

Akhand Jyoti is not merely a magazine. It is an incarnate embodiment of my soul. - Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya



# Akhand Jyoti

The Light Divine

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Pran Pratishtha Samaroh (Consecration Ceremony) and Inauguration of Gayatri Chetana Kendra, Bengaluru (Karnataka)



International Yoga Summit, Mysore (Karnataka)

॥ Om bhūrbhuvāḥ svaḥ tatsaviturvareṇyam bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo naḥ prachodayāt ॥  
(May Almighty illuminate our intellect and inspire us towards the righteous path)

- Rigveda 3/62/10; Samveda 1462, Yajurveda 3/35, 22/9, 30/2, 36/3



# Akhand Jyoti

The light divine

**Founder-Patrons**  
Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya  
Mata Bhagwati Devi Sharma

**Chief Editor**  
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Amrit Chintan

## How do You Please God?

Now-a-days offerings of some materials, e.g. sweets, coconut, cardamom etc. to God or the deity and doing some rituals or to chant the praises of God are considered worship; and it is expected that He will be pleased with the devotee and fulfill his desires, proper or improper, just or unjust. Such persons are totally ignorant about the true nature of Godhead and consider Him to be a stupid Super-person who could be allured or befooled like a child. The common man is a victim of this illusion.

It should be clearly understood that a really worthwhile thing is bound to cost more. You should realize that God cannot dance to your tune. You will have to act according to His will. If you are able to do so, you will become identical with God. Fuel has no worth except when it embraces fire and becomes fire itself. Fire does not become fuel. A drain meets a river and becomes as purifying and great as the river itself. But it never happens that a river flows in reverse, meets the drain and becomes dirty like it. A drop of water merges into and becomes one with the ocean. The ocean does not become a drop. It is the *Sadhak* who has to dance to the tune of God's will like a puppet. God does not fulfill the wishes of the *Sadhak*. A *Sadhak* has to surrender himself to God and fulfill His will. This is the philosophy of worship. If a person wants to please God, he has to unconditionally surrender himself to Him, do His will and become His beloved.

- Puja Gurudev Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya

(Excerpts from his autobiography 'My Life: Its Legacy and Message')

You cannot believe in God until you believe in yourself. - Swami Vivekananda

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My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness. - Dalai Lama

## From Chief Editor's Desk

### **'Yug Srujeta' Convention:**

The Conclusion of 'Yuva Kranti Varsh'

It is well known that youth are the spine and strength of any nation. If they are strong, healthy, addiction-free, have a positive outlook towards life and believe in self-reliance, then we can be certain that the nation will have a glorious future. With this perspective, we took a step in 2016 which marked the beginning of a unique revolution. Years 2016 and 2017 were observed as 'Yuva Kranti Varsh' (Youth Revolution Years) by our Mission. During these years, the youth responded enthusiastically to our call of participating in youth camps, conventions and workshops, our green earth program, cleanliness drives, de-addiction program, women's awakening campaign, etc. These activities were not just confined to our country, but crossed the boundaries and reached several countries. At the conclusion of 'Yuva Kranti Varsh', we are organizing a convention of youth titled 'Yug Srujeta' (literally meaning – creators of the new era) at Nagpur (Maharashtra) from January 26 to 28, 2018. The main objectives of this convention are as follows:

- 1. Inspiring and training youth towards leading a *Sadhana*-centered life style** - The objective is to build a strong and effective personality. By *sadhana*, we are not referring to a certain kind of rituals of worship. It is the *sadhana* of self-management that is essential for everyone. Youth is a stage of life in which necessary training should be provided so that a person can be molded as described in the Upanishad:

**'Yuvasyat sadhuyuva adhyayakaha aashishtho drudishtho balishthah'**

-Taittiriya Upanishad, 2<sup>nd</sup> Valli, 8<sup>th</sup> Anuvak

**Meaning:** *Yuva* or youth is one who performs noble actions, who is always involved in the pursuit of knowledge, who is an expert in management, one who possesses strong body and mind and is strong in all aspects.

When such youths are trained for specific tasks, their skills and abilities can work wonders for the nation.

