

Rays Of Dharma



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Translated by

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Preface

About 750 years ago, Ächärya Shri Devendrasuriji had written “Dharmaratna Prakaran”, in which he describes 21 attributes necessary for leading a truly religious life. During 1960 Shri Chitrabhänuji delivered sermons thereon. They were published during 1962 under the title “Dharma Ratnana Ajwälä”. Last year he asked me to translate it into English. I undertook to do it and am now presenting here the outcome thereof.

Sermons are basically talks; we cannot expect coherence therein. Coherence, however, becomes a necessity when it is to be presented in a book form. While translating, I had therefore to present the matter of the sermons in a slightly revised form. It would therefore be seen that this is a free translation; not a literal one. This will be obvious from the fact that I have preferred to call it “Rays of Dharma”.

While preparing the translation, I have maintained the overall order of the chapters as per the Gujarati text, except in two respects. Chapter 4 was a little too long. I have therefore covered its matter in two chapters. On the other hand, Chapters 25 and 47 were too short to be treated as separate chapters. I have therefore incorporated the contents thereof in the adjoining chapters. The total number of chapters in this book thus stands at 50, instead of 51 as per the Gujarati text. As such, the serial numbers of chapters 5 to 25 and 47 to 50 do not tally with those of the Gujarati text.

The attributes described in the book are very significant and need to be contemplated at length. Those, who do it, will be able to grasp the essence of true religion and that can lead them to Samyag Darshan (Right vision). It would then be possible for them to mould their life in light thereof.

Manu Doshi

Appreciation

Our spiritual journey is illumined and made simple by Pujya Gurudev Shri Chitrabhanuji, spreading his rays of sublime wisdom.

Reading through the book, we imbibe wonderful qualities of kindness, serenity, humility, gratefulness, compassion and non-violence, straightforwardness, having an open and objective mind and many others, making our lives noble, wholesome and purposeful - thereby leading us to 'freedom'.

The ancient scripture was dissected and explained in a simple, interesting and effective manner by Pujya Gurudev in Gujarati, and now five decades later, Manubhai Doshi of Chicago has rendered yeoman service to a large number of our brethren, by translating the same into English. Well done, Manubhai !

Neville Gyara

Chapter 1

Introduction

“**D**harmaratna Prakaran” is a highly inspiring book. It states what type of attributes a religious person should have. It is easy to be considered religious but hard to be truly religious. The book indicates the characteristics of a truly religious person by which one can mould his character.

Humbleness is an essential attribute for writing such books. One, who has no softness at heart, cannot make others soft. The life of a person would be wasted, unless he cultivates humbleness and modesty. The family, where the elders and other respectable persons are not held in reverence, cannot be said to be on religious ground. In order to teach modesty, the author of the book starts with obeisance to Lord Mahāveer, who taught the importance of modesty in life, to the world.

Humbleness should arise from within. There are people, who show outward humility, but harbor deception at heart. Their intention could be to gain something at the cost of others. One should therefore be careful in dealing with such people. When someone gives undue respect and bows to us inordinately, we should become cautious and try to figure out his motive in doing so. Bowing with a selfish motive could also be a business tactic.

The author here offers obeisance to the detached Lord, the abode

of all adorable virtues; to the live spirit that prevailed in Rājgruhi-Pāvāpuri area 2,600 years ago. Even the soil sanctified by the Lord's feet stands gratified. It is capable to indicate to the deserving persons what had occurred long back; they can even visualize it. The author therefore bows to Lord Mahāveer, who has transcended time.

The book contains the precious spiritual treasure that the author offers at the feet of Lord Mahāveer. Prior to renouncement the Lord had access to all sorts of comforts. He had youthfulness, wealth, wife, daughter, brother, sister etc. But he knew that it was all ephemeral and subject to destruction. His spiritual thirst could not be quenched with such worldly pleasures. He was looking for the ambrosial truth, the everlasting peace. As such, he gave up all worldly possessions and adopted the path leading to bliss.

For that purpose, he resorted to spiritual pursuit for more than 12 years, bore intense pain and hardship that came on the way. But in the end, he gained the spiritual treasure of innate love and universal friendship. In this respect the saint-poet Ānanddhanji has said, 'I have drunk the poison of worldly life; now I want to have the ambrosial drink that can quench my spiritual thirst.'

Chaitanya (consciousness) has amazing capability. It can turn a moment into ages and ages into ageless. The body does not have that capability. Once consciousness leaves, the body is turned into a lifeless bundle of bones. There is unending pleasure in consciousness, that is lying latent within us. We have to manifest it by resorting to meditation and realizing the truth.

We have to fasten our belt in order to gain the jewels contained in the book; we need to spare enough time for listening, comprehending and contemplating over its words. Only then would it be possible to experience the ambrosia contained therein.

The modes of instruction, logic and reasoning may change with the passage of time, but such books remain constant. Some people argue that these sutras are very old; we need something new that is lively. They should remember that these sutras are not going to be

obsolete; their essence is indestructible. Whether it is 2,600 years or 2,60,000, its spark will continue to provide light to the deserving ones for all time to come.

Since jewels are very precious, these religious instructions have been termed as jewels. They are meant for those, who deserve the instructions and look for bliss. Those having the true aspiration will be able to evaluate their worth. If the instructions are given to those, who do not look for them, they would treat the same as worthless. These spiritual jewels therefore need to be offered only to the deserving ones, to those who have learnt the art of evaluating and implementing them. They would be able to assimilate the truth contained therein.

Chapter 2

Spiritual Talks

Jain scriptures consider it undesirable to indulge in four types of talks, viz. those pertaining to the lifestyles of the ruling class, political affairs, food and women. Every man, young or old, is normally interested in talking about women. The same is the case with food; people spend a lot of time in thinking about the quality and type of food, how to make it, when to take it, etc. Similarly they remain interested in talking about the ruling class and the political affairs. Such talks have been prevailing almost everywhere.

So long as human society remains organized, we will need the governing machinery. We cannot dispense with it and that is bound to provide food for talks. The political gossip has therefore been prevailing since the ancient times and people have been wasting time therein. The question therefore arises, 'Is it worthwhile to spend precious time of human existence in such stray talks?'

We remain virtually ignorant of the value of human life. We hardly think of our true nature and of the loss we incur by indulgence in transitory aspects. In this respect, we happen to behave like children. Even if the father is a millionaire, the child would be pleased to get a candy or a toy from someone. Similarly the average man forsakes his infinitely valuable worth and remains pleased with ephemeral happiness of the worldly life. He thus wastes his spiritual wealth for

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the sake of momentary pleasure.

The enlightened people have therefore urged to recognize the true nature of soul. If one does it, he can get the idea of his own spiritual worth. It is a valuable treasure, which can be realized by those, who have freed themselves from Rāg and Dwesh (Sense of craving and of aversion). It is therefore said that the happiness experienced by a person, who is free from defilement and sensual instincts, is not available even to a sovereign ruler. As a matter of fact, the worldly life does not provide even a negligible fraction of happiness that is experienced in the pure state.

One can experience it when he gets freed from the concept of worldly happiness. He can get a glimpse of the pleasure inherent within the soul, when he is free from the sense of Rāg. What we normally experience is not happiness; it is an illusion. If one gives up the ego and stays absorbed in contemplation of the Lord, he can experience the true inner peace.

Spiritual talks provide the pleasure, which is not experienced in worldly happiness. The true nature of the soul manifests during such talks. Spiritual talks are in the interest of the soul. They deal with invaluable and indefatigable truth. As sandalwood provides increasing fragrance as it is scrubbed, one can gain increasing pleasure when he remains busy with talks about the nature of the soul or with contemplation thereof. The Lord has therefore said, "Know thy soul and you will be able to understand the world."

Just think of the nature of worldly life. We might have close ties with our relatives and friends; for them we might be holding much regard and love. No sooner, however, one of them dies, than we take his body to a cemetery and put it on funeral pyre, while taking care that our fingers do not get burnt. We turn to ashes the body of the very person for whom we cared much and whom we loved intensely. Religion therefore wants to point out that since this is the ultimate end of the body, how is it worth to indulge in sins for its sake?

The body is inherently impure and continually goes on decaying.

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Therefore it is termed as 'Pudgal', which denotes acceleration and reduction of the particles. In no way is it possible to keep it intact forever; neither can it be kept fragrant by sprinkling some perfume. Why then harbor undue sense of belonging to it? There is nothing in the world, which is praiseworthy or despicable. Everything is subject to continual change. The wise would therefore simply observe and know whatever happens. It is said, 'Kartrutvam nānyabhāvānam, sākshitvamavashishyate'. It means that the soul is not the Kartä (doer) of anything and it should stay only as a spectator. If one understands this much, he becomes worthy of listening to religious talks.

Chapter 3

Spiritual Pursuit

All the great philosophers have said that the sea of worldly life is too deep to be fathomed and that during the worldly wandering, it is rare to get the human birth. Since we have obtained it, we should undertake the spiritual pursuit during this life and terminate the cycle of birth and death. When a child is born, the first thing that needs to be known is how long it is going to live; thinking of education, reputation, wealth, etc. are worthwhile only if one is to live long enough.

As a blind man has no concept of light, the ignorant one fails to realize the significance of human life. If we come across even a slight pain, we can express it at length, but the animals have to bear the same silently. We can complain of the pain and can even take measures to remove it. That is the distinctive feature of human life. If one therefore wants to understand the worth of human life, he should look at the animals or at those, who are not blessed with the comforts and amenities that are accessible to us.

But instead of looking down, people tend to look up and become unhappy. They forsake the happiness that they are having and feel miserable by noticing the better standards of others. In fact, happiness does not lie in any object; it is the perception that makes one happy or unhappy. Such perception varies from person to person and from

time to time. One may like a particular object or situation and another may resent the same. Till yesterday one was feeling pleased with a friend; now he avoids him because of some difference of opinion or misunderstanding. The objects and persons have not changed here, only the perception has changed. True happiness actually lies within the soul, but it can be experienced after gaining enlightenment. That can be gained by acquiring the right perception.

It is therefore worth examining our concept of happiness or unhappiness. If one is in a good mood, he may be pleased to see the beauty of a rose; otherwise he would feel sad on seeing the same flower. When one is not in a good mood, his mind remains perturbed. As such, he remains far from being peaceful. It needs to be borne in mind that during our life we are going to come across happiness as well as unhappiness, comforts as well as discomforts. It is not possible to come across a person, who is imbibed with only happiness or unhappiness. With excessive happiness, one may get swollen-headed, and with excessive unhappiness, he may get depressed. We have to accept both gracefully and maintain peace of mind and equanimity.

Bearing of unhappiness can become helpful in reducing the bitterness of life and rendering it sweet. Count Leo Tolstoy has therefore said that unhappiness is comparable to the summer heat that ripens the mangoes and fills them with sweet juice. It is thus helpful to undergo unhappiness, in order to experience the pleasure of happiness. It is necessary to get a bitter taste in order to experience the pleasure of sweetness. Both of them nourish life; one need not get sick of either of them.

As winter follows summer, so does discomfort follow comfort. That is the law of Nature. It is said that one remembers a jeweller in times of happiness and the Lord in times of distress. It means that when one comes across the adversities or draws close to the end of life, he remembers the Lord. Adversities thus become helpful in remembering Him.

Neither happiness nor unhappiness stays forever. They are like

the wheels of a vehicle that move upward and downward. Happiness and unhappiness are thus two sides of the same coin. A coin is acceptable when both the sides are intact. One should therefore patiently bear both the situations, and hold equanimity in every situation.

At present man seems to have gone crazy after money; he does not realize that monetary wealth presents only a transitional phase. In the beginning, wealth goads the man to go ahead and he becomes swollen-headed. At the time of exit it kicks him from the back and the man gets overturned.

One should therefore take inspiration from a tree. It remains green under the heat of the sun, because its roots stay adhered to the coolness of the soil. We also need to face the heat of adversities while adhering to the coolness of devotion. In that case our life will remain peaceful. Unless one has the peace of mind, how is it possible for him to extend it to the world?

Human life has been acquired by the saint as well as by the criminal, but their lifestyles are different. They have similar limbs but they use them differently. In order to make the life worthwhile, one should learn to adore those, who are higher up and have compassion for those, who are down-trodden. That will provide the charm of life; one will then be able to visualize and experience that charm.

Chapter 4

Hankering for the Shadow

The book ‘Dharmaratna Prakaran’ contains original thinking and it deals with the essence of human life. We have to consider whether our lifestyle conforms to that essence or we need to look at the lives of great men for that purpose. Reading and contemplating over the book will pinpoint the importance of the human life and will convey how we can make right use thereof. In its absence, our life would remain more like the animal type.

We attach importance to money and measure happiness on that basis. But just think, ‘if one is a millionaire, but is blind, shall we call him happy?’ Having eyesight is obviously more important than having material wealth. As it is hard to gain all organs intact, so is it hard to get birth in a nonviolent family. One, who is bred in nonviolent culture, will feel sad, if he sees a drop of blood. This happens because he has grown up in compassionate environment. Those, who are not imbibed with that culture, remain wedded to worldly ways of life. Getting birth in a non-violent family and being equipped with all efficient organs are therefore the pre-requisites for making life worthwhile.

A very beautiful child was once born in a noble family at Chennai. Everyone was pleased to see it. But its lower limbs were not functioning and it was in a helpless condition. It is therefore valuable to get all the limbs and sense organs intact. But that is not enough;

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one should also have the discretion to make the right use thereof. The great men have therefore said that we can make progress in life only to the extent we make right use of the means at our disposal; wrong use will ruin us. The discretion is therefore the key to having a successful life.

The main purpose of life is to see, listen, consider and do what is virtuous. But so long as one does not have the concept of death, he does not realize the true value of life; he spends time carelessly and behaves arrogantly. By virtue of ignorance of the transitory nature of worldly life, one gets swollen-headed and refuses to respect or listen to the words of elders and gurus; out of pride he moves about with head erect. He may afford to keep it erect for some time, but death ultimately bends it down. Death is thus the teacher that brings him to sense. This does not mean that one should always remain frightful of death. Those, who make out the true concept of death, realize that birth and death are two ends of the same phenomenon; there was life before birth and it would be there even after death.

Once there arose a dispute between a man and his shadow as to who was greater. As they could not resolve it, they went to a temple and asked the deity about the extent of their greatness. But there suddenly arose a voice ordering silence. On hearing it the man and the shadow hid themselves in a corner. From there they saw that a man entered and uttered in a sad tone, 'While I had money, people tried to be friendly to me; as I have no money now, everyone stays away from me.'

Thereafter a retired officer came there. Since he had retired, he was shorn of all authority. He said, 'When I had the authority, everyone tried to remain around me; people used to bow their heads to me. Since I do not have even the phantom of authority now, I have become valueless. Does the world bow only to the phantom, not to the person?'

Then there arrived a person, who had recently acquired wealth. Till yesterday people used to call him Lakho, now they are addressing

him as Laxmichandbhai and respectfully offer him the seat..They hail him with adoration. He bowed to the idol and requested it to keep his wealth intact.

This is the way the world functions; the shadow counts for more than the man. The man professes to be tall and his shadow gets oversized. When one does not live in accordance with his true stature, when the shadow is magnified, he gets enamored of the shadow. The true worth, however, lies in manliness; the shadow is merely a phantom.

Our life has two phases, external and internal. However precious the external phase may be, it will not provide true pleasure. Though the world may be dazzled by it for some time, the true happiness will evade him so long as the internal phase does not become important. That internal wealth lies in our true Self; we can never be stripped of it.

One would not feel at ease, if he is empty within; he would feel disconcerted. Emptiness is like an ancient relic where ghosts abide. One should therefore become aware of his inner self. For that purpose, he may need guidance from a person who can point out his inner wealth; alternately one can learn it from books. Once a man becomes aware of his true treasure, he would vigorously protect it and experience the pleasure inherent therein.

Chapter 5

The Right Approach

Many people live in the past and continue to talk of good old days. To get stuck with such talks amounts to taking the leftover food. As a matter of fact, present is the only real and helpful time. It could be right to adore the virtues of forefathers, but it is foolish to spend time and money in the name of maintaining their image.

There is no stability in life and man remains restless. He has forsaken his true self and attaches more importance to the shadow than the substance; the kites of worries continue to fly over his head. Here comes the role of religion; it can help in removing the shadow and in rendering the inner consciousness soft, cool and positive. If a man resorts to true religion, it would not fail to perform its duty.

We can, of course, endeavor to earn our livelihood and get reasonable comforts, but we should not get nervous or perturbed, if we fail to earn enough. We should keep in mind that more the means of comfort, greater is the worry. If one reduces his requirements, he would see that life becomes more peaceful. Excessive comforts sometimes work as daggers that make the life wearisome and frightful.

Happiness and misery continue to occur one after the other; and the happiness that has been lost cannot be regained by shedding tears. The philosophers have dwelt deep into that aspect and have stated that it is no use crying in times of unhappiness. What one needs to do

is to figure out how it arose. By contemplating over it, one can make out that unhappiness has arisen out of illusory notions of happiness. Happiness does not lie in the means of comfort. When one gains them, he feels happy; but that feeling does not last and one starts feeling unhappy in spite of having the same means of comfort.

Moreover, it is no use attributing the reasons for our unhappiness to others; for that purpose one should better look within. Lord Mahāveer's life provides an illustration. When the cowboy pricked thorn-sticks in his ears, he did not blame the cowboy. In an earlier life the Lord had asked to pour molten lead in the ears of his attendant. That attendant was born as the cowboy and was inserting the sticks in his ears. The Lord patiently bore the pain, because his previous Karma was to be eradicated by that act of the cowboy.

Moreover, the illusory happiness arising from the means of comfort does not yield peace of mind and fails to provide equanimity, which is the essence of religion. If foundation is not laid on solid ground, how would it be possible to construct the palace of religion thereon? The illusory happiness is identical to borrowed happiness. There is an interesting anecdote in that connection.

A king was once pleased with his barber and presented him a costly shawl. The barber was very proud of having it. Once a gentleman borrowed it on the occasion of his son's wedding with the stipulation that the barber would not disclose it to anyone. When the people, however, started praising the quality of the shawl, the barber could not keep his mouth shut and said, 'Don't tell anyone, but it is my shawl and I have given it to the man.' Did the respectability of the gentleman go up or actually come down?

The worldly esteem thus happens to have been based on borrowing that is not going to boost up our stature. We have to leave everything here and disappear from the stage of worldly life. Therefore, instead of looking for the worldly esteem, if we dwell deep within, we can visualize the internal treasure abiding there. That would provide us the peace of mind; our life will be purified and will

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remain worry-free.

Instead of going for outward dazzle, one should therefore try to gain the inner light of truth and non-violence. The luster of a diamond rests upon polishing of its phases. Similarly we have to manifest the immense capability lying within us. No one is born great; everyone has to endeavor for acquiring greatness. We also need to endeavor for manifesting the inner potentialities.

While an average man stays at the service of his sense organs, the enlightened one tames the sense organs to function at his command. If we try the same way, we will also be able to manifest our true capabilities. In order to keep a vessel bright, it is necessary to polish it. It actually requires more energy to keep the mind pure than is required to clean a rusted vessel.

Habits play an important part in lifestyle. We need to form the habit for learning the truth, for manifesting the infinite capability of the soul. The soul is distinct from the body; they are not identical. When inner doors are opened up, one becomes aware of his true inherent worth. Thereafter he does not remain a slave to the sense organs; on the contrary he directs them to the desired ends. He makes out that in the unfathomable sea of worldly life, it is very rare to gain the human life where it is possible to realize the true nature of the soul.

One can do this by resorting to the religious mode. As it is not possible for a poor man to buy diamonds, rubies, etc. so is it not possible to resort to the religious life without cultivating the required attributes. Only those, who are having the wholesome Karmas to their credit, will be able to do so. This is a very vital aspect that can be explored by those, who are equipped with intelligence and the required attributes.

It is said that Chintāmani (Desire fulfilling) jewel is more precious than all other jewels. Similarly the jewel of religion is of utmost importance in human life. As it is necessary to have determination

and will-power to gain anything, so is it necessary to have both of them in order to gain the jewel of religion; any one of them would not serve the purpose.

If one therefore cultivates determination and will-power, nothing would remain beyond his reach. The soul has immense capability; one can even attain the state of Tirthankar by developing that capability. One will succeed in proportion to his will-power. A cowboy once came across Chintamani jewel; since he did not know its worth, he used it for scaring away a crow. We also happen to set aside the jewel of religion and go in for worldly ephemeral happiness. We need to change it; leave everything else and resort to religion.

Chapter 6

Serenity

Those, who want to get the jewel of religion, need to think of their capability and worthiness. For resorting to spiritual life one should have the appropriate background. Those, who do not possess the wealth of virtues and still talk of spiritual life, happen to deceive themselves. While their imagination flies high in the air, they are in reality at the bottom level. Such people merely bring down the level of social life.

A religious man should have 21 attributes. The first is serenity. One should not be shallow or rash; he needs to be considerate. He should think before uttering anything. During life, we come to know about the tales pertaining to various people; but we need to exercise discretion before taking any decision thereupon. What functions as ambrosia to one, may prove to be poisonous to another. As such, even before expressing the truth we should filter it through the funnel of discernment.

Simultaneous with exercising serenity and discretion one should also cultivate broadness of mind. The world is round and what we talk about someone will come back to us like a boomerang. It is therefore necessary to think before expressing anything. There is also the possibility that what you utter could be misinterpreted. Nothing should therefore be uttered thoughtlessly; otherwise it may give rise

to discord and dispute. It would be possible to avert quite a few problems, if everyone thinks and speaks with discretion.

One should cultivate the habit of presenting even the stray talk in a way that does not hurt anyone. One should surely avoid telling lies, but it is not necessary to express everything that we come to know. We need to exercise discretion and should express nicely what is true and beneficial.

In ancient times, the kings used to be guided by Gurus or other wise persons in handling the administration. When they ceased seeking such guidance, their characters reached a very low level. There is an interesting tale in that connection. After the British rule was set up in India, one member of the British Parliament decided to survey the administration in India. As a part of his mission he visited Junāgadh, in the present State of Gujarat. The Nawab (Muslim ruler of the place) was short of intelligence and did not know what to talk. His secretary, who worked as the interpreter, was however intelligent and presented Nawab's queries in his own way. While Nawab asked about the numbers of queens and children to the British king, the interpreter presented them as the number of members in Parliament and the women's right to vote.

Similarly the wise ones should present even the adverse talks in right perspective. Those, who give rise to fiery atmosphere by their talks, cannot resort to true religion. One should therefore cultivate the attribute of serenity in his life. Rashness would result in hurting oneself as well as others. It should also be borne in mind that disclosing anything about a person without his consent amounts to breach of trust. One should therefore scrupulously avoid the same. He, who adopts serenity in his behavior in the family as well as in the society, can rise on the ladder of humanity.

Chapter 7

Realization of Soul through Serenity

We are considering the characteristics for getting worthy of leading a religious life. Religion is a noble asset. One needs to have the required attributes in order to resort to it; otherwise he is likely to be deceptive in his approach. Many people resort to religious life in order to conceal their own drawbacks. One who talks of a religious life, but stays oblivious of his faults, is a hypocrite; he disgraces the very concept of religion.

Just as the purity of gold is required to be tested, so is it necessary to test the attributes of a person. If one hesitates to put his gold to test, if he refuses to cut or heat it for that purpose, there is a possibility of his gold being impure. The same way it is necessary to put a man to test in order to ascertain his claim to be religious. If religion truly pervades in his life, he could reach a high level of spirituality, to the level of divinity.

One who is not serene, whose approach is shallow and is not inclined to go to the depth, fails to realize the true nature of religion. Those in search of pearls need to dive deep to the bottom of the sea; floating at the upper level would not serve the purpose. Similarly it is necessary to cultivate serenity in order to learn the true value of life. In the absence of serenity, one can sacrifice not only the truth, but even his self in order to gain wealth or power. For the sake of worldly

happiness he would be willing to set aside the true value of life.

Religion is not meant merely for the sake of utterance; one has to put it into practice. True religion can help in having real satisfaction at the time of death. Outward show of religion does not become helpful at that time. The shades formed by anger, greed etc. and their impacts are called 'Leshyäs'. It is now possible to study their impact from the scientific point of view. It has been observed that when one indulges in greed, his fingers get slightly bent. It is good that we cannot take photographs of one's attitude. Had it been possible, we could know how different we actually happen to be from what we look.

Selfishness leads one to become hypocritical and deceptive. We come across people, who coat brass with gold and try to sell it as real gold or who lay frozen ghee over the water in a tin and sell it as ghee. When such cunning men want to profess as gentlemen, they approach some monk or a so-called saint to perform rituals like Satyanārāyan poojan or Shāntisnatra poojan. The average man cannot make out their hypocrisy and might adore them as religious persons. It is, however, not possible to achieve true well-being, so long as one does not resort to truthfulness.

A truthful life cannot be attained in the absence of serenity. This was evident in the life of the saint-poet Ānanddhanji. While he sang the songs of the Lord, tears used to flow from his eyes. Even the listeners were overwhelmed by his sense of devotion. His songs are rapt with spiritualism. He could forget the world and stay tuned to his soul. As the crystal of sugar has to melt in milk in order to render it sweet, it is necessary for one to be absorbed in religion in order to make life sweet.

Mogul emperor Akbar once called saint Haridās in order to hear his devotional songs. Haridās sang to the best of his ability and the court was filled with applause. But the devotional tears were absent in his eyes. Thereupon Akbar asked, "When I saw you singing in wilderness, tears were flowing from your eyes; how come, your eyes are tearless now?" Haridās replied, "That time I was trying to please

the Lord and my heart was filled with pangs of separation. Today I have come to please you and your pleasure gives me delight.”

Serenity is the language of self-realization. In order to understand the inner depth, it is necessary to have serenity. It consists of giving up all sorts of insignificance. One, who barter his Self for the sake of worldly pleasure, will have to cry later; shedding tears will be the price that he would have to pay for the pleasure. The importance of life lies in giving, not in getting. A truly great one will decline to barter the Self. He would stand firm in the face of all temptations. One who gains the true essence of life, is the wealthiest person.

Human life should be treated as a pilgrimage to the supreme abode. Once we embark upon it, we have to strip off the limitations of time and place. We have to remove the distance from the Lord and be one with Him. That union can be accomplished when we get rid of the limitations of time, space and matter. The Lord is not far away, but we fail to realize the closeness due to our ego. It is possible to see Him, only when the ego melts. When one forsakes it, tears of devotion would start flowing from the eyes. The world may laugh at those tears, but the Lord will make out their truth and will shower his blessings.

Chapter 8

Giving up Insignificance

We need to understand the positive role of serenity and the negative one of shallowness. We should give up the insignificance and install serenity in its place. In other words, we should scare away crow and set swan in its place. A serene person is entitled to get respect. Those picking up disputes on minor issues, lose the affection of even the lovable ones. One can make progress in life, when he cultivates serenity and learns to forsake the faults of others. By indulging in insignificance, he would reduce his stature and court misery for himself. One fails to experience pleasure when the mind becomes shallow. He gets overtaken by anger and remains gloomy; his temper would go off, if he is not well-received or is not properly respected.

It is therefore necessary to adopt the concept of 'forgive and forget'. That is a vital approach and can occur when one develops generosity at heart. How is it possible to experience pleasure, if the mind is afflicted with prejudices? The life is not embedded with misery; we happen to create the misery and make ourselves unhappy. For instance, we spoil our stomach by eating too much; we drive away the serenity and indulge in insignificance. It is therefore said, 'Fill the mind with knowledge and keep the belly a little empty.' If the mind is imbibed with good thoughts and wholesome approach, what we utter would be sweet and beneficial.

Giving up Insignificance

We come across quite a few people who contemplate about trifling matters and wallow over the same. One should actually forget such matters. He, who can forget them, is really fortunate. Do we not remove the garbage and dump it in a dustbin? If one opens up his dressings while getting healed, the wound revives and it becomes hard to get healed. Similarly by wallowing over the matters worth forgetting, one revives the old wounds and becomes unhappy. By repeatedly indulging in such wallowing one gets conditioned to it and then even the ambrosial words of enlightened persons fail to have impact upon him.

Forgiving is a great virtue. The capacity to forgive the wrongs of others is a measurement of one's nobility. If a dog happens to lick one's face, does he try to lick the dog as tit for tat? One behaves according to his understanding and the level of intelligence. It is therefore unnecessary to behave inappropriately with the wrong-doer. When he emits the fire of bitterness, we should behave like water and cool him down.

What can we expect from an unintelligent person? Is it possible for one to give what he does not have? We should rather understand his level and feel compassionate over it. One unnecessarily happens to feel bad for the sake of trifling: someone criticizes him and he gets unhappy. He should better ponder over what the man has said. If what the man has said is true, he should feel thankful and try to change himself. If it is not true, he should forget it and stop worrying about the same. For realizing this it is necessary to have serenity of mind. When one cultivates it, he gets imbued with subtlety that would enable him to forgive.

One person took a vow to serve a saint before taking meals and tried to keep it scrupulously. One day he could not come across any saint who was in need of his service. He considered that day as futile and felt sorry that there was no one in need of his service. He had, of course, taken the vow for good, but he could not make out the significance thereof and felt sad that no saint was sick that day. One therefore needs to cultivate the subtlety in order to understand the significance of what he thinks or does.

Chapter 9

Well-built Body

The second qualification required for leading a religious life is to have well-equipped limbs. If one is equipped with properly functioning sense organs, if his body is well-built, it would be easy for him to observe a religious life. If one is mute, he cannot express his mind. Inadequacy of any organ comes in the way of observing a religious life. Not only does a handicapped person become miserable, he may also lend misery to others by having to depend upon them. One should therefore try to maintain all organs in proper shape.

One is bound to feel unhappy to the extent his organs do not function properly. In order to keep them in good condition, one should remain self-reliant to the extent possible. If that is given up, the body would get stiff and unworkable. In that case, it becomes hard to undertake any activity. When one relies upon his own self, he can experience the pleasure of independence. Everyone should therefore remain energetic. True pleasure of life can be experienced when the body is maintained in proper shape while observing a life of restraint.

In addition to the body being in good shape, it is also necessary to be well-built. If it is not well-built, it would be hard to undertake activities like observance of austerities or extending help to others. If he goes on a pilgrimage, he will have to hire the laborers to lift him in ascending the hill. The enlightened persons have therefore urged for

Well-built Body

healthy body and competent mind (Ärugga Bohilābho). Physical ailment and weakness of mind virtually constitute death. If one remains careless about his body; he will have to repent for it later in life.

Besides being helpful in spiritual pursuit, the austerities also help in maintaining the competence of body and mind. Fasting within limits helps in keeping the body healthy. Naturopathy has proved that many diseases can be cured by resorting to fasts. Meditation becomes helpful in keeping the mind competent. Practice of staying steadily in a posture becomes helpful in withstanding the wavering and temptation.

It is true that the soul is distinct from the body. It cannot, however, be gainsaid that so long as the soul abides in a body, it is hard to remain indifferent to the body. It is therefore said that the body should be treated as a chariot, the sense organs as horses and the soul as the charioteer. Like a chariot the body functions in defense of the soul. If one uses it in observance of a virtuous life, it would lead to his progress. If however, one uses it in indulgence of vices, it would lead to his downfall. Merits and demerits are thus inherent in every aspect.

Eyes, for instance, are meant for seeing. They are going to witness whatever good or bad comes to the sight. It is left to us to decide whether we should go in for beautiful natural scenes or ugly indecent ones. It is up to us to have the impact of what the eyes see. It is not necessary that one should keep the eyes closed or that he should cultivate grudge against beauty; one has to exercise his discretion. A religious person can remain pleased with whatever he comes across; he would avail the innocent pleasure from all sources.

One needs to remain in pleasure like an innocent child. One may ask, 'A child playing in dust is pleased while making palaces of mud; do we need to indulge in such fanciful pleasures?' We, however, do indulge in fanciful pleasures of worldly aspects. The difference is that while the child enjoys the break up of mud-palaces, we feel sad when our dreams of worldly life come to an end. We forget that the worldly pleasures do not last forever and are illusory; we thus remain

blissfully ignorant of the truth.

Gold, for instance, is considered precious, but what is its inherent worth? While moving in a desert if one gets thirsty, does gold become helpful in quenching the thirst? What he needs for the purpose, is a glass of water, which has virtually no market value. One should not lose sight of the fact that those, who sleep on a cot of gold, usually remain worried about protecting their wealth; as such, they fail to get a sound sleep.

We, however, remain overcome with delusion and retain a safe distance from the truth. We forget that the money not only leads to worries, but it also breeds indiscretion. It rarely leads us on the path of religion. It induces loss of discretion and pushes us to degeneration. Those, who are equipped with wealth and sound physique, should therefore develop the discretionary habits. The well-equipped limbs would be helpful in leading a religious life, if we keep in mind that true religion consists of experiencing the spiritual pleasure.

Chapter 10

Agreeable Disposition

Agreeable and soothing disposition is the third attribute required for leading a religious life. There are people who spread pleasure everywhere they go. Ability to handle a situation smoothly and delicately can quiet even the acute anger of the opponents. That involves a deep sense of forgiving. Forgiving is a great virtue; when it is associated with sympathy and compassion. The animosity of an adversary gives way and he also tends to respond favorably. During the spiritual pursuit of Lord Mahaveer, when Sangam got exhausted of perpetrating atrocities and fell at the feet of the Lord, the Lord felt compassionate to him and that drew tears in his eyes. Only those, who are imbibed with generosity at heart, can thus afford to forgive the perpetrators.

In order to get qualified for a religious life, one needs to cultivate compassion at heart. He is the true human being whose eyes get wet out of compassion for others. It is, however, seen that the people are out to fight even for trifling issues. If a piece of stone is dropped in a pond, it gives rise to ripples that continue to spread and reach the other end. Similarly our sense or words of rage raise vibrations in the air that reach the other end of the world and become instrumental in leading to wars. It is therefore necessary to give up animosity of all sorts and cultivate amity that gives a soothing impact.

If we want to have peace and tranquility in the world, we should first become peaceful and non-violent. Those who are imbued with compassion, know that animosity emits heat, while peace provides the soothing effect like sandalwood. Outward show of tranquility does not help in that respect. One, who has not developed compassion and serenity at heart, cannot remain tranquil. External measures can be helpful in the physical realm; a person suffering from headache can apply pain balm or take Anacin and get relief. Alternately he can try to remove the constipation, which could be the real cause of headache. In spiritual realm, however, external measures are of little or no consequence.

Unless an attribute becomes the part of nature, it is not possible to retain it longer. Geetä therefore says, “Prakrutim yānti bhootāni, nigrahaḥ kim karishyati” (All beings behave as per their dispositions, how is it possible to restrain it?). We may be able to control the disposition for some time by adopting restraints, but it springs back with double force, when opportunity occurs and our will-power is weakened. As science says, the actions and reactions are equal and opposite.

In order to cultivate an agreeable disposition, it is necessary to learn how to behave peacefully. Those, who give up anger and animosity, become agreeable. What they utter would be pleasant. Our spiritual books were composed by the sages, who had cultivated calmness at heart. Their books therefore lay emphasis on remaining peaceful and contented. What the people nowadays write, reflect their discontent. Their writings echo discontent. Sanskrit is a sweet language, but some of the present day works in that language also give a bitter taste.

In ancient times Brahmins as well as monks were noble-minded; they accepted what was offered to them. They considered it below their dignity to beg. The role of the monks and nuns was to stay above likes and dislikes and that induced the laymen to serve them. Now the condition has changed to the extent where monks are seen

begging and the well-to-do persons think that they can buy even the monks. It should, however, be remembered that those, who can be bought, are not true monks; they could be hypocrites. Before trying to buy over a monk one should be able to realize the true importance of monastic life.

In ancient times, the rulers considered it a duty to take care of the learned men. When the great scholar Kanād was busy composing his work, the king of the place sent to him a plate full of gold coins. But Kanād did not even look at it and remained busy with his work. When he did not care for the gold, the king sent to him a plate full of diamonds, but Kanād did not look at it too. So long as one does not remain absorbed in his work, the outcome will not have the spiritual flavor that can give satisfaction to the author.

Since Kanād did not look at gold or diamonds, the king thought that the scholar must have some higher type of wealth. In order to figure it out he went to Kanād in disguise. That time the latter was sleeping. The king therefore sat by his side and started serving his feet. Kanād woke up and recognizing the king he asked, “Why do you serve the feet of a pauper like me?” The king was under the impression that Kanād must have Pāras, which is supposed to turn iron into gold. As such, he asked for Pāras. Kanād replied that he had nothing of the sort; but he said that the Lord is the Pāras that can turn the iron of the downtrodden souls into the gold of blessed ones.

It should be borne in mind that wealth cannot lead to liberation, nor can it prevent death. Anger, arrogance, greed and delusion are the disease-bearing germs that eat away the health of the soul. We need to overcome all of them and make our life faultless and agreeable. One who has attained the agreeable disposition, cannot indulge in violence. His evil instincts get blunt; his behavior remains similar to the surface of a polished wood that does not hurt.

Chapter 11

Accompaniment to Agreeable Disposition

The attributes that we are dealing with have been presented in an order where cultivation of one attribute leads to the rise of another. In this chapter we are going to consider the factors that need to be associated with agreeable disposition. Since environments play an important role in that respect, we should try to live in an environment that becomes helpful in development of agreeable disposition.

Reading the right books is an important factor. Such reading gives rise to good thoughts. When we do not make use of even an earthen pot for storing stones, why should we fill our brain with evil thoughts? Brain is a delicate instrument; it should not be subjected to evil thoughts. If someone talks to us about wrong things, we should refuse to listen; listening to such talks is fraught with danger. Once an evil notion enters the head, it becomes hard to dislodge it. We may be able to remove it by repeatedly trying to do so, but its impact could continue to stay at a deeper level. Psychology gives ample evidence thereof. The present psychological research thus gives support to what the ancient seers had said long ago.

It is unfortunate that people happen to read anything that they come across. The minds can get agitated by reading such rubbish matter. Their condition becomes analogous to those, who indiscriminately take junk food. As such foods are bound to hurt the

digestive system, so does reading of rubbish matter spoils our brain. We should therefore be selective in reading. No problem, if we do not read much; but whatever we read should be conducive to mental health. Moreover, it is necessary to contemplate over what we read in order to have its impact on the mind.

Commercial advertisements occurring in the media are designed to brainwash the people so that they can be induced to buy the goods advertised or adopt the lifestyle projected therein. In order to counter its impact, it is necessary to read the literature that can inspire us to reduce the attachment for worldly objects and to augment the purity of the soul. That can also help in averting blind faith in traditions and in setting up the ideals that can lead to a truthful life. Our life should be transparent enough to project truth like a sensitive camera that takes the picture of any situation with a flash of light.

Another factor for developing agreeable disposition is to have good friends. One should remain cautious while making friends. If one happens to get into wrong company, he would have to repent when he is faced with the consequences thereof. We should therefore make friendship with those, who are noble at heart, and who can be helpful and relied upon to give the right guidance in times of adversities.

Creative thoughts raise ideal vibrations in brain. By concentrating upon them, we can raise the level of sanctity within us. The ideal vibrations can also boost up a peaceful environment. As flowers have the flavor, so do the ideals have their aroma. Mind is like a musical instrument. As one can raise a musical note by touching the right key of a musical instrument, so is it possible to create the harmonious impact by taming the mind in the right direction. Happiness arises when there is harmony. Beating the drum in tune with the song creates the vibrations of harmony, and the mind stays delighted where there is harmony.

When one develops harmony at heart, whatever he thinks or speaks would be agreeable. Happiness abides where the words are in

tune with the mind and actions are in tune with the words. Having a piano does not serve any purpose if one does not know how to play it. In a temple there had been a beautiful piano, but no one used to play it. After a long time a player came and spread sweet musical notes by playing it. The people loved it and got absorbed in listening to it. That could happen because the man was an expert player and remained absorbed in it while playing the instrument.

That temple consists of our internal self. We need to pray to the Lord to enter our mind. The mind is very delicate. If we play it with uniformity of verbal and physical faculties, sweetness would emerge and that can yield the true pleasure of life. In order to make the prayer more effective, we make use of incense. The uniformity of mind, words and actions serve the purpose of incense in this respect. Exercising those three faculties harmoniously leads to a divine tune. We need to resort to that harmony in every sphere of life. For that purpose it is not necessary to go to a sacred place or to approach some great man. In the absence of harmony, even the contact with a great man would be of little help.

A poet has said, 'One went to fifty six places of pilgrimage, but he could not give up the temperament of a dog.' Even if we bathe a dog in several sacred rivers, it does not cease to bark. Similarly, an envious person does not cease to feel sad on seeing the prosperity of others. The religious life consists of changing it and of developing generousness at heart. It is, however, not possible to achieve a real change, so long as the mind does not undergo transformation. One can afford to develop agreeable disposition, when violence and other wrong instincts are rooted out of mind.

This is, of course, not easy. When anger or rage arises in our mind or when we get upset, we should try to figure out the reasons thereof. Instead of looking outside for that purpose, we should quietly delve within. It would then be realized that the reasons lie within us. The wise men therefore used to maintain a room of peace in their home. In that room they kept symbols of peace that could quiet the

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mind. Whenever rage arose, they used to retreat to that room and quietly examine the reason for getting angry. That helped in removing the anger from their minds.

Good books, virtuous friends, wholesome situations, sweet music etc. are thus the accompaniments required for cultivating agreeable disposition. What we have to do for that purpose is to remove every rubbish thing from the mind. That will enable us to refrain from causing harm to anyone. The virtuous family and noble heritage can restrain us from indulging in sinful activities. Such noble heritage can be obtained by undertaking meritorious deeds.

Chapter 12

Transformation

A religious person needs to have several virtues that become helpful in climbing over the summit of success. Our body happens to be a bundle of lifeless particles, virtuousness turns them into gold. Virtues can direct our life-journey towards the mine of gold.

All sorts of worldly wealth are temporary. We have to leave everything here and proceed on an uncharted path. We have, however, an internal treasure that can be perceived in the light of knowledge. The darkness stays so long as we do not light that lamp. Once we light it, we can see the brightness spreading over this life as well as beyond it. For that purpose, we need to be equipped with the attributes discussed in the previous chapters.

When one understands the nature of the soul, his life starts undergoing the change. We know that delirium reduces the state of literate as well as illiterate at par. Similarly, the saints and common men, monks and laymen come to the same level, when they are overcome with anger, arrogance, deception and greed. One can come back to his sense only when the delirium of defiling instincts is removed.

We should not consider ourselves as very different from other people. The way we treat others, they are going to treat us. A monk once happened to pass by a pond where a washerman was washing

clothes. As a few drops of water fell on his body, the monk reproached the washerman and abused him. The latter reciprocated by asking why the monk was roaming there and rudely pointed out that drops of water would inevitably fall, if one moves by the side of a washing place. While saying so he gave a push to the monk.

The monk moved from the place and sat under a tree. While contemplating over the incident he realized that it was his fault to abuse the washerman. As such, he went back and begged the washerman to forgive him. That prompted the latter to see his mistake in abusing a holy man. He fell at the feet of the monk and humbly requested to forgive him for the rude behavior. When one thus gets agitated, foul words are likely to turn out of his mouth. We should therefore carefully restrain ourselves and manifest our nobility by overcoming anger.

One normally likes to bow to a holy man; but when the latter forsakes his monastic code and resorts to rage, he comes to the level of an ordinary man. Unrestrained ego leads to arrogance, and the purity can be regained when one realizes his fault and overcomes the ego. If one listens to this truth and contemplates over it, he would start changing himself. Thereby he becomes conscious of the inherent purity of the soul and tries to manifest it.

Considerable emphasis has therefore been laid on right listening. Listening to the enlightened talks helps in realizing the true nature of the soul. Listening to such words is thus essential for one's internal purification. When we sprinkle water to cool a heated pan, the initial 100 drops may evaporate and seem to have gone waste. But that is not true; all those drops had their impact which becomes apparent with the 101st drop. Similarly listening to truth leads to internal transformation. That may not be apparent initially. Our job is to continue to listen and contemplate over it. Even if no result is seen for some time, we should pursue it. Every time we do so is a step in the direction of transformation that would become manifest in due course.

Chapter 13

Popularity

Popularity is the next attribute required for leading a religious life. Everyone likes to gain popularity. That inclination is inherent even in a child. The question would therefore arise as to why everyone does not gain it. The reply is simple; we do not know how to be popular. There are rules for gaining anything. If a patient wants to regain health, he needs to take appropriate medication and resort to the dietary restrictions. Similarly for gaining popularity one has to avoid criticizing others. Those, who are habituated to criticize, are bound to find faults of others and that is going to lead to unpopularity.

We should therefore form the habit of not criticizing others and particularly the virtuous ones. Major vices are, of course, unpardonable; but when the faults are minor, we should be willing to condone them. It is also possible that one's circumstances may be responsible for his drawbacks. It would therefore be injustice, if we criticize him without considering his circumstances. It should be remembered that no one is perfect and that it is highly sinful to criticize others in their absence.

If we notice someone's fault, there is nothing wrong in pointing it out gently; but we should never run him down. Everyone has the sense of self-respect; no one likes to be ridiculed or denounced. Take the instance of performing a religious ritual. If one is seen performing

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it incorrectly, we can affectionately bring it to his notice and show how to do it. Our approach should prompt him to improve his method. To ridicule him does not help; it would indicate our lowliness.

When people refuse to listen to what we say, we need to think that we might have lost popularity. If we ponder over the situation objectively and change our approach, we can regain it. If we hold the popularity, people would attach importance to our words. In the realms of religion, morality, politics, etc. there could be respectable leaders, whose words become inspirational. But it is not easy to locate them; we need to be worthy of it. For that purpose, we have to eschew selfishness and parochialism. In case, however, one does not gain popularity in spite of deserving it, he need not worry or get despaired. The world is large; there are bound to be people, who would appreciate the right qualifications.

We happen to talk about unity and common approach, but we need to consider whether the people at large agree with our views. We may not care for those, who extend support only for the sake of formality; but we should be particular to gain it from the people of integrity. The world functions on the basis of co-operation. Not only do we need it from other people, we also need it from the animal kingdom. Only a swollen-headed one would say that he does not care for anyone. The endeavor should be to gain near-unanimity.

Our main objective should be to attain internal development. While endeavoring for that purpose if we come across obstacles, we should accept them as consequence of our Karma. What we generally term as Karma is the outcome of our previous physical, verbal and mental acts; and what we do now will extend its consequence later on. It is thus up to us to mould our future.

Chapter 14

How to gain Popularity

For gaining popularity, it may be necessary to adopt the mode of life prevailing where we live. Our dress should not be weird or unusual that could be subject to criticism. It should neither be queer nor untidy. It is true that brightness does not depend upon clothes or ornaments. It is therefore not wrong to economize on that account, but that does not justify frugality or miserliness. One can remain impressive with simple and neat clothes; it is possible to hold a respectable place in the society with a pair of simple neat clothes.

Moreover, one should be willing to donate for wholesome purposes in proportion to his earning. We do not know what is going to happen tomorrow; only present is in our hands. We should therefore live in a way that does not lead to worrying in future. This is particularly relevant in the religious realm. Whatever good or bad we do now, will come with us in the next life. As such, what we want to do in the religious realm needs to be done without delay.

Donation is a sort of travel-kit for journey to the next life. The concept of donation is holy and divine. Those, who are out for taking instead of giving, are devoid of divinity. It is interesting to note that in the Marathi language the term for donation is Dev. We have been imbibed with the trait of taking since time immemorial. Now is the time to give, to the extent possible. Not to donate in spite of ability should be treated as a crime. At the time of our death, people should

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not be tempted to say that the poor guy left everything here.

Another factor for popularity consists of not getting angry while facing the truth; we should really be pleased to face it. The right comment from the esteemed people should be considered beneficial; it could be in our interest. Those, who have no expectation from us and who are not out for fame, are like mirrors in which we can see our drawbacks. Ägamic literature also constitutes a mirror that shows our virtues as well as vices. Virtues cannot be sustained unless vices are removed. If one does not give up what is wrong, how can he assimilate the truth? We need to get rid of the vices and manifest our inherent purity.

Not to do something good in spite of having the capability is considered by the scriptures as concealing the ability. Whatever ability one may have in the realms of wealth, knowledge, oratory etc. needs to be used for the benefit of the society. It will then be seen that abilities increase as they are used. New horizons continue to open as one tries to reach the first one. That gives us the challenge to boost our capability. One should, however, be careful to stay away from superiority or inferiority complex.

While undertaking an activity, one may feel afraid of getting failure. It should, however, be remembered that everyone is imbued with immense capabilities. Since our soul is identical with Lord's soul, we can also do what the Lords had done. We are simply not aware of the ability lying latent within us. We need to explore and use it in uplifting the life. Not using it would result in blunting that capacity.

When one tries to do something new, people may criticize it; but when he succeeds in the endeavor, they start praising him. Not to use the latent capability is a default. We should remember that the time passes away. Unless we use the capability now, we may not get the time to use it later on and the capability would get rust. Lord Mahaveer has therefore urged to wake up from the sleep of ignorance and move ahead. He did not want that man should beg at the door of temple or remain satisfied by praying to the Lord. He knew of the immense

potentialities that can be manifested by treading on the right path indicated by the great men.

That manifestation can transform the mode of life. As such, one should go ahead irrespective of criticism or likelihood of failure and present to the world the truth that he comes across; he should go by his intuition. Every one thus needs to use his intellect and other abilities to the extent possible. As unused arms get rusted, so does the capability go waste, if not adequately exercised.

Youths are the symbols of energy; they have to become the torch-bearers. They should never look down at elderly people. He, who runs down the old people, happens to run down his own old age. Moreover, they should treat women with respect. Women should feel safe in their presence. When queen Kamalprabhā was fleeing from the capital with her son Shripāl in the arm, she initially was scared to see a group of youths. But the leader of the group assured her of the safety and volunteered to help her out of distress. Every youth needs to have that type of boldness equipped with restraint and understanding.

Generosity, sacrifice and politeness are essential attributes for gaining popularity. One who is courteous and generous at heart, gets admired. He would not mind sacrificing the articles of his fondness for the benefit of others. There are, however, people who seem to have been born for enjoyment. They try to collect as much as possible. Such miserly people miss the charm of human life. Even when they have the chance to donate, they try to avoid it. They stand to lose the fruits of even their meritorious deeds. Donation needs to be made enthusiastically.

The life pattern also hinges upon the type of food. One should therefore take care of the purity of food. He, who longs for the food from a place of worship, compromises his self-respect. The slogan should be not to depend upon others' charities and not to get anything free. Depending upon charity constitutes cowardice; it amounts to discounting one's own capability. One should learn to stand boldly upon his feet.

Chapter 15

Broadness of Mind

We are talking about the attributes for gaining popularity. People would show regard for those, whose words are trustworthy and who have innate love at heart. Those who are imbibed with these attributes, will get co-operation in whatever they undertake. How would one rely upon a person who is not trustworthy? If one is misappropriating others' property, if he has deceived them, how would the people believe him even if he feigns to be religious? They will ask him to resort to religious life. One who wants to join any public institution, should have purity at heart; otherwise he is likely to become detrimental. It is not possible for one to cool others, if he is burnt at heart. Broadness of mind is thus an important attribute for popularity.

There are people, who spend liberally, but they cannot cultivate liberal approach for differing views. They think that they are right and look with contempt at those holding different views. Really speaking one should cultivate regard for others' views. He should think that as he wants to hold his views, so are other people entitled to hold their views. That would constitute the broadness of mind.

Freedom of thought should prevail among fathers and sons, among mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, among the people in general. Domination over others does not prevail forever. Exception can, however, be made for two types of people, viz. a) those who are

good for nothing and meekly submit to others, and b) those who are deeply religious and can patiently tolerate the wrong approach of others.

We come across cases where the parents have to lead a miserable life, in spite of having several children. This happens due to loss of tolerance and absence of compromising spirit. Differences are bound to be there between two generations; they cannot be suppressed by force. It is necessary to settle them with mutual understanding. Differences can be put to rest by accepting the truth of others' views.

That is Syādvād. Syādvād is not merely a scriptural precept. It needs to be resorted to in every sphere of life. The precept which cannot be put to practical use, which cannot be woven into social fabric, ceases to have its importance. As such, what the enlightened persons have stated in scriptures needs to be put in practice. It should teach us to resort to compromise as and when necessary.

Let us take an illustration. In a family, the father and the son happened to be on friendly terms and used to take food together. The son once felt bad by what the father had said. Thereupon he sat away at the time of dinner. Instead of reproaching him, the father adopted a conciliatory approach. He took his plate where the son was sitting and started eating by his side. That helped in getting over the tension while satisfying the son's ego.

Ego prompts us to be emotional in asserting our point of view without giving the opportunity to others to express their views. Instead of insisting on our views, we should invite the opponent to express his views first. That takes wind out of his emotions and then we can explain to him our point of view with love and affection. It would be helpful in convincing him of our view. Many people realize the importance of this approach, but they find it hard to put into practice.

There was a millionaire, who happened to be miserly. He was constantly worrying about increasing his wealth and about protecting the same. Once he was sitting on sea-shore worrying about his ships that had gone abroad. That time a generous person arrived and noticed

the worrying face of the former. The man thought that the latter would have been there for committing suicide out of despair. The man gave him a ten dollar note along with the visiting card with an offer to see him when necessary, and left.

That generosity opened the eyes of the miserly person; he realized the importance of giving and started spending liberally. Years passed by. He once read in a newspaper that the man, who had given him ten dollars, was in financial crises. That gave him the inspiration to help the man. He went there and said, 'You had given me ten dollars that day. Now it is my turn to reciprocate.' With these words he gave the man a blank check with permission to write any amount the man liked. That helped in tiding over his difficulty. Generosity can thus induce even a miser to reciprocate.

Chapter 16

Discretionary Gentleness

Popularity arises by virtue of internal attributes. A popular person endeavors to work for the well-being of self as well as of others. Those who do not have such attributes, may profess to be popular, but they would soon get exposed. The people are not foolish enough to give respect to any Tom, Dick or Harry. They do it when they notice appropriate attributes. Moreover, it is not easy to maintain popularity. For maintaining it, one has to behave like water, when he has to face the fire of ire.

Some social workers complain that people do not remain grateful. They are wrong. Such people do not have any asset in the form of discretion and politeness, and yet they come out for public service. They need to realize that the people are going to test them and give respect, if they notice the real worth. Popularity does not arise by mere outward show; it arises from true worth, from one's character.

A popular person also needs to be open at heart. He should be willing to listen to others and ponder over the same. There is, however, a shortage of such liberal approach. Most people happen to be parochial and harbor prejudices. That leads to all sorts of discords, disputes, divisions and conflicts. Even though the educational level has gone up, the people are still fighting in the names of castes, languages, regions etc.

Discretionary Gentleness

It is necessary to develop wholesome ideas and thoughts. One should be willing to accept whatever is good from any source. That would break down unnecessary knots. Broadness of mind will arise and that will ultimately lead to harmony in life. A social worker needs to understand the general trend and to stay in tune with it. For that purpose he has not to give up the truth; he has to learn staying in harmony with the time without compromising the truth. That will enable him to gain what is wholesome and leave the unwholesome.

A religious person needs to cultivate Syādvād in his approach. He should be ready to understand others and cultivate amity with everyone. After attaining omniscience, Lord Mahaveer could make out the doubts prevailing in the minds of Indrabhuti Gautam and other learned pundits, and removed the same. As such, they became his Gandhars. Syādvād thus consists of broadness of mind. You can even call it the Theory of Relativity.

For that purpose, one has to cultivate discretion as well as gentleness. A peacock looks pretty by virtue of its feathers. Bereft of feathers it looks rump. Similarly even though one is equipped with knowledge, power and position, he would remain rump in the absence of discretionary gentleness. A leader has to lead while keeping in mind the pace of his followers. The relation between a leader and his followers is identical to that of the engine and its compartments. A leader going ahead will be of no avail, if the followers trail behind. If he thinks that he is above all others, he merely pampers the ego that will lead him towards his downfall.

The teaching of Lord Mahaveer as given in Āchārāṅg Sutra therefore starts with discretion. It points out to his monks, "The people will bow to you and fall at your feet; but if you do not remain vigilant that time and get overcome with ego, that will lead to your downfall." Āchārya Sthulibhadra was once so overcome. After attaining several accomplishments when he arrived at Pāṭaliputra, his sisters Senā, Venā and others came to see him. As Sthulibhadraji learnt about their arrival, he assumed the form of a lion. The sisters were scared to see

it and talked to his Guru about it. The Guru realized that Sthulibhadra was overcome with arrogance and declined to teach him further.

Some persons feel that the people will become their followers by showing some miracle. They forget that the people will stop going to them, if they come across a greater miracle elsewhere. Religion has nothing to do with miracles. If one adopts it on account of a miracle, it will cease to have any impact when the miracle disappears. The enlightened ones have therefore not given importance even to the amazing accomplishment of pneumatic capability. Religion has to arise from within; it must be the outcome of truth in life.

We do not know when ego would enter our brain. It is easy to give up the sense of belonging for wealth, wife, children etc, but it is hard to give up the ego. By virtue of the rise of detachment, Bāhubali gave up everything and became an ascetic, but the subtle ego remained in his mind. As such, he wished to attain the enlightenment before going to Lord Rushabhdev so that he would not be required to bow to his younger brothers, who had renounced earlier.

He therefore adopted acute penance; he stayed steady in meditation while bearing cold, heat and rain to the extent that birds built their nests around his body. But due to the ego, he failed to gain enlightenment. Then Lord Rushabhdev sent Brahmi and Sundari to him. On coming to Bāhubali they asked him to get down the elephant of ego. On hearing those words the ego of Bāhubali disappeared and he got ready to go to the Lord's assembly. As he took the first step, the omniscience got manifested to him.

Omniscience lies within us, but it remains obscured due to our wrong tendencies. That obscuring envelope drops off at the sight of enlightened ones or on listening to their words. They thus become instrumental in manifesting what had been lying within us. The lock, which we fail to open by exerting too much force, is instantly opened by moving the right key. Guru's words function as the key to open our internal doors.

The above illustrations of Bāhubali and Sthulibhadra are meant

Discretionary Gentleness

for all of us. If there happens to be a snake somewhere in the house, the people cannot sleep at ease. The ego lying within us is a snake. We therefore need to stay alert so long as the ego stays. For removing it we need to develop the attribute of discretionary gentleness. The more we pound the lump of wheat flour; the better would be the tortillas. Similarly higher the level of discretion, the better would be the performance. This aspect seems to be lacking in the present education. The students happen to joke while the teacher teaches. That is not a desirable situation.

We know from the life of king Bimbisār that while he tried to learn from the skinner the art of remaining invisible while sitting on the throne, he failed to grasp it. When he asked Abhaykumar about the reason, he was told that if one wants to get water from a well, he needs to bend down while immersing the vessel in water. Similarly the king needed to give respect to the skinner for learning his art. Accordingly when Bimbisār gave a higher seat to the skinner, he could quickly learn the art.

The enlightened persons have therefore said that those who comprehend the underlying meaning of scriptural words, get enlightened. This cannot be done in the absence of discretionary gentleness. Those, whose ego can melt on seeing an enlightened person, like wax in the presence of heat, get a high place in the society. They cease to belong to a particular family, sect or a section of the society. Their individuality gets merged within the society and their names remain engraved forever.

Chapter 17

The Lasting Wealth

We are considering the attributes required for gaining popularity. The popularity has nothing to do with adoration from others. The certificates of adoration do not last long. No one should therefore be led away by praise, adoration or flattering words. Some people think that the popularity depends upon wealth. Wealth is, however, gained by virtue of wholesome Karmas and does not stay forever. It is unsteady like a ship moving in rough sea. However much we try to keep it steady, it may tumble down any time.

Popularity does not depend even on power. It is also transitory; one can be stripped of it any time. Similarly it does not depend upon physical prowess. One can exert force only so long as he is not afflicted with pain or disease. Once a man gets pain in spinal cord, he loses his strength. Instead of depending upon such factors for gaining popularity, one should concentrate on cultivating generosity, modesty and good character.

Since wealth, authority and prowess are transitory, we should make use thereof for right purposes, while they last. We need to use our body, mind as well as speech for such purposes. In that case the people will be induced to say that so and so was a king at heart. People shed true tears after such men of generosity. The life should be so ordained that it leaves its scent behind; we should be ready to

give, whenever the opportunity occurs.

Another aspect that we have discussed is gentleness, the modesty associated with discretion. People generally tend to take credit for success and attribute failure to others or incidental factors. While writing invitation cards for a wedding ceremony, we show our pleasure for planning the occasion and invite others to share it. While intimating about death, however, we write 'we have to accept what the Lord has ordained.'

There was a gardener. It rained well and his garden blossomed out. One stranger came there and looking at the blossoming flowers and fruits he asked, 'Who made such a beautiful garden?' The gardener said with pride, 'I did it.' Meanwhile a cow came there and started eating the flower plants. In order to push it out, the gardener hit it with a stick and unfortunately the cow died. When he had, however, to face the court for killing the cow, he pleaded, 'a cow does not die by a stroke of stick; it must have died due to other factors.'

The ego thus operates in all our activities, religious, social as well as national. It is seen that the man is getting narrower, but his ego goes on expanding. We need to reverse that trend. Instead of taking pride for any performance, we should be humble enough to attribute the credit to the Grace of the Lord or to the help and co-operation that we might have received from other people.

A few years ago one entrepreneur decided that he would retain only a fraction of the profit and distribute the rest among his employees. That led to improvement in performance and the profit went up. He was a man of integrity and was reputed for his sense of justness. The people referred their problems to him and felt satisfied with his decisions. When his son broke his engagement, people asked the man to decide what should be done. In similar cases earlier he had fined Rs.1000 for such faults. Since it was the case of his son, he decided to levy a fine of Rs.5000. When the people pointed out that it was too heavy, the man replied that as a father he was responsible for his son's action and being the leader of the community, he needed

to bear a heavier penalty.

This shows the true impartiality and modesty. It is possible to win over the hearts of others by gentleness and modesty. The man is no longer alive, but the people of that place still remember his sense of justice. The popularity thus arises out of inner virtues. When the man died, everyone felt that he had lost a close relative. While crying aloud his watchman had said, 'I did not cry that much even when my father died.'

Another attribute required for gaining popularity is to have a good character. Character is the measurement of morality. The extent to which the standard of morality has gone down can be seen from the pictures of actresses in periodicals. If we want to bring it up, we shall have to change that environment. The present sad state can be removed by the scent of good character. For that purpose, we need to adopt restraints in our life. We should have a level of gentleness that does not prevent anyone from coming in contact with us.

This was noticed in the life of Sudarshan and his wife Vijayā. While leading the worldly life they remained so pure that even great monks and nuns did not get tired of adoring their lifestyle. Good character is not merely required in the religious realm, it is also necessary for a happy and benign life. Married life should not therefore be treated as a license for indulgence. As it is necessary to have a dam for the lake, so is it required to have a limit to indulgence. This was also evidenced in Mahatma Gandhi's life. While admitting of excessive sexual instinct in his earlier life, he reached a stage where he adopted celibacy and could call his wife with the motherly address of Bā.

Sex is not inherent in disposition; it lies in one's tendency. The person, who talks of woman as the source of evil, is not necessarily a man of character. When one talks derogatory about women, he might merely be satisfying his sexual urge or the underlying tendency. Sex is a tendency, while character is a perspective. The tendency can be overcome by the right perspective. When the true character arises

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from within, one ceases to find fault with individuals and looks everything from unprejudiced perspective.

If river has no banks, the water would spread over and cannot reach the sea. Restraints constitute such banks against indulgence so that one can reach the Lord. The great men have therefore said that everything in life remains ablaze in the absence of coolness of virtues. Wherever there is confluence of generosity, gentleness and good character, a place of pilgrimage would arise.

Chapter 18

Kindness

As it is necessary to climb over the steps to reach a summit, so is it necessary to cultivate required attributes in order to climb over the summit of religion. These attributes are not hard to attain. It is therefore easy to rise on the ladder of religion. Those, who consider it hard, have not understood the nature of religion. We should consider ourselves as pilgrims of religious summit and should be keen to reach it. As we go up step by step, we would experience an increasing level of peace.

Every step on this journey has its own importance. It is therefore necessary to look back from time to time in order to make sure that the progress made during the journey is maintained. That is called Swādhyāy, which becomes helpful in making sure that we are on solid ground. Looking back here is identical to a patient's continuing to take medication while he is getting cured. In this journey we have so far dealt with four attributes, viz. serenity, well-built body, soothing disposition, and popularity. Now we are taking up the next attribute of kindness.

Kindness denotes the absence of harshness and cruelty. There are people who become jealous on seeing the happiness of others. That indicates their harshness. He, who is harsh at heart, can resort to greater violence than a wild animal. Moreover, he is bound to be

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crooked and would not mind hurting others for his selfish ends. It is therefore said that we can save ourselves from a snake or a wild animal by taking necessary precautions, but it is hard to escape from the evil designs of crooked ones.

A kind person cannot be harsh; that is the law of nature. He, who wants to feel cool, cannot afford to sit near a furnace. A religious person should be able to extend soothing impact to everyone who comes in his contact. He must be delicate at heart and be pleased to see the happiness of others. The heart of a religious man is soft like wax or butter that would melt at the sight of other's misery. Let us cite an example.

There was a gentleman from Charotar in Gujarat conducting a large business in Africa. He had the mark of a wound on his forehead. His friends used to advise him to go in for plastic surgery and remove the spot. He, however, did not agree and said that the wound was his Guru. When asked to explain it, he used to say: "I was raised in a poor family and lived in a hut along with my mother. She used to earn our livelihood by grinding for others. There was a building nearby and we, kids, used to play in its large compound. Amongst us there was the son of a wealthy family. He used to come with pockets full of almonds and cashews. Once I asked for a few of them, but he refused because his mother had asked him not to share with anyone.

"I went home crying and asked my mom for almonds or cashews. How was she to bring them? Tears came in her eyes because she could not satisfy my desire. She went to that lady and said, 'Madam, I am happy that God has given enough to you; but it would be a favor, if you do not send your son to play with almonds and cashews.' The lady was not in a mood to hear it and said, 'Who are you to advise me? My son will bring almonds and will eat; they are not meant for paupers like you.'

"In despair my mother came back. I asked her for almonds again. She was enraged by what the lady had told her. Out of rage she took a stone and hit it on my forehead. I was wounded and the blood started

flowing from the wound. She highly repented to see it. The wound was dressed, and I was cured, but the spot remained. I grew in due course and started earning well. Now whenever I look in the mirror, this spot reminds me of the abuse of the poor by the rich and asks me to remember that my wealth does not become instrumental in hurting others.”

At times even distress leads to happiness. This gentleman had learnt a lesson from his distress. There is a proverb in Sanskrit, ‘Vajrādapi kathorāni, mruduni kusumādapi’. It conveys that the saintly persons are moved to see the distress of others, while remaining adamant in their own adversities. The attribute of kindness has thus two edges, viz. one should be harsh towards the self and soft for others, as illustrated by the following stanza.

Life is mostly froth and bubble, two things stand like stone;
Kindness in anothers’ trouble, courage in our own.

The Hindi poet Nirālāji was once going home with the amount of his remuneration. On the way he came across a pauper woman. Nirālāji was moved to learn her state of poverty and handed over the amount to her to buy a spinning wheel in order to earn her livelihood. When he reached home, his wife asked about the amount of remuneration. Nirālāji told her what had happened. She was glad to know that her husband was kind enough to mitigate the distress of the woman.

Chapter 19

Feeling afraid of Sin

Feeling afraid of committing sin is the sixth attribute of being religious. Since fearlessness is an essential attribute of religion, feeling or remaining afraid may seem anomalous. But fearlessness does not mean that one is free to do whatever he likes. He cannot behave crudely or unjustly, nor would he be allowed to indulge in vices. He has to observe restraint. Feeling afraid of sin exactly conveys that sense.

This attribute requires that one should hesitate to think or do anything that is against the interest of the society or against the well-being of his own soul. If one has never done wrong and undertakes to do it under pressure or out of some temptation, his inner self would resist. That shows the fear of committing a sin. When such fear arises naturally, it can be said that the person is imbued with discretion to distinguish the right from the wrong. Let us take an illustration.

A beggar was hungry and was requesting the passers-by to give him something to eat. One man took pity upon him; he picked up a handful of roasted chick-peas from his pocket, gave to the beggar and went on his way. As the beggar was eating the peas, he noticed that there was a golden coin in their midst. He felt happy that he would be able to buy anything with that coin. But then the idea occurred in his mind, 'The man gave me the peas to eat, but he had

no intention to give the coin. He must have forgotten that there was this coin in the pocket and has mistakenly given it to me.' Thus a sort of tussle arose in his mind and he could not decide what to do. The tussle continued even after he went to his hut; that did not allow him to sleep until he decided to hand over the coin back to the owner.

In the morning he went to the same place with the coin. After a while the man appeared and asked whether he was in need of food again.

The beggar: No, I have come to return this coin to you.'

Man: Did you not feel tempted to keep it?

Beggar: The idea had occurred to me, but that created a storm within me.

Man: Storm within? What do you mean to say?

Beggar: My mind was telling me to keep it, but my soul was revolting against it.

Man: I am pleased with your honesty; I was actually looking for a man like you. From now on, you are my best friend, come and stay with me.

The beggar's consciousness was awake and that helped him in resisting the temptation. We also have the soul; does it warn us against indulging in dishonesty? Our soul does not do it because we have muted the consciousness. If we want to hear its voice, we can look at The Sermon on the Mount by Jesus. It indicates how one should behave towards those, who are put in unfortunate condition. It refers to a woman who was involved in adultery. According to the custom prevailing that time she was to be stoned to death. As the people came to stone her, the woman fled and reached a hill. A saint was living there. The woman rushed into his hut and entreated the saint to rescue her from the people pursuing her.

The saint knew that the woman had indulged in adultery, but she was repenting for the same and wanted to adopt good conduct. He

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knew that man is not infallible. The saintly persons are therefore compassionate to those, who fall but are willing to avoid the repetition thereof. Since the woman was truly repenting of her misdeed, the saint saw it his duty to help her. He asked her to sit in a corner of his hut.

Meanwhile the people arrived at the hut and asked for possession of the woman. The saint patiently heard them and then said, 'Stone her, if you think she is unchaste; but the first stone should be thrown by the utmost chaste one. He should never have cast lustful eyes at any woman, he should have never abused any woman, he should never have been overcome with passionate instinct on seeing a beautiful woman. Contemplate over this while keeping the Lord in mind; if your inner voice says that you are chaste and have never thought of indulging in impurity, start throwing the stones.'

The people stood there in amazement. They realized that they did not belong to the true category of chastity. They were listening to their inner voice. Do we ever try to listen to our inner voice? How many of us have talked to the Self with a quiet mind? Even when we go to the temple, our mind happens to be loaded with various kinds of fancies. It is possible to hear the inner voice only when the mind is silenced.

The people assembled to stone the woman were ashamed to see their own level; they dispersed and went home. Then the saint permitted the woman to leave and advised her to lead a chaste life thenceforth. The woman thus got a new lease of life. It is possible to see the day light, when one comes out of the cave of darkness. The duel between the desire and the desirable however continues to take place in the mind; those who withdraw from the desire and go in for the desirable attain bliss.

Feeling afraid of committing sin means that one would not indulge in wrong activities; he should feel uneasy, if he happens to indulge therein. Such indulgence should make one uneasy the way we feel uneasy, if some dirt is lying in the bed. Similarly the inner

voice should alert us against wrong indulgence. It is, however, hard to stay vigilant all the time. It is therefore necessary to keep in touch with good books and to listen to wholesome talks, which can keep us on guard.

It may be possible to keep our activities in control by resorting to restraints, but it is hard to bring the mind under control. In the absence of that control, we would remain prone to fall and would have to bear the consequences thereof. The law of Karma is inexorable. No influence works there. Even Lord Mahaveer's soul was destined to infernal abode on account of evil Karmas acquired during the life of Triprushta Vāsudev. The attribute of feeling shy of committing sin is meant to spare us from such evil consequences.

Chapter 20

Overcoming Sin

One, who is afraid of committing sin, who trembles at the concept of sin, always stays fearless; he who has overcome the very tendency to commit sin, has nothing to be afraid of. Those who commit sin, remain afraid of various aspects, 'What would happen, if I am caught committing the sin? What consequences will I have to face?' and so on. One should bear in mind that one sin leads to another and the series can continue unabated, unless the brake is applied.

Feeling afraid of sin becomes helpful to the self, society, as well as the nation. Such a person would honestly observe the laws; he would not indulge in smuggling, tax evasion, illicit trade etc. Similarly he would not indulge in adulteration of merchandise. Breach of rules and regulations that has been prevailing now can be attributed to the loss of this shyness. It's no use blaming the Government for that. Every country gets the Government. it deserves.

In a democratic country like India, the Government is run by the ministers elected for the purpose. They are not imposed from above. They come from the society and reflect the shortcomings and drawbacks thereof. If we are not willing to abide by laws, if we are going to break the laws framed by the Government, how would it be possible for it to function effectively? The rules and regulations need to be respected.

In Mumbai a judge had once to go for some urgent work. For that purpose, he speeded the car without regard for the traffic rules. The traffic police saw it, but did not intervene. After completing the work, however, the judge went to the police station and admitting the breach of traffic rules, he volunteered to pay the penalty fixed for the purpose. This is an example of being shy of doing anything wrong.

What is seen at present is loss of shyness. What good can the laws do, if every one is out to get benefit by resorting to breach thereof? The people should realize the importance of remaining afraid of breaches and avoid doing anything that is against the interests of the society. There was a time, when people used to have regard for the society and held the leaders in esteem; they hesitated to indulge in unsocial activities. The conditions have now changed. Self indulgence prevails and the people do whatever they like, irrespective of its impact on the society.

Feeling afraid of sin has a religious dimension. Such a person cannot do anything against the religion. It is therefore said 'Dharmo rakshati rakshatah'. It means that if one protects the religion, the religion will protect him. The conditions have at present been reversed. People are seen axing the very tree of religion. It is difficult to say where that trend would lead us. If it does not change, we are going to be doomed. It is the time to remember the other part of the above saying, viz. 'Dharmo hanti hantah'. It means that if religion is killed, we would be killed.

Chapter 21

Harmony and Straightforwardness

Many people aspire to gain heavenly abode, salvation or liberation. But that cannot be attained simply by desiring; one has to cultivate the attributes required for that purpose. As one rises on the ladder of such attributes, he would experience an increasing level of pleasure. In these chapters, we have so far considered the attributes of serenity, well-built body, soothing disposition, popularity, kindness and shyness to commit sin. The next attribute for our consideration is straightforwardness or absence of cunningness.

A cunning man has always an evil motive in what he does. Not only do his eyes and movements are deceptive, his smiling or lamentation also happen to be deceptive. His smile will have a purpose and could be dangerous; he cries when he intends to gain something by raising compassion in the mind of the person concerned. The deceptive man never discloses his mind; whatever he shows is to fool others. People call it diplomacy. One may seem to be winning the game thereby, but he actually becomes a loser.

It is therefore necessary to lead a straightforward life, devoid of cunningness. Upādhyāy Yashovijayji has said that while taking simple food, observing austerities and staying unclad, if one holds deception in mind, he will have to take innumerable births. It is therefore wrong to harbor deception in mind; whatever one does, should be free from

cunningness. A straightforward person will never try to deceive anyone.

The cunning people create a show of trustworthiness in order to trap the innocent ones. Being trustworthy is a great virtue. One might have gained wealth and other assets, but that has no value in the absence of trustworthiness. A deceptive one casts the net of deception around his friends, relations, parents and even Guru. He does not allow the religion to come in his way. His observance of austerities also could be hypocritical. He fails to realize that thereby he entertains his own downfall.

Straightforwardness means to speak in conformity with the mind and to act in conformity with the speech. Those faculties should be in concurrence as mentioned in the following verse.

Yathä chittam tathävächo, yathä vächo tathä kriyā;
Dhanyäste tritayam eshä, visamvädo na vidyate.

It means that one should speak in accordance with the mind and act in accordance with his words. Those, who observe conformity in those three modes, are commendable. A child seems lovable, because it does not know hypocrisy and behaves innocently. We should treat it as Guru and introduce conformity in our life. Is it possible to create music in the absence of harmony of voice, instrument and tuning? In our present state the soul has its own tune, the oral drum makes different sound and the harmonium of activity spreads a still different one. How is it possible to succeed with that sort of disharmony of mind, speech and action?

Such disharmony prevails even within the families. It becomes necessary to swear, to prove the truthfulness and the doubt may still persist thereafter; deception and lies have grown to that extent. The condition was different earlier. There was harmony in the family; wife and husband had trust in each other. This is seen from the illustration of Sheth Sudarshan. The queen Abhayä tried to seduce him, but he refused to comply. When the queen failed in her design, she accused him of raping her, and Sudarshan was sentenced to death.

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The people were curious and assembled at the place of gallows to witness the punishment. Sudarshan's wife was, however, sure that her husband was chaste and that he would never indulge in rape. She went on a fast and called upon the Divine help to come to the rescue, if her husband was chaste by body, words and mind. The goddess in charge of the Order came and released Sudarshan from the gallows.

That type of harmony cannot come back unless there is a change of heart. But that cannot occur easily; one has to get prepared for it. That requires change in tendency, because nothing can help unless the tendency is transformed. Religion can lead to purification of the tendencies. That purity would not allow him to go in for possessiveness; even the slightest possession would become burdensome to him. He would feel uneasy with it the way one feels uneasy with the growth of hair and goes to a hair cutting saloon. Similarly, if one renounces everything or at least develops detachment at heart, he would gain respect and reputation.

Rich people sometime think that they are the saviors for the society. Out of vanity they feel that even the monks need their help. This needs to be changed. A gentleman once offered a donation of Rs. 300,000 to an institution. The manager of the institution accepted only 100,000. The next year the gentleman offered 200,000, out of which the manager accepted 100,000. The third year the gentleman offered 100,000 and the manager accepted it.

Thereupon the gentleman asked, "Since the institution was willing to accept Rs. 300,000 in all, what was wrong in accepting it the first time?" The manager replied, "We need Rs. 100,000 every year; accepting 300,000 at a time would have required us to deposit 200,000 in the bank. We are working with the faith that the required amount would come forth as and when necessary. Accepting Rs. 300,000 at a time could come in the way of that faith. Moreover, it could have raised a sort of vanity in your mind."

It should be noted that the mode of donor is more important than the amount of donation. There should be a sense of pleasure in giving.

Rays of Dharma

The act of giving should be identical to raining in which the cloud becomes lighter after dropping its water. In the absence of that mode, there could be a sense of ego in donation. Pure generosity devoid of ego or deception gives transparency to donation. That itself constitutes the attribute of straightforwardness, which cannot arise in the absence of the harmony of mind, words and action.

Chapter 22

Test for being Truly Religious

The life of a person, who does not indulge in deception, could be pure like a crystal. He will be frank and trustworthy, not diplomatic. The people would have no reason to feel afraid of him. A cunning one cannot be trustworthy; he would try to know the minds of others without disclosing his own. People would therefore remain afraid of him and ask others to remain cautious while dealing with him.

Those who are straightforward and stay away from deception, can be religious. They are trustworthy and are adored as such. The life of a religious person is imbued with wholesome mode. A flower plant grows and blossoms, if it gets the required manure and water. Religious mode similarly sprouts in the soil of straightforwardness and grows in wholesome environment; otherwise it may dry up.

There are really a few people, who are innately happy and delightful. Others consider wealth, power, position etc. as the source of happiness and try to gain the same. Some of them even resort to miracles for gaining reputation. Such achievements can be gained by worldly endeavors. Moreover, there are those, who might not have gained anything of the sort, but make a show of having gained them. They may show outward happiness while making such gestures, but internally they are not contented and stay desirous of gaining something special. For that purpose, they may not mind even resorting

to deception. The approach of such persons is signified in the following verse.

Vairāgyarang parvanchanāya, dharmopadesho janranjanāya;

Vādāy vidyā'dhyayanam cha me'bhoot, kiyadbruve häsyakaram
swamisha.

It means that I adopted detachment for deceiving others, gave religious discourses for pleasing the people and gained knowledge for debating other views; oh Lord, how much do I say about my ridiculous state?

Such people generally present a magnified image of their minor achievement. In the eyes of other people they may seem to be sacrificing, but their so called wholesome gestures happen to be hypocritical. The people may, however, get impressed and that helps in increasing the cunningness of those people; their approach thus goes on getting dirtier. They may make pupils, attract devotees and spread their reputation even by advertising in newspapers. Such persons may succeed in their plans for a while, but truth does not remain concealed forever. When it comes to light, the bubble of their reputation gets burst.

A truly religious person tries to retain purity at heart. That is possible only when one is straightforward. His selfless work may draw praise from the people, but he has no intention to get praised. It is natural for a bee to be attracted by the scent of a flower and to start humming. For that we do not find fault with the flower. Similarly there is nothing out of way, if a straightforward person gets praised for his activities.

We happen to think of others' drawbacks, but do not try to look at our own. We thus remain bound to the unrealities. The true pleasure arises when one perceives the selflessness. This is indicated by the pleasure that we get, when we see a relative with true affection. While undertaking any activity we should therefore try to figure out whether it gives us true pleasure. If pleasure seems to be evading, we need to

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find out the reasons. For instance, if we had been to listen to a sermon, we should ask ourselves what we gained from it. Did we get a new insight? Which attribute of ours got nourished and which fault could we drop?

Man can abandon many things, but he cannot give up the sense of belonging. A monk might have given up the worldly life, but he may not be free from the aspiration for fame and reputation. He may even feel jealous of others. There is an anecdote in this respect. In ancient times, there were two monks. One of them could not observe austerities, but he appreciated the virtues of others. The other observed acute austerities, but was egoist and could not bear others' virtues.

Once they spent the monsoon together in a vacant house. When the owner came back at the end of the monsoon, he asked the first monk about his experience. The monk talked highly of the austerity of the other. When the owner requested for religious guidance, the monk humbly said that he was not competent to give it and pointed to the other monk for getting the same. When the owner talked to the other monk, he criticized the first one for not observing austerity; when the owner asked for guidance, the monk started talking about the religious canons. By virtue of his egoism and jealousy, he acquired much sin, while the straightforward monk got absolved of his Karmas and attained omniscience. What we need to make out is that egoism does not allow a man to perceive the virtues of others. One should therefore learn to minimize his own qualities and magnify those of others. It is said:

Pargun paramānūn parvatikrutya nityam; nijhradi vikasantah santi santah kiyantah. (How many saints are there who develop at heart by magnifying the slightest virtues of others to the level of a mountain?)

If one wants to gain true superiority, he should develop his attributes without trying to reduce others to inferiority. Mogul emperor Akbar once drew a line on a board and asked Birbal to make it shorter without tempering with it. Birbal did it by drawing a longer line and showed that Akbar's line was shorter.

Chapter 23

Courteous and Sympathetic Attitude

The next attribute that we want to consider is courteousness that can lead us towards pure and wholesome deeds. In the absence of this attribute, one is likely to lean towards selfishness. A dog repeatedly goes to a place and even faces hurting, if it knows that it is going to get food from there. We, human beings need to rise above such selfishness and elevate ourselves to a higher plane of seeking well-being of others.

How could it be possible to develop humanism if the people remain self-centered? If one wants his life to blossom like a flower, he should cultivate a sympathetic approach. Those who hold sympathy at heart, can extend solace to others. If someone approaches them for help, they would be willing to do whatever they can. There are unfortunately very few places where people can shed tears and lighten their burden. In this respect the urban people are more calculative. It is hard for them to give anything even if they are economically well-off. Forget extending help, they hardly have time to listen to the misery of others.

As a person grows, his virtues also should rise. He should remain in contact with those, who are at a lower level and are in need of help; he should sympathetically look at their problems. In a city, there was the head of a business community. Anyone could go to

him and talk about his problem. The man used to listen patiently and extended the appropriate relief. He has died, but he has left his scent behind. If there is a person of that calibre in the family, other members also would be induced to cultivate similar attributes.

Such a person is benevolent at heart. He weighs the importance of his work and that of others, and extends help to others even at cost to himself. Nowadays such persons are getting rare. When asked for help; most people would say 'Excuse me, I have no time'. They would actually have enough time and by giving such replies they simply happen to pamper their indolence. Truly busy persons can manage to spare time even out of their busy schedule.

2,600 years ago Lord Mahaveer had asked Gautamswāmi not to waste even a fraction of a second in indolence. The time of an indolent person gets wasted in laziness. Many people continue to lie in bed after waking up. They spend hours in sluggishness and think about unnecessary aspects. It is therefore advisable to get up from the bed as soon as we wake up, to remember the Lord and embark upon the work; otherwise indolence would take us in its hold. Remember that work is worship; that will keep us light, hale and hearty.

Religion should not cause any fright even in the name of death. Its role is to make us fearless by teaching that death is a resting place, it is friendly. A religious person knows that birth and death are the steps on the journey of life that ultimately leads to the summit of liberation. If we become helpful to others during that journey, they would also try to help us. What, however, happens is that we raise expectation in our mind without doing anything for others and start complaining, if others do not behave as per our expectations.

Parents and children, mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, employers and employees, ministers and public, all have complaints against each other of not doing according to the expectations. After getting votes in the election, ministers hardly show their faces to the people and expect that the people should behave as they suggest. No expectation can, however, be realized unless there is some degree of

reciprocation.

Years back when Āgam Mandir was being constructed in Pālitānā, Āchārya Shri Anandsāgarsuriji was remaining continuously busy with the project. Even those, who witnessed it, could realize the strain involved. I asked him, “Why do you take so much strain?” He replied, “I do not feel any strain in this work; I actually enjoy it. This is a significant project; I would like to spend every moment on it.” While remaining so busy with the project if a monk got ill, Āchārya would rush to serve him. Those on a great project thus need to learn the art of serving while working laboriously on the project.

In one of his books, Victor Hugo draws the character of a monk. He once saw a man suffering from acute disease and was so overcome with compassion that he set aside his regular work and stayed there in order to serve the man. The people who were passing by, were impressed by the priest’s sense of service and appreciated his work. Our true interest thus lies in acts of benevolence. If one becomes helpful in putting out the fire in a neighbor’s house, that would also avert the possibility of his house catching the fire.

The society is not filled with ingratitude. If we do something good, it will reciprocate at least in the form of a petal, if not a flower. It is analogous to getting a few drops of scent on your body, if you spray rose water over others. Whatever we do will be reciprocated sooner or later. If we sow a fruit-seed, it would sprout and turn into a fruit tree in due course. Let that faith stay forever in our mind.

Chapter 24

Donation with the Sense of Dedication

Sense of dedication to a good cause is a wholesome attribute. Even birds and animals have dedication for their young ones. See the nest of a weaver-bird; how well-knit is it? Even an artist would marvel at it! Birds and animals have sometimes better sense of dedication than the human beings. That is evidenced by the attachment of a Sāras (Indian crane) couple for each other. They willingly bear the strain, heat etc. for the sake of each other. Even human beings do not remain so faithful. Quite a few husbands nowadays keep aside the duty for their wives and spend the time in clubs.

In one adoration song for the Lord, the poet has presented the analogy of birds and has said, “Lord, I crave for you like a ruddy goose.” That is an interesting analogy in this respect. Is our family life comparable to it? It should actually be higher, because we have not simply to live and die like the birds; our human life is meant to reach the state of immortality.

The journey of our life has been moving in that direction since we started it. We, however, remain unaware and pass the time in gossiping and other futile activities. We remain under the illusion of its continuity and overlook the fact that the journey is going to end one day. It is therefore necessary to sublimate our life before that time, as was done by Nem and Rājul. It may seem tough, but the

attributes that we are considering can be helpful in that respect.

There was a police officer known for his cruelty. One of his eyes had failed and was replaced by an artificial one. It was so exquisitely made that no one could make out that it was not real. Once he thought to test its efficacy. He told a culprit that if he could figure out which was the artificial eye, his sentence would be condoned. The culprit minutely looked at both the eyes and said that the left one was artificial. That was the correct reply and the officer was stunned to hear it. He asked the culprit how he could make it out. The latter replied that while watching both the eyes he could notice a trace of compassion in the left eye, which was absent in the real eye. It meant that the officer's cruelty was manifest in every real limb. He repented for that extreme level of cruelty and decided to give it up.

In life we have to undertake various worldly activities, which happen to be more or less futile. We should therefore undertake some activity that can give the sense of satisfaction and provide sound sleep at night. Such activities will be in the interests of others as well as in our own. The dedicated courteousness that we are considering, stipulates that the pains of others should get echoed in our hearts. But that cannot arise spontaneously; we have to make conscious efforts to cultivate it.

The built-in wrong traits do not disappear all of a sudden. When it is hard to get rid of the addictions like snuff-inhaling, smoking, etc., how would it be easy to remove the traits prevailing since time immemorial? But as it becomes possible to clean even the clothes of an oil-miller by carefully washing them, the built-in wrong traits can also be removed by resorting to contemplation, meditation etc. over a long period.

Many people undertake even the apparently wholesome activities with wrong motives. If they have to make a donation, they would donate illicitly earned amount or something that is no longer required by them. They would contend that since God can turn a wicked man into a virtuous one, He would also legitimate their illicit earning. But

that is wrong; one should donate what is best.

In Upnishads there occurs the story of Nachiketä. He was perturbed to see that his father was donating old and disabled cows at the end of a sacrificial rite. That was not the right donation; he should have given milk-giving cows. In Jain mythology also, there is a story in which Draupadi, in an earlier life, gave bitter gourd in alms to a monk and had to bear evil consequences thereof in the succeeding lives.

Donation should consist of the best quality and needs to be offered with pleasure. Such donation can lead to rise of consciousness and broadening of mind. Donation is meant to reduce the possessive sense; otherwise it would merely amount to a transaction. As we pay for what we buy, so do we donate in order to get praise or reputation; but donation is not business; it needs to reflect one's internal inclination.

When Ächärya Shri Anandsägarsuriji undertook the project of constructing Ägam Mandir (Temple of scriptures) at Surat, he decided not to approach anyone for donations. A donation box was set at the place and intending donors were asked to put therein whatever they liked. Surprisingly a substantial amount was received within 24 hours without anyone knowing who put in how much.

There was another noteworthy incident. There was a railway accident in the midst of heavy rainfall. In order to provide relief to the distressed people, a group of persons decided to raise a fund. For that purpose they went to a businessman and requested him to donate Rs. 51. The man, however, declined to give more than Rs. 21. After accepting that amount while those persons were criticizing the miserliness of the man, one knowledgeable person informed that the man had anonymously donated Rs. 31,000 for the relief. The true donors thus have no intention to give publicity to what they donate.

Names are given to us for the sake of convenience. One known as Ramesh, could have been named as Suresh or any other one. There is no intrinsic value of any name and the given names are not going to last forever. Instead of giving importance to a name, it is therefore

necessary to take cognizance of the soul which abides in the body. We should keep in mind that whatever we do should be for the everlasting soul.

Just think over the marvelous temple complex of Lord Ādināth on Shatrunjay hill near Pālitānā. Does it bear the name of the person who constructed it? The history says that when Bāhad Mantri decided to renovate it about 900 years ago, many people came forward to contribute. When the list of donors was being drawn, the ghee-vendor Bhim happened to come there. He also thought of contributing what he had earned that day by vending ghee. As he counted the amount with him, it turned out to a rupee and a half. How could he dare to contribute that trifling amount where the people were contributing in millions? In despair he stood aside in a corner.

When Bāhad saw it from a distance, he thought that the man could be in need of help. Rising from his seat he went to Bhim and asked how he could be helpful. Bhim replied that he was not looking for any help, but was thinking to contribute the amount that he had earned. Bāhad was very much impressed that the man was willing to contribute the entire amount he had. He respectfully led Bhim to the dais, accepted the amount and wrote his name at the top of the list. When asked to explain it, Bāhad said that other donors had contributed a fraction of what they had, while Bhim had contributed his entire amount. As such, he stood the highest among all donors.

Rānakpur temple in Rājasthān is truly marvelous. It is an exquisitely sculptured beauty. It has 1,444 artistically carved and individually designed poles that make it unique in the world. The delicacy of the art is apparent in the whole complex. There, however, does not occur anywhere the name of Dharanā Shah, who constructed it. Only his humble image in a bowing posture is seen on one pole.

Such places can provide the true sense of devotion and humbleness. One would feel gratified to touch the pious particles of its dust. May Lord help in bringing back the time when the people would be out to donate without any expectation.

Chapter 25

Feeling Ashamed

The next attribute that we have to consider is of remaining ashamed. A religious person would feel ashamed of doing anything wrong. He remembers that he cannot do anything of the sort. The enlightened people have therefore said that a shameful person stays away from wrong activity. He cannot do anything out of the way. He would not feel at ease, if he has to get involved in an inappropriate activity; it would bite him. One who abides by this attribute can stay virtuous.

On the other hand, those who have formed bad habits, stay away from good activities. Those who are used to smoke or take alcoholic drinks, crave for the same even when they are served with wholesome food. A person with good character feels uneasy with wrong activity, while one with bad character gets elated by indulging in it. One's character normally depends upon his environment, and in order to remain in wholesome environment, it is helpful to listen to the enlightened talks.

A meat-eater gets elated to get meat; he even relishes its smell. A vegetarian would, however, get upset on seeing the meat. This happens because the former has stayed in an environment of cruelty, while the latter has stayed in an environment of compassionate delicacy. One thinker has therefore said that he could stay away from

wrong activity, because he had to remain in wholesome environment.

This was noticed in the life of Sulas. His father was a butcher. His relatives and friends therefore asked him to adopt that occupation. He had, however, learnt the importance of compassion in the company of Abhaykumär. As such, he declined to go in for butchery. Abhaykumär was known for extending fearlessness to all living beings. After staying in his company, how could Sulas think of slaughtering animals?

When Sulas refused to adopt the family occupation, his relatives tried to persuade him by saying that if butchery involved committing sin, they were willing to share it. Sulas, however, knew that no one can share the consequences of others' sins or merits. In order to bring it home to the relatives, he hit the axe on his foot. As blood began to flow and it started giving pain, he asked his relatives to share it. But they were unable to do it. They could dress up his wound, but could not take on his pain. He then pointed out that when they could not share his pain, how could they share the consequences of his sin?

Cultured family, wholesome environment and good company can thus save us from sinful activities. It is thus helpful to get born in a virtuous family. Thereby we inherit the sense of feeling ashamed of such activities. We feel ashamed if we get into addiction. We were born without any addiction. Getting addicted could be the result of ignorance and undesirable company. We might have started those habits with a view to gaining pleasure, but by getting addicted to them, we become their slaves.

A man once said that he was ready to observe three days' fast, but he could not stay without tea. Could he therefore be permitted to take a cup of tea devoid of sugar and milk? See his condition; he could stay without food, but not without tea! Isn't it identical to the popular tale in which the elephant could pass through a narrow space, but its tail did not? No wonder, that some people are seen passing on the snuff box to their friends even during the religious discourses!

Giving up of addiction should be a primary concern for everyone.

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Those who want to come out of addiction, should first examine how they got addicted. They were not born with addiction. Since they have cultivated it, they must have the ability to come out of it. While keeping this in mind if one exerts enough vigor to get out of his addiction, he would succeed in his endeavor. Thereafter he can go ahead for cultivating a virtuous life. That is the main purpose of listening to discourses.

One way to remove addiction is to spare some time in the morning and pray to the Lord for help in giving up the addiction. It works as watering the mind so that the plant of good thoughts can sprout out. In the morning, the mind is fresh and receptive, the impact of prayer made at that time would continue even while one is busy with other activities. Moreover, it is worth having on hand a book containing noble thoughts and to read from it whenever the time permits. The actual impact will of course depend upon one's background. There is an interesting story in that connection.

Four persons were once accused of identical offence and were brought to the court of king Vikram. The king examined them at length and decided to punish them differently. The first was released by simply pointing out that he should have been ashamed of getting involved in the offence. The second was sentenced to a fine of Rs. 500. The third was exiled to a rural place and the fourth was sentenced to move around the city on a donkey with the sign of culprit marked on his face.

When the secretary asked for the reason of differing punishments, the king said, "The first person was innocent and was inadvertently involved in the offence; the second was involved in several offences earlier; the third was a habitual offender and the fourth was a seasoned one. If you want to know the impact of varying punishment, go to them and find out how they are reacting to it."

The secretary sent his men to those persons and learnt that the first person felt ashamed of getting the rebuke. He wept bitterly and decided to make sure that he does not get involved in offence again.

The second felt unhappy for being caught and decided to remain more vigilant. The third scoffed at the punishment and thought that he would stealthily enter the city and indulge in offences. The fourth was totally unashamed of the punishment and while riding on the donkey he invited the onlookers to have the pleasure of such a ride.

It is evident that those, who feel ashamed of doing anything wrong, repent for the same and avoid the repetition thereof. If someone therefore points out our fault, we should thank him and see that we do not indulge in the fault again. When the nun Mrugāvati happened to overstay in the assembly of Lord Mahaveer, Chandanbālā simply pointed out to her that it was inappropriate for a nun to stay out after sunset. That caused the latter to contemplate remorsefully over her fault and it resulted in her attaining the omniscience. The life is thus meant for improving when the opportunity arises; the attribute of shamefulness becomes conducive in that respect.

We should keep in mind that purity leads to purity and impurity to impurity. Our perception, thinking as well as actions should therefore be pure. It should be remembered that feeling ashamed of wrong activity serves as a dam that prevents the water of character from flowing out. If one feels uneasy while resorting to a wrong activity, it can be said that he is embedded with the attribute of feeling ashamed and hence there is scope for making progress.

Chapter 26

Stream of Compassion

The author of Dharmaratna wants to take us to the temple of bliss, which needs to be the goal of every one. That temple lies on a high altitude where we can reach by climbing over step by step. That should be our firm inclination. Listening, pondering and contemplating are the means thereof; they constitute the steps over which we have to climb while remaining aware that every step takes us upward.

Compassion is the essence of religion. A religious person should have compassion at heart and he should aspire to bring others out of the trouble. That is the main purpose of human life. Whichever religion one may belong to, if it does not stand for compassion, it is not worth being called a religion. One cannot come to the threshold of religion without being compassionate. A religious person is full of compassion; he feels pain to see those, who are depressed, cruel and devoid of religion.

The religious person cannot remain insensitive. When one becomes truly religious, when he gets enlightened, compassion starts flowing from his heart; misery and unhappiness of the worldly beings get reflected therein as sunrays are reflected in a stream of water. The religious person cannot be cruel, merciless or heartless. He, who does not feel the pain of others at his heart, cannot be religious.

One, however, needs to have discretion to make out the concept

of compassion; otherwise he is going to fail in differentiating violence from non-violence; a sort of darkness would prevail at his heart. By virtue of that darkness, he is likely to indulge in violent activity while claiming to be kind. For being truly kind and compassionate, one thus needs to have the lamp of discretion.

One should therefore either be enlightened or he should be guided by an enlightened person; for seeking guidance it is necessary to go to the shelter of an enlightened person and abide by his instructions. Otherwise, he is likely to get proud of his minimal understanding and gets stuck up with it. Molasses tastes sweet even if one takes it in the dark; it is however required to make sure that it is not stained with the poison of lizard.

One man was bitten by a dog. He took the required injections and got cured. Then he thought that no one else should be subjected to such bite. As such, he donated Rs. 50,000 for killing dogs. He had a kind intention, but due to indiscretion he arranged for embarking upon a violent project. The enlightened persons have therefore said that donations need to be associated with discretion and kindness.

When one happens to witness the violence for the first time, he experiences a sense of trembling, but that sense disappears if he witnesses it repeatedly; he gets conditioned to it and his sense of compassion gets blunt. It was a time when our hearts used to shiver by the talks of violence, but that feeling no longer exists. Though we may not be directly committing violence, we do become a part of it directly or indirectly. We like to use shoes, purses, wallets etc. made of soft leather; how many of us are aware that the leather is obtained by skinning the young calves alive? The leather obtained from the dead animals is not so smooth.

We, Jains claim to observe non-violence and avoid taking vegetables on some days for that purpose; but we do not mind resorting to lies in our business dealings. This happens because our concept of non-violence has remained traditional and we refuse to adopt a rational approach. There are vegetarian clubs at several places abroad. The

members thereof insist on using leather obtained only by non-violent means.

Our traditional thinking does not prevent us from raising uproar on trivial grounds. There are mothers-in-law, who taunt their daughters-in-law mercilessly; they make use of outrageous words that hit the hearts of those girls. Some of them find it hard to bear it and commit suicides. There are also daughters-in-law, who make the lives of their mothers-in-law so miserable that they have no alternative but to commit suicide. How can there be even a concept of true religion, where such cruel practices prevail?

Words have their own power. One should therefore make use of only appropriate words. When Mahatma Gandhi had the reason to get exasperated, he simply used to say, 'the world is getting crazy'. It is said that in very ancient times when one indulged in anything wrong, he was simply reproached with the words, 'hey, does this befit you?' Thereby the person felt much ashamed and avoided repeating the same. This shows the importance that was attached to words. Today people can disregard even the sharpest words.

We believe in Bhāshā Samiti (Verbal meticulousness), which requires that one should remain vigilant while speaking; he should keep his verbal faculty in control. Using right and minimum words is the way to be happy as well as to make others happy and comfortable. We should not utter any word for which we may have to repent later on. Always keep in mind that the words and arrows, once used, cannot be called back.

The compassionateness that we are discussing should thus be reflected in our words; they should be kind, sweet and pleasant. True peace rests on non-violent thinking, non-violent words and non-violent action. So long as we live, we have to undertake activities; but they should be undertaken vigilantly. The great men have said that he, who walks vigilantly, speaks vigilantly, eats vigilantly and undertakes every other activity vigilantly, does not acquire Karma while undertaking his normal activities.

Some people are prone to be angry; they remain arrogant and shun those, who point out their drawbacks. There was a grandfather, who used to talk incessantly and did not allow anyone to interrupt. He was once applying jam to the bread. His grand-daughter noticed that there was a cockroach in the jam. She tried to point it out, but the old man would not allow her to speak. After taking the food, he asked the girl what she intended to say; the girl replied that there was a cockroach in the jam and he ate it away.

While doing anything, one should also remain careful not to indulge in any sinful activity. There is an instructive scriptural story. One man had no child and was keen to get one. Someone told him that he could get a child, if he pleased a goddess by offering a goat. The man was hesitating to resort to such a violent means, but he agreed when another person undertook to do it on payment. Accordingly the man purchased a goat and it was offered to the goddess on his behalf by the said another person.

As the destiny would have it, the wife of the man got pregnant and in due course she delivered a son. The man was impressed by the miraculous impact of the goddess and decided to keep her pleased by offering a goat every year. His son grew up and continued the tradition set up by the father. In due course the man died and was reborn as a goat. It was bought by the son for offering to the goddess. While it was being dragged towards the temple, it came to pass by the same shop and remembered the previous life. In order to seek protection from the impending death, it climbed upon the shop, but the son asked those men to drag it down and take it to the temple.

Meanwhile an enlightened sage happened to pass by. He took pity on the goat and said in its ears, 'you had started this practice and have now become the victim of it; why do you hesitate to bear the consequence of your own Karma?' The goat realized the truth and gave up the resistance. The son was surprised to see it and asked the sage about the mystery. When the sage said that the goat was his father in the previous life, it was spared from getting slaughtered.

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What we need to make out is that one should not invite the downfall of his soul by indulging in thoughtless action. We should have compassion at heart and should not be involved in any activity that leads to gross violence. A religious man needs to observe non-violence physically, verbally as well as mentally.

Chapter 27

Two Streams of Compassion

There are two categories of compassion, viz. external and internal. External compassion consists of extending physical or material help to those, who are poor, disabled or handicapped; while internal one consists of one's inclination to bring up those, who spiritually drift downwards. As a person devoid of wealth is considered poor, so is the one who is spiritually at a low level. A poor person may not undertake sinful activity even if he does not get monetary help, but the spiritually downward one is likely to get involved in any sort of activity.

Many a time, wealth becomes the source of sinful activities. If a well-to-do person indulges in immoral or unjust activity, there will be very few to restrain him; while a common man would remain in constraint on account of the fear of being criticized. A millionaire may drink, or indulge in other vices, but people would not try to restrain him, because they come under the influence of his wealth. The enlightened persons therefore feel more compassionate to those in comforts than to the discomforted ones.

It is thus necessary to have greater compassion towards those, whose life-styles remain sinful than those, who are poor or handicapped. A man can move upward even during misery, but a happy one is likely to go continually downward. We generally do not

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slip while climbing, but there is a greater possibility to slip while getting down. Property and power are more slippery, because people tend to praise those who hold them; hardly anyone dares to point out the faults of such persons.

Misery can be helpful even in gaining heavenly life. A bullock drawing a vehicle while getting beaten happens to eradicate its unwholesome Karmas and may be destined to reach its heavenly abode; on the other hand a happy man consumes his wholesome Karmas and hence may go downward. Human beings do not have the benefit of unplanned eradication of Karmas to the extent the animals have. Even though we might not be destined to gain the heavenly abode, we should at least remain careful to retain the human species.

Those who have restrained the instincts of anger, arrogance, deception and greed, can regain the human life. Inclination to donate can also help in gaining it, but for that purpose one needs to have the pleasure of giving in donation. As a loving wife is eager to see her husband, so does a religious person stay eager to get the opportunity to donate. The eagerness should be identical to that of a devotee waiting for the arrival of the Lord. When Lord Mahaveer was to terminate his fast, Jiran Sheth was eagerly waiting to receive him for the purpose. The termination actually took place elsewhere, but Jiran Sheth's devotion was great and he had made all arrangements to receive the Lord at his place.

Thus what really counts is not the external act, but the inclination for that purpose. It is possible to get the benefit of donating even without actually giving, if one has the sincere inclination to do so. Donation made with the intention to gain status or respect is a sort of bargain. When there is true inclination to donate, one feels pleased, gets elated to get the opportunity to do so. By having such inclination one becomes eligible to regain the human birth.

But this was a sort of diversion; let us turn back to our subject. Compassion towards the poor is material compassion; that for the

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well-to-do but devoid of religion is modal compassion; detecting one's own instincts of anger, greed, arrogance etc. and turning back from the same is self-compassion. As we should be compassionate to the persons in need of help, so should we be compassionate to ourselves. Do we ever think about what is going to happen to our soul? Is it not worth cultivating compassion for ourselves?

Lord Mahaveer's compassion for Chandkoshi became fruitful because he had compassion for himself. We should also be compassionate to those becoming angry or indulging in any other defiling instinct. Compassion for others will arise after we learn to be compassionate to ourselves. It is analogous to the compassion of a mother, who does not go against the interests of her son despite knowing his faults. Once we learn this, it will be easy to comprehend modal compassion. We would then help others in removing their faults, but will not disgrace them by publicly exposing the same. If we want to reform an offender, it is no use raising walls against him. That simply results in downgrading ourselves.

As divers dive deep into the sea and bring forth the pearls, a religious person should dive deep into one's life and bring forth the jewels of right perception, knowledge and character. It is of course tough and can be gained by undergoing spiritual pursuit for a long time. Observing austerities and expecting to get liberated thereby, does not help. 'Reap as you sow' is the rule. Law of Karma is inexorable; one acquires it in proportion to his inclination; no influence works there.

We have thus examined here the concept of external and internal compassion as well as of self-compassion. It would be clear that if we want to proceed towards liberation, we need to dive deep in our life, figure out the faults and try to remove the same compassionately. There will always be a lot of people who find faults at our back; we should rely upon our true well-wishers, who point out the same on our face. In order to be compassionate to the self as well as to others, it is necessary to have the right understanding. In absence thereof, the compassion will merely stay at the external level.

Chapter 28

Universal Compassion

The scriptural tenets differ from religion to religion. The tenet of compassion is, however, common to all of them. A garland can have different colors of beads, but the thread passing through them is one. Similarly compassion is the common binding factor of all religions. Everyone is imbibed with some degree of compassion. In some people it is manifest, while in others it remains concealed.

It is said, ‘Dayā dharmakā mool hai’ (Compassion is the basis of religion). The basis of compassion lies in empathetic spirit that human beings are imbibed with. When one realizes that he does not like misery and tries to avert it, the idea would occur in his mind that he should also not become instrumental in causing misery to others. This is comparable to a musical instrument in which touching one strand leads to thrilling sensations in other strands. If it occurs to you to call a person shameless, the empathy within would ask you to consider how you would feel, if someone called you shameless. Your plan to call the person shameless will evaporate. Compassion for self (Swadayā) thus leads to compassion for others (Pardayā).

When one restricts his approach to Swadayā, he is likely to remain selfish. If he is a trader, he would try to sell his goods at maximum rates, but if someone comes to him to sell an article, he would assess its value at a lower rate. In personal life also, he retains the same spirit.

If he gets a boil on the body, he would make a hue and cry, but he would have no concern for others suffering from even acute pain. If he enjoys lying in the bed of roses, he would not mind causing distress to the roses; the idea of avoiding violence to the delicate flowers would not occur to him.

It is therefore necessary to cultivate empathetic approach towards all species. One should have the sense of unity with every living being. There was a domestic servant working in a wealthy family. He worked very sincerely and had developed much affection for a young girl of the employer. Once he had to go on a long leave. Meanwhile the girl died. The parents lamented for the loss, but they got reconciled to it. A year later when the landlady gave birth to a son, they got busy fondling him and forgot about the loss of the girl.

Three years later, the servant came back to work and learnt about the death of the girl. He was overcome with grief and tears flowed from his eyes. When the landlady asked for the reason, he could barely utter 'loss of the girl'. The landlady thought that he might have lost his daughter and tried to console him. He had then to point out that he was referring to the loss of her daughter. On hearing it, tears came in her eyes. She had no feelings when she thought that the servant had lost his daughter; but on getting reminded of the loss of her own daughter, she also started crying.

This incident shows the sense of belonging and affection that the servant had developed for the girl. Such sense arises when one transcends the attachment for self and extends it to others. Here 'others' stands for all others; affection and compassion thus need to be extended to every one without exception; they should become universal. The Aryan philosophy puts it as "Ätmavat sarva bhooteshu, sukhduhkhe priyāpriye". It means that we should treat every being like us in happiness or unhappiness.

Universal compassion is the third dimension of compassion. When one realizes it, he would not undertake or be a part of any activity that involves violence to any living being. He would make

out the violence involved in medications, silk, musk, leather goods etc. and stop using them. It is worth mentioning the scriptural tale of Atimukta Muni in this connection.

He was initiated into monkhood in his childhood. While he was once going from one place to another, along with his Guru and other monks, they came to a tree and decided to take rest there. After taking the food, while other monks went to sleep, Atimukta went out and came to a pond. Being a child he did not know all intricacies of the monastic code and began to play in water. As he saw a piece of wood, he put it in water and fancied that he was sailing a ship in the ocean. While he was absorbed in the game, a monk came there and told him that the fish in the pond were getting distressed by his play. No sooner did he learn about the violence involved in his play, than he gave it up. He deeply repented for playing in water and remained so remorseful that his Karmas were consumed and he attained omniscience at that young age.

Repentance is a function of the mind, that leads to internal purification. The external activity becomes irrelevant. Though it is not possible to physically measure its depth, it can be experienced within. What we read, listen and contemplate should lead to the purification of mind, so that our affection and compassion are extended to every living being in the universe and there remains no scope for indulging in violence to them. Non-violence and compassion are two sides of the same coin; one cannot exist in the absence of the other.

Chapter 29

Open and Unprejudiced Mind

We are now going to consider the eleventh attribute for being religious. Only those, who have open and unprejudiced mind, can think of the true nature of religion. That is called having an objective approach. Simultaneously with the objectivity, one should also be calm and quiet. How is it possible to think objectively for a person, who cannot quietly deal with the issues occurring in his life?

Objectivity denotes absence of excessive affection or disaffection. The human mind is very fickle and cannot think objectively and correctly unless it has been trained for the purpose. Let us elaborate it with an illustration. There were two pupils; one was prudent and discretionary, the other was rash and devoid of discretion. Once they went to a learned Guru and asked for the way to be happy. The Guru instructed them to gain popularity, eat with taste and sleep at ease.

The first pupil had the insight to grasp the underlying meaning of the instructions. He made out that true popularity is gained by giving up expectations. As such, he gave up all desires and started becoming helpful to people without expecting anything in return. Due to his selfless approach, people started trusting him and he became very popular. Regarding food intake, he knew that those, who eat only when hungry, get the true taste of food. As such, he would eat when he had real appetite. Regarding sleep, he knew that one can get

sound sleep, if he goes to bed after putting in hard work. As such, he used to remain busy the whole day and retired to bed when he got exhausted. Thereby he could get sound sleep.

The other pupil, however, did not understand the true meaning of the Guru's instructions and took the same literally. For getting popularity, he gained accomplishment in mantras, astrology, medication, etc. and started pleasing the people with those means. Following the second instruction, he gave up simple food and started having sweets and other tasty foods, which had an adverse effect on his body. As for the third instruction, he arranged to sleep on a soft, velvety bed. Since there was no place for exertion in his lifestyle, he failed to get sound sleep. That also had an adverse impact on his health.

He had merely heard the words of his Guru, without making out the meaning thereof. As such, he started behaving in a wrong way. This usually happens now-a-days. People get struck with the words of Gurus or of the books that they read and put the same into practice, as per their understanding. That leads to disputes, discords, wars, terrorism, etc. Amazingly enough, they do it in the names of great men, who wanted to set up peace and amity in the world. It is therefore said, 'don't stick to the words; grasp the underlying meaning thereof'.

In the absence of true insight, not only can words be wrongly understood, they can also be misinterpreted. For instance, one comes across the sutra, 'Aparigrah (absence of accumulation) is the essence of religion'. If, however, 'A' is separated from Aparigrah, it could be read as 'A parigrah is the essence of religion'. That is exactly the opposite of what the sutra intends to convey. One should therefore be very careful in reading. This should particularly be borne in mind, while reading religious strictures.

The second pupil failed to understand what the Guru had said, because he did not have the objective approach. The popularity that he gained by resorting to mantras, astrology, etc. did not last long. On the other hand, he became indolent and consequently compromised

his health. As such, when he happened to see the first pupil, he complained that he had done what the Guru had said, but he did not get the happiness. The latter inquired what he had done and said that he had misunderstood the Guru's instructions. Then the first pupil explained by his lifestyle, what the Guru really meant to convey.

When there is true appetite, simple bread also becomes tasty. The root cause of the diseases lies in the fact that we eat for taste, not for appetite. The present medical treatment also sometimes gives rise to some diseases. A learned Chinese man had once gone to the U.S. In a meeting a question was asked to him about the role of physicians in China. The man replied, "I once got ill and called for a doctor, but the illness worsened by his treatment. I therefore called for another doctor; his treatment led to further aggravation of illness. Thereupon I called for a third one, but he was out of town. By the time he came back, my illness had gone and I was cured." This is not mentioned to downgrade the medical science. It is, however, a fact that many diseases do not need treatment and get cured on their own.

For getting popularity, one needs to give up all expectations; he need not harbor even the desire to be popular. Once a man ceases to expect other persons to do his work, the people will start volunteering their services. This is not surprising, it simply shows his popularity. For a desireless state of mind it is said, 'Sahaj milä so dudh baräbar, mäng liyä so päni; khinch liyä so khoon baräbar, yah Gorakhki bāni' It means that what is obtained without asking for it, is equivalent to milk, that obtained after asking for the same is equivalent to water and that obtained by snatching is equivalent to murder; that is what saint Gorakhnath says.

What is necessary for the purpose is to reduce the requirements. Food, clothes, residence and medication are what we need. All other requirements are superfluous; they merely happen to be shackles that make us run after them. If a desire arises and if it remains unsatisfied, it is going to cause unhappiness. Desire and misery thus go hand-in-hand. The right way is not to desire. We should cultivate a state,

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where we can decline to accept even what is offered. We can then experience the pleasure of having overcome desire.

Only those who have exerted hard and are fearless, can sleep at ease. We see the manual laborers sleeping at ease on the sidewalks with arms as the cushions. A person lying in a luxurious bed in his mansion does not get such a sound sleep. If our life does not involve manual work, we should at least remain worry-free and contemplate over the inherent happiness of the soul. That would provide fearlessness and will allow us to get sound sleep.

Chapter 30

Objective Approach

He who is truly religious, will have objective approach and tranquil perception. The first pupil in the last chapter had such an objective approach. Since he was also unprejudiced, he did not run down the other pupil and guided him to cultivate the right approach. Those who are free from acute sense of attachment or resentment, can make out the truth, and they can be bent towards the right path. Those who do not have the objectivity of mind, tend to stick to their opinions; they would think that what they feel is always right and that their approach is the only correct one.

Mistaken as such people are, it is hard to convince them to change their minds. There needs to be softness at heart in order to enable one to take a desirable turn. If the soil is wet, we can give it the shape we desire; if, however, it is dry, it would crack while trying to turn it. Similarly, those who do not have the objectivity of mind, fail to give up the wrong perception. They would persist in their approach and refuse to hear anything to the contrary. They thus remain devoid of right perception.

Simultaneously with the objectivity, if one is equipped with tranquility, he would not get agitated on minor issues; his equanimity would not disappear even in adverse circumstances. If one claims to have cultivated calmness and still becomes angry on one excuse or

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another, his calmness is worthless. It is easy to hold calmness when circumstances are favorable. Even a dog does not bark unless it sees a stranger or gets otherwise disturbed. The calmness is put to test in adverse circumstances.

One should therefore learn to remain quiet even when someone else gets angry. A hammer retains its coolness even while hammering hot iron. If it gets hot, it would set ablaze the wooden handle which the smith has to hold. The same way the loss of peace would destroy the benefit of all other activities. One minute's peaceful activity is thus more valuable than several activities undertaken with an agitated mind.

If we spend a lot of time in religious activities, e.g. worshipping and adoring the Lord, and thereafter if we lose the peace of mind on trivial grounds, we would wash off the wholesome impact of those religious activities. Even a spark of fire can consume tons of cotton in no time. We should therefore be careful to maintain equanimity in favorable or unfavorable situations. The following story would illustrate it.

There was a monk living on the outskirts of a village. One villager wanted to go on a pilgrimage. He came to the monk with a bag of silver coins and requested him to take care of the money during his absence. The monk said that he had no box or safe where he could keep the money. Since the man insisted, the monk asked him to dig a pit nearby and keep the bag inside. The man did it and went on the pilgrimage.

When he came back and asked for the bag, the monk asked him to get it from the pit. The man did it and saw that his bag was intact. He was highly pleased and showered praises over the monk. The man then went home and giving the bag to his wife he went to take bath. Meanwhile the wife thought that since they had returned home after the pilgrimage, she should celebrate it by preparing good food. She therefore took a coin from the bag and purchased the required groceries for preparing the food.

After having food, the man opened the bag for counting the coins and found that one coin was missing. He thought that the monk had taken it from the bag. He rushed to the monk's hut and started abusing him for dishonesty and misappropriation. The monk, however, remained unperturbed. The man went back home and told his wife that the monk was a rogue and had taken out one coin from the bag.

When the wife said that she had taken the coin for buying the groceries, the man repented for accusing the monk and misbehaving with him. He went back to the monk and humbly requested for forgiveness. The monk took a little earth from the ground and said that for him the man's praises and abuses were of no more importance than the pinch of earth. He was neither elated by the praises nor felt bad for the abuses. Only those who remain cool like sandalwood, are entitled to be called religious. We should learn to observe such equanimity in all circumstances. If someone in the family commits a mistake, we should not be mad; we should remain peaceful and explain to the person about his mistake at the proper time. That would be the test for our objectivity and equanimity.

Chapter 31

Adoration of Virtues

The 12th attribute for being truly religious consists of the ability to adore the wholesome attributes of others. We have been used to seeing the faults of others and hence find it hard to appreciate their virtues. One who is religious, would appreciate the wholesome attributes of others and try to cultivate the same in his life. Such insight is comparable to the skill of a jeweler, who can test diamonds, pearls, etc. and assess their values. Adoring the attributes of others can also induce us to adopt those attributes.

In the heavenly assembly, it was once pointed out that those who adore the attributes of others, are great and that Lord Krishna was an outstanding example thereof. One heavenly being was skeptical about it. In order to make sure, he took the form of a wretched dog and lay on the way by which Lord Krishna was to pass. Everyone who passed by that way was shuddered to see its rotten and stinking body, moth-eaten ears etc. and turned away the face. When Lord Krishna passed by, instead of turning away his face, he looked at the dog's teeth and admired the same. Thereupon the heavenly being assumed his real form and said, "Lord, everyone looked at the rotten state of my body; you are the only one to notice the beautiful teeth; my sincere obeisance to you".

We have to spend a few years in this world. Out of twenty-four

hours a day, we spend seven hours in sleep, eight to nine hours in earning, two hours in eating and two hours in cleaning etc. If remaining four hours are spent in finding the drawbacks of others or in purposeless talks, how can we find time to look for the well-being of the soul? Our mind remains so full with gossip etc. that there remains hardly any scope for entry of useful matters, which could be truly beneficial to us.

The way out is to forget unnecessary or superfluous aspects, notice the wholesome attributes of others and adore the same. As a bee sucks honey from the flowers without causing hurt, so should we look at the attributes of others and assimilate them in our life. We should adore others' good attributes and try to adopt the same. As a trader remains busy in conducting his business, so should we remain inclined towards those holding wholesome attributes and adopt the same to the extent possible.

Two scholars once went to Kāshi for studies and became pundits. One of them specialized in grammar and the other in logic. Each of them felt proud of his achievement and looked down upon the other. One gentleman invited them for dinner. As they came, he seated them in different rooms. He first went to the logician, who described at length how deep he had gone into his subject and said, 'the other knows nothing of it; he is as good as a bullock'. When the gentleman went to the other room, the grammarian related how deep he had gone into his subject and said, 'the other knows nothing of it; he is as good as a donkey'.

The gentleman could make out the vanity of both and decided to bring them on the right path. At the time of dinner, he placed silver plates before them and served husk to one pundit and grass to the other. Both of them got irritated and shouted out that they were being insulted. The gentleman calmly said that he had served husk to the grammarian because according to the logician he was a bullock and grass to the logician because according to the grammarian he was a donkey.

Both the pundits were ashamed to hear it. The gentleman then said that they had been proud of their own accomplishment, but had failed to realize the importance of the achievements of the other. As a matter of fact, every occupation has its own importance. Scholars, merchants, hair-dressers and even street-cleaners have their roles in the society. None of them should be considered inferior to any other; everyone should have appreciation for others' accomplishments. Both pundits realized their mistakes; they started minimizing their own accomplishment and adoring those of others. Everyone should thus learn to look at his own drawbacks and to adore the attributes of others. The world would then turn into a paradise.

Chapter 32

Regard for Virtues

The trait of finding faults of others has been prevailing in our society. The reason is simple; it is always easy to go down, while effort has to be made in order to go up. Finding fault is also easy, while it is hard to develop regard for virtues. We should question ourselves, 'since we do not store the garbage in the house and dump it in garbage box, why do we need to hold the drawbacks of others on our shoulder?' People, however, tend to take interest in the talks of such drawbacks and go to places where such talks take place.

The wise men therefore advise us to develop regard for virtuous people. It is of course difficult to come across such people in the present vicious atmosphere. As every home does not have a garden, so is it futile to expect everyone to be virtuous. Criticizing or censoring anyone can lead to washing off his faults. A washerman cleans the clothes on payment, but we happen to remove others' drawbacks free of charge. It is therefore said, 'Nindā na karajo pāraki, na rahevāy to karajo āpaki (Do not criticize others; if you cannot do without it, criticize yourself). If we keep this in mind, nothing but good words would turn out of our mouth.

Words have great impact. Our eyes get reddened on hearing one word of anger, while a smile arises on our face when we hear a word of affection. That is comparable to the musical tone turning out of a

musical instrument when we touch a cord of it. Our nerves get dull because they happen to be continually battered by words. When we are required to use a hammer, we take out the watch from the wrist so that it is not affected by the thrust, but we do not care to protect the delicate nerves of brain from the impact of harsh words.

One should keep his mind clean like a white cloth so that even a slight stain becomes visible and we can immediately remove it. As a stain on cloth can be removed by using soap and water, so can the stain on mind be removed by virtuous contemplation and by remaining in touch with virtuous persons. We should be careful not to write anything rubbish on the writing paper of mind. We can erase what is written with a pencil, but while erasing, the paper gets worn out. Similarly the delicacy of mind is affected while trying to remove the wrong thinking.

In order to keep the mind delicate, we should cultivate regard for virtuous people. We should remain in contact with those, who are more virtuous. Every type of contact would have its impact. An object in contact with garlic gives bad odor and that with sandalwood gives a good one. Similarly addiction starts by getting in the company of addicted ones and becomes irresistible by continuing in that company. That can be removed by getting in the company of the virtuous ones. That is comparable to the drain water becoming pure by getting in the stream of the Ganges.

Some people say that the drawbacks of everyone, even of a Guru, should be exposed. That is not right; it is imprudent to do so, we would get unclean thereby. If possible, we can point out the faults affectionately and compassionately; otherwise we should remain objective. It is said, 'Marg bhulelā jivanpathikne marg chindhavā ubho rahun; kare upekshā e māragani toye samatā chitta dharun (Let me show the path to a lost traveler and retain equanimity if he ignores it. Criticizing others for their faults or drawbacks can adversely affect our own character. Our endeavor should be to adopt virtues and ignore the faults.

Regard for virtuous can function very subtly. There is the story of Eklavya in Mahābhārat. He had great regard for the expertise of Dronāchārya in archery. When the latter, however, refused to teach him because he was an aborigine, he prepared a statue of Dronāchārya and mastered the art of archery in its witness. As a touch of scent spreads its aroma roundabout, so does the contact of virtuous ones fill our mind with noble thoughts. As such, what we speak should be true, nice and beneficial to everyone.

Chapter 33

Wholesome and Virtuous Talks

We have now considered twelve attributes required for leading a religious life. Those who have attained these attributes, can easily adopt the thirteenth, which consists of wholesome virtuous talks. A religious person should be able to talk in a way that does not lead to dispute, discord or disagreement. The mankind today happens to be divided not only into large nations like U.S., Russia, China, India etc., it is also becoming more regional and provincial-minded. Due to that parochial attitude, their talks relate to the difference in views, difference of opinions and disagreements.

Moreover, there seems to be an increasing craze to talk about women. Films and advertisements project the beauty of women and heroines, and the media tries to project it widely. Formerly it was the proverb, 'If four women get together, their talks would break the households'. That proverb now needs to be changed to, 'If four males get together, their talks would relate to the female beauty'.

If smoke frequently arises in a room, it leaves its impact there. Similarly the impact of such talks remains in the brain. The walls of the brain get darkened thereby and there remains no scope for rise of virtuous talks. It is therefore necessary to cultivate the taste for wholesome and virtuous talks. If we resort to those talks, others also may be induced to do the same. When one repeatedly hears something, he does get its impact and starts doing accordingly. If the

people are well-cultured, their children also are likely to be cultured.

When Shankarāchārya embarked upon the journey of literary conquest, he had to contest with the scholar Kumārīl Bhatt. On reaching the latter's village, Shankarāchārya asked the girls at the well about the address of the scholar. The girls replied that the place where he could see even the parrots talking philosophically, is the home of Kumārīl. What should be the calibre of the person, who could induce even the birds to talk of philosophy? The right environment can thus have its impact not only on children, but also on the birds and beasts.

One woman had tamed a calf that would eat only after the woman ate. The woman once observed fast for three days. Thereupon the calf also gave up eating. At the end of three days both of them terminated the fast together. Another example relates to the dog seen on the record of His Master's Voice. It is said that when the owner played music, the dog used to sit there and listen to it. At the time of meal also it used to sit by his side and eat what the master gave. When the owner died, the dog was deprived of the music. It gave up eating, drinking, etc. and stayed sad. The efforts made to feed it were of no avail.

Someone remembered that the voice of the owner was recorded and it was decided to play it to the dog. As soon as the dog heard its master's voice, it became enlivened and started moving its tail in pleasure. It ate after hearing that voice. That was the impact of music on a dog. The picture on the gramophone record therefore shows how interestingly the dog listens to His Master's Voice.

One should therefore invariably resort to virtuous talks; that would put a stop to other talks. The minds of the persons indulging in stray talks get blighted. As the light of a lamp is blighted when the chimney gets smoky, so does the light of discernment remain withdrawn from those, who indulge in stray talks. How is it possible to perceive the truth in the absence of discernment? Discernment is essential for distinguishing the truth from falsehood. One imbibed with it would not do anything that is harmful in this life or in the life beyond. Religion thus mainly consists of discernment. Its absence

constitutes the negation of religion.

A Kashmiri and a South Indian once got together in Mumbai. The former was generous but devoid of discernment, while the latter was discretionary. At the time of departure, both of them exchanged their addresses and invited each other to their places. When the Kashmiri went to Chennai, the weather was hot. As such, the host gave him cool water for bath, served yogurt pudding in food and turned on the fan for convenience of the guest. The Kashmiri was pleased with that and felt elated for what the other did.

Shortly thereafter, the South Indian went to Kashmir, where the weather was cool. The Kashmiri host was anxious to reciprocate what he had enjoyed at Chennai. Without realizing the impact of the weather he gave his guest cool water for bath, served cold pudding and turned on the fan. As the guest began to shiver, the host was overwhelmed and asked how he could help. He had good intention at heart, but due to shortage of discernment, he failed to realize that the guest was in need of warmth.

Religion also needs to be observed while keeping in mind the discernment relating to time, place and other environments; otherwise it would be reduced to a farce. Organizing the processions was once an occasion to display the esteem for religion; today it has become an exhibition of extravagance being indulged with black money. There was significance for a temple where no temple existed; now a new temple is being raised by the side of an old one. In Kutch and Rajasthan, there are many temples where hardly any one goes.

It is therefore necessary to remain conscious of time and place. We should never think that something is good because it was once okay. One needs to have the discernment to make out right and wrong; otherwise there is the risk of resorting to wrong in the name of religion. While reading the life story of Shripāl one need not conclude that since Shripāl had married nine girls, there is nothing wrong in resorting to polygamy. Similarly, while reading Mahābhārat one should neither justify gambling because Yudhishtir had indulged therein nor polyandry because Draupadi had five husbands.

Chapter 34

Integrated Life

We have noted that a religious man talks truly and appropriately. What comes out of his mouth would be inspiring. His talk, whether it is in public or private, would always be harmless. The life of an average person on the other hand is compartmentalized; what he talks in public is different from what he would say in privacy. He maintains two faces. Due to that compartmentalization, the life remains afflicted.

Life needs to be uniform and straightforward; there should be nothing like public or private. One should learn to speak and act as he thinks or feels. So long as one cannot do it, his consciousness should not stay at rest. When the mind stays agitated, even the ambrosial precepts of religion would pass by like the drops of water falling on a heated pan; they evaporate and disappear immediately.

Before trying to improve the society one should therefore make his life wholesome. Hypocrisy is wrong and is bound to hurt. Compartments of public and private are the obstructing walls. The enlightened people have therefore urged to adopt straightforwardness in life. Their precepts could be short but they are highly meaningful. We need to deeply ponder over their underlying significance.

If we are straightforward, it would not be necessary to change the topic when someone drops in. On the contrary, we would welcome him to listen to the same. If there is a lamp and another lamp is brought

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in, they do not clash with each other; their flames merge together and make the light brighter. If our talk is not light-like, we shall have to change the topic on seeing some one else. How long shall we continue to remain thus scared? Our life would be gratified, if we give up hypocrisy and compartmentalization. We would then experience the harmony lying within ourselves.

Let the life be integrated; do not divide it in compartments. A thread cannot move along with the needle, if there is a knot in the thread. Compartmentalization works as a knot on the thread of religion. One cannot go ahead so long as the knot is not removed. That removal consists of breaking the compartmentalization. We should learn to speak what is in the mind. The same words should be uttered whether we talk to one single individual or to the public at large. That would lead to true pleasure and we would be able to remain frank.

The life of the people now seems to be reduced to that of a mole. As the mole lives in a hole, so do the people, trying to live in secrecy. We need to consider why the man has become so dwarfish. We are having good food, good clothes, comfortable accommodation etc. and yet we happen to grumble and render the life miserable. Let us decide to change all that and experience the pleasure of life. If there is an ideal, the life will cease to be boring; we would find it worth living.

We experience unhappiness in life because the pleasure stands withdrawn at present. Just consider what we have gained during the life. Is it not a fact that we have mostly spent it in disputes and deception? The gold-like human life is being wasted! Childhood has gone, youthfulness also has gone; now is the time to think what we have to do; it is not necessary to continue the life in the same fashion.

Old age is the time to rest. If we give up hurry and bustle of the young age, we will be able to enjoy the old age. It is the time of peace and calmness. The excitement of sense-organs has calmed down, the distress and afflictions are generally over and we are blessed with

the light of experience. We passed the childhood in playing and youth in availing the worldly pleasure; now is the time when the dirt of worries settles down and clean water flows smoothly in the stream of life. We can now afford to ponder over the well-being of the soul or to sit with the wise and talk about the good aspects of life. While doing so, let a ripple of wind ensue and our eyes may close down at ease like a flower falling from the plant.

The conditions have, of course, changed; many people are now required to work even during the old age. But that should not involve restlessness. Whatever the situation, we should accept. If it is necessary to handle economic or other worldly aspects, do so, but do not run after them. We need to go in for the true purpose of human life; it is not meant for lying in bed, waiting for the end.

Chapter 35

Wholesome Leanings

After discussing the importance of integrated lifestyle, it is worth considering the nature of support that one gets for such a lifestyle. A virtuous person earns respect and gets support from the family, friends as well as others. A vicious one gets vicious company and gets deeper in vices. A drunkard may love to drink in the company of his colleagues, but those people continue to lean towards him only so far as he affords to spend for the drinks. Those people hardly have strong leaning for anyone.

People generally appreciate virtues; they lean towards the virtuous ones and lend their support in adverse circumstances. Leading a life free from addiction is not only a virtue; it is an austerity which gives credit and gets spontaneous support. Even the unfavorable circumstances turn favorable to them.

There was a virtuous person, who had a like-minded wife. They had a farm; the man used to cultivate it properly and reap good harvest. Once he had to undertake a travel. When he reached the rail station, his train had not arrived. He saw a water tap on another platform and went there to take water. By the time he filled his water bag, he heard the whistle of the arriving train. In order to reach his platform, he crossed the rail track. While he was getting on the platform, the train arrived and his feet were slashed.

People had all sorts of sympathy for him, but how long could they be helpful? His wife therefore undertook to take care of the farming. For that purpose, she had to prepare food in the morning, hurry to the farm and get back in the evening. Thereupon the man thought of becoming helpful to her. He started moving his body on strength of his hands and to reach the kitchen in order to prepare the food, while she was at work. Husband and wife thus became complements to each other.

As the man got used to cooking, he thought to serve the saints arriving at his village. As such, he asked the local people to direct the saints arriving at the village to his place for taking food. He thus began to serve the monks and nuns with fresh bread and buttermilk. The saints were happy with the food and used to bless the family. The man felt gratified that he could be helpful, in spite of being disabled.

If we compare his life with that of a millionaire, we can easily say that the man experienced far greater happiness than the millionaire. By working hard and serving the saints this man gained the peace of mind and got sound sleep at night, while the millionaire had to struggle for sleep and had to take sleeping pills. True happiness cannot therefore be measured in terms of wealth, position or power. If we try to measure it from those criteria, the balance sheet of life would get vitiated.

For happy family life the couples need to have a common approach. If the wife is vegetarian and the husband is not, she might fall in line with him. Wrong traits easily make headway, while one has to endeavor hard for cultivating the virtuous attributes. In a pack of betel leaves if one leaf is rotten, it will soon affect the other leaves. Upādhyāy Yashovijayji has therefore said; “Hinā tano je sang na tyaje, tehno gun navi rahe; Jem jaladhijalmān bhalyu Gangānir, loonpanun lahe”. It means: one cannot retain his virtues if he does not give up the company of low people; the water of the Ganges becomes salty as it merges in the sea.

Wholesome Leanings

We often listen to this fact, but we tend to overlook it; we are so overcome with worldly values that it has become almost impossible for us to countenance the true value of life. A religious person therefore needs to have wholesome leanings and he should remain scared of indulging in wrong activity. That would be easy, if one has some ideals in life. Wholesome leanings, religious orientation and virtuous behavior are therefore considered favorable environments for gaining support from the people at large.

The indigenous term for wholesome leanings is 'Supaksha', which also denotes efficient wings. That connotation is equally applicable here. Our soul has to fly high up in the sky and that can be done if our wings of religion are strong enough. The human bird can proceed towards its liberation at ease, when equipped with the wings of virtues.

Chapter 36

Practising the Wholesome Leaning

We come across many people who feel concerned about our worldly well-being, but there are a few, who worry about our religious inklings. It is seen that the religious places seem less important to the people than the places of entertainment. This happens, because we remain enamored of worldly attachment and virtually forget the concept of detachment. So long as we cannot assess the value of religion, we would fail to develop the inclination for it. Assessing it would help in overcoming our misery, afflictions as well as addictions. It is therefore essential to make out the true worth of religion.

It is easy to make out the concept of religion, but it is hard to put it into practice. On hearing the sermon of Lord Mahāveer, Shrenik's son Meghkumār developed detachment and decided to renounce. His mother Dhārini had no objection to her son's listening to the sermon, but was not prepared for his detachment. It was hard for her to accept his renouncing of worldly life. The people thus do not mind their relative's resorting to the external and superficial aspects of religion, but they get scared when one wants to go for the internal ones. The significance of religion however lies in assessing its worth and putting it into practice.

When the family and other environments are not encouraging, one's progress in religion gets hampered. Friends and family remain

favorable only for one, who is blessed with wholesome Karmas. He can resort to the religious life and family members become helpful in making progress therein. They may also enter into competition with him in making the progress. The absence of wholesome and harmonious environments on the other hand leads to difference of opinion and loss of harmony in the family.

The pleasure lies in the mind, not in the objects. Even the tasty food seems tasteless, if there is some clash in the family. While even bare bread becomes tasty, if the environments are smooth and favorable. Pleasure is a function of contentment. There are many leaders and social workers, whose domestic life is ablaze. They fail to settle the domestic feuds and are out to serve the society and the country. What can we expect from them? One needs to remain cautious lest they extend their domestic clash elsewhere.

If one wants to be religious, he needs to cultivate the wholesome leanings. He should adopt a mode of life that his children and others would like to emulate. The Sanskrit term for a son is Ätmaj, which denotes born of the Self. He is the creation of parents' love and inherits their culture; what had been at their hearts could have embodied in the children. The children should now carry out the parents' expectations and aspirations. There is an interesting tale in this respect.

One young man was setting the tiles on a roof. In the afternoon, when it was too hot, he was called by his father to come down and take lunch. The young man did not respond and continued to set the tiles. The father was perturbed to see that the son was perspiring all over the body and still was not giving up the work. In order to get him down, the father tried a trick. He laid his grandson under the open sky. As the young man saw it, he immediately came down and picking up his son he asked his father, "Why did you put the child under the hot sun?" The father replied, "I wanted to show you how one loves his son. You will now be able to realize that you are as dear to me as is your son to you. I could not bear seeing you working under the hot sun and tried this trick to get you down."

The children inherit what belonged to the parents. In return, the children should carry out the aspirations left unfulfilled by the parents. They should remember that whatever they have is by virtue of their parents. One may be tempted to say that whatever he has is by virtue of his own Karmas. It cannot, however, be gainsaid that the parents had been instrumental therein and that obligation of theirs need not be forgotten. The way to reward them can arise, if they happen to go astray. In that case, the children can bring them back on the right path. There is no other way to get out of their obligation.

As parents get adored for having a virtuous son, they may also be criticized, if the son turns out to be a rogue. It is therefore said that it is better to remain childless than having vicious children. Vastupāl was childless and still he, along with his brother Tejapāl, became virtually immortal by constructing the marvelous temples on Mt. Abu. They are so artistic that one cannot stop looking at them.

Chapter 37

Foresightedness

Foresight is the next attribute to be considered for leading a religious life. Before undertaking any activity, a foresighted person thinks of its consequences and avoids it, if it is seen as undesirable. Not only does he thus remain foresighted, but he also avoids attachment to any activity. He adopts the motto of Geeta, viz. 'Karmanyevādhikāraste, mā faleshu kadāchan'. (Your duty is to do what is required to be done, not to expect the fruits thereof). It does not mean that his action does not bear fruit; but he need not crave for it.

While religion thus stipulates to undertake every activity, without being concerned about the outcome, most people happen to crave for the benefits thereof. When one undertakes an activity without expectation, it is bound to be wholesome and worthwhile. One old man was sowing a mango seed. Since it takes several years for a mango tree to grow up and bear the mangoes, someone asked him how he expected to survive till then. He replied, 'I have had the mangoes from the trees sowed by others; it is my duty that I sow the seed now so that the future generation can reap the fruits thereof.'

This shows the sense of gratitude for availing the fruits of someone's labor and also the foresight to extend the benefit of own labor to others. Such approach benefits one's family, relatives and

the society. While it does not involve much labor, it extends a lot of benefits without raising any clash. Labor is a physical phenomenon, while clash is a mental one. They need not be associated with each other. Putting in less labor at present and getting more benefits later is generally acceptable to nature. If, however, there is a craving for getting undue benefits, it is deemed as exploitation.

Jainism terms those undertaking spiritual pursuit as Kshamāshraman. The term is made up of two words, viz. Kshamā meaning forgiving and Shraman meaning one who puts in effort. One who bears pain for internal purification, for purifying the mind, is therefore Kshamāshraman. Effort is inevitable, without it there is no charm in life. One who has put in effort for preparing the food, finds it tasteful. It is also true that he, who has appetite, finds the food tasty, and appetite arises after putting in enough effort.

One whose belly remains full, does not have the concept of hunger. He might talk about it, but that would stay at superficial level, because he does not have the experience of being hungry. This also applies to the monetary aspect. One who has earned by working hard, would not waste it; he would use his earning appropriately. He may economize in other aspects, but would not mind spending for wholesome purposes.

Poverty does not denote loss of wealth; those who do not have the moral considerations, are really poor. Poverty is thus a mental phenomenon. Loss of wealth is not the consideration; one should not be mentally poor. A poet has therefore prayed, ‘Santoshathi jivan gujare etalun tun mane āpaje; ghar ghar garibi chhe, chhatān pan dil amiri rākhaje’. It means: ‘please give me enough to carry out the life with contentment; let there be poverty, but keep my spirit peer-like’.

The author of our book therefore asks to undertake the activity that does not involve much clash and yet yields more benefit. Clash here stands for worries, anxiety etc. Activities need to be undertaken with mental pleasure. When the mind is not at rest, one feels worried. Jainism calls it Ārt dhyān and stipulates that after taking a vow to

fast if one cannot stay without food and gets involved in Ärt dhyän, he should be allowed to terminate it; on no account should one's quietude be laid at risk.

Vows are meant for mental quietude; they are of no avail, if quietude cannot be maintained. Jain vows therefore provide for Ägär (exception) by stipulating 'Savvasamähi vattiyägärenam. It means that the vow can be set aside in the interest of all-round quietude. Every religious activity thus needs to be thought over; it is not possible to make progress without it. The foresighted person makes the progress, because he thinks properly before undertaking any activity. Thereby he reaps the benefit in this life as well as in the life beyond.

Chapter 38

Discretion at Depth

A religious person does not do anything rashly or hastily. He is not led by emotions and keeps them under control by exercising his discretion. Everyone likes what is in order and systematic. We do not want even the furniture or other objects lying in disorder and try to keep them in order. Similarly we also do not like anyone talking haphazardly.

It is human nature to appreciate what is pretty and systematic. On that very account, a cultured and civilized person becomes popular all over. The nature also likes it and that can be seen from the pretty objects existing all around us. The people, however, happen to set aside that inherent sense and indulge in misbehavior. They do adore virtues, but tend to leave the observance thereof to the saintly persons. They stay under the illusion that the wholesome life of saintly persons would somehow be helpful to them.

The law of Karma however states that it is not possible to get benefit from the activities of others. That law is indelible; one reaps as he sows. In order to take the advantage of the popular illusion the so-called saints and performers encourage people to undertake various rituals. Thereby they make money; no wonder such cunning people are now-a-days seen accumulating millions and billions!

The human birth that we have gained is meant for achieving the

Discretion at Depth

well-being of the soul. If we waste it in availing worldly pleasure, no one is going to prevent us. But it is in our interest to think of tomorrow, to think of where we would be destined to go. Whatever we possess is temporary and we have to leave it. Even our body is temporary and is going to be burnt to ashes. As such, those who do not think of the life after death, are going to repent later. We should therefore make use of this life in the interest of the soul.

As we think of young age during the childhood, of adulthood during the young age, of old age during the adulthood, so do we need to think of death during the old age. A foresighted person invariably thinks of the life after death. We have been imbibed with discretion and we should judiciously exercise it. About the right use of discretion, there is an interesting story in our scriptures.

In Rājgruhi there was a merchant named Dhanyaadev. He had a vast business that he used to conduct with the help of his four sons; his wife Bhadrā taking care of the manifold household aspects. He had trained his sons in different divisions of his business and they were carrying out their activities efficiently.

When Bhadrā died, Dhanya thought to allocate her work among his daughters-in-law. For that purpose, he wanted to know about their inclinations. As such, he once called them one after another and gave to each of them five grains of paddy. He told them to take the best care thereof and give them back when he asked for. Then he proceeded on a long pilgrimage.

The eldest daughter-in-law knew that there was a large stock of paddy in the storage. As such, she did not feel concerned about the five grains. She thought that the old man must be crazy to ask her for taking care of the five grains and threw them away. She was sure that she could give the old man five grains from the storage when he called for the same.

The second eldest also did not have much significance for the five grains, but she had some regard for the old man. As such, she took out the rice from the paddies and swallowed them as Prasad

(Sanctified offering). She also thought that she could give five grains from the storage when the father-in-law called for them.

The third had high regard for the father-in-law and knew that what he did must have had some significance. She therefore decided to keep the paddies in safe custody so that she could give the same back whenever he called for. As such, she placed the five grains in a silk cloth, made a neat knot and put it in her jewelry box.

The youngest had utmost regard for the father-in-law and knew that he would not do anything without a purpose. She remembered that he had asked for taking the best care of the paddies. What can be better care thereof except sowing them? She therefore sent the grains to her father and requested him to sow them in a carefully prepared bed. At the end of the season there came out five paddy stalks with several ears, each bearing many grains. She sent the message to sow all of them in a hedged garden. At the end of another season, there came about 500 stalks bearing too many paddies. All of them were sown in a large field that yielded tons of paddy grains.

When Dhanya came back, he asked the daughters-in-law to return the paddy grains. The eldest went into storage, picked up five grains of paddy and handed over to him. When Dhanya asked whether they were the same five grains, she confessed that she had thrown them away and had brought the five grains from the storage. Dhanya named her Ujjilaki and entrusted her with the task of keeping the household clean.

Then he called the second one, who also brought the grains from the store and confessed it to the father-in-law. Dhanya termed her Bhakshikā and entrusted her with the kitchen work.

He then asked for the grains from the third one. She went to her treasure chest, opened the jewelry box, untied the knot and handed over the carefully preserved grains. When Dhanya asked, she said that they were the same five grains that he had given to her. Dhanya was pleased with her concern for keeping the grains in safety. He

termed her Rakshikā and entrusted her with the task of keeping the valuables in safe custody.

Thereafter he asked for the grains from the fourth. She said that she would need cart loads for bringing them. Dhanya feigned amazement and asked her why she needed cartloads for five grains. Thereupon Rohini told him how they were grown season after season. Dhanya was very pleased. He realized that the girl would not only maintain the prosperity and reputation of the family but would enhance it. He congratulated her for right understanding of taking care of the grains. He called her Rohini and entrusted her with planning and management of the household.

There is a spiritual significance of the story. The old man stands for the preceptor and grains for five restraints for laymen. The preceptor asks the pupils to adopt the five restraints. Pupils may take vows for the purpose, but there are those, who do not care to observe them; they are like Ujjilaki. There are those, who intend to observe, but do not stick to it; they are like Bhakshikā. There are also those, who scrupulously observe the restraints, but there is no impact thereof on their lives; they are like Rakshikā. And there are those, who make out the purpose of observing the restraints and try to gain increasing internal purification thereby; they are like Rohini.

Chapter 39

Having an Open Mind

A truly religious person should have the capability of correct evaluation; he should be able to make out the pros and cons. This is a bit tough, because we happen to be prejudiced. If we do not like a particular aspect of someone, we are prone to reject him outright. As Jainism, however, says everything has multiple attributes. It is therefore not right to be led by one single aspect; it could even be hazardous.

A religious person is not guided by any isolated factor. If he notices some drawbacks of a person, he also looks for the positive attributes that the person might have. As a goldsmith tries to figure out the purity of gold, so does a religious person try to evaluate the true worth of others. He would resent the vices, but not the individuals. One who is prone to resent several virtues on account of one or two vices, can never make progress in life, because his approach is wrong.

The difference of opinion that we now come across, is mainly due to such wrong approach. We refuse to look at the multiple points of agreement, and concentrate only on an isolated point of disagreement. We need to cultivate a swan-like approach. It is said that if milk mixed with water is placed in front of a swan, it would suck up the milk and leave aside the water. Similarly we should be able to adopt the substance and leave aside what is insubstantial. If

Having an Open Mind

we fail to do so, we are going to lose a lot that is good, virtuous and worthwhile.

Ächärya Haribhadrabhatt was earlier a learned Brahmin. He was highly knowledgeable, but was not swollen-headed. He had an open mind and was prepared to learn anything worthwhile. Once he heard the nun Yäkini reciting a verse about the sovereign rulers arising during the time-cycles. Haribhadrabhatt could not make it out, because what she was uttering was in Ardhamägadhi. When he asked her about it, she advised him to go to her Guru.

The Guru had gained expertise in all six ideologies. While elaborating them he showed how Jainism stands ahead of them. That led Haribhadrabhatt to adopt Jainism. He became a monk and turned out to be one of the greatest Ächäryas. He has written copiously, but in all his works he has termed himself as Yäkinisunu, (Son of Yäkini). That shows his acknowledging of the obligation of the nun. It is not easy; one should have the gentleness and modesty to do so.

That modesty is evident even in case of Dattät-ray. He treated everyone from whom he learnt even a bit as his Guru. He counted twenty-four of them, of which four are worth mentioning. One was a dog, from whom he learnt the attribute of loyalty; second was a swan, from whom he learnt discretion; third was a crane, from whom he learnt the art of concentration; and fourth was a crow, from whom he learnt alertness. He thus considered even the dumb animals as Gurus, while we fail to treat even an enlightened person as a Guru.

Now-a-days when everyone happens to consider himself as knowledgeable, where is the scope for learning? If one wants to elevate his soul, he needs to go to an enlightened person, whose words are convincing and are in accordance with the scriptures. The aspirant should attentively listen to and contemplate over the same. After correctly comprehending those words, he should try to put them into practice.

Worshiping, Sämäyik, Pratikraman etc. are worth performing, if we understand their meaning and purpose. In that case, they will

cease to be lifeless rituals. Stipulations laid by the Lords are simple and straightforward, but we hardly find time to understand the meanings thereof. One can get to the truth of life, if he sincerely endeavors for it. For that purpose, he should be willing to examine the pros and cons of all situations dispassionately without developing craving or aversion for any of them.

Impartiality is an essential attribute of religion. For that purpose it is necessary to have an open mind. That is the most vital step in order to climb over the summit of religion. Closed mind is analogous to an egg. Once it is broken, the bird can come out and will learn to fly in the sky. Our mind, intellect etc. now happen to be confined within the traditions. It is necessary to break them in order to make out the true nature of the soul as well as other substances in the universe.

Chapter 40

Following the Old Ones

We saw the importance of discretion in religious life. Such a person takes into consideration every situation, ponders over it and adopts what is worthwhile. For that purpose, he does not go by the criteria of old or new. He is willing to reject the old if worthless, and adopt the new if appropriate. A guinea, if noticed in the garbage, needs to be picked up.

Now let us turn to the next attribute of following the old and experienced ones. Those, who have seen the path, who have walked over it, can guide us; they can point out the dangers on the way. Their experience can help us in avoiding the perils and hazards. It is therefore said, ‘Mahājano yen gattah sapanthähä’ (The road by which the great men have passed through is the right one.)

The young people may, however, contend that they do not care for the old or their experience; they want to go their own ways and undergo good or bad experience. They can do so, but they need to keep in mind that it is not necessary to taste the poison in order to learn its property. We are aware of it from the experience of those, who had tried it. Moreover, the term ‘old’ does not relate here to time; experience and wisdom gained thereby are the main criteria.

A merchant once went to a royal court. The king asked him about his age, property etc. The man replied that he was ten years old and

he owned Rs. 50,000. The king and the courtesans were surprised to hear it, because the man was old and was known to be a millionaire. When asked to explain it, he said, 'I count the age from the time I adopted restraints; the years prior to that were worthless, because they were spent in availing food, sleep, etc. Moreover, what I spent for the right purpose is my true property. As such, I said that I have Rs. 50,000. Rest of the property went in vain.'

The true human life starts thus from the time one turns to the right path, when he makes out the essence of religion, contemplates over it and concentrates upon it. Then he forsakes the taste for any type of food, keeps sleep under control, stays fearless, harnesses the sex and lays limitations on his possessions. Control over these five instincts constitutes the seed of religion.

A religious person's lifestyle thus undergoes radical change and that should occur at the internal level; the impact of change at the external level would be short-lived. The lasting change occurs after one gains the right perception. Thereafter one does not do anything for the sake of exhibiting to others; he does it in the interest of his soul. While undertaking any activity, he remains vigilant so that it does not hurt the soul.

Such a person is termed here as old. Since he remains oriented to the soul, he is also termed as wise. What he speaks is sweet; he invariably avoids harshness. As mango tastes sweet to everyone, so do the people remain pleased to hear his talks. We see that many people get harsh-tongued in old age; that is wrong. After undergoing experiences in life, one should learn to remain peaceful; he should behave like a stream of affection. Old people need not be burdensome to others.

With the advent of old age, one generally turns towards worship and devotion. But he also needs to develop the bearing capacity. During his life he must have gone through ups and downs and that might have tested his bearing capacity. As such, he should now be able to patiently bear the hardships that he may come across. When

an earthen pot is subjected to the heat of furnace, it becomes strong enough to hold water. Similarly bearing capability enables a person to face the hardships patiently; he does not easily break down. The bearing capacity gives him the strength to undertake twelve types of austerities stipulated by Jainism.

King Janak once dreamt that he had lost his kingdom as well as all other possessions and had turned a beggar. While moving with the begging bowl from home to home, he received some bread. As he was going to eat the same, two bulls came there fighting and overturned his begging bowl. While he was thinking where to go for begging, he heard a roaring sound and woke up; he saw that he was lying on a costly bed in the palace.

While contemplating over the two situations he could not decide which one was really true. When he went to the court, he asked the pundits about it, but they could not give satisfactory replies. Meanwhile young Ashtāvakra (One with eight crooked limbs) came there. On seeing his crooked limbs everyone in the court began to laugh. Ashtāvakra also laughed in return. Thereupon the king said, “We laughed to see your crooked body, but what made you laugh?”

Ashtāvakra: I laughed to notice that there are all skinners in this court.

King: What do you mean? How can you call these pundits skinners?

Ashtāvakra: If a person merely looks at the body, he obviously overlooks the illuminating soul lying within it. Those, who laughed at my body, must therefore be skinners. You thus happen to be the king of skinners and still you call yourself as Janakvidehi (One who stays above embodiment), and that made me laugh.

The king realized that the young boy was highly enlightened. He asked the question that was perturbing him since the dream. Ashtāvakra was highly enlightened, he replied, “Neither of the situations is true. The situation of the dream disappears on opening

of the eyes, while the worldly situation comes to an end with the closing of the eyes.” The king knew that such knowledge is not gained from books; it arises when one’s internal treasure gets manifest. As such, he adopted Ashtāvakra as his Guru.

The description of a skinner presented by Ashtāvakra could be applicable to us, because we also are used to look at the external form and ignore what is lying within everyone. For instance, a tiny ant also wants to gain happiness and averts unhappiness; it loves sweets, avoids heat and so on. On seeing it does it occur to us that in its body there is a soul like ours? Does the sense of equality arise within us? Is it not necessary for us to look at the soul lying in each body, instead of looking at the external shape?

As said by Ashtāvakra we need to keep in mind that our life is a dream that is going to disappear one day. It is therefore useless to develop too much attachment for any worldly phenomenon. Neither should we cry at the time of misery, nor be euphoric at the time of happiness; we need to hold equanimity in all circumstances.

Chapter 41

On the Anvil of Experience

There are four types of old men, viz. Jñānvriddha (Enlightened), Tapovriddha (Observers of austerities), Chāritryavriddha (Having good character) and Vayovriddha (Aged). All of them are expected to have gained the patience and bearing capability. If they are sitting in a group, they would attract the attention of everyone; the people would have respect for them and peacefulness would prevail in their presence.

Jñānvriddha means well-read; well studied. A book-worm also might have read or heard a lot, but his knowledge may signify the storage of information and he is likely to remain self-conceited. A well-read one must have grasped the fundamentals and be respectable. Tapovriddha would have observed the austerities and gained internal purity. A Chāritryavriddha would have faultless character and he would be willing to serve. He would feel sad to come across any sinful activity and tears would flow from his eyes on seeing the misery of others. A Vayovriddha would have the maturity to look at every situation objectively and people would feel happy to be led by him. It is not necessary that he must be grey-haired.

Our scriptures are called Shrut, which means what was heard. That term is used because the scriptures were not initially written. What was heard from Lord Mahaveer was composed in scriptures by

Gautamswāmi, Sudharmāswāmi and other Ganadhars. Jambooswāmi heard it from Sudharmāswāmi and the knowledge thus continued to pass from mouths to ears. The life of the person, who gains it, is radically changed. The sun of enlightenment arising thereby leads to the destruction of darkness of ignorance. In order to learn it, one needs to resort to restraint, renouncement and austerities, and go to a Guru.

While listening to the scriptural truth as one bows his head, his pride goes down. Āchārya Haribhadrāsuri has therefore said, ‘There are three benefits of serving a saint, viz. one can view a saintly figure, gets to listen to his wholesome words, and gains the opportunity to show reverence to him’. Those who are detached, can help in removing the attachment of others. They can turn one’s earthly life into the gold of humanity.

Now-a-days there are many publications professing to deal with truth; so-called Kathākārs (those narrating ancient Indian epics) also talk of it. Most of them, however, do not deserve it. Their talking is comparable to a barber talking of jewelry business. Their reciting of epics in public is identical to reading of a poem on fire. Such reading cannot help in shielding against the cold of winter; for getting protection from cold one needs to have access to real heat. If one goes to a person of true character, he can gain the warmth of truth. It is therefore better to come in contact with a saint rather than reading many books.

In ancient times, there were Gurukuls, where the pupils used to stay and learn from Gurus. There they could acquire true knowledge and maturity. Gurus also used to test how much the pupils had assimilated. Those Gurus were Jnānvrudhdhas and Tapovrudhdhas. They knew that the sense organs have the tendency to go astray; as such, they used to keep them under control by observing austerities and restraints.

There are six major attributes, viz. austerity, scriptural knowledge, discretion, attentiveness, enlightenment and good character. One

should have at least one of them; the true life begins from that time. The merchant in the last chapter said that he was 10 years old because he had gained that state only 10 years before. The same way he said that he had Rs. 50,000, because he had spent that much amount for wholesome purposes.

Whatever one does should therefore be done with true inclination. What we spend should yield pleasure. We should be able to treat it as sowing of seeds. If seeds are good, one can expect to reap a bumper crop. During our various lives we have mostly accumulated like ants; for that purpose we have also resorted to sinful activities and acquired misery and pain. We need to bear in mind that what we accumulate in this life has to be left here; it is therefore the time to spend for good causes.

One more question that was put to the merchant was, ‘How many sons do you have?’ He knew that one who takes care and serves the parents in their old age, and who recites the name of the Lord in their ears at the last moment, is the true son. Those who merely hanker after the property of parents, are no good. Even if the parents have no property, a true son would hold the sense of obligation for them and carry out their last wishes. Since the merchant was not sure of it about his sons, he said that he did not know how many sons he had. He was thus Jnānvrudhha as well as Vayovrudhha. We need to follow such old ones.

Chapter 42

Humbleness

The next attribute that we have to consider for being religious is humbleness. As compassion is the basis of religion, humbleness is the basis of all other attributes. One may be equipped with several attributes, but if he lacks in humbleness, his other attributes go in vain. As such, we need to teach humbleness to the children; if they are imbibed with it, they can easily cultivate the attribute of reverence. If one does not have reverence for the virtuous people, how would he gain anything from them?

Humbleness denotes modesty and courteousness. Holder of that attribute becomes worthy of knowing and grasping the religious tenets. If one is not humble, if he is immodest, he would fail to receive anything. If we pour ghee in dust, add sugar to it and make sweet balls, would they be of any use? The condition of an immodest person becomes identical to such sweet balls; he remains useless. It is therefore necessary to cultivate courteousness in life. If one is courteous in speech as well as in action, we can cite his case as an example to children and others.

One woman had no regard for her mother-in-law; she used to serve her the food with contempt in an earthen piece, which she could discard. In due course the woman's son grew up and got married. His wife was wise; she noticed how her mother-in-law was treating the

senior mother-in-law. After the latter finished the food, instead of discarding the earthen pieces the girl started cleaning them and stored them upstairs in a corner. Her mother-in-law once happened to go that side and was amazed to see those pieces. She kindly asked the girl, 'Dear, we have so many utensils of brass and bronze, why do you collect this garbage?'

The girl quietly replied, 'Mom, when you grow old, I will have to serve you the food in earthenware; I am collecting them so that I have not to go to a potter for getting the same'. The mother-in-law learnt the lesson that if we do not treat others reverently, how can we expect to be treated reverently? She stopped treating her mother-in-law with contempt and started behaving with her courteously and reverently.

We are now noticing the loss of discipline among the students. Everyone complains about it, but no one tries to figure out the reason. The fact is that we fail to inculcate modesty and reverence in our children. There was a time when parents used to inculcate such traits. The children were taught to treat the parents, teachers and other elders with a sense of divinity. As such, they held the parents and teachers in high regard. That condition no longer exists. When people happen to mention the teachers as dumb, senseless or good-for-nothing, how can we expect our children to show regard for them?

There is a scriptural story about humbleness relating to Lord Mahaveer's time. A boy named Falshäl had learnt three lessons from his parents, viz. give respect where due, be courteous, and perform the duty honestly and sincerely. He once went with his father to the village land-recorder. As his father bowed to the recorder, Falshäl made out that he must be superior to his father. He also bowed to the recorder and said that he was willing to be his assistant and learn his working. Since he did not ask for any salary, the recorder agreed to train him. As he found the boy very sincere and obedient, he was pleased to show him all the ins and outs of his work.

The recorder had once to go to the Revenue Secretary for paying

the land revenue. Falshäl was with him. When he noticed that the recorder bowed to the Secretary, he made out that he must be 'superior to the recorder. As such, he humbly bowed to him. The Secretary was pleased to learn from the recorder about the sincerity and obedience of Falshäl. When the Secretary showed the inclination to learn more about him, Falshäl said that he was willing to serve him to the best of his ability. The Secretary was pleased and decided to hire him.

In that position too Falshäl worked sincerely and efficiently. Everyone, who had to deal with him, was satisfied with his work and adored him as such. When the Secretary had once to go to the king, he took Falshäl with him. While talking to the king about Falshäl, the Secretary highly adored his attributes of sincerity, efficiency etc. The king was impressed by the humble and courteous behavior of Falshäl and employed him as his Personal Assistant.

By virtue of having the attributes of humbleness, integrity and sincerity, Falshäl thus rose to a high position. It is not hard to develop such attributes, if we concentrate on developing them one by one. The people now-a-days try to learn about many aspects without concentrating on any one of them. They thus become jack of all and master of none. It is, however, necessary to concentrate on one aspect at a time and gain mastery over it; thereafter one can go for another aspect and get accomplishment therein. One can thus get accomplishments in several aspects. While starting the new books of account at the time of the New Year we write to get imbibed with the strength of Bāhubali, intellect of Abhaykumār and attainment of Gautamswāmi because of their accomplishments in the respective areas.

In the capacity of Personal Assistant to the king, Falshäl worked very capably and faithfully. King Shrenik was very pleased with his work. When he once went to Lord Mahaveer to pay his homage, Falshäl was with him. As the king bowed to the Lord, Falshäl realized that he should also pay his homage. While doing so, he offered to

protect the Lord with his sword and armor. The Lord then pointed out that the sword and the armor cannot protect anyone from death. What is therefore required is to protect the soul from defilement, and the trait of violence; and compassion and renouncement are the means thereof.

Together with humbleness, one also needs to be imbued with respect for the revered ones. Humbleness is an external attribute, while reverence is an internal one. Humbleness without reverence can turn out to be flattery. Falshäl had both of them. He realized the significance of what the Lord had said. Setting aside his sword and armor, he renounced the worldly life and resorted to the spiritual pursuit under the Lord's guidance.

The story thus shows that humbleness is a great virtue. It prevents the person from uttering and doing what is wrong or unacceptable. Those who adopt it, can go ahead in worldly as well as the spiritual realm.

Chapter 43

Sense of Gratitude

As we need food and water for survival, so is it necessary to have virtues for the mental and spiritual health; human life is the time for developing them. We therefore need to use every day of our life for developing the same. Thereby we would be able to spend our days in purity and peacefulness, every day of our life can thereby be turned into a day of 'Parva'.

Gratitude is one of the great virtues. If someone has done even a little good to us, we should return to him in manifold terms. Earth is the model example thereof. If we sow one seed, it gives back a lot of them. That also applies to the domestic animals to a certain extent. We give grass to a cow and she returns in the form of nourishing milk. Man is the only animal, who consumes what is given to him without the inclination to give back. That shows our ungratefulness. Our normal tendency is to avail everything without the sense of giving anything in return.

Our body consists of the particles of earth, water, gas, fire and space, which are called five great elements. Do we ever keep in mind the gratitude therefor? A grateful person remembers what others have done for him and remains keen to do something in return. We are obliged to the parents for giving us birth and raising us, to the Guru for giving right instructions and guidance, to all others, who have

been helpful to us in some way. Do we, however, do anything in return?

Maximum obligation arises from a Guru; from the deep darkness of worldly life he brings us out into the light of knowledge. He does it out of innate compassion, without expecting anything in return. Let us therefore think over the characteristics of a Guru. A true Guru restrains five sense organs; observes celibacy with its nine stipulations; is free from four defiling instincts (anger, arrogance, deceit and greed); adopts five major restraints (avoiding violence, untruth, stealth, sensuous pleasure and accumulation); observes a five-fold spiritual code (of knowledge, perception, conduct, austerities and vigor); takes meticulous care while making movement, speaking, accepting or moving any object and while disposing the wastes; and constrains the faculties of mind, speech and body. He is thus imbued with thirty-six attributes.

Lord Mahaveer laid these stipulations for the Guru so that a spiritual aspirant can recognize a true Guru and fulfill his life by resorting to him. The more valuable however an object, the greater efforts are made to imitate it. As such, there now seems to be a race to become a Guru. It also happens that one changes his name and dress, gets some accomplices and professes to be a Guru. It is therefore necessary to test them. As we buy gold after testing its purity, so do we need to examine the true qualities of a Guru in light of the stipulations mentioned above.

Guru's life is identical to a tree or a river. A tree gives shade to those, who come to it and a river quenches the thirst of those, who go to it for that purpose. Neither of them invites anyone to take those benefits. We have come here alone and have to leave alone; no one is going to accompany us. Under such helpless conditions, Guru gives us the shelter in the form of extending the right perception. Upādhyāy Yashovijayji has therefore said, "How is it possible to return the obligation of the Guru, who brought us out of darkness of ignorance and provided the right perception?" Obviously his obligation can in

no way be paid back.

Guru has a piercing eyesight. He can make out the traits of anger, heights of arrogance, thickets of deception and depths of greed lying within us. He would point out how these defilements do not allow us to make out the true concept of religion and would urge us to develop virtues required for the purpose. We can see the miserable state in which we have been drifting, when the Guru provides us the eyesight to see the truth.

Jain Darshan consists of looking inward so as to come out of all drawbacks. We, however, remain involved in narrow parochial interests. Instead of rising up, we stay confined within the boundary of this or that sect and sub-sect. True religion consists of the well-being of the soul. The Lord has therefore said, 'All this time you have roamed outside; now go in and try to know your true nature'.

Let us therefore pray in the presence of the Lord, "Lord, you are so peaceful and tranquil, while I am full of anger; you are the illuminate enlightenment, while I am in the darkness of ignorance; though everyone in the universe worships you, you remain humble, while I remain full of arrogance! Why all this my Lord? You have attained omniscience; how come, I have not!" While thus comparing ourselves with the Lord, our conscience may wake up, and we may feel grateful to all those who have done good to us!

Chapter 44

Four Pillars of Gratitude

The sense of gratitude is an essential attribute; all other attributes in its absence are worthless. If one fails to remember the help extended by someone during an adversity, he misses an essential trait of humanity. In earlier times, one used to treat the obligation as a debt and remained keen to pay it back. That sense of gratitude is now not only going down; it also seems to be disappearing. People profess to be religious, but they hardly care to remember the obligations of others.

We stand obliged not only to parents, Guru, and society, but also to the civilization. The civic sense causes us to hesitate while undertaking anything inappropriate. On that very count, there arises within us a sense of reproach, when the animal instinct becomes too strong at times. If consciousness is awake, one repents even for a minor fault; and that helps him in refraining from anything wrong.

Now let us think of the obligation from the parents. They raise us with love and affection, for that purpose they bear extremities of temperature and other discomforts, when necessary; in times of adversities they feed us even if they have to remain hungry. In short, they survive more for the sake of children than for their own sake. How can one forget such a great obligation?

Third major obligation is from the society. Whatever progress we make is mainly due to the society. Our ability also counts, but we

could not have developed it in the absence of the society. Think of the condition if we were born in wilderness; we would have become prey to some wild animal. Even if we could have been spared from that fate, we would have hardly learnt even to stand erect on two legs. Education, money-making or anything of that sort would have been impossible. How can then we justify spending the money made with the help of society exclusively for ourselves? Earlier the people used to keep in mind the obligation of the society and spend at least a part of their earning for social purposes. The society in turn gave them credit for that.

When we were born, we were crying while others were smiling; the wise men urge us to live in a way whereby we can court the death while smiling and others may be crying. The way consists of remembering the obligation of the society and living in its interest. When people cry at the time of someone's death, they do not do it for his physical loss, they do it because they miss the attributes of generosity, greatness etc. That indicates their sense of gratitude towards him. Gratitude normally consists of four aspects, viz. i) never forget what good someone has done to you, ii) do not remember the benevolence rendered by you, iii) forgive the ingratitude of others, and iv) sincerely atone for any ingratitude indulged by you.

In a village there was a woman named Gajarä. While she was once on a pilgrimage, her food was consumed away by a dog. Luckily a caravan arrived there and the merchant invited her to share the food. While eating, it remained in her mind how she would be in a position to discharge the obligation of the merchant. At the time of departure she gave him her name and address, and invited him to visit her place whenever possible.

Years passed by, but she could not see him at her door. After ten years while the merchant's caravan was passing by that village, someone complained that he was carrying stolen merchandise. He pleaded that he was the true owner, but the judge wanted someone to bear evidence thereof. That time he recalled the name of the village

Four Pillars of Gratitude

and asked the court to call the woman as the witness. The woman was very happy to get the call and gave evidence that he was the genuine owner of the caravan. Thereupon he was acquitted and the woman got the satisfaction of discharging her obligation to him.

One who holds such sense of gratitude, can make much progress in life. But the present situation is far from satisfactory. Forget the sense of gratitude, people tend to be even jealous of such persons. There are also people who can bear the prosperity of unrelated persons, but feel jealous, if some close relative prospers or gets reputation. They forget that prosperity, reputation, etc. are like bubbles of water and are going to disappear in no time. What is going to stay is the memory of virtues; gratitude being one of them.

Chapter 45

Gratefulness

With the rise of virtues, one's abilities also continue to grow. A child would fall down with a small jerk, but a grown-up one can easily withstand it. Similarly a well-established virtuous person can withstand the rise of vices. If a drop of oil falls in water, it spreads over its whole surface; similarly virtues spread over one's entire lifestyle. The wicked ones are like boiling oil; if it drops in water, it raises a flame therein.

During the infinite length of time cycle, it is rare to get the human birth. If we do not develop virtues in this life, it would go in vain. There is nothing more important to be gained in life. Our attention so far has been on wrong objectives. Let us now change it and go in for virtues. Gratefulness is a major virtue. We need to feel grateful for even the slightest obligation of others; otherwise we would be called ungrateful.

There was a barber who had gained the accomplishment of keeping any object in air. One monk came to know of it and persuaded the barber to teach him the same. After learning that art, the monk started moving place to place and displayed the miracle of keeping different objects in air. Since he could not say that he had learnt the art from a barber, he contended that he had gained it by undertaking spiritual pursuit in the Himalayas. No accomplishment can, however,

Gratefulness

co-exist with lies. As such, while the monk once flung a heavy disc in the air in order to show his miracle, his art failed; the disc fell on his head and broke his scalp.

Another aspect of gratefulness is to forget the good that we might have done to others. By reminding one of our benevolence, we lose the value of our action. It nourishes the ego and we tend to be arrogant. Moreover, we put the person concerned in a humiliating position. We should rather behave like a tree that gives shade or like a river that quenches the thirst, without making any claim.

If we donate, we should keep it a secret. Anonymous donation has great significance. It is like sowing of the seed. As it sprouts out in due course, so does the anonymous donation become fruitful in course of time. While donating, one should experience a degree of lightness within; donation is meant for reducing the burden of possession. One should not try to recoup it by gaining additional wealth; let it remain low.

As it is necessary to forget what good we might have done, so is it necessary to forget the ungratefulness of others; we should actually try to be grateful to them. Our approach should be like sandalwood, which gives fragrance as it is scrubbed. A spade would cut the sandalwood tree, but while being cut the tree makes the edge of spade fragrant. Gratefulness thus consists of four parts mentioned in the last chapter, viz. i) never forget what good someone has done to you, ii) do not remember the benevolence rendered by you, iii) forgive the ingratitude of others, and iv) sincerely atone for any ingratitude indulged by you.

We, human beings, are different from other animals. A cow, for instance, would leisurely eat the feed given to it without concern for the hunger of other cows and animals sitting around; we would not do so. We are inherently compassionate; the hungry looks around us would not allow us to eat alone; the sense of compassion would choke our throat and induce us to share our food with others.

A religious person has deep insight; he can make out how many

people are involved in his comforts. One has sown the seeds and grown grains for him; someone else has woven his clothes; several persons have been helpful in building his home and in making his furniture; someone has made scientific research, which is providing him the light and other amenities and so on. What we know or see around is also the outcome of many people's endeavor. Those interested in our well being have arranged to provide the education and opened up the ways for our progress, and the saints have showered their blessings upon us. Our entire life thus subsists on the labor of many people. Do we not hold any responsibility towards them?

Due to our ignorance and self-centeredness, however, we remain unhappy and miserable. If we open the eyes blinded by ignorance, we can realize that happiness lies in thinking of others' interest and in being benevolent to them; in fact our true interest lies implicit in it. It is identical to giving perfume to others, whereby our hands also become perfumed; it can be compared to holding the lamp for them whereby we also happen to get the light.

Chapter 46

Look to the Interests of Others

When people undertake social service and undergo some sacrifice, they expect appreciation; and if the society fails to do so, they get disappointed. They should, however, remember that while undertaking any social work one needs to forgo all sorts of expectations. He should do it selflessly like a mother, who serves the child without expecting anything from him/her; she does it because of her innate affection. The social worker also needs to have affection for the people whom he intends to serve. That can be done, if one keeps in mind that his own interest cannot be separated from the social interests. It was therefore stated in the last chapter that one's own interest lies implicit in the benevolent activities.

While undertaking any work, one should feel that the work has been assigned to him by his Karma. Some people have the tendency to shift it to someone else. That is not acceptable in the realm of Karma. One should analyze his work and figure out how best he can do it. Shifting it to others amounts to borrowing, for which the law of Karma charges interest; and the rates of interest in that realm are very high. Law of Karma is indelible. A calculator, though being lifeless, does not commit mistakes in the calculations; the same way the lifeless Karma never commits mistakes. We should therefore avoid incurring its debt (acquiring new Karma) and try to be free from the existing ones as early as possible.

For applying brake on acquisition of Karma, we need to reduce our requirements. What we need for survival is a handful of grains, two pairs of clothes and some space to lie down. But we clamor for large houses and have been accumulating heaps of clothes, ornaments etc. Moreover, as the wealth increases, we aspire for still more. We also try to increase our relations and friendly circle. We overlook the fact that we came into the world alone and are going to leave it alone.

A virtuous man deeply thinks over these aspects and overcomes all sorts of worldly temptations, so as to go ahead in spiritual pursuit. While doing so, he need not ignore what others do for him. One who has not formed the habit of self-reliance, is likely to expect work from others. If he goes to a temple for worshipping the idol, he would use the sandalwood paste prepared by someone; he would expect someone else to light the incense-stick, to clean the sanctum and so on. He thus wants to get the benefit of worship while exploiting the labor of others. In his home, he would sleep on a costly bed, but would not care to provide reasonable comfort to his servant.

Such persons should look at the example of Ishwarchandra Vidyāsāgar, who always remained concerned with the comfort of his employees. Once he had some important work and had to go out in the noon; instead of sending his servant for that purpose he himself went on a bicycle. When his wife reproached him for not sending the servant, he quietly replied, “My dear, the servant would have been required to go on foot under the hot sun, while I could do it in no time by riding the bicycle”.

One, who thus gives priority to the interests of others over his own, is called Parahitnirat. If one bears in mind that every living being has a soul like his own, he cannot live without doing good to others; it becomes his nature. As eating, taking water, sleeping are considered natural instincts, benevolence becomes natural to him. He feels sad, if he fails to do something good to others. That is a sort of devotion whereby one can attain liberation. It is therefore said, “Mookti bhaktini dāsi chhe (Liberation is the maid of devotion).

Chapter 47

Objective

For breaking the folds of internal darkness, it is necessary to gain illumination, and that needs to be the objective of this life. We are, however, out to gain so many things in life that we happen to forsake that objective. Moreover, we do not remain conscious of the objective and, do not even feel sad for forsaking it. We crave for all the things that we have to leave here ultimately and stay oblivious of the true objective.

The worldly aspects that we pursue are the means of survival, but they cannot form the objective. We, however, treat those means as objectives and pursue them day and night. We thus spend our energy for transient, superficial aspects and refrain from going deep inside. Our life thus happens to be meaningless. We live for the sake of living and when death becomes imminent, we vainly run to the doctors to spare us from that fate. What is, however, the purpose of extending the life, if it is mechanical and purposeless?

We unnecessarily spend time in listening to talks of others. There are six billion people in the world; do we have time to listen to all of them? Even if we give one minute to each of them, the lifespan will be over before we cover a fraction of them. Why not then look to the well being of the soul? Keeping this in mind Lord Mahaveer had said, “Know thyself; if you know the Self truly, you will automatically

know others”. It is not hard to understand this, because one who knows the nature of earth, knows the nature of all earthenware; earth remains the same, simply its forms go on changing.

One who thus knows his soul, can understand all souls; if he is capable to know one today, he will be able to know the world tomorrow. That happens because truth remains the same, it does not get rusted with the passage of time; our thinking pattern undergoes change. If we can therefore correlate old and new, we will find that outer covers are different, but truth is the same. That truth consists of our soul, our objective in life should therefore be to realize the everlasting soul.

Chapter 48

The Goal of Life

He who wants to be religious, must have the required virtues. We have by now dealt with 20 attributes required for being religious. Religion is a jewel; in order to gain it one needs to be worthy of it. Our indigenous term for religion is Dharma, which denotes morality and righteousness. That term becomes a misnomer when an unworthy person claims to be religious. A religious person, who is equipped with above 20 attributes, would obviously have a goal in his life; and that is the last and the 21st attribute.

What is the principal purpose of human life? Whatever situations we come across in life can be divided in three categories of Heya, Jneya and Upādeya. Heya means worth giving up, Jneya means worth knowing and Upādeya means worth adopting. If we go by those criteria, we can find out that there are many concepts, objects and activities that need to be given up and we wrongly cling to the same.

Dharma (Morality), Artha (Economics), Kām (Satisfying the desires) and Moksha (Liberation) are the four main endeavors in life. If we examine our situation, it would be seen that we give too much importance to Artha and Kām, and ignore Dharma and Moksha. There is of course the importance of money in life; we need it even for livelihood. We should therefore endeavor to earn it reasonably and honestly. Now the people have, however, a craze for getting money

and for that purpose they set aside all standards of ethics and morality. That is not Artha in the real sense; it is Anartha, which is Hēya and needs to be avoided.

Money has gained so much importance in life that the people treat even God as subsidiary. They get so engrossed in gaining money that they do not find the time even to avail what has been accumulated. As years pass by, the people like to celebrate their golden and diamond jubilees, but do they bear in mind how many years of the precious human life have gone to waste? It needs to be remembered that lost wealth can be regained, but there is no way to bring back the lost years. Time passes on and life comes to its end. There is no way to prevent it.

If water flows to the desert, it would be absorbed in the sand and evaporate; but it is possible to divert it for agriculture and reap a bountiful harvest. Similarly though it is not possible to stem the passage of time, we can surely use the remaining period of life for a good and wholesome purpose. After our death, people should be able to say that our living was worthwhile. And that can be our goal of life.

Chapter 49

On the Way to Goal

Just think why Lord Mahaveer might have preached about the religion 2,600 years ago. His only intention was to seek the well being of all souls. What has been left to us has been from that pure motive. The Lord and his great followers had been our true well-wishers, who tried to bring us out of the mire of worldly life.

If a child sees a snake and tries to grab it with the intention to play with it, the mother instantly holds her child. Out of rage for preventing if the child bites her, she bears it, because she knows that the child cannot be allowed to play with the snake. Similarly when we try to play with the objects of senses, Guru tries to prevent us. We may not like it, but what the Guru does is in our interest and we need to listen to his advice.

There are various categories of listeners. One is called Kāntāsam meaning like women. They need to be instructed lightly in the form of stories and tales. Second is Mitrasam meaning like friends. They can be instructed logically. Third is Prabhusam meaning dedicated to the Lord. Such listeners have crossed over the stages of first two categories; they have no doubts about the commands of the Lord and observe the same without hesitation. What the Lord had said needs to be put in practice; it is not possible to make out the taste of sugar by reading several books, but it can be instantly experienced by putting

the sugar in mouth.

We have so far spent the time in nourishing the body; now let us start nourishing the soul. It would be okay if the body is frail, but a weakened soul would not do. There have been enlightened persons, whose bodies were frail, but they had very energetic souls. Shrimad Rajchandra was a concrete example thereof.

A man was given two pitchers, one in the left hand contained wealth and the other in the right hand contained peace. He was asked to dissipate the wealth and preserve the peace intact. As such, he started distributing the wealth from the left hand. Meanwhile a thorn pricked in his foot. For removing it he put down both the pitchers. Thereafter he happened to pick up the pitcher of wealth in the right hand and that of peace in the left. Since he did not keep the real objective in mind, he now dissipates peace from the left hand and keeps the wealth intact. The way out is to remember that the goal is to dissipate the wealth, not the peace.

Everyone thus needs to have a goal. A goal-oriented person would undertake every activity while keeping its objective in mind. He does it appropriately like the captain of a ship, who knows where he wants to go and how to reach there. We should also think over the purpose of our life and where we want to reach. If a person has no objective, his condition becomes identical to a sailor, who has no destination.

Chapter 50

Conclusion

If you ask a person coming to a city like Mumbai ‘from where he came and where he wants to go’, and if he replies that he does not know, how would you brand him? Would you not term him senseless? But are we not in the same boat? All of us live in hurry and hustle. How many of us know from where and why we came, what is the purpose of our life and why do we remain so busy? Our position happens to be similar to that of a lost traveler.

The enlightened persons therefore point out that we think a lot about marriage, building of house etc. but we never think about the purpose of life. We do not like to think about leaving the world; we consider it inauspicious to think or talk about death. We simply overlook the fact that it is going to happen and we shall have to leave. Is it possible to postpone the death? Can we avoid it? Since it is going to occur one day, why not get prepared to face it?

When a hunter pursues a rabbit, it runs away; but when it gets exhausted, it stops while keeping its eyes stuck to the ground. Since it is now unable to see, it may fancy that no one, inclusive of the hunter, is able to see. Hunter’s eyes are, however, open and he kills it. The hunter of death has been similarly pursuing us, but we refuse to notice it. Quite a few of our relatives and friends died and we cremated them; still we try to persuade ourselves that we would escape

it, as if we have gained the boon of immortality!

Upādhyāy Yasovijayji has therefore said, “The friends of our childhood time have left; those whom we respected as elders have left; those whom we heartily loved and whose love we expected to continue indefinitely, have been reduced to ashes; yet we fail to think about our outcome! What a great indolence?”

We need to remain aware that we have to leave one day. As a balloon collapses when the air goes out, this body will be reduced to a lifeless bundle, when the soul leaves it; deprived of consciousness it will start stinking within a few hours. The body of which we took enough care during the life will be cremated. Everything in life is uncertain, but death is a certainty. It is therefore necessary to set a goal in life.

A river while turning out from the mountain has the set destination to reach the sea. As such, it makes way out of hills, forests and thickets, does not stop anywhere and advances towards the sea. The same way, the spiritual aspirant, who has set his objective, undergoes various activities in life, but does not get stuck to any of them. The vital question is how to handle what has to be done. For instance, a cat picks up in its mouth its young ones as well as a mouse. While picking up the young ones, it takes care that they are not hurt; but squeezes the teeth hard while picking up the mouse. The approach differs, because the young ones it picks up for protecting them, while the mouse it picks up for food.

Take the case of sugar and honey; both of them are sweet. A fly can sit over sugar and leave it after extracting sweetness; when, however, it sits on honey, its wings get stuck therein and it fails to fly,

While undertaking any activity one therefore needs to keep in mind how best it can serve his objective. As such, he does not resort to lies, nor does he do anything inappropriate or indulge in sinful activities. Since he knows that ultimately he has to give up everything, he stays away from deeply getting involved in any activity. This would

Conclusion

not be hard when one has set the attainment of true nature of the intangible soul as the objective; his approach to life undergoes change thereafter.

It is said that no one can hit his target if his eyes are not steady. It is therefore absolutely necessary to set the objective firmly in mind. We will then learn to keep the defilements under control while undertaking all routine activities. If a monk also misses that objective, he is likely to fall from the monastic stage. He needs to be particularly cautious, because he has to face higher temptations. While a layman finds it hard to get enough living space in a city like Mumbai, the monk may get one or two floors' space; while the layman gets simple food with difficulty, the monk may get rich and tasty food in alms; while the layman may have to manage with torn or worn out clothes, there would hardly be a torn cloth on the monk's body. If the monk therefore misses his objective, he may get stuck up with all such facilities.

Some people say that they get overcome by rage even though they try to restrain it. It is worth asking them, "While you are in your shop and a customer comes from whom you expect to get the profit of a couple of thousands, how do you behave with him? Even if he tells you that you are lying about your material, do you fight with him? You ignore what he says because your objective is to earn from him. Similarly if you keep the objective of soul's well-being in mind, it would be easy to control the rage and other defilements".

In the absence of such an objective, the virtues are likely to be reduced to hypocrisy. When one is imbibed with that objective, the virtues start blossoming forth; morality, integrity etc. become indivisible parts of his life and he finds it hard to survive without them. Then there could emerge a message from within, about where he needs to go and how he can proceed.

The human life is precious in the sense that we can chart our own course; we can decide to proceed towards the heaven or to the hell. Soul is a caravan-owner, who decides which way the caravan

Rays of Dharma

has to proceed. The city of worldly life is glamorous and attractive, while that of liberation is blissful. If we bear in mind who we truly are, from where we came and where we need to go, it would be easy to make out that instead of getting attracted by the glamour we need to go to the state of bliss. Once that objective is clear, it would be possible to resort to Darshan, Jnän and Chäritra (True perception, knowledge and conduct), which are the means thereof. Our endeavor would be to gain liberation and 21 attributes that we have described here, help in being worthy of it.

The Immortal Song

Amity

May the sacred stream of amity
Flow forever in my heart.
May the universe prosper,
Such is my cherished desire

Appreciation

May my heart sing with ecstasy
At the sight of the virtuous.
And may my life be an offering
At their feet.

Compassion

May my heart bleed at the sight of
The wretched, the cruel, the poor.
And may tears of compassion
Flow from my eyes.

Equanimity

May I always be there to show the path
To the pathless wanderers of life.
Yet, if they should not hearken to me,
May I bide in patience.

* * *

May the spirit of goodwill
Enter all our hearts.
May we all sing in chorus
The immortal song of human concord.