The opportunity to the body, which is used to roaming about continuously, to remain still at one place, is provided by **illness which is a blessing**.

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There are times when we consider our family members to be selfish and self-centered. You think as if these were relatives

only in name. You had believed that none of these were of any use. You probably had more faith in friends than family members. But on the occasion of your illness, you saw that everyone in the family were on their toes to nurse you and make you feel comfortable. The visible benefit of brothers staying together is evident during an illness. Enabling you to get the love and co-operation of all the family members, providing you with an opportunity to understand their love and concern and explaining you the benefits of living in a jointfamily is **illness which is a blessing**.

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How grief-stricken you become when you see a person afflicted with cancer ? Don't you tremble at the sight of a patient undertaking dialysis treatment ? Don't you experience a shiver in every goose pimple when you hear about herpis or psoriasis ? When you see the pain of a burns victim or see his disfigured face, you don't feel like eating food, isn't it ? How frightened you are when you see someone with 40 stitches on his head ? After seeing such a person don't you feel scared to perform any violent act or any action that may cause pain to others ?

We become cautious while eating outside food due to an instance of suffering from food-poisoning in the past. We realize the importance of exercising restraint when eating, having suffered from loose motions in the past due to overeating. When we see someone suffer from fracture while falling down the stairs, we change our style of walking. We add caution to our simple acts of getting up and sitting down when we see someone suffering with a big cut on the head caused

by hurting his head with the corner of an overhead cupboard. When the window suddenly slammed shut due to the force of the wind, causing someone's finger to crush, we never forget to put a latch on the window, to avoid such accidents.

If other people's illnesses can teach us a lesson, shouldn't our illnesses also inspire several others to learn from us? From our illnesses we see the mistakes that we have committed in the past, while others learn not to commit such errors in the future. If we see as such, our illnesses are an open discourse to people. That which advises others from the beginning to exercise care and restraint, take safety precautions and exercise caution and saves them from future pain and anguish are our **illnesses which are a blessing**.

### Blessings of Illness – Summary

- 1. Provides spare time to pursue other interests.
- 2. Strengthens connection with God.
- 3. Review and repentance for our past sins and purify our soul.
- 4. Makes us aware of our tolerance power and endurance level.
- 5. Prepares us to face death with equanimity.
- 6. Enhances our compassion for other beings.
- Shows the temporary and non-trustworthy nature of our body and thereby reduces our attachment with the body.
- 8. Frees one from the bondage of *Karmas*.
- 9. Gives insight that body & soul are apart and not one.
- 10. Improves our management skills against unforeseen crisis and other uncertainties.
- 11. Steadies our body movements which helps one during *Kayotsarg* meditation.
- 12. Care & love during illness shown by family members strengthens family bonds.
- 13. Teaches one self-discipline, awareness and restraint to avoid illness in future.
- 14. Sets example for other people not to repeat the same errors and thus avoid sufferings.
- 15. Teaches us many virtues.

## ILLNESS : FEAST FOR THE SOUL

Swami Ramkrishna Paramhansa was suffering from the terminal illness of cancer during the last few years of his life. However, he was a great saint and totally oblivious of the ailments of his body. But his disciples and onlookers who saw him suffer so much could not bear to see him in so much pain. Hence they asked Swamiji : "How long will you suffer with so much pain in your life? ". Swami Ramkrishnaji gave a very thought provoking reply that did not give importance to pain. He said : "Whether the floral garland stays on the buffalo's horn or not, it does not matter to the buffalo. Whether my body suffers from the disease or not, it does not matter to me at all".

We need to contemplate/introspect on this reply. It is a very enlightening reply. This reply gives us the direction to cultivate a view-point that relates the body and the disease. Two aspects have been covered in this reply. You should equate the body with the buffalo's horn and equate the floral garland with the disease. This comparision seems very intellectually driven.

Till date whatever attachment we have shown to the body, had we shown towards our soul, we would have attained *nirvana* ten to twenty lives ago. Till date whatever hatred and ill-will we have held towards disease, had we directed it towards our worldly attachment and negativities, then our life cycles would not have extended so much.

We view the body favourably and disease with contempt. These are our very old view-points. Due to these incorrect view-points, instead of considering the body as a means and looking after it as such, we have almost begun to consider the body as an end. Hence the attachment towards the body has become very deep. On the other hand, as a disease causes pain to the body, our dislike for disease has existed since ever. Due to this, when inflicted with disease and pain, we lose our equanimity spontaneously. Thus love for the body and hatred for disease has become our nature.

Judging from another angle, we can say that we love it when the body is fit or healthy and have become habituated to hate diseases.

An athlete will never neglect the shoes with which he has to run; at the same time he cannot carry them tied around his neck. Just as an athlete knows the place of shoes in his life, a wise man should know the importance of his body in his life.

We have to enlarge our view-point of looking at the body and the disease. Alternately, we need to accept the view-point which has been developed by the enlightened. Now recollect the reply given by Swami Ramkrishna Paramhansa mentioned above. Both these expanded view-points are present in his reply. Consider the body to be a buffalo's horn and the disease to be a floral garland.

A common belief is that the horn is an unwanted crooked burden and the floral garland is a whiff of sweet scented perfume. Hence it is difficult to get attracted to the horn, while we can easily find something good in the floral garland. If both these view-points are nurtured further, then our perception of pampering our body and our contemptuous view towards

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disease will be diluted. Then union with worldly attachment becomes difficult and endurance becomes easy.

Look at the buffalo's body. Everything below the horn is useful. The horn sometimes gets entangled, sometimes gets trapped, it is heavy and can hurt someone as well. If someone hangs a floral garland on her horn, she remains unperturbed. The problem is only due to the weight of horn and not of the garland.

The great Jain Acharya Jagadguru Heersurishwarji Maharaj who gave sermons to Moghul Emperor Akbar and transformed him, once got a boil on his back. He suffered a lot of pain due to this boil. While performing his daily rituals also he used to get severe pain. Once after he had performed his daily ritual in the evening, one devotee came to tend to him. The Acharya, who was the head of a group of monks, refused his seva (selfless service), but still the devotee insisted and started massaging his back. He thought that acharya's back was paining him, so he would get him some relief. But in the process that boil perforated. He must have experienced unbearable pain. But the acharya after one accidental moan remained calm. The devotee was grief-stricken. "Gurudev ! You had such a big boil on your back. Why didn't you tell me ?" The acharya gave a heart-wrenching reply : "why worry about a boil on a boil ?"

If the fan doesn't work, the mind feels suffocated and if the bed is not properly made, the mind is disgruntled. The devotee kept looking at the acharya, who had such a panaromic outlook of the body which he considered itself to be a boil, and quietly went away. He returned again next morning and inquired : "Gurudev ! now do you have some relief ?". The acharya replied again : "I am more pained about the original boil i.e. the body.

I will get relief only when it can be discarded permanently." Using a psychograph, if we compare our mental state when we get a small boil and the mental state of the Acharya, the distinction between a dwarf -like and a giant-like mental state will become very clear.

What an exceptional and enlightened view-point? To consider the body itself as a boil! Thereafter if there is a boil on the body or someone puts a cotton ball on it, how does it matter to the ascetic? All the troubles are due to the main boil. So beautiful is this world of spirituality! Someone considers this body to be a horn and someone considers the body to be a boil ! Eventually it is an unwanted burden attached to the soul.

If we can learn to view the body with any such search-light, it would be called the true realization of the body. What differentiates an enlightened soul and an ignorant soul ? Hands, legs, eyes and ears are same for both. The difference is due to their outlook. Both have a different way of evaluating objects. We give the highest importance to the body whereas the enlightened soul considers the body, as nothing more than a vehicle. We do not see anything in a disease other than pain, whereas an ascetic considers a disease as an opportunity to make spiritual gains.

Suppose that money due from a customer is not being paid despite our repeated reminders. Imagine that one amongst our creditors resolves to collect his over-dues from us, from our client. He manages to collect our dues from our customer, adjusts the money received against his dues from us and makes us pass necessary book entries. Here though we did not receive our dues from our customer, at least the reduction of our debt is in itself a consolation. During illness whatever pain

we suffer helps us nullify our bad *karmas*. Those who look at an illness with this business-like attitude, see an opportunity to gain here too.

A diseased state also has its own internal commerce. If you can view this diseased state from that commercial angle, then even in the midst of immense pain, you can maintain your equilibrium. If a businessman can see the commercial angle, then keeping awake till late night, working over-time and sometimes staying hungry would all become second nature to him, isn't it?

When you appear for an exam in school, the examination time is only three hours, yet the student's hard-work for the entire year is checked in this exam. The way a student perceives his exam., the patient should perceive the disease in the same manner.

For a dumb student exam time is a problem time, For an average student exam time is a testing time; But, For a bright student exam time is a time to excel.

In the same manner, we can divide the diseased state in three categories and explain as follows :

For an ignorant soul, the period of illness is one when he accumulates more *karma* to his soul, since he perceives suffering when he has an illness.

For a religious minded person, the period of illness is a time when his bad karmas are at play since he perceives his illness to be the result of his karmas. For a spiritually enlightened person, the period of illness is one when he can reduce (conquer) his *karmas* because he perceives an opportunity for spiritual progress when he is afflicted with an illness and suffering from pain.

The coming into play of good *karmas* brings happiness, comforts and luxuries, whereas the coming into play of bad *karmas* brings pain and miseries. In a way you can say that good *karmas* are like an interior decorator who decorates our homes/lives with beautiful artefacts, whereas the bad *karmas* are like the house-sweepers who clean up the dirt and dust in our `residence'.

The house-sweeper has no personality when compared with that of the interior designers. Yet whose services are inevitable? If the home is a little less decorated, it will be okay, but accumulation of dirt and dust in the home cannot be tolerated. This thought process explains the inevitability of tolerating pain.

When you have a severe cold accompanied by a stuffed nose, a severe headache, difficulty in breathing and a feeling of suffocation, you inhale steam. While you inhale steam with your head covered with a warm blanket, you experience suffocation and feel hot, but who would refuse to try this remedy? While doing this there is a thought in the mind that you would experience discomfort for some time, but thereafter you would experience a lot of relief. Once the cough is melted, there will be a lot of relief in the lungs, throat, nose and head. Then the breathing also will be in a rhythm. With this thought, the discomfort of inhaling steam becomes insignificant and it's benefits become important. When your health declines, you should cultivate such a positive view. The soul which has become impure with the attachments of *karma*, will not feel suffocated to inhale the steam of bad health to free itself from the bondages of *karma* and become pure.

### **NO ENTRY FOR PAIN**

Dressed in a splendid outfit, as Alakh tried to enter the room, there was a tearing sound. Ch ...r..r..r... ! His brand new shirt got entangled in a nail and was torn. As he realised what had happened, there was a sighing echo from his mouth, A...r...r.....!.

When he entered the room he observed that Naman had also scratched himself with the same pointed nail when he had entered the room. Not only was his shirt torn, he had a cut on his ribs and blood was oozing out from that cut. Naman had pressed a kerchief on the bruise and was experiencing immense pain.

Alakh looked at Naman and then at his shirt which was torn. He got a consolation. Even though his shirt was torn, the body inside was safe. Shirt is an external object and if it is torn, you can get a new shirt, the body should be safe. **The external loss can console you, only if you can see something inside being saved.** 

This view-point is very useful when you suffer from physical illness. The body is also an external object. Sooner or later it has to be changed. Don't let the soul within be affected by bad thoughts. To ensure this is also in our hands. The reason is that it is not in our hands to ensure that there is no scratch on the shirt or on the body, whereas the soul can be scratched with evil thoughts only with our permission.

Those who consider the shirt to be everything, become unhappy when the shirt is torn. But this unhappiness inflicts

pain only till your attention has not gone towards the body beneath the shirt which is more precious than the shirt. The physical pain can also make you suffer, only so long as your attention is not focused on the extremely precious and great element present within the body.

Our problem is that our physical eyes can see only the body and it cannot go within. Often when you fall or bang yourself against something, that portion of the body experiences immense pain and you feel concerned about probable injuries within. You wish that the x-ray does not show a fracture. When the doctor examines the x-ray and declares that the report is normal and further adds that there is merely muscular injury which is likely to cause pain for a fortnight, despite external injury, there is a consolation because the bones within are not fractured.

One thing you must understand is that *karma* attacks the body, but it's target is not merely the body. It's intention is also to cause pain to the soul within. When you are attacked by your *karma*, the body will suffer. Yet if the soul within is saved, you should realize and believe that the attack of your *karmas* has been unsuccessful.

When America bombarded Baghdad and razed the city to ground. Their target was not Baghdad city but it's King, who was probably hiding in one of the bunkers. If he remained safe, America's attacks would be considered unsuccessful. In the same manner when the army of *karmas* attack the body but cannot affect the emperor called Soul residing within, the attacks by the army of *karmas* prove unsuccessful.

During these attacks, we must protect the emperor within under all circumstances. At that time, the action of the mind,

the loyal guard to the emperor is very important. When Saint *Khandhak's* skin was peeled off by the king's soldiers, the emperor within maintained its equanimity and finally emerged victorious. Burning splinters of coal were put on the head of *Gajasukumal*. It's heat caused the secure armour of the head, the skull, to break and affected him by causing his death, but the emperor within remained calm and he emerged victorious, as he attained his self-realisation before death overtook him.

During such attacks, the emperor along with one of his trusted body-guards translocates himself to some other place. During pain, if the focus of the soul, which is generally over the body, is moved to another secure location, then only it is possible to save the soul. The hands, legs, eyes or other parts of the body that have supported you till now cannot be trusted. They may betray you anytime. At such time, if the mind does not betray, the emperor will remain unscathed. Hence on such occasions, the soul can be saved only if supported by the mind. Hence to fail the attempts by *karma*, the mind should be focused elsewhere.

Our problem is that at such times, instead of diverting our focus, the formula of shifting the focus itself gets diverted. The finger got stuck while closing the window ......you screamed ......experienced pain also....this was an attack by *karma*. At this time instead of shifting the focus somewhere else, the entire thought now surrounds the finger that was stuck. If the nail is slightly broken or the skin is peeled off or there is a small boil or there is pain in the waist or the nose is filled with mucous ..... the pain in just one square inch of the body, makes the entire body weighing 65 kilos to lie down on the bed. **The attachment nurtured towards the body** 

removing an infected tooth, we continue to experience pain in the same tooth.

In the last world war, a wounded soldier was admitted to a hospital in France. The wheel of a heavy vehicle had rolled over his foot and it was badly crushed. The soldier was almost unconscious.

After examining his foot, the doctor's had decided that the soldier's leg below the ankle would have to be amputated. There was no other way out. If the foot was not amputated, the infection would spread to his whole leg and finally the entire leg would have to be amputated. Doctors administered anaesthesia, made him unconscious and operated his leg. They separated the foot and discarded it. Thereafter the soldier was given pain-killers and made to sleep.

The soldier regained his consciousness twenty-four hours after the operation. He complained of experiencing tremendous pain in his foot which was amputated. Till now he had no idea that his foot was already amputated. He continuously complained of experiencing pain in his foot. The doctors removed the bed-sheet that covered his foot and showed him that his foot was amputated and hence there was no question of his experiencing pain there.

The soldier refused to listen. 'Whatever it is, but I am experiencing continuous and tremendous pain in my foot below the ankle'. Finally they called a psychiatrist. He examined him minutely and diagnosed that the nerve-cells which connect the foot with the brain cells were still active and they were causing pain to the soldier. There was only one way to relieve him of his pain and that was by silencing the nerve-cells or severing their connectivity with the brain. After that procedure was done, the soldier experienced relief.

That's it ! Similar is the problem faced by us. Our body is connected with our soul. Hence whatever happens to the body is communicated to the soul by the mind. Because of that we continue to experience unhappiness.

In reality, we are distinct from our body, but because of our connection with the body over many past lives and many years of present life, we have become equal to the physical body that the soul has embodied. We live for the body. As this embodiment is continuous and close, we are unable to appreciate the difference between the two. This knowledge of the soul and the body being separate is an injection that severs the connectivity between the two, at the mental level. Once that is achieved, the pain experienced by the body is akin to the pain experienced by your neighbour.

When we see our neighbor in pain and experience compassion, as a good neighbor, we may help him with his treatment also. That is an entirely different issue. But now the bondage between the body and soul has become detached and hence the experience of pain also reduces.

Let me explain this with an illustration : Just imagine that Chetan dials the phone no. of Nitin, but could not establish connection. He dials again and again but is not able to establish contact as Nitin's line is busy. He can establish contact only after Nitin disconnects his other calls. You need to take this telephonic technology to the mental level. Our body is under direct control of mind. We can restrict pain sensitivity by dissociating our mind from the body and focusing it upon some neutral thing e.g.. reading, chanting of mantra, *jaap*, meditating etc.

When you are in pain, you should connect your mind with good books, listen to devotional songs and discourses and contemplate on the same. Then the physical pain has no effect on the mind. During these times the immediate benefit of keeping the mental line busy is that you do not have to receive the complaining calls of the body. In the telephone line you get to see the missed call, but don't you return the call only if it was important !

When someone looks at us to start a conversation and we are not inclined to talk to him don't we get `engrossed' in conversation with someone else ? When we don't want to work, don't we pretend to be asleep although we are awake ? **Remember that to give us misery is in the hands of the** *karma,* **but whether to give importance to the misery or not is in our hands.** 

A remedy for pain or grief is the passage of time. As days pass, the pain doesn't go away, but is forgotten. A person who has lost his dear one would always miss him / her, yet as the days pass by, the loss and vacuum remains merely in the house, it does not remain in the mind. For the same reason, with the passage of time, although the loss is permanent, as you stop thinking about it, the loss does not remain so painful.

In the scriptures also, this is the remedy shown to forget your misery. If you want to forget your misery stop thinking about it again and again. Similarly, if your mind does not register the presence of miseries they get forgotten.

### THEN IT BECOMES EASIER TO ENDURE !

Bhagwan Mahavir symbolizes endurance and patience ! His life as an ascetic is vividly described in the *Aagams*, the scriptures. The state of Bihar was where he roamed as an ascetic. In a dilapidated temple in the jungles, he would stand in meditation. In a chilly night which can freeze the limbs, how can one remain stead-fast in meditation ? How could he tolerate the winter which was so severe that one could suffer a frost-bite ?

When the winter became unbearable, Bhagwan would meditate in the open compound of the dilapidated temple. The chilly wind would bang against his bare body. He would meditate for some time outside and then return to the interior of the temple. As the wind was less severe inside, the body could remain steadfast in meditation.

In these actions is hidden an amazing technique to help the body settle amidst difficult situations. This body is like a donkey. If you place a heavy burden on the mule's back and then remove some of it, he experiences some relief and begins to walk straight with his burden.

We may not have the courage to go ahead and ask for difficult situations, but we can certainly cultivate the courage to bear the difficult situations that come in our lives like a brave man (soldier) by exploring these four solutions :

#### 1. If you think that you could have possibly faced even

# more misery ...... the misery that you are faced with, seems insignificant :

Hasmukhbhai who used to work in a small firm as an accountant came home in the evening as per his daily routine. The son opened the door. When he slipped his hand in his pocket to remove his wallet, he found that the wallet was missing. Somebody had cleverly stolen it. His wife also realized that the wallet was gone. She was alarmed within....she screamed. Hasmukhbhai was laughing, happily and loudly. His wife angrily retorted : "You have lost your wallet and you are laughing?" Hasmukhbhai said : "See, see the date. Today is 4<sup>th</sup>. Yesterday this wallet contained the entire month's salary. Rupees twenty thousand. Today the wallet contained only rupees four hundred and the spectacle case. <u>When good fortune is on your side, even robbers miss the ride !</u>".

In these circumstances if the name of a person can have any impact in keeping a smiling face, then we all should have been named us `<u>Has Mukh</u>', which means `smiling face' !

Here you should remember that even after losing his wallet, which thought helped him to maintain his equilibrium ? The loss could have been bigger than the one incurred ! When you hurt a finger with a needle, there will definitely be pain. But when the punishment of crucification is substituted with mere prick of a needle, then we don't feel the pain of the prick at all.

When the body is inflicted with disease, it is bad luck; but if you get the proper medical assistance and if others are there to serve you, to help you, to take care of you, then shouldn't you consider at least to that extent yourself fortunate ? What would have happened if you would have been affected by this disease and you were extremely poor and had nobody to care for you ? This thought can definitely reduce the negative impact of the disease.

When you are already facing an economic crisis at home and have to spend your limited income wisely, what would have happened if you would have been afflicted with a disease also? This thought process will definitely reduce the mental stress of the economic crisis.

Man always thinks that the happiness that he has, is very less. Hence he never gets tired of making attempts to find more happiness. In the same manner, if he feels his miseries to be less, he will get the strength to endure his unhappiness.

# 2. If you recall someone more unhappy than yourself, your pain will minimize a lot :

During the earthquake those who lost their houses consoled themselves by the fact that they had managed to stay alive. The ones who were injured, ignored their pain, keeping in mind those who had lost their entire families. How much pain would a person feel who has lost Rs.500/-, if he thinks of a person who has lost Rs.5 lakhs ? Show a person who is cribbing on losing his shoes, another person who has lost both his feet in an accident. A person having sore eyes can remain disturbed only till he has not seen the sufferings of someone who is blind.

### Although, you don't have to feel happy about other's pain but when you see the volume of your pain or loss to be small compared to someone else, then where is the

# need to make a hue and cry about your pain ? You yourself would realize this.

When a person is bedridden due to plaster on the foot, his major worry is when he would be able to resume walking again? How much would the plaster hurt, if you think of the trees which cannot move even one bit on their own and are imprisoned at one place for decades ? What is the pain of a plaster as compared to an immobile person who has lost his limbs ? When your spectacle frame breaks you should think of a blind person. You will definitely get another spectacle frame, Will he get his eyesight any time ?

# **3. When you recall someone more enduring than you, your own endurance will increase manifold :**

Many people can get their work done with their intellect. Such people are called intellectually powerful. Many people can get people to understand their view-point with their vocal power. Such people are called powerful speakers. Some people can defeat even the wrestlers with the strength of their fore-arms. Such people are called physical power-houses. Some people can tolerate their pain without getting disturbed. Such people are the one with the strong will power – power of mind. And this is real power !

To endure pain you don't need physical power, but will power. Sometimes you may come across a child having a superior endurance level as compared to a youth.

Here was a small child with an amazing will-power. He had a boil near his arm-pit. He ignored his boil. The boil had

reddened and was about to burst. He was in immense pain. His hand was also swollen.

The elders of the family learnt about his malady. The news spread around. Some knowledgeable people recommended to show him to an old lady for the treatment. They took him to show her. The old lady crushed some herbal leaves and applied the paste on the boil but there was no relief. Thereafter, the pain was so severe that he could not even raise his hand.

Someone said, "the only remedy to the problem is to use the hot iron rod treatment". Another suggested that if you want to give this treatment, don't go to a quack, rather take him to an expert barber. That child took the barber's name and address and directly went to see him, that too, alone.

The barber heated the iron rod till it became red. He raised the child's hand. His whole hand was swollen. The boil had matured and become deep red. The barber did not have the heart to give the hot rod treatment to such a small child with delicate hands. He said : "Child ! go home and crush herbal leaves and apply the paste. You will be cured !".

The child understood that the barber was hesitating and having pity on him. With the help of a small rag, he picked up the hot iron rod in his hand and asked him : "please show me the exact spot, where I should touch the rod". The barber merely pointed his finger to the spot and went away.

Very casually, the child took the hot iron rod and with his own hand burnt the boil. At intervals he kept rotating the rod on the boil. The barber standing far was aghast. He had treated several men before and all of them used to scream while being treated, but he had never seen such a strong child. There was not even a trace of pain on the boy's face. He just kept smiling. This child grew up to become the renowned `Iron Man' Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. **Iron is iron from the `time it is extracted from the mine, isn't it ? Similarly, an iron man is also an iron man since his birth !.** 

When you have fever with body pain or you fall down or bang against something and hurt yourself or suffer from internal pain, you must recall such illustrations. Your tolerance level which may have completely gone down, can be pumped up, by using these inspiring illustrations that can help you cultivate a technique to `see' your pain and not feel it. The body suffers the pain. **An observer does not suffer pain.** A person who suffers pain, can never be free from misery.

# 4. When in pain, if you divert your attention elsewhere, the intensity of pain reduces :

If the road ahead is not smooth, then the car has to take a diversion. When the pain is unbearable, there is a great chance of you losing your composure. At such a time, if the mind is diverted, the feeling of pain will not be so severe. When a small child falls down while walking, he will start crying loudly if he sees that someone has noticed him falling. But if he realises that nobody is paying attention, he will quietly stand up and start walking again. Our pain is also like this small child. If you continuously focus on the pain, it's intensity will increase. If you ignore it, it will remain quiet. If a guest is given a very warm welcome, he will prolong his stay. If the guest feels that he is ignored, he will wrap up his trip and go away quickly.

Cultured people who consider extending good hospitality to the guests as a virtuous duty, would welcome guests. But if they are not too happy with the guests, they would opt for another route, i.e. ignoring them.

When in pain, by remaining engrossed in reading spiritual books, chanting the mantras (*jaap*) or listening to devotional songs and prayers, the mind can be given a new food for thought and a new direction.

In one of the suburbs of Mumbai, the alertness and solidarity shown by one family in helping a child maintain his composure, has provided an ideal in this direction. This child who was merely 12 years old, was suffering from cancer. For the past two years he was suffering from this terrible disease. As it is, cancer evokes pity and that too when a child was affected by this deadly disease, the entire family was grief-stricken. The child was experiencing a lot of discomfort amidst the unbearable pain that he was suffering from. Everybody in the family was convinced that death was now inevitable.

But, due to the child's good fortune, there was one person in this house, who even in these moments of crisis, wanted to handle this problem with a determination that was salutary. That person was the child's mother. She assembled all the family members one night and said "we accept that we cannot stop death, but the opportunity to let him have a peaceful death is still alive. Let us do something whereby we can make the human birth worth-while for this child who is born in our family".

From the next day, as if everyone had made it a goal of their

life, taking turns, everyone would recite something spiritually uplifting to the small child, at regular intervals. His younger sister would sing such beautiful hymns with so much emotion, that people would find it difficult to hold back their tears.

Mother was the most determined in her efforts. She would recite the holy nine prayers (*navsmaran*) eulogizing our *tirthankaras*, *rushimandal* stotra, some-times the *iryavahi stotra*, which is a penitence for our sins. She would explain the meaning of every word and lovingly caress his head and explain "son ! In the past we must have been instrumental in causing sufferings for many and the time has come to pay for our sins. But remember ! You are not going to be weak. You have to teach us how to bear with a dreadful disease". The son, who had immense love for his mother, would nod his head in acknowledgement. She would remind him the 14 vows of a *shravak* in the morning as well as in the evening.

Sometimes his mother would take him vicariously on an entire pilgrimage (*Bhavyatra*) of the holy Shatrunjay *tirth*. The child would not even know how two hours passed doing this. Sometimes she would make him recite the eighteen ways of committing sins, with a view to make him repentant for his sins. Sometimes she would make him seek pardon of all the living beings in the universe. Sometime she would recount all the big temples of Mumbai alongwith the presiding deities therein and then test his knowledge about the same. In this manner he would do a vicarious mental pilgrimage of more than twenty temples every day. All the members of the family would participate in this noble act of helping the child to maintain his peace and while doing so, they themselves also became high level spiritual aspirants.

Once the child got emotional and exclaimed : "Mom ! Good that I fell victim to a fatal disease ! You keep on telling me so many good things. Had I been fit, I would have never thought of anything other than playing". Everyone in the house was touched when they heard the child uttering the above statement. Because this was the very same child who had asked the doctor, a fortnight ago, to administer a poisonous injection to him as he could not bear the pain any further. Everyone witnessed the result of the miracle produced by their combined efforts. But crores of thanks to the mother who maintained amazing patience and inner strength and helped to change the child's mind-set.

After a few days his health suddenly deteriorated. The last day of his life had dawned. In the presence of all the family members, his mother made him do the niryamana, recited the final prayers which help a dying person to maintain his composure. His mother said bravely "Son ! These are the moments of your true test. Now you will have to bear with pain for only a little while". A framed image of God hung on a wall of the room was brought near the child. After cautioning her son, the mother said : "Now nobody can save you. Only God will help maintain your equanimity. The you to ever compassionate God has come so close. Just see !" The son focused his vision on the picture of God. With unwavering eyes he kept looking at God's picture. ... The brave child's mind was engrossed in listening to the powerful and eternal navkar mantra, (the most powerful and eternal mantra which pays obeisance to the tirthankaras, siddhas and the saints), chanted continuously for about half an hour by the family members and then he shut his eyes forever.

The child who was a victim of the attack of his own *karmas* despite his tender age and innocence had a smile on his face. **This was not death, it was the freezing of a permanently smiling face.** The family members were moved to tears that were a mixture of happiness and grief.

From the description of the above episode provided by the family members, it is clear that by diverting the mind, the endurance power increases manifold. It was not that only the child had lost his life, the family members had lost their loving son too. Since they were also engrossed in a wave of devotion and *bhakti*, their own misery had also reduced considerably. This was their personal experience.

In Bapunagar (Ahmedabad) lived a Jain lady who was struck by dual illnesses. For almost ten years she suffered from paralysis and both her kidneys also had failed. An *acharya* who visited her to help her retain her equanimity had asked a touching question : "Do you ever feel like dying ?"

Normally a patient suffering with the pain of paralysis and dialysis would be waiting for the train of death to arrive on the platform of his life. Since he cannot die, he continues to bear the pain of living. So the *Acharya* had asked this sensitive question with a view to know her mental state, so that he could give her tips for additional peace of mind.

The lady replied nonchalantly: "Why should I think of dying ? A lot of my past *karmas* are being wiped out and new *karmas* are almost not being created. I find the day to be really short to complete my reading, listening discourses and chanting

activities. What is wrong if such a profitable business runs longer ?" Isn't this reply difficult to believe? Really hats off to her.

Then someone clarified that although this lady had been suffering with such pain since last 10 years, she had been performing the ritual of *pratikraman*, (repentance of sins) daily, not missing it even for a single day. Even while suffering so much, she had done the auspicious *ayambel oli*, (fasting for nine days with only once in a day meal of boiled food), twenty times. To add to the list of surprises was the fact that she had done three *masakshamans*, (complete fast for one month). In the year 1998 she had done *masakshaman* twice in the same year. Choked with emotion and full of reverence, when the *acharya* sprinkled the *vasakshep*, (consecrated sandalwood powder) as a token of his blessings, on her head, she requested : "I still want to do one more *masakshaman*. Please shower me with your blessings so that I can do it"!

With the power of her inner strength and understanding, she bore her illness with so much fortitude that people who went to offer their sympathies came back making her as their inspiration idol, whom they would like to emulate. The difference between religion and science has been truly demonstrated here. Science tries with all its might to reduce the pain. Religion gives the power to endure the pain. When all the weapons have to be laid down, i.e. when no further remedy is available, science reaches up to the level of "mercy death", whereas religion provides the most important emotion and that is maintenance of equanimity at death. Instead of going down on your knees before misery, there is greatness in bearing it

courageously. The status of the person who died while fighting a war is always higher than the person who meekly surrendered.

#### **INSURING HAPPINESS**

Some years ago a sudden scary siren rang in Bombay Stock Exchange Towers accompanied by the flickering of red lights. After that there was fear and people ran helter skelter. There was an urgent announcement to vacate the entire tower and within 15 minutes the entire tower was evacuated.

Later on it transpired that due to a couple of bomb-blasts in Mumbai and on account of the apprehension of some more terrorist attacks, the concerned authorities had planned this false alarm. Just imagine, by chance if there was a genuine attack on the stock exchange towers, what could the authorities do ? How much time would it take to vacate this building ? This was the exercise used to check it.

Today's age is called the Management Era. In reality, in today's times a lot of importance is given to disaster management. More than routine operational management expertise, a bigger challenge is to manage a once in a while accidental crisis and needs greater expertise or greater dedication.

In the school and college exams, the students are given a topic on which they have to write an essay. Like, if I become the Education Minster ......! If I become a multi-millionaire ......! If I become the Prime Minister ......! By giving these topics they try to assess the imagination of the students. On this pretext, they are given a fine opportunity to imagine how to embrace such situations.

We should make a more productive and creative use of this practice, which appears to be merely imaginative and akin to

building castles in the air. Sometimes we can also dig deeper into these topics, isn't it ?

"if I become dumb, then ......!"
"if I fracture my leg, then .....!"
"if I make a loss in my business, then .....!"
"if there is a fight in the joint family, then .....!"
"if I lose my eye-sight, then .....!"
"if my kidney fails, then .....!"
"if I get paralysis, then .....!"
"if I get cancer, then .....!"
"if I get diabetes, then .....!"
"if I fail in my exams, then .....!"

Today's intelligent generation may call this a negative approach or pessimism. But making a calculated plan to provide for one's security against possibilities of losses or damages is considered to be extremely brilliant. Summing up all the management courses, it is truly said -Hope for the best and be ready for the worst. For what have they advised us to be ready for ?

What is the thinking behind an absolutely healthy and fit person taking a Medical Insurance ? What is the thought process behind taking an insurance while purchasing an expensive article ? Taking cautious steps to protect oneself against possible losses is an indication of an intelligent thought process. A short-sighted person can measure a loss only in financial terms. Hence he provides only for the financial component of the loss arising during a possible ailment, accident or calamity. But the learned masters have advised us

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to make an estimate of losses that may lead to a possible rebirth in a lower state of existence and the spiritual downfall due to negative and evil thoughts and make a solid preparation to avoid such losses.

We consider the possibility of adverse circumstances to be merely a figment of our imagination. We face three adverse results of the same :

- 1. Inertia (Non-action)
- 2. Weakness
- 3. Failure

We should consider the advent of imaginary circumstances to be an opportunity to prepare ourselves. A suspicion may sometime turn into reality.

America declares high alert against possible terrorist activity, as if there can be an attack any time and remains in a state of complete preparedness. It is possible that the entire effort might just prove to be a mere exercise. Yet there is contentment in it, because even if the steps taken by way of precaution prove futile, it is a bigger crime to remain unprepared.

An individual may be able to escape and save himself against Al Qaeda's gigantic goal, whereas the attack of your own *karmas* takes place at point blank range. Where will you escape and flee ? This means that if you think from the individual level, the laws of *karma* are far more powerful and terrorizing when compared with any terrorist group. Yet we are unable to take as effective steps against the attacks of *karma* as much as the government takes against possible terrorist attacks. If the targets of the terrorist attack are the airports, highways or major connecting bridges, then we can prepare ourselves to foil their plans. But when a scooter hits you and you fracture your leg, how well have you planned to remain in bed with a smile on your face?

If a terrorist contaminates food or water using poisonous chemicals, we would prepare to take counter steps. Similarly when any disease is at its peak, it may be impossible to gulp down a morsel of food or a spoonful of water. How well have you cultivated your mind to manage without food or water in such circumstances?

The government has to remain alert if the terrorist attack creates a financial crisis. But when our own *antaraay karmas* (a *karma* which prevents you from getting the desired benefits of your efforts), attack us and we face a financial crisis, how well have we been trained to manage with lesser resources?

If the terrorists use poisonous chemicals or chemical weapons, America is ready with gas masks. But when *karma* strikes with its final assault and makes you unconscious or puts you in coma, where you can neither hear, nor see nor think anything, then how well equipped are you to emerge victorious in this final battle of your life, merely on the strength and wealth of your character ?

As we contemplate, we realize that all the rituals prescribed by the great saints/descendants of Bhagwan Mahavir are nothing but a magnificent course in crisis management. It is like a training program that

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### saves you by enabling you to remain in a blissful state and maintain your equanimity, during the critical moments of your life.

We have a tradition of keeping *maun* i.e. silent or speechless. Along with exercising restraint on our sense of speech, why can't we consider it as a training to remain steadfast amidst the crisis, when suddenly our speech fails us and we become dumb?

We have a tradition of meditating and in meditation we have a tradition of keeping our eyes shut. Behind this is the main purpose of remaining inwardly focused. Yet, why can't we consider this as a preparedness to maintain our composure, if suddenly we become blind ?

We have a tradition of chanting and doing *kayotsarg* i.e. meditating on a mantra. While we perform this ritual which tests our patience, why can't we consider this as a divine plan to enable the mind also to stay quiet along with the body, when suddenly you become bed-ridden?

We have a tradition of fasting. There is a far-sighted divine plan entwined in this act of fasting, along with the aim of helping you to work out your *karmas*. Can you not consider this as a preparedness to enable you to remain happy, when suddenly you have to stop taking food on account of poor health?

We have a tradition of simplicity and self-restraint. The reason behind this is abandonment of unwanted extravagance. But along with this why can't we consider it as a training for managing with less?

We have a tradition of keeping a limit on wealth that can be held, a limit on the volume of food that we can partake daily, and a limit on other products that we can use like clothes etc. Greed for wealth and conspicuous consumption can definitely be kept under control with this. This practice is called `*Aparigrah*' in Jainism. But besides that can we not consider it as a prior preparation to manage yourself gracefully during a sudden financial crisis?

We have given the act of *swadhyay*, learning and understanding scriptures and reading of good books, the status of internal penance. From that you can understand it's significance. When you are bed-ridden and you cannot perform any other ritual, reading good books and learning scriptures is one such remedy which enables a man to retain his composure. As such, *swadhyay* is a pre-preparation to enable you to stay mentally healthy.

Every act of the path shown by *Dharma* is for upliftment of your soul on the path to spiritual progress and enabling you in progressing quickly towards your endeavours for achieving self-realisation. In that sense, practice of religion is a spiritual management course.

On the other hand, due to temperament or *karma*, due to destiny, or on account of prevalent times or because of illintentioned efforts, if any adverse circumstances are created, how do you keep your mental balance? How will you stop the damage to the pillar of equanimity on which depends upliftment of soul. The damage is taken care of by all these spiritual practices with a new approach. In this way, if you see, the prevalence of *dharma* provides in it's true sense an amazing crisis management course.

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## LEARN WHAT `ENOUGH' IS

If we visualize the body and the mind that we have received and compare the two, we will find an amazing difference between them. From the body, arise needs and from the mind, flow desires.

The needs are like the roof of the house, which has an end. Desires are elements having the vastness and limitlessness of the sky; Unlimited, immeasurable and never-ending. On one end of necessity is production and on the other end is contentment. On both the ends of desires is production only.

You can meet the hunger for food of all the human-beings on this planet, but you cannot satisfy the mental hunger of even one person. To clothe all the human-beings of this world, cloth from India alone would suffice; but the material required for covering a man's mind will always be less. However expensive or favourite a food item is, at one stage the hunger will be fully satisfied. However much you give to the mind, it's craving will always be one step ahead. Satisfaction is the characterization (definition) of the body, and discontentment is that of the mind.

Where the body is satisfied, the mind has merely done a sample testing. The body gets tired and hence takes a break. The mind never gets tired and hence does not talk about taking any break. The needs of the body are so few that they can be met even by begging, but the hunger of the mind cannot be fulfilled by looting also.



In another way you can say that there can be a full-stop to needs, but there is always a comma after desires. The hunger pangs of the stomach can be satiated but the desires of the mind cannot be fulfilled.

The deep hole of the mind is different from all the deep holes in the world. The holes in the world can be filled with sand, but the hole in the mind is such that it never gets filled by putting sand; the more you put the more deep it becomes.

Today on the world panorama, one scene is visible everywhere - people making endless attempts to fill the hole of the mind and people burying their happiness while doing so. Those who want to understand the significance of happiness must first understand the significance of contentment. Someone has made a very poignant observation :

"To sow the jeweled pillar of happiness in the foyer of life, we have to first dig a hole. The sand, mud and stones that are excavated when you dig a hole represents the discontentment that prevails in our soul.

We can understand the need to satisfy the necessities of life. As man moves ahead in life, he needs comforts. Then he begins to indulge in extravagance. As he moves further he gets entwined in showing off. **The importance that is given to showing off in today's life was perhaps never so much rampant earlier.** 

Sumanbhai came from his native village to Mumbai for the first time. He was staying with his son Shishir, who had one son named Montu. He was only four years old but was very smart. He would roam around on his own. He had devised a very smart technique to remember his house. While climbing the stairs leading to his house, he would reach the fifth floor. He would see something and then climb down one flight of stairs and knock on the door exactly below the house above. Shishir asked him the reason for doing this and he replied : "I have memorized one symbol to remember our house. Our house is exactly below the door on which a flower is embossed. Hence when I see the symbol on the door on the floor above, I climb down."

Shishir's father Sumanbhai was stunned when he heard this reply. He touched his forehead and in a shivering tone remarked : "This toddler is absolutely really strange. Instead of the fifth floor, if he had remembered the sign on the door of the third floor, he would not have to unnecessarily climb up and descend an additional floor."

Very poignant is this observation. When you keep in mind someone with higher standard of living than you, you always have to stretch a lot. You don't have to work very hard, if you keep in mind someone lower than you. Today's new generation especially, must learn from Sumanbhai's philosophical tenet.

The new generation lives keeping in mind the people with a standard higher than theirs. The cyclist compares himself with a person owning a bike. The bike owner compares himself with a person owning the car. A person staying in a chawl keeps in mind the person living in a flat and accordingly lives his life. A person living in a flat tries to match with a person living in a duplex flat. When there is a function in the house, the budget is not decided as per one's own capacity but everything is

arranged based on the functions of others, who are wealthier than them. People tend to forget that their spending has to be based on their own income and should not be based on their neighbour's or someone else's opinion or their status and respect enjoyed in society. Learned scholars while giving the extent of expense to be incurred say : "आयोचितो व्यय:" i.e. spending within your means.

People who decide their purchases of food, clothes, furniture, car or their life-style based on their neighbour's standard, will soon forget the address of happiness. Some people pay a higher price while purchasing an article not because the product is worthy of the high price, but because the store is of a higher status. Today's trend is - purchase all the necessities of life by keeping in mind the person with a higher standard of living. The marketing and sales personnel who know the mindset of today's generation merely say "High society people have high tastes !". The slogan is enough, and people purchase their products.

Today there are Textbooks and manuals on advertising and publicity. There are courses on these subjects. Higher education is also provided for the same. A lot of weightage is given to these subjects in commerce. Today no goods are sold on the strength of their quality alone, but sales are more linked to publicity. Another thing, most purchases made are not need-based, but are based on the attractiveness of outer packaging.

Often women who go for buying one saree, return home empty-handed after spending four hours and visiting eight shops. They could not select a single saree and hence could not

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purchase any or sometimes they liked all the sarees and hence could not purchase any. **A man who is confused about his selection finally selects confusion and returns back.** For such people it is very difficult to retain their happiness.

A person who goes for shopping doesn't shop on the basis of his buying capacity, but based on the availability of things in the market. **We have to eat not on the basis of the available food cooked, but on the basis of our hunger.** Man forgets this simple rule of good health and becomes mentally ill and makes his life also miserable.

In the good old days, there used to be one person in the family who would secretly save money with the intention of helping the family when in need. In times of crisis, those savings used to be of great relief. Now there are members in the family who earn secretly and spend also secretly. They create a feeling of insecurity and discontentment in the lives of the entire family.

It is pointless talking about value of money in front of a collegian who can spend the equivalent of an entire month's household expenses of a poor family on just one college day, those who can spend the highest currency note in the pocket in an hour's visit to a restaurant, those who do not hesitate to make a vulgar display of their wealth during weddings and similar occasions, those who do not believe in economizing at all while spending money on useless and shameless celebrations during *navratri* and 31<sup>st</sup> nights, as such people have not understood the value of wealth in it's true sense. The goddess of equanimity turns its face away from such people.

Such people face great difficulties during a sudden economic

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crisis. It may not be surprising to find that people who have been extravagant and spending irresponsibly on useless and wasteful purposes, may at some stage in life find it difficult to meet even their meager necessities. Among the people who are caught up in depression due to financial insecurity, there must be a large proportion of people who did not spend their money wisely when they could have done so and hence have put their equanimity at stake.

Some people are worried about their son's admission. Some are worried about arranging their daughter's marriage functions properly. Some are worried about not having enough money to spend on accidental illnesses. Due to the greed for increasing their business, some are not able to repay the interest on loans taken while the greed for getting a higher interest results in some people losing their capital. Some people raise their hands in despondency, some are crestfallen, some refuse to see what is visible to them, while some meet with pre-mature death. Spending recklessly can lead a person to depression, premature death and a rebirth in a lower level of existence.

People who are wealthy and materialistic may have to wait for happiness forever, but a contented person experiences calmness and tranquility even in the present status. Contentment is the *dharma* of the present era. Simplicity is the spinal chord of the body structure of the equanimity of the soul. A person whose spine is injured cannot stand straight. It may not be surprising to find that people who cannot accept simplicity instilled with pride as a virtue have to forcibly bear with simplicity as a punishment. The life slogan of the people in olden days was : "reduce your needs, but save money". The life slogan of today's people is : "incur debt if you have to, but enjoy and make merry". The scriptures have laid down that once a Jain temple is constructed, a certain amount has to be set aside as corpus fund, so that it can be useful later. In the same manner, the traditional economic experts have suggested that one fourth of the income should be set aside towards savings. At the heart of these suggestions was the welfare of the people. They were worried about everyone's equanimity, whereas today's people are not worried about their own equanimity also.

A person takes medicines when he falls sick. He considers medicine to be the cure for good health; yet he feels happy as he gradually reduces the doses of medicine. After some days, if the doctor increases the quantum of pills or dose of medicine, he gets a shock. This means that medicine is the cure for good health is a weak truth. The real truth is that taking medicine is the sign of bad health. What applies to medicine applies to all things.

The continuous accumulation of material things is not the cause of happiness, but a sign of unsatiated hunger. What can you imagine about a person's health who is surrounded by medicine bottles, capsules and tablet strips? We can imagine the same for a person's spiritual health who is imprisoned in the vast circumference of material things.

We can get oxygen from a cylinder, but that is a sign of bad health. A person who is healthy will breathe oxygen from the environment itself. In the same manner, happiness is created by the inner self and a subject of internal experience. The attempt to get happiness from material things is equivalent to talking about oxygen cylinder, tube and mask.

The issue here is not about the material things that should be on the necessity list of a person for whom life is difficult to live, expensive to fall sick and cheaper to die. What is most crucial is that every person should have continuous equanimity and happiness. It is doubtful whether the material things lying in their house will brighten up even their present life or not; whereas the true happiness and contentment within their soul will certainly brighten up their present as well as future lives. I am tempted to offer some golden advice here that will be a protective shield to maintain your equanimity in the present times. They are :

- 1. You should not cultivate a habit of things which you may probably not get in the future. You can maintain your composure not on the basis of what you have, but on the basis of what you can do without.
- 2. Think 100 times before stepping on the road which promises to bring overnight prosperity.
- 3. Think of your savings as your child. A child has to be cared for. You cannot scratch him.
- 4. Implement the advice of the learned masters who taught that you should keep in mind your income before incurring expenses.
- 5. Remember that only some time ago, you could do without so many things. If a person whose stomach

used to get full with six *rotis*, now doesn't feel full after eating twenty-six *rotis* also, then you should believe that this is not hunger, but gluttony.

When today's world has become a huge *bazaar* for material things, where there is no control over production, then there is a need to control consumption. The depth of happiness is far above that of material objects. Once you understand this, your angle of seeing material objects will change.

The things that you have will separate from you in two ways : Either you will leave the things or the thing will desert you and move away. You lose material things in both the options, but there is a big difference in its impact. Voluntary abandonment emerges from a person's virtue of contentment. Forced denial causes a lot of discontentment. A Philosopher has said very sweetly : "Contentment is the religion of the present times. Contentment is the security bond given by religion. A person who yearns for equanimity and a re-birth into a higher level of existence leading finally to nirvana (liberation) should preserve this security bond".

# THE SUPREMACY OF SPIRITUALITY

The famous repository of learning of North India is Kashi. Once Gautam Buddha reached there while roaming as an ascetic. As the majority population in that entire area comprised of Brahmins, the vedic religion prevailed there. Nobody had any faith in the Buddhist religion. One fresh disciple of Gautam Buddha proposed : "Sir ! What if you show some miracle here ? This is a good opportunity. Upon seeing the miracle, everyone will become a follower and disciple of Buddhist religion. A miracle inspires an ordinary person to pay obeisance". Gautam Buddha contemplated over his disciple's proposal and replied : "Ok ! But should I show a big miracle or a small one?"

"A miracle is a miracle ! There is nothing like small and big in that". Upon hearing the confused disciple's malady, Buddha clarified : "Look son ! some miracles are small and considered ordinary e.g. Being buried in the ground for a few hours and then coming out completely fit and fine .....; pass through a thick wall without any way through it .....; walking on water ....; flying in the sky like a bird .....; holding a burning splinter in the palm ......and so on. All these are considered to be small miracles". The disciple was stunned to hear this. He inquired : "Sir ! if these are considered as small ones, then what would the big ones mean ?"

"Bringing an internal transformation in a man !" Buddha replied. To bring about an internal transformation in a man is the biggest miracle.

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If we want to simplify and elaborate Buddha's categorization of miracles given above, we can say that to demonstrate incredible magical powers is a small miracle and to demonstrate purification powers is a big miracle.

In the ancient Jain scriptures and in several other scriptures, there is a mention about special miraculous powers. Their description is also very amazing. With some magical powers man can see with his ears, he can listen with his eyes, while with some magical powers he can walk on water or fly in the sky without any wings.

Once the era of special magical powers ended, the era of science began. With magical powers or with the help of science, the changes that you can bring in a man's life or the miracles that you can see are all at the external level only. The transformation that happens through religion is at an internal level. Hence we can say that science can produce petty miracles, whereas religion believes in producing bigger miracles.

When Delson, the former Foreign Minister of Great Britain suffered from cancer, he drove the whole world crazy. The disease had no cure and at the same time, his ardent desire to live also had no remedy. Finally he had to surrender helplessly before his disease and died with an unfulfilled wish to live longer. During those same times, famous Jain Acharya Vijay Bhuvanbhanusurshwariji's younger brother and first disciple saint Padmavijayji was also suffering from cancer. It was difficult for him to drink even water.

It is possible that people suffering from the deadly disease of cancer may not be able to consume food. But because of this impediment, their desire to eat doesn't diminish. The disease

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would reach its final stage and eventually take away the life of the patient. When the saint learnt about the stage of his illness, he declared : "Now stop searching for new remedies. We have the route of spirituality. Then why go on the route of medical technology ?"

It may be hard to believe, but it is a real fact that even while he was so ill and bed-ridden, he completed one *masakshaman* (complete fasting for one month), and once he fasted continuously for 24 days. He was so engrossed in reading scriptures, contemplation, meditation and so on, that in his dedication to spirituality, the commotion of his physical pain was completely vanguished.

Those days, the specialist doctors of Mumbai were also completely astonished. They all felt that **he should be a magician.** In the mega war between his physical illness and the equanimity of his soul, the maintenance of equanimity emerged with a sparkling victory. The dwarf named physical illness could do nothing in front of the mammoth mantra of equanimity. The body was destroyed but his composure was intact. Science could not execute even a small miracle to save him from the invincible disease, whereas religion performed such a big miracle.

In such events you can see the power of *karma* and the power of religion. It is true that *karmas* have the destructive power to rip off the body, but an aspirant whose mind has found the protective shield of religion doesn't flinch a bit. *Karmas* can make an aspirant ill, but they cannot make him unhappy. Thanks to the power of religion !

### It is possible that science may have been successful in preventing the germs of an incurable disease from

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spreading to other parts of the body. But it doesn't have any technology to prevent the disease from affecting the patient's psyche. Spirituality possesses this most amazing technology. This important point establishes the superiority of spiritualism over science. Nobody ever had to teach man how to put to use the conveniences created by him. But, to be able to happily bear the difficulties that come your way, is in itself a big miracle.

A man suddenly lost the vision in both his eyes at his middle age. He was extremely fond of reading and hence used to read continuously for six to eight hours every day. He had become a learned scholar in the areas of philosophy, spirituality and literature due to his relentless reading : A relative once asked the man "Now you are facing hurdle in reading, isn't it ?" He answered spontaneously : "No, not at all ! I have now received an unhindered opportunity to contemplate and mull over all that I have read till date. I have been presented with an opportunity to give a test of all that I have read till date".

Then he smilingly said : "If you have read before the exam, it is useful while appearing for the exam. While appearing for the exam you have to stop reading, isn't it ? Right now I am writing the exam. I am really enjoying myself".

Do we call this a loss of vision or achieving an enlightened vision? When there is no chance of improvement of vision, it is time to bring about a change in view-point. It is entirely in our hands to bring about the change. **You cannot change the winds, but you can adjust the sails.** 

An author's strength lies in his hands. When the hands become weak, he becomes weak. An athlete's strength is in his feet. He stops when his feet get tired. A sharp shooter's strength lies in his eyes. When his eyes become weak, his interest for his sport diminishes. A spiritual aspirant's strength lies in his mind and as long as he doesn't permit his mind to become weak, he continues to emerge victorious. Even if such aspirants lose their eye-sight, they keep their inner vision secure.

If an experiment of keeping your eyes covered with a blind fold and sitting at home that you are familiar with, for only half a day also can prove to be difficult, then it is certainly not easy to accept with a smiling face, the loss of vision for an entire life-time.

Just imagine the state of being blind. When you cannot see, you definitely have difficulty in walking around, but you have so many problems in remaining seated also at one place. You cannot see the faces of those with whom you have to live for life-time. While others praise an object, you cannot even see it. Suddenly the door opens and someone walks in. Every other person gets up immediately to welcome the visitor exclaiming : "Welcome, welcome, you have come after a long time". A blind man too is anxious and wonders who has come. While eating food, he cannot see the plate, bowls or any food placed therein. This is blindness !

Forget the eyes, our mind is so vulnerable that even when any ordinary thing gets spoilt, we get upset. Just remember the days when everyone was crazy during the cricket season and more so, when India was to play against Pakistan. That day suddenly the television set broke down. The mind was plugged with the television set and it too broke down ! By evening you got to hear that India had lost the match with a very poor score. Someone inquired : "Did you see the match ?". "No!" : "Why ?". Then you had answered with the style of a philosopher : "Why to see and feel the pain !" In reality, for this

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fox inside you, the grapes were not merely sour, they were beyond reach also !.

When the television stops functioning, you are not able to watch your favourite programs. T. V. viewing stops, but your grumble for your inability to watch doesn't stop. Yet, the person who philosophieses about the cricket match is not an enlightened man but a smart guy. When the television stops working you are unable to watch, and when your eyes get spoilt then also you are unable to watch. But the mind of an ignorant addict seeking enjoyment in worldly things gets dejected when the television stops functioning because his world revolves on the television screen. But an enlightened man's mind does not get dejected even with the loss of eyesight. Reason being that the enlightened man's inner world is immeasurable, seamless, limitless, endless and indestructible.

The revered Jain Acharya Shree Bhadrasuriji had suddenly lost his vision. He was around eighty-five years old then. I was later informed about his response while consoling his shocked pupils and disciples, when they learnt about his blindness. He comforted them saying : "I saw so much of the external world. Now mother nature has made it convenient for me to see my inner world. Then let me dive deep inside". We realized that this saint had merely lost his eye-sight. His vision was intact. After losing his eye-sight also this great saint had lived for the remainder of his life stretching to almost two decades with utmost patience and understanding.

To have your cataract removed using laser technology in merely 15 minutes is no big miracle, but to lose your vision suddenly and yet to live happily for such a long period is a big miracle.

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Science has the answer to what needs to be done when it gets dark, but science has no answer for how to remain happy when you lose your vision. Science is capable of keeping the environment cool in the scorching heat. But it is beyond the realms of science to teach us how to remain stress-free (cool) when the airconditioner does not work during hot weather.

In a nutshell, science is oriented towards circumstances. Hence it can never create big miracles. Spiritualism is more concerned with the inner self and hence it does not believe much in small miracles. Science combats to provide remedies to cure the diseases of the body, whereas spiritualism helps us to gain victory over our inner weaknesses.

A person who has to live with dialysis due to damage of his kidneys manages to prolong his life-span by several years. Nobody or nothing except spiritualism has the power to make that period interesting and worth-living. Perhaps, science will be able to research and develop the remedy to free the skin from the spots of leucoderma, but it will never have the formula to rid the mind of anger, jealously, greed, depression, etc. etc. – all black spots !

In short, science targets unhappiness, spirituality targets weaknesses. To live with your weaknesses and attempting to remove your unhappiness is like applying an ointment on the boil without removing the pus from inside. Science gives comforts to the man's outer physique or body. Religion purifies the inner psyche of the man. **The endurance which religion gives you is far superior to the comforts that science provides you with.** 

## THE THIRD WORLD WAR

"Beloved villagers ! You will now reap the benefits of electing me. Today you have to walk to reach your farms from here. To catch a train, you have to walk to the village nearby. You will have to bear with all these hardships for only a few days now. From here, the road to the main highway is being constructed. Thereafter, all buses and cars will be able to reach our village. You will not have to waste your time walking for an hour. You will reach the main village in just 10 minutes by bus. You will not have to walk up to the fields also. You will save two hours every day......". The villagers greeted these promising words of the politician with a loud applause.

Then someone questioned : "It is alright that you will help us to save our time. But then what do we do with the two hours that we would have saved ?" The leader replied : "Now you are connected with electricity. Equipments that provide entertainment will now reach your villages, then not only a few hours, but even days and years will go by without you even realising it." People dispersed with expressions of surprise on their faces and hopes of progress in their villages.

Science first invented means and equipments to save time. Then it invented equipment to spend the time thus saved. The time saving equipments eliminated labour from life. The time consuming equipments removed restraint from life. With the reduction of both labour and restraint, the edifice of health started shaking. The turmoil in health carved a fissure in our equanimity. Today this fissure is widening. To appreciate the significance of equanimity, we first need to understand the four factors that help us maintain our equanimity. They are :

- 1. **Physical Labour**
- 2. **Restraint**
- 3. Self-reliance
- 4. **Tolerance/Endurance**

#### The significance of physical labour in life

Physical labour is as significant in life as good health is. Science has gifted countless equipments to mankind for a comfortable life-style. At the same time, it has completely eliminated the need to toil and labour in life.

It is foolishness to believe that you can get the satisfaction of doing some physical labour by merely moving your arms and legs continuously for half-an-hour while exercising. Real labour is when at regular intervals during the whole day, you perform the functions of getting up and sitting down, coming and going, climbing up and descending and so on. All this physical labour itself is presently relaxing on the mattress of equipments !

WHO, the top-most health organization of the world has, in an eye-opening report given five major reasons for the increase of diseases in the world. The foremost reasons among them are pollution and a sedentary life-style.

Man first accumulates laziness in his life. Then he accumulates cholesterol in his blood. Thereafter he undergoes a by-pass

surgery and declares with pride : "Wow ! Science has reached upto such an advanced stage" Today's life-style is free of manual labour and loaded with tensions. As a result, it is possible to get a heart-attack even at the age of 30 years and joints may wear out at the age of 35 years. The hip bones and the knee-joints deteriorate when you are probably 40 years old. Pills for blood-pressure and diabetes are sold like peppermint. The glamorous package of a toil-free life-style that science has given us comes with several diseases as additional gifts.

Today Jogger's Park and Jogger's clubs have come up. It has become fashionable to go for a morning walk. When you inquire with them : "Why do you go for a walk ?" They would reply in a philosophical style : "Oh Yeah ! Walking is the best exercise, you know !" The people of yester-years did real exercise by day to day activities. Now-a-days exercise is just a fashion.

Why is it that the people who do more of manual labour are less prone to diseases? In today's world, if someone does research on this subject, prepares a paper, publishes and propagates the same among the people, then only people will appreciate the significance of manual labour in their lives. In the yesteryears, the life-style was such that manual labour was naturally entwined in the day-to-day life. Today people leave at dawn and spend money on superficial activities, that make them exert extra physical efforts or exercise at the gym. Science has kicked out toil from life and then propped up life by giving the support of synthetic hi-tech work-outs. There is a relationship of cause and effect between labour and health. Today the relationship is exploited commercially.

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## The significance of restraint in life

One of the finest examples of inner alertness is that of Emperor Bharat, the ruler of six continents of this earth. He had made a special arrangement to ensure that he didn't get drowned in the excesses of luxuries available to him as a *chakravarti*, i.e. ruler of six continents.

Three *shlokas* were recited loudly whenever he entered the royal court-room. He had appointed a special squad for undertaking this task. They would recite the following *shlokas* in Sanskrit as soon as Emperor Bharat entered the royal courtroom : "जितो भवान्, वर्धते भी : तस्मात् मा हण मा हण". These *shlokas* meant "Oh King ! You are surrounded by immense material wealth that will make you weak. You have been conquered by the king of material wealth. You have already entered the danger zone. Hence you should not proceed further".

Such bold and cautioning messenger of Emperor Bharat is very necessary today for each of us. In reality, it is necessary to have such a micro Bharat in everyone's conscious. The moment you see danger in enjoying material wealth, you will be compelled to exercise restraint.

King Bhartruhari has coined a very beautiful philosophy in a shloka composed by him. "भोगे रोगभयम् .....". You associate disease with suffering and hence you want to remain free from diseases. Similarly, if you fear disease as the outcome of rampant materialistic consumption, you will be wise enough to stay away from the same. Today also man keeps away from physical indiscretion owing to the fear of contracting diseases associated with such bad habits.

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Today's science has given man ample comforts and in exchange thereof taken away his tolerance power. On the other hand, it has given him many things which fill his life with unbridled consumption and removes restraint from his life. Unrestrained consumption will always invite ailments. Besides, the absence of tolerance will always lead to loss of poise and composure while suffering from a disease. Thus, science has made it difficult for a person to maintain his tranquility.

Being drowned in the world of comforts, we have forgotten that the most important thing in life is not a comfortable lifestyle, but maintaining equanimity and peace and that the excesses of comforts in life will control my ability to exercise restraint and my tolerance and put my equanimity at risk.

Today's science has made progress by leaps and bounds in medical field and removed the fear of disease from a man's heart. Four decades ago when a person had to undergo a surgery for cataract, he had to make adjustments for a number of days. This operation is completed today within the same number of hours. Going under a surgeon's knife has become as simple a matter today, as going under a barber's scissor for a hair-cut.

By-pass surgery of the heart and operation of the brain are not dangerous anymore. A patient sitting in Mumbai can consult an expert physician in New York after mailing his medical reports.

The bones can be repaired or replaced by screws, plates and balls of sparkling metal. You can attach an artificial foot from Jaipur or Germany. A blind man can be operated upon and given vision. Everything from the cornea of an eye to the kidney can be replaced. Science is determined to fulfill its pledge to provide utmost comforts to mankind. But this is dangerous because it corrupts a man's state of mind, though it improves his circumstances.

Ultimately science is also a branch of learning. Yantra i.e. equipment, mantra, i.e. group of holy words that can have a profound positive impact and shashtra, i.e. scriptures of learning can be given only to the deserving person. Goshalak had learnt the art of throwing the tejo leshya, (akin to a large fiery ring which when thrown at a person burns him to ashes) from Lord Mahavir. He used this technique only for burning others. He went to the extent of throwing this fiery fire ring on Bhagwan Mahavir as well. Looking at today's conditions, we feel that the benefits of the scientific discoveries that man has achieved are like the fiery ring in the hands of Goshalak. The inventions that man has made are now scaring and causing harm to him.

Science ignores lack of restraint, the root cause of disease, and pays attention only to the pain resulting from disease. Let us illustrate our point : "If I am not cautious about what I eat, I will get loose motions ". This thought keeps him under control. Science has researched and produced a pill which keeps motions in control. Man tries to find a mid-way solution. "Eat the medicine before eating *besan dhokla*". Science first gives problems which spoils a man's health and then gives solutions to cure him of his ailments. But science could not invent a remedy to cure him of his inner illness.

Just guess if someday science could bring diseases like cancer and aids in the same category as cholera and typhoid in terms

of providing a remedy, can you imagine the level of decencies that man will continue to maintain ?

Just guess if some government trades criminal tendencies by legalizing robbery, murder and rape and simultaneously takes up the project to modernize and construct jails into three star, five star and seven star categories, then would you consider this act as humanitarian and for the welfare of the people? On one hand, by giving unlimited equipments for satiating man's lust for all sorts of pleasures, science has multiplied the criminal tendencies in a man's mind, and on the other hand it has provided remedies for ailments arising out of excessive consumption of material things.

*Dharma* preaches the right way of living, whereas science fights against diseases arising out of the wrong way of living. We find that on one hand science invents equipments to spoil a man's psyche and on the other hand provides remedies to cure him of the ailments arising out of his excesses. Don't you think that we should contemplate before calling science progressive?

#### The significance of self-dependence in life

Science has converted this mammoth universe into a tiny village. In no time man can reach wherever he wants to. Within a few seconds he can send a message wherever he wishes to. Within a few seconds, he can procure any info or anything that he wants from any part of the world.

New technology has played a significant role today, that of providing great speed. By showing distant images on screens

it has boosted the power of the eyes to see. By making distant sounds audible on communication means, it has enhanced the intensity of the ears to hear. By enabling man to reach far off places in no time, it has increased the speed of his feet. Through the medium of composing and printing, it has enhanced the strength of the hands to create. Computers and CDs have been instrumental in increasing his mental prowess. With the use of bulbs, tube-lights and lamps, man's capacity to see has increased manifold.

Firstly, we need to calm our minds, then sharpen the intellect and ponder whether science has given us speed or excitement. What is the difference between *veg* (spéed), power and *aaveg* (excitement) as manifested in the form of a gigantic power?

In the context of grammar we can say that when we add a prefix to *veg* we get *aaveg*. This has really come true today. When power gets a boost, it manifests itself into excitement. If we want to understand in a simple manner, we can clarify thus : that which can be stopped is speed, and that which is very difficult to contain is excitement or impulsiveness.

Doesn't a flowing river have speed ? But a small dam built on it can stop it's flow. Doesn't the blowing breeze have speed ? By shutting the window we can stop the breeze also. But when *veg* takes the form of *aaveg*, the breeze which could merely sway the trees, now gathers enormous power which blows away people and uproots houses as well. Such a breeze is then called a cyclone.

Water which flows and characteristically runs downhill is also endowed with the character of motion. Based on this

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characteristic, it is alright if the water from the tap falls into the bucket. But when the water from the river Tapi overflows into the streets of Surat, we have to call this phenomenon as floods only. It is alright as long as the tea boils on the gas burner, but when that same flame flares up and engulfs the whole house, it has to be called a fire. The car has *veg*, but a car whose brakes have failed has *aveg*. A pen has *veg* but ..... when turmoil flows from within, the pen leaks (does not write sanely) and spoils everything.

When you observe a man's strengths and the level of material comforts enjoyed by him today, you realize that it is not a depiction of his power, but of a vulgar display of excessive might. When time comes to give up comforts and you can do so easily, it is called veg. But if you cannot give up your comforts, then you should realize that it is aveg. Floods are bad because, instead of satiating your thirst, they take away your life. Fire is bad because, instead of enabling the roasting of the roti, it roasts the man himself. The cyclone is bad because, it kills everyone and destroys everything in cold blood. Don't you think we should revise our opinion on science ? On the pretext of giving comforts to man, science destroys his mental composure. The difference between water and floods. between breeze and cyclone, between flame and fire is only that of dimension and degree.

Comforts can be a part of one's life, but when they mean everything to you, there will be nothing except lamentation and devastation. Instead of making you wear a ring on your finger, what happens if someone cuts your finger ? Instead of garlanding you, what happens if someone wrings your neck ? Instead of putting medicinal drops in your eyes, what happens if someone puts acid in your eyes ? On the pretext of giving comforts, the excesses of science has inflicted man with a helpless and paralytic dependence.

While enjoying any comfort man should question whether such a comfort is necessary for him or not ? He should further investigate whether these comforts are dangerous or not ? Comforts are like a leech. First they stick to you and then they suck you out. They will take a break only after they have made their victim useless. We can accept when a comfort takes the form of tea, but when it becomes an excess and the addiction takes you to consumption of opium (narcotic drugs), the person who consumes it carelessly, first gets a `kick' out of it and then is kicked out !

Some time ago, America met with a historic event . There was complete black out in New York. This black-out was published in news-papers all over the world. It continued for almost one and half days. What would have happened if this crisis continued for a month ? In the beginning the generators, and after a few days the ventilators of the ICU would have been seen functioning.

Just imagine, due to the occurrence of a major break down, the entire satellite system breaks down. Then perhaps there will be a phenomenal rise in suicides as our lives are completely dependent on the satellite system. The mere imagination of a life without electricity would push a person into a state of depression. It is, as if the modern science has imprisoned a man's mental happiness in a switch board. This high level of dependence has truly become a cause of concern.

A person is not prepared to wait for five minutes for his family members to get ready for going out somewhere, but after stepping out of the house he waits for two whole minutes for the lift to arrive to take him down five stairs. He has no value for love, labour, time or self-dependence.

Dependence is a culprit which separates a man from his family as well as his own body. A person who uses the lift does not realize that he is mortgaging his feet. A person who uses the calculator and computer while performing some basic calculations, mortgages his mind.

Today a person without a mobile is like a handicapped man. In the good old days, a father would shout aloud to call his child standing in the building compound. Today's father uses the mobile ! In this manner does anyone feel that he has humiliated the capabilities of his own throat or feet ? Now-adays, a person can survive without his mother, but not without his mobile. We should ask a father, who cannot spare a single minute for his son, but spends hours on mobile, `who will be your supporting stick in your old age?' The scenario is so bad that a person who does not have a mobile, feels ashamed and guilty.

Have you realised how this leech sticks and sucks ? Keep the mobile aside for fifteen days on an experimental basis only. "We can do whatever we want to" - We may have to gulp down this famous dialogue !

Remote control is fascinating. Without moving your limbs you can change the channel by merely pressing a button. Remote can be used to open the door, it can be used to fly a plane and if mis-used by terrorists, it can raze a few cities to ashes. This remote has eliminated the need to stand up and sit down frequently. Besides that, it has increased the unsteadiness of the mind manifold. You can keep flipping the channels while lying in bed. If the remote doesn't function when you press the button and you cannot change the channel, you lose your balance because from the soft coffin of cotton (your bed), you had to raise yourself, isn't it ?

It is difficult to climb stairs once you have lost the habit to climb. Similarly after losing the habit of standing up and sitting down, it becomes extremely difficult to get up frequently. A person who gets accustomed to the services of the chauffeur, finds it extremely difficult even to open the door of his car. When the taxis and autos unite to call a strike, the state of Mumbaikars becomes very pitiable and worth watching. The house-wife's face changes shape and colour if the maid doesn't turn up for work. When the chauffeur doesn't turn up for work, the man's face wrinkles up so much that one feels it needs ironing. When the AC doesn't work, the members of the family stay awake without even performing the penance of jagaran. When the TV stops working, a cartoon (distorted face) can be seen in the mirror itself. If, even one file is lost in the computer hard disk or back-up device, the programming for the entire day goes hay-wire.

A person who considers self-dependence as the foundation of his equanimity and moves ahead, does not become upset in this manner. A person who voluntarily gives up using the lift once a day does not even realize that he is taking an insurance of his own happiness. If the lift is not working some-time, he will not get mentally upset but will voluntarily climb up the stairs. The mental happiness of a person who is habituated to walk home from the station, does not go on strike when the auto rickshaws go on a strike. A person who does some household work himself can become a domestic help when the maid is not available . Washing machine, AC, TV, lift, cell phone, remote, computer, calculator .... How many of these appliances can today's man abstain from using?

If someone says that man has made progress, a question immediately arises in the mind that man has forgotten his activities only. The progress has been made by these appliances only. Washing clothes, making calculations, remembering, climbing up and down and all such activities are being done by men himself since ages. Today all such activities are performed by equipments.

What man was habituated to do earlier, he is unable to do; and equipments are able to accomplish now what they could not do earlier. Man who is talking about personality development and skill raising today looks like an orphan child adopted by science !

Dependence on gadgets has increased so much that it is difficult to say whether man uses gadgets or gadgets use man. If a man wants to speak, he needs his mouth only. Today if a mobile phone wants to talk, it needs the help of a man. Earlier you needed the brain to remember something. Today a computer needs the help of a man to store everything into its CPU. If man wants to go somewhere, he used his legs. If the car wants to go for a drive, a chauffeur is required. Earlier man used to use his finger-tips to count and calculate. Today a calculator takes the help of man when it needs to operate. It

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appears that the emperor called comforts has challenged the independence of man. Is there any Bhagat Singh who can pick up the challenge to liberate him from the slavery ?

All the appliances developed by science has in-built features like Delete, Stop, Off or Mute; but science has no control over itself. In reality, the man who is dependent on science has no control over himself. What should be promoted ? To what extent should you conduct research ? In this respect, science has no break, nor does it have any sense of propriety.

Man's urge of being more and more happy motivates him to move forward in the field of science. But his unbridled imagination in the field of science is perhaps still incomplete. The space shuttle Columbia which was released in space by the US, finally lost control over itself and crashed with the Indian cosmonaut Kalpana Chawla. This space shuttle aptly represents modern science. Be a visionary and visualize the end-results (not always happy) produced by the imagination of mankind, which has boarded the flight launched in the space of science without being in command of control measures.

Man is cautious about how much salt he should add to his curry or how much sugar he should add to his tea. But he has no sense of measure about how much comforts he should enjoy in his life. A pinch of salt can add to the flavor of the curry and a pinch of sugar can add to the taste of the tea. This same salt and sugar if added disproportionately can spoil the taste of the food. Some comforts can perhaps bring happiness in life, but an excess of these luxuries can spoil this happiness also.

The fathers of science may not appreciate and may not like it, but the bitter truth is that science has inculcated an addiction

in man for comforts. He is so intoxicated that he has lost sight of his goal of retaining his mental peace. What goal can addicts have ?

Chemical fertilizers may initially help the farmer to harvest a bountiful crop on fertile soil, but eventually it will rest only when it has made the farm a barren piece of land. The excess of comforts finally proves to be a dangerous game in a man's life. It sucks a man's integrity, self-esteem and his ability to retain his composure and makes his life-style insipid and bland.

## The significance of tolerance in life

Vishwanath Shashtri was a famous learned *pundit* from Bengal. A very soul stirring incident from his life is narrated here. Once he was invited for debate on the scriptures along with several other learned *pundits*. The debate started at the appointed time. The opponents had no response to make to the learned arguments placed by Shashtriji and their defeat seemed certain. Shashtriji's face was wearing a serene smile of victory.

When the opponents could not find any substantive argument to win the debate, the last opponent removed a snuff-box from his pocket, opened it and sprinkled all the tobacco powder on Shashtriji's face. Shastriji remained unperturbed by this sudden disgusting behavior of his opponent. He removed his kerchief wiped his face and remarked in a calm tone : "This was a diversion from the subject. Let's continue with the debate." The smile still lurked on Panditji's face. This was a true smile of victory.

In the Parliament also people pull each other's leg and in the cricket field also mudslinging goes on, then why should the

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house be spared ? But during these incidents we fail to retain our smiles.

As Shastriji was stepping out of the hall, someone from the audience inquired : "Did you not feel upset by such repulsive behavior?" He gave a very fitting reply : "We are habituated to inhale the smoke from the kitchen furnace every day. Why should I get angry?"

Earlier people used log fire to cook. Today they use gas. The activities of cooking and dining continued in the same routine manner. The only change was in the equipment. But rarely anyone has noticed that this change in equipment has brought about a change in man's temperament. A person who blew air into the log fire everyday, inhaled the smoke and tears rolled from his eyes. This smoke cleansed his eyes everyday and hence people did not get cataract till a very late age. A person who was habituated to inhale smoke unknowingly got trained to tolerate pain also. Gas and lighter can give food, not training !

What difference does it make whether a person ignites a lantern or switches on the light to dispel the darkness ? There is a huge difference. It takes some time to light the lantern. It also needs some time to stabilize the lantern. If there is a strong wind blowing, the lantern has to be lighted several times. If the flame is excessively bright, glass of lantern becomes black. The lantern is a complex equipment. Whereas the electric light serves like an obedient slave. You merely press the switch of the light and there is brightness everywhere. Don't think that with the advent of new technology, man has to merely labour less. His training or learning to manage and find a solution using a complicated

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equipment which does not perform without some tinkering has also come to an end. His tuition about how to deal with a complicated or resisting equipment has also come to an end.

This lantern is merely a sample. Just compare all the old equipments with today's new equipments. All the old equipments were resistant and reactive. All the new equipments are servile and instant. Just press the switch and they start functioning. Hence people habituated to use such equipment, have developed a tendency in their minds that every work should be done instantly. A man believes that if I say "keep quiet", my wife must stop talking immediately, and if I say "speak up" my son must start talking immediately. As if "keep quiet" is the **Mute** and "speak up" is the **Play** key on a remote !

Today people lose their temper over very small and insignificant events. One of the reasons that seems responsible for this attitude is that with the use of such highly servile scientific equipments, man's arrogance, desires and expectations have increased manifold. If these are not satisfied, he loses his balance. His peace of mind and family relations are all disturbed.

A lady who sells *daatan*, (*neem* or *babool* sticks used for cleaning teeth), addresses her donkey thus, when it does not walk properly : "walk my sister ...walk ...please walk ...". You would be surprised when she calls the donkey her sister, isn't it ?

When someone inquired of her the reason for so addressing the donkey, she replied : "This donkey is a very stubborn animal but I am cultivating the habit of talking sweetly with it so that when my customers haggle for lower prices, I do not lose the sweetness of my tongue and the peace of my mind".

The equipments of yesteryears were clumsy and not so convenient. But they taught you how to get your work done, when you were stuck with complexity. Such learning helped to maintain harmony and concord in the family.

As the new equipments function instantly, they naturally test a person's patience and tolerance. Today if someone takes more time in the calculation of account given, our mind becomes restless. The reason is that we are used to instant service of the calculator and hence not able to maintain our patience.

Today, why the mind gets excited when someone is asked for an address or phone number and you get to hear a reply - as "can't remember?" The computer has left negative impact not only on man's memory but also has taken away his tolerance power.

Today a man's tolerance limit is less than even a second . The contribution of advanced technology for this state of affairs is significant.

Science can give hi-tech equipments. Through these equipments, it can give conveniences. But science does not have the power to give peace.

Man is a curious creature ! He loves pleasures. He accumulates/collects material things and then produces miseries for himself. Due to this, peace and wealth have become adversaries.

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The first world war was waged in the second decade of the last century. The second world war was waged in the fourth and fifth decade of the last century.

Where and when will the third world war be fought?

People will have a different assessment in this respect. As per one view-point the third world war has already started and is being played out in the man's mind. It is being fought between religion and science. The coming decades will be decisive in this respect.

Famous psychologist Karl Gustav Young has written : "thousands of psychologists have not been able to provide a solution to as many problems till date, that religion has been able to provide".

The degradation in the value systems due to all encompassing and excessive indulgence of worldly pleasure (material things) on a large scale has led the intellectuals also to think of the necessity of religion in life. Religion acts as a safety valve in today's fast paced life and for that purpose alone also, the presence of religion in life should be accepted as inevitable.

If man can accept the fan which helps to relieve him of the external heat, who would hesitate to accept the presence of religion which helps to relieve him of his inner heat ? Why do people install an exhaust fan in the kitchen ? So, those who have realized the insignificance of comforts and the importance of peace and harmony in life, have accepted the requirement of religion in life. The only reason why man has

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installed the exhaust fan, which though does not provide a cool breeze, is due to its ability to remove the heat from inside. On this same basis, let there be a sparkling victory of *Dharma*, which is concerned about the happiness, well being, peace and harmony of all living beings.

### **POSITIVE OUTLOOK**

Very revered and renowned Jain Acharya Kalapurnasuriji had written a detailed explanatory commentary on one of his favourite scriptures. Unfortunately the manuscript which was given to the press was lost. He did not have another copy. His entire effort was wasted. Do you think that anyone could accept such a tragic incident coolly ? Acharyaji merely said : "May be there is some good omen. I must not have written as well, as was required". The entire commentary was re-written and published with the title "Dhyaan Vichaarna". Every page of the book overflowed with and reflected the deep inner mental peace of the author.

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A similar event had occurred in the life of my Grand Gurudev Pujya Dharmajeetsuriji Maharaj Saheb. He had compiled detailed notes after a deep study of a complex scripture called "Karma Prakriti". These notes were special because all the important points were covered through the tables and sanketas. These notes which were compiled after months of strenuous efforts got accidently drenched in water by someone. The pages got stuck, the ink spread all over and the book became like a lump. The person who had spilled the water accidentally was absolutely aghast and kept sobbing at the tremendous loss. The revered acharya consoled him saying : "See ! Please do not be afraid. I have got a beautiful opportunity to refer to the scripture again. I accept it with my heart. I will compile the notes again".

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When renowned Jain Literateur Shree Mohanlal Dalichand Desai was toiling day and night and remained engrossed in writing the summarized history of Jain literature, he used to prepare short-notes of the chapters that he would be writing, in a chronological order. His young son used to see these pages with short-notes written on them, with curiosity. One day he got a bright idea. He took a match-stick and chronologically burnt all the pages with short-notes. He was enjoying himself. He now started burning books also. Just then Mohanbhai entered the room and was stunned to see these flames at play. He controlled himself and collected some of the half-burnt pages. He prepared all the notes again. Without feeling dejected he re-wrote all the chapters pertaining to the thirteenth century. In the preface to the summarized history of Jain Literature, he has written : "My son Ramnik (meaning beautiful) has done a ramniya (beautiful) thing. These chapters were written in a much better way than the ones written earlier". Mohanbhai emerged victorious in the fire test of his tolerance.

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Everyone has to learn to accept a loss. Without feeling disappointed or dejected or getting mentally agitated, a person who accepts the loss gracefully, is a true victor. There is a very good saying in English : "Winners don't do different things. They do things differently". We can differentiate between greatness and pettiness not from difference in the activities but from difference in the way of performance of the activities.

King *Kumarpal's* Minister *Bahaad* had undertaken the renovation of the holy *Shatrunjay Tirth*. When he received the news that the main temple was ready, he gave a gold denture with 32 teeth carved around a tongue, to the person who gave him the good news. But the next day there was an

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accident. Due to the wind pressure in the circumambulation area outside the main temple, there were cracks in the wall. It became necessary to re-construct the entire structure again. The messenger gave this tragic news with a crest-fallen face, minister though momentarily taken but the aback. immediately regained his composure and gave the messenger two gold dentures with 32 teeth carved around a tongue. The messenger was perplexed by this act of generosity. The minister clarified : "Only a greatly fortunate person over centuries gets the great fortune of renovating such a holy tirth once in his life-time. You have brought such news that in one life-time, I will have the fortune of renovating this tirth twice. Let there be cracks in the wall. There is no dent in my mind. We will start the work from tomorrow".

Many buildings are razed to the ground when earthquake strikes. At that time many people lose their near ones and many become homeless. But this is not abandonment of their home. It is a destruction of their home. When you have to bear your loss having no option, it is helplessness. Very few men have the courage to accept such a loss with grace, mental peace and fortitude.

Make a mental note of all these events. When your hard earned money from a lifetime's labour is lost in one stroke in the share market, the lessons learnt from the above incidents and the fortitude, gracefulness and calmness with which each of the above victims bore their loss, will give you so much peace. When a relationship that has been built by mutual deals on a regular basis over several years, becomes sour due to improper conduct of your young amateur son, who has recently joined the business, then the loss that is borne by you is not small by any means. During such times, these classic examples help our precious inner self to retain its balance. When some fragile artifact or any valuable which has been treasured for several years suddenly breaks, tears up or is

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lost, then these illustrations help us retain our mental balance and peace of mind.

Our mind does not have the capacity to bear even a small loss caused by disfigurement of a beautiful *rangoli* or a painting created with a lot of efforts or a painting just completed or a piece of cloth which is being embroidered. We are owners of such a petty mind, that we rebuke and shame a person, when an insignificant handicraft done merely on thermocol is damaged accidentally by him. To strengthen our tolerance levels we need to continuously think about the above incidents, where those great men have so easily forgiven the persons who caused them such colossal damage. Both, buildings which crash and those that remain stable during an earthquake, look alike from outside. The difference lies in their foundation only !

Gowardhanram Tripathi, the author of the legendary novel "Saraswatichandra" was a lawyer by profession. Once, in his absence, his little daughter went into his room. She took some important papers, cut them and made a beautiful kite with those pages. She showed the kite with great enthusiasm to her father, when he returned home in the evening. "Look father ! I have made such a beautiful kite from these useless pages. I have made it myself !". Tripathi was absolutely dumb struck. But now that the damage was already done, he had no choice but to accept his misfortune. Lovingly caressing his daughter's head with oceanful of love, he exclaimed : "Wow ! Excellent ! But dear, henceforth do not take any papers without asking me, ok !"

While flying the kite in the evening, the little daughter again asked her father : "this kite is flying so beautifully, isn't it ?" With a smile on his face, he had affirmed : "Wow ! My dear daughter ! You have made my play reach the skies !" Just visualize what would happen if a check worth rupees five lakhs flies off the table through the window and can never be retrieved back ? The estimate of a loss suffered when a painstakingly created work of art is destroyed accidentally, can be gauged by the artist only.

Thomas Carlyle had written a detailed and fascinating thesis on the French Revolution. His friend came to visit him and took it home, especially to read it. Once at mid-night the friend came running to his house. Panting with breath, he told Thomas : "Friend ! A major problem has occurred. Please forgive me. Many pages of your thesis have been destroyed". For a moment Thomas became blank. He regained his composure and said : "Come, let's talk about other things". He thought that while his friend was still in a daze, if he added to his misery by reacting negatively, both of them would become unhappy. The whole night Thomas diverted his mind to other diverse topics. After an hour he started discussing what was written in the thesis. At dawn, when they parted, he remarked : "If an essay is not written well, the teacher asks his pupil to rewrite it - isn't it ? I am led to believe that nature has given a similar hint in this accidental loss. Perhaps the thesis will be written in a much better manner now".

When we received imposition in school, we accepted the same as punishment and wrote it down. Instead of considering it as a punishment, had we accepted it as a part of our training, then at that time itself, we would have improved manifold.

When a person likes the music in a cassette, he rewinds it. Just assume that nature has developed a liking for the cassette of our hard work. Nature has rewound it. So what ? Let the cassette play again.

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Dr Thomas Cooper had compiled a massive dictionary singlehandedly. The result was the fruit of extremely laborious efforts made over a period of eight years. One day his pugnacious wife burnt all the papers. Upon reaching home he inquired about the papers and his wife contemptuously showed the ashes lying on a plate. Cooper responded calmly to this dreadful act of his wife saying : "You may be able to burn the papers. How will you burn my love for literature ? It's ok. I will work hard for another eight years. I will not die without completing the work. Besides, do you know ...? You have added eight new years to my life and I am grateful to you for the same".

Hard work of eight full years ...... Drudgery of about 2,500 days ...... Laborious efforts of approximately 15,000 hours ......

When all these efforts come to noughts as a plateful of ash, then couldn't all of us also cultivate such patience, such an ability to remain calm as that of Dr. Cooper ? and have a lion's heart that gives the strength to strive again, without getting disappointed ?

When our shoes are stolen .... when someone steals our wallet ...... when a pick-pocket robs us of our belongings ...just think that ... "this loss is definitely not so big that it takes eight years to wipe off".

A youth asked a saint whom he had seen praying to God for several years : "why are you wasting your time everyday with folded hands ? Is there anything that you gain from this activity?" The devotee replied : "I am not wasting time. I am making good use of it. Prayers made to God are never wasted". The youth thundered : "But you are the same since ages".

The saint explained calmly : "See, there is a difference in your view-point and mine.

When I go out for *Bhiksha* and don't get anything, I still manage to remain calm. Earlier that was not the case. This training of being able to stay calm is received here. After praying for years together also, when I don't get anything, I am able to maintain my patience and calmness. The training that I received here to remain calm is useful when I go out for alms. Tell me ! Did I not gain the strength to remain calm in adverse circumstances?"

This is the mental state of a devotee. It can never be that God doesn't give anything. When God doesn't give you anything, he trains you to maintain your faith and calmness.

I recommend you to read this illustration five times. Reason being ....

- When you sit for lunch....and the food is not ready then .....
- When you go to the station.... and the train is late then .....
- When you go to collect your payment check .....and there is a delay then .....
- When you go to meet someone ......and the house is locked then ......

If you have read this, then it will be extremely useful.....for gaining the training for retaining patience and your composure .....!

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## **PROGRAMMING THE SOFTWARE OF HAPPINESS**

#### Glimpses into some pinpricks !

When you left home for an important meeting did you know what was going to happen on the way? The wheel of the autorickshaw fell into the puddle and drops of dirty water splashed up and stained your clothes. This sudden burst of dyeing and printing on plain clothes distresses the mind. The face wrinkles when new clothes that are well ironed are crumpled. It will take barely an hour for the clothes to become clean again but the mental disturbance resulting from the damage caused by the dirty water takes very long to heal !

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The servant has barely finished mopping the floor and lay down to relax, when the door bell rings. Little Pintu who was playing in the compound entered the house as soon as the door was opened and ran into his room. His soiled feet fell on the wet-floor and created a coloured xerox of his foot-prints in your mind. If you were to wipe the floor again with a wet mopping cloth, it would barely take 15 seconds and the floor would sparkle again. However, it takes much longer for the impression of these foot-prints to get erased from the mind !

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Just when the clothes were washed and hung for drying on the pipe outside the balcony, the neighbor residing on the upper floor, swept the ridge of his balcony and window with a broom. All the dust flew down. The wet clothes lovingly accepted the

dust but we could not accept our misfortune so lovingly, as we are not soaked and wet with love ! Upon seeing the cleaning activity on the floor above, our own top floor experiences a lot of anger. We lean forward and look towards the balcony on the upper floor hoping to catch someone....but unfortunately can't find anyone. It is a lot easier to remove the dust by shaking the clothes, but not that easy to cleanse the mind of anger !

Late at night, the phone bell rang and your sleep was disturbed. On attending the call, you realized that the caller had dialed a wrong number. You hardly uttered a word or two on the phone but you mumbled for a long time after hanging up although there was no one listening to you !

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You have saved some money by spending very thriftily during the whole of last year. These savings were especially reserved for spending on a planned holiday. You were eagerly waiting for the children's school to close for the vacation. But just before the start of the vacation, a close relative had to undergo angioplasty treatment. As that family was financially weak, the burden of this expense rested on your shoulders, whether you liked it or not. The relative's heart was cured, but your internal discomfort will continue till the next year's vacation !

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Working hard the whole day, you made *papads* and *vadis* and laid them on the terrace for drying. Suddenly there were

heavy unseasonal rains and the *papads* and *vadis* were soaked in water and became a lump before they could be dried and roasted...and so did your face !

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You laid the mattresses and blankets in the back-side of the building compound for drying in the sun. At that same time the land-lord was cleaning his terrace and the dirty water came flowing down the drainage pipe and soiled the mattresses and blankets and along with that polluted your mind also !



As it was salary payment day, you were hurriedly performing every activity so that you could reach office early. However today was a different day. You had forgotten to put the check book in the pouch !

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While you are sincerely praying to God in a temple, someone dressed in a pant and shirt suddenly comes and stands like a pillar, between you and God, the distance between your two eye-brows narrows down. The wrinkles emerging on your forehead clearly reflect your disturbed mental state !



While you were having lunch, the butler served the vegetable with a lot of liquid gravy and a stream of it flowed right below the rotis ...... and with that, the stream of irritation reached right up to your head !

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While driving the car out of the building compound, your car is obstructed by another car parked awkwardly in the mid-way. Nobody turns up although you honk several times. At that moment your inner anger gets expressed through the horn that you keep blurting !

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You were climbing the railway bridge. In front of you was a coolie climbing very slowly, as he was carrying a large load on his head, forcing you also to climb slowly .... but this hindrance made your mind race with rage at great speed !

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You had entrusted someone with a task and if it could not be accomplished, your hand touches the forehead in despair. Your lips part and you definitely utter the saying : "Better to burn the hands than to burn the heart". This saying should have been remembered before entrusting the work to someone, we use it after entrusting the work !

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When you pick up a fight with someone and speak words that should not be uttered, you finally end with phrase "silence is mightier than speech" and walk out. You should have remembered this saying before getting into an argument. But again, it is like taking the pre-meal medicine in the postmeal session !

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While you are about to take your afternoon nap, suddenly there is a loud sound and your sleep is disturbed. Together with it, your peace of mind is also destroyed. When you knock the door twice and the person inside the house takes time to open the door, the mental machine gun immediately gets activated. If there are wrinkles in the bed-sheet, it doesn't disturb the body but definitely pricks the mind. If the shirt is not properly ironed, wrinkles surface on the forehead ! So many pinpricks to a delicate mind !

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If things are littered in the house, the mind gets disturbed. If the child's hair are not combed properly, the mind is disturbed. If the clothes are not folded properly the mind is disturbed. If somebody does not keep the thing taken at the same place from where it is taken, the mind is disturbed. If somebody takes your belonging without asking, the mind is disturbed !

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If someone does not sleep for long, the mind gets disturbed. If someone sleeps till very late in the morning, the mind gets disturbed. When someone talks in a soft pitch the mind gets disturbed and when someone talks in a loudly pitch also, the mind gets disturbed. When someone doesn't work, the mind is disturbed. If someone interferes in everything, the mind gets disturbed. If you are not given what you asked for, the mind is disturbed and if someone advises you without your seeking his advice, the mind gets disturbed !

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If time is wasted the mind is disturbed, when the food doesn't get cooked properly the mind is disturbed, when the clothes

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are soiled the mind is disturbed, when the sleep is disturbed the mind is disturbed, when the TV stops functioning the mind gets disturbed, when the car stops working the mind gets disturbed and when the pen stops working the mind gets disturbed.

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When there is a recession in the market, the mind gets disturbed, when you suffer from an illness the mind gets disturbed and when someone curses you the mind gets disturbed. If someone scolds you the mind gets disturbed, when the son fails in his exam the mind gets disturbed, when you miss the train the mind gets disturbed, when you lose a thing, the mind gets disturbed, when someone dies, the mind gets disturbed. When there is a hindrance in the work, the mind gets disturbed. When the servant comes late to work, the mind gets disturbed.

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When someone keeps the lights on when not needed the mind gets disturbed, when someone wastes water unnecessarily, the mind gets disturbed. It is a different matter to provide an appropriate remedy keeping in mind the principles of Ahimsa and Jainism. But merely keeping in mind the damage incurred at the material level and getting disturbed is a loss at the spiritual level and it is purposeless.

When the donkey brays on the road, the mind gets disturbed, When someone spits on the road, the mind gets disturbed, If the dog barks again and again, the mind gets disturbed, If someone keeps smiling at us also the mind gets disturbed, Sometimes when you have to make an unforeseen payment, the mind gets disturbed, Sometimes you have to contribute for a good cause and the mind gets disturbed,

Someone blows the horn and the mind gets disturbed,

Someone rings the bell and the mind gets disturbed,

If your feet fall in muck, the mind gets disturbed,

If your drive is halted due to a signal, the mind gets disturbed,

If someone points out an error, the mind gets disturbed,

If someone harasses you unnecessarily then also the mind gets disturbed,

If the small child keeps crying then also the mind gets disturbed,

If the mosquitoes, bed bugs keep biting then also the mind gets disturbed,

If the tea is served a little late then also the mind gets disturbed,

If the curry contains less salt then also the mind gets disturbed.

Milk gets spoilt after a certain period. Curd becomes sour after a certain period. The mangoes in the fruit basket rot after a few days. But our mind is an amazing object. When will it get disturbed? Where will it get disturbed? For what reasons does it get disturbed? Nobody can give any guarantee for the same. Because you understand the value of clothes, it is natural to maintain them. A person who appreciates the value of money, does not waste money. When the municipal water is available only two hours a day or if one has to walk a mile to get a pot of water, which fool would waste it? Similarly, our life is an area that is usually devoid of happiness ! Why do we want to shatter the happiness that is achieved with great difficulty?

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After so many life cycles where we did not even have all the five senses, do you think that we attained this precious mind just to let it get polluted ?

Our true inner wealth is happiness of the soul ..... Life's true prosperity is happiness of the soul ...... The true worth of having all senses is happiness of the soul ...... The precious jewel of human mind is happiness of the soul ......

Man is endowed with different types of temperaments. Sometimes our fortunes are bad while sometimes our destiny is not in our favour. Instead of getting disturbed by the problems in life, you should find the true causes of the problems and find a solution.

It is not that all our problems are caused by others. The pain that comes causes unhappiness. Of these causes of pain, in most cases, there is no significant reason for us to get mentally disturbed. Amongst these several incidents of pain, in many cases we do not even have a right to get mentally disturbed.

Much of the pain is caused due to our own wrong doing. Sometimes blind risks taken in business causes unforeseen losses. Excesses committed while eating sometimes backfire. Errors committed while walking on the streets, climbing the stairs or driving the car sometimes leads to accidents that make you bed-ridden. Negligence committed during your child's upbringing and character building years can sometimes make you face undesirable consequences. Too much of spanking and scolding your son may sometimes boomerang on you. Sometimes getting into an argument with a passer-by may turn dangerous. You may spoil your relationship with your

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own brother and hence he may not be of any help when you actually need him. Due to indiscretion committed while talking, sometimes you may lose a big customer for ever.

The true cause of our losses are we ourselves. Why blame others? Why would a parent (God) be evil to his own child? We have to be careful to ensure that we do not tumble down from the risky position of haste and excesses. We should be selfcontrolled.

# Follow the 4T Principle – and that principle is, Take Time To Think.

A lot of pain is adopted by us. When a property or material purchase decision made contrary to the advice given by a seasoned expert in the field backfires, the transaction does not generate positive results or when a wedding terminates into a divorce; then more than counting your losses, you should focus on your errors. This is an opportunity to realize the problems that you have invited by ignoring an expert's or well wisher's advice.

Our full consciousness gets involved more in an error caused due to irreverence than due to a loss caused by our own ignorance of the subject. An accident caused by ignoring the danger sign-board and driving past it in a brazen fashion deserves a more severe punishment than an accident that occurs by mistake. At that time there is no reason to become excited, but sincere churning is necessary. You should be sporting enough to accept your own error of disregarding the expert advice given by your parents or experts, by mentally saluting their advice and firmly resolving not to be foolish

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enough to ignore such an advice again. The next time over it will be easy to pacify the mind.

The cat is endowed with a peculiarity. From wherever it falls or if anyone throws and it falls, it will always land on its own feet. We should train the mind gradually that in whatever adverse and difficult circumstances our destiny places us, yet we should be in a position to stand on our feet. You can train your mind in the following manner, with every such incident that occurs in your life.

1. A loss that will not have a long-term detrimental impact should not be the cause of your mental unrest : Instances like the tea is cold, the curry is blend, the juice is sour, the papad is soggy, clothes are soiled, the ironing is not done properly, clothes are not folded properly, someone has incorrectly dialed your number, the door was opened after a long wait, you had a normal cold or temperature, someone cursed or insulted you. These are all small and very very shortterm irritations.

> By tolerating short-term irritations, you get special strength and training to withstand long lasting disaster. Besides, the remedies to correct these losses are always handy and simple. Then what is the use of polluting the mind?

2. Any loss where the amount is not greater than Rs.500/- (you may set higher limit, if you wish !) should not be the cause of your mental unrest : e.g. the window pane is broken, shirt is torn, the kurta is burnt while ironing, chappals are stolen, the wallet has been pick-pocketed, the train is missed and so on.

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The peace of mind is priceless. Cheerfulness is it's ornament. It is more precious than crores of rupees. To cultivate the habit of endurance you should not auction your happiness for any loss which is at least less than Rs.500/-.

- 3. With the passage of time, certain circumstances which are inevitably going to change, should not be allowed to be the cause of your mental unrest : e.g. it is very hot, it is excessively cold, it is raining heavily, it is very dark, and so on. All these circumstances are transient in nature and are bound to change.
- 4. Those circumstances where the ordinary remedies can heal the pain should not be the cause of your mental unrest : e.g. an ordinary hairline crack in your hand or leg or diseases like malaria, typhoid, pneumonia or dehydration, or a car parked that hinders your way. A patient who is suffering with a mild temperature and can be cured by merely taking two pills need not be admitted into the ICU. In the same manner happiness should not be buried in the cemetery, upon the occurrence of a small problem which can be solved easily or managed easily.
- 5. A circumstance in which it is impossible to bring a change in a thing, a person or a circumstance should not be the cause of your mental unrest : e.g. the son is very arrogant by temperament, a parent continuously criticizes you for everything, cancer is in the final stage, both the kidneys have failed. The

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scriptures also advise us not to react to a person with unsound mental health. Then how can you not accept a disease for which there is no remedy or a circumstance for which there is no solution ?

You have to work hard to maintain your physical fitness. The athletes and sportsmen have to continuously practice to keep their bodies fit and agile. The wrestler has to give top-most priority to exercise in his daily routine activities. The singers who have been endearing the audience with their sweet and melodious voice also continuously rehearse their voice. The actors also rehearse before they perform on the stage.

Similarly, repetition and revision is necessary to retain the memory power of the brain. The learned scholars say that if you stop revision of grammar notes for merely a fortnight and put them in the attic, those grammar notes will forever remain in the attic. If you leave the company of logic for even a moment, then it will leave you forever.

If so much practice is necessary for remaining merely physically and mentally fit, then conquering the mind is an extremely difficult feat to attain. For achieving that you have to continuously cultivate the mind. You should consider the happening of something different, unexpected or unforeseen as a training session for conquering the mind and not lose such an opportunity to cultivate the mind's power. You can program your own happiness by training the mind with the happening of every such adverse event and learn to retain your composure.

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# Failure doesn't mean .....

*	Failure doesn't mean – You are a failure. It means – You have not succeeded.
*	Failure doesn't mean – You accomplished nothing. It means – You have learnt something.
*	Failure doesn't mean – You are inferior. It means – You are not perfect.
*	Failure doesn't mean – You have wasted your life. It means – You have a reason to start afresh.
*	Failure doesn't mean – You should give up. It means – You must try harder.
*	Failure doesn't mean – You'll never make it. It means – It may take a little longer.
*	Failure doesn't mean – God has abandoned you. It means – God has a better way for you.

If the body is diseased, But the mind is healthy; The disease is not at all serious.

However, when the body may be healthy, there are hundreds of reasons to make the mind diseased !

Physical diseases may be many, but are still limited; While diseases of Mind are infinite !

Physical diseases cause pain only when the body is sick; One who is mentally sick is perennially in pain !

When a physical disease turns out to be fatal, the dead body is cremated; a mental disease kills also and burns alive also !

However, there is something positive about mental illness, You need to source the medicine for physical illness externally, But.

the cure for mental illness is internally in the mind itself !

Further, this internal medicine not only cures, it also prevents the disease.

This cure is;

MIND YOUR Mind !!