- 2. Guiding the youth to inculcate the habit of *swadhyaya* (study of noble literature) in their regular daily routine** - The purpose is to uplift their moral and intellectual base. Regular practice of *swadhyaya* will ensure that they always think positively. It is an undebatable fact that personality is shaped according to one's thoughts. The youth of today is living in despair and very soon it gets transformed into depression. A depressed state of mind is a hurdle in both success and personality development. In such situations, they tend to gravitate towards drugs and other vices. This marks the beginning of their downfall. *Swadhyaya* is the remedy for this. It is very important that the right books are chosen for *swadhyaya*. The books written by Param Pujya Gurudev are extremely inspiring and provide appropriate guidance to the reader.

The foundation of every state is the education of its youth. – Diogenes

**3. The third objective is to inspire youth to conserve energy for noble activities by exercising *sanyam* (control over senses) -** *Sanyam* is important not only for maintaining good health but also for enhancing energy and directing it upwards. *Sanyam* provides the necessary power to promote one's self-confidence. In fact, the word '*Sanyam*' has a wider meaning. The 4<sup>th</sup> sutra in *Vibhuti Pada* of Patanjali Yoga Sutra says – *trayamekatra sanyamaha* (which means - when there is a union of *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi* for a particular goal, it is known as *sanyam*). *Sanyam* enhances one's intellect, strengthens *sanskaras* and develops concentration. This is what is needed by our youth today. *Sanyam* is interpreted only with respect to body by many people, whereas it needs to be applied at all the three levels – physical, mental and spiritual. Formation of spiritual aura and many other supernormal attainments can also be achieved by the practice of *sanyam*.

A person who practices *sanyam* can awaken his self-respect and tap his inner potential which leads to a life of self-reliance. Self-reliance is essential in all walks of life. One needs to be self-reliant not just in financial aspect but more so with respect to the mind. One who possesses a strong mind and is self-reliant mentally will derive strength for all other aspects of life. Therefore, in order to make our nation progressive and prosperous, we need to train our youth to observe strict control over the senses.

**4. Developing an aptitude for service by enhancing empathy for humanity -** Only those who possess empathy can understand the pain and misery of others and work towards alleviating them. This is how we can develop a culture for service, which is the need of the hour. Society comprises of a variety of people. There are innumerable people who are backward just because they belong to lower castes. Then, there are people who are economically weak, those who are barely educated because of the imperfections in our education system, those who think they are educated but are not, those who are literate but are not skilled in their jobs, those who complain about not having got any opportunities to prove themselves, those who have been oppressed by those wielding powerful positions etc. There are many such categories of people who are barely able to make their ends meet. Some even lack resources for having a decent meal per day. On the other side are women who have been labeled as weak and get confined to the four walls. They are mostly uneducated, misinformed, and dependent on others; and are bound in meaningless traditions. Such women are living a so-called life but there is an undercurrent of grief and anguish, the sound of which is not being heard. They are living in a male-dominated society and suffering from their atrocities. There are many children who are being harassed by their own families; and there are others who are living a life of slavery owing to their circumstances.

Will youth come forward to help these downtrodden people? Service and empathy are two creative emotions that inspire an individual and propel him to take action so that those denied of justice can get their due and those in need of resources get support. In reality, service is the greatest virtue. A heart that can resonate with the pain of others cannot remain idle, it will leap into action. They will not just stop at helping one person but will always look at helping the maximum number of

**Good habits formed at youth make all the difference. – Aristotle**

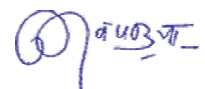
individuals. Our country possesses an extremely large number of such service-oriented persons, but there is need to bring them under one banner. If our youth focus their efforts in this direction, they can form a group of empathetic people; and can begin to contribute in various social activities.

The pivotal objective of “*Yug Srujeta*” initiative is to activate the youth in all the above four aspects and motivate them to work towards the development of the country. If our youth are inspired by the four principles of *Sadhana*, *Swadhyaya*, *Sanyam* and *Seva* and progress on these four steps, then they will surely transform the country with a spiritual outlook.

Four activities have been identified for the youth who will emerge out of this ‘*Yug Srujeta*’ program:

- 1. Search** – Search for enthusiastic and patriotic youth with impeccable character
- 2. Develop** – Refine and mold the youth who have been identified with the necessary training programs so that they are effective in their activities.
- 3. Organize** – The youth thus trained will be made into small DIYA (Divine India Youth Association) groups at the village, town and zonal levels. The pearls thus obtained will be made into a beautiful garland so that all of them will speak with the same voice and echo the same ideals.
- 4. Assign them noble tasks** - Make these groups to work unitedly towards a noble objective of ‘*Yug Nirman*’ (ushering in of a golden era of truth, peace and harmony).

**With prayer-filled wishes to our readers,**



(Pranav Pandya)

**P.S.** - A ‘Youth Vision Document’ is being prepared that will outline an 11-point program for the development of our youth. This will be presented in the ‘*Yug Srujeta*’ convention.

### Promise yourself:

To give so much time to the improvement of yourself  
that you have no time to criticize others.

To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear,  
and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

— Christian D. Larson

The youth need to be enabled to become job generators from job seekers. - A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

## Don't get fooled by Appearances

There is a saying –“Fools are the food for the intelligent.” Today this saying is being actualised everywhere in the Indian society, especially among the Hindus. Schemes of various kinds are being devised daily to befool the people and grab their money. Big ‘philanthropists’ have emerged. Some offer to bestow the riches of Kuber (mythological king of riches). Some promise heaven after death.

Nothing in this world is entirely good or bad. Everything has its own specific attribute which can be either good or bad depending upon the use and the user. Fire can be used for cooking; it can also be used for burning someone’s house. Food is essential for life, but many a glutton fall ill due to overeating. Similarly, religion is meant to give benefit in this life, and also in the life after death (*lok-parlok*). But several cunning fellows have started misusing it for their sinful selfish ends.

India is a religious-spiritual country. Those who follow the path of religion are held in high esteem. The devout shower them with money and gifts, and feel privileged in doing service for them. But this mentality has given birth to many *thugs* and charlatans who masquerade as *sanyasi*, *vairagi*, *baba*, *shaiva*, *vaishnava* etc. Some smear ash all over the body, some apply sandal. Some stand in water, some walk over ember. They have no intention of self-realization at all; their sole aim is to earn name as a saint or *sanyasi*, create an empire of blind followers and live in filthy opulence at the latter’s expense.

Such persons and their practices have attracted even foreigners to our country and they have rushed to teach us. Some came as *avatar* (reincarnation), some as *mahayogi*. Some tempted people with a sure shot path to self-realisation, some assured *moksha* (salvation). We, in good faith, did not scrutinize much and believed in ‘all that glitters is gold’. As a result we are looking like fools today. Our highly scientific religion is being sneered at even by many of us. This is proving an obstacle in our progress. On the other hand, those who are inimical to our progress are deriving benefit from our fake religiosity.

What is more disturbing is that the number of such frauds is increasing in the society. They have hit upon the formula to mint easy money by brainwashing people through their trickery. People go to them and think –‘My work has been done without spending money. How smart and intelligent I am!’ Honesty and integrity carry no value for them. Some are openly selling their integrity for small gains. They feel no compunction in deceiving others and betraying their trust as a matter of routine.

Society is here to stay. Even a bad society will stay. Someday, its good times will come. All people cannot go on committing mistakes simultaneously and for all the time. Their eyes will open. What will happen then to those who are selling their integrity? They do not realise it today but they are actually indulging in a costly bargain.

Character is like a tree and reputation its shadow. The shadow is what we think it is and the tree is the real thing. - Abraham Lincoln



The lazy and the shirker are shrewd in their own way. Their greed has increased to the extent that they cannot control it now. So what could they do; from where money will come? They shun work, and nobody will offer jobs to such persons. For doing business, capital is needed and also credibility. Then, there is no guarantee that there would be no loss in business. In this situation, such persons are left with two choices. One is that they should improve their habits, do some labour, and remain content with whatever they earn. Second choice is to manage money somehow. Thus, they start with selling household items like furniture, then landed property, then wife's jewellery, and lastly their scruples and honesty. Some begin with selling honesty. These persons are not very educated, and have an ill-developed sense of right and wrong. But they are bold and determined. They become brokers of religion and live off betraying people's trust.

Many of them adopt a facade of 'detached soul'. They live in 'huts'. Even if they live in opulent bungalows they name it '*kuti*' (hut). The faithful do not doubt their utterances and action. Occasionally, however, a sceptical person might ask - "Maharaj, you are a *tyagi* (renouncer). Then why have you amassed such things of luxury?"

This question would embarrass a normal person, but not these fake *mahatmas*. They are past masters and are well prepared for such questions. Their reply would be - "It is the wish of the disciples. For me, wearing a royal dress or no dress is all the same." Sometimes they would just smile fakely and keep quiet. Sometimes they would say - "You are English educated. How could you know such things? If you had lived in the company of a *sadhu*, you would have known." Occasionally, they get angry and shout - "This fellow is a non-believer. Drive him out. He is making the *ashram* impure." Thus they have many ploys to deal with different situations. And if nothing works, they proclaim - "The scriptural limitations do not apply to the liberated souls (*jeevan-mukta*)". Now no one will utter any word at this verdict because it is considered discourteous to counter this by saying that the claimant was not a liberated soul. Through all these tricks and ploys they keep on deceiving people and exploiting their faith. Their own purpose is, no doubt, served fully, but the society and genuine religion suffer deeply. So, what is needed is that we should not be taken in by outer appearances. We must learn to value the virtues and internal attributes.

There was a huge Banyan tree on the bank of the river. Once a traveler came, rested under the shade of the tree and praised the vastness of the tree and left. Same traveler visited the same place after a few months again. He was surprised by not finding the tree there. He asked the residents near the tree. They said that the tree was huge but the roots of the tree had become hollow. When the storm came, the roots of the tree could not hold the tree to the ground and the tree fell. The traveler kept thinking on his way ahead that however huge you are from outside, the roots inside should be deep and strong.

**What men call knowledge, is the reasoned acceptance of false appearances. Wisdom looks behind the veil and sees. - Sri Aurobindo**

# Have a Glimpse of the Future-World and Get Ready for the Change

Gurudev Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya was a true saint. Despite being a *siddha* of Gayatri and spiritual science of Yoga at the preeminent level of the *rishis* of the Vedic Age, he kept his supernatural powers away from publicity and lived an austere life of a devotee whose heart pulsed for the welfare of all living beings. Millions of people in agony or those suffering from adversity of circumstances, as well as the seekers of spiritual light used to go to him with their prayers. No one returned empty-handed. His divine blessings, pure love and enlightening guidance fulfilled their lives with happiness, self-awakening and miraculous support from the visible and the subtle worlds. Several volumes of thousands of pages would be required if one attempts to compile the experiences of all those who had ever had the opportunity to meet this *rishi* of our times (*Yugrishi*). His life was an open book that stood as a living testimony to the universality of the science of spirituality. In the previous issue, we had presented his premonitions of several unexpected globally threatening events that occurred in last four decades. We had also cited his spiritual efforts of successful prevention of their devastating consequences well in advance.

## **Vision of the new world order:**

A ship's searchlight is seen at the shore long before the ship's arrival. Many people experience a fleeting premonition but only a few pay attention long enough to decipher them correctly. Several animals have the extrasensory sensation of natural events such as tremors, cyclones, tornadoes or heavy rains. Study of their hectic movements and unusual behaviours are often found useful

as preventive alarms. The clairvoyance of seers-sages like Acharya Sharma is far more advanced and reliable, as it is 'perceived' through their spiritually awakened sixth sense. Here we outline his vision of the future of the world at the peak of 21<sup>st</sup> Century <sup>c.f.[1-4]</sup>.

The course of human history today is now witnessing the culmination of a natural cycle of "Change of Era". Over the past two centuries, the shadows of a dark age have been disturbing humankind with chaos and disorder. However, in accordance with the natural law of periodicity, this period too must come to an end. This process of epochal change has begun since past couple of decades. Everywhere, the people of the world are eagerly awaiting the end of the Dark Age and the dawn of the Golden Era of *Satyuga* (Age of Truth).

Despite the pessimistic forecasts from several thinkers and scientists, he assured again and again that a bright future was in store for humankind as a whole. Believe it or not, the new era will witness revival of divine culture – the culture of virtuous values and righteous intellect embedded with compassion, humanity, morality, altruism, integrity, etc. The culture of opportunism, commercialization, advertisement, power-grabbing, oppression, deception and exploitation prevailing today is worse than the culture of demons. This degrading culture of the modern era is hidden within the glitter of 'smart' deceptions, intellectual diplomacy and cleverness. That is why, it continues to attract not only the money-minded people or those driven by materialistic

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. - Margaret Mead

aspirations and glamour, but also the apparently progressive and learned fellows. However, the foundations of falsehood, howsoever gigantic its expansion might be, are always shaky. The light of truth can dispel it in an instant.

According to Acharya Shriram Sharma, cultivation of inner-strength and awakening of intrinsic desire for spiritual ascent will bring about an extraordinary transformation in the aspirations, thoughts and behaviour of humankind and will turn the course of the misguided human endeavour upside-down from cravings and evils, towards humane sensitivity and social benevolence and elevate it towards wisdom. Thus, gradually, an environment will be created that would resemble resurrection of *Satyuga*.

The bright era will neither witness wars nor any epidemics of grand scale. Nor will there be any reason for worries on account of paucity of resources arising out of population explosion. The enlightened and empowered woman will herself refuse to produce more children, will prevent drainage of her energy; instead, she will channelize her immense power to what is absolutely necessary for promotion of viable prosperity and compassion. With the progression of twenty-first century, women will play an important role in the ascent of human society. They will be guided and supported in their actions by the sublime light and the combined power of the divine trinity of goddess – Saraswati, Lakshmi and Kali.

Science will continue to progress, not in its single-tracked materialistic form, but as a spiritually motivated science for holistic development. Adoption of this new form of science will automatically solve those problems that have produced a hazardous situation like the threat to

sustainability of life faced today. With the adoption of simplicity and prudent self-discipline in their life, people would enjoy natural good health; load on natural resources and energy consumption will also reduce drastically. Nature-friendly and altruistic life-style would result in Nature's grace, and enhancement in social harmony.

The system of education will also change. Besides providing livelihood, the new educational system will also nurture holistic development of personality and groom the students into responsible, duty-bound, vigilant, thoughtful, talented, caring, and compassionate citizens.

But how will this great change materialize? Will it happen on its own as per God's Will? Certainly Not! Nature does not allow anything to happen against its universal laws. These are the moments of the 'birth' of a new era. The 'labour pains' will also be historic and will be experienced both within and beyond the physical dimensions of the world. Demonic forces won't accept defeat easily. The darkest hour is just before the dawn. A person's respiration rate quickens at the time of death. Similarly, the devilish forces, in all their negativity, will advance their last ditch effort before annihilation.

Acharya Shriram Sharma clearly warned about the difficulties and the testing times of the transitional phase. The world is undergoing unprecedented and rapid transformation towards a new era of human history during the *Yug Sandhi* (era-transition) period (~1980 to 2000). The adverse consequences of inhuman deeds and follies of mankind would be at peak during most part of this transitional period. Natural calamities, dreaded health hazards, all-round threats, regional wars, social conflicts and anarchy, etc, would pose enormous hardships,

**To realize that new world we must prefer the values of freedom and equality above all other values - above personal wealth, technical power and nationalism. - Herbert Read**

sufferings and pains. Unless we change our selfish outlook, our attachments with sensory pleasures, our thinking and our life-style, we would not be able to bear the terrible outcomes.

Though he said that Golden Age would be the imminent result of divine will, he also emphasized that the human society would have to play an important role. According to him, the present generation of humans on Earth has been given the task of ushering in this new era by means of launching a popular movement aimed at raising the collective level of human consciousness throughout the world. The evolutionary force of supreme divine energy has already been activated in the transcendental world; its manifestation in the physical realms of Nature will occur only by human effort. Great souls are already born in different parts of the world to lead in these endeavours, but this time the immensity of the task of eradication of negativity of *Kaliyug* (Dark Age) would require awakening and devout participation of almost the entire human race [...].

#### **A Mission to usher in the New Age:**

Acharya Shriram Sharma not only predicted the certainty of Golden Future against all odds, and warned about the inevitability of the challenges and great epochal changes on multiple fronts of life before that, but also carried out epochal spiritual experiments to minimize the adversities, and hardships of this momentous transitional period and to awaken collective consciousness of human kind to prepare for the epochal transformation.

Noted among the majestic spiritual experiments guided by him is the *Yuga Sandhi Mahāpuraścaraṇa* of total 2400 crore *japa* (rhythmic enunciation with meditation) of the

Gayatri Mantra by collective participation of millions of *sādhakas* across the globe around the sunrise time every day during 1980-2000. Although his *Sukṣmīkaraṇa Sādhanā*<sup>F1</sup> alone was sufficient to create suitable ambience and generate the necessary flow of spiritual energy for the global transformation<sup>[5-6]</sup>, the objective of this collective *sādhanā* was to awaken the force of collective consciousness and spiritually awaken the potential torch-bearers of the new world order.

Acharya Shriram Sharma initiated the *Yug Nirman* mission with hundreds of reformatory, educative and reconstructive projects for the welfare of the masses. The distinct feature of his mission is that he also motivated and enabled people to elevate their inner strength and inculcate virtuous tendencies by *Gāyatrī Sādhanā*. Dissemination of the philosophy and practice of *Yajña* in scientific light was another milestone of his divine mission that inspired the masses towards altruistic service and organized activities for eradication of blind customs, purification of the manifested as well as subtle environment of life, and expansion of knowledge<sup>[7]</sup>. He pioneered renaissance of Scientific Spirituality and initiated the *Vichāra Krānti* (Thought Revolution) movement.

As the term “*Thought Revolution*” implies, Acharya Sharma conveyed a message not about a political or economic revolution, though those too must surely follow, but rather about a revolution within human thought. Instead of looking for technological or legislative solutions, or relying on rich or powerful members of society, Acharya Sharma located the roots of our global problems in the level of the human collective consciousness. By emphasizing the primacy and power of the consciousness that resides within

**We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if humankind  
is to survive. – Albert Einstein**

each of us, Acharya Sharma brings the frontiers of the global crisis within reach and to where they can be directly accessed by each of us<sup>[2]</sup>. He advocated *Swādhyāya* and *Satsang*<sup>F2</sup> as most effective means for refinement, prudent and constructive orientation of thoughts and intellectual faculties. He guided *Upāsanā*, *Sādhanā*, and *Arāadhanā*<sup>F3</sup> for self-purification, chiselled glazing of inner potentials, and awakening of *Bhāva-Samvedanā*<sup>F4</sup> that can eventually awaken the divinity indwelling in human self. His teachings underlined *Bhāva-Samvedanā* as the core source of immense power that would play most significant role in the realization of epochal transformation of

the dark phase of humanity into divinely pure and illumined Age of Truth.

“Gayatri Pariwar”, a global family-like socio-spiritual organization founded by him is instrumental in expanding the *Yug Nirman* mission at grass-root level. Its fraternity at Shantikunj, Haridwar and several centres in India and abroad provide practical guidance and training<sup>F5</sup> to help everyone prepare to usher in the bright future. Let us all pledge/join hands and wholeheartedly participate in the human endeavours essential towards materialization of this epochal change in world order in the decades to come.

#### Notes:

- F1. *Sukṣmīkaraṇa Sādhanā*: Supreme endeavour of sublization and spiritual transmutation of self-existence. (This *sādhanā* generates the supernatural power in the *yogi* to expand his/her energy-body and mental-body to omnipresent levels beyond any barrier of time and space at will).
- F2. *Swādhyāya* and *Satsang*: *Swādhyāya* - Self-study and self-training in the light of sagacious thoughts and teachings of elevated souls. *Satsang* - Attending spiritually illuminating discourses and discussions; being in the company of great personalities.
- F3. *Upāsanā*, *Sādhanā*, and *Arāadhanā*: *Upāsanā*: devotional, meditative practice of sitting near God, i.e., having an emotional proximity with divinity that induces divine feelings and inspires benevolence. *Sādhanā*: Self-determined endeavour of self-restraint (over sensory passions and mental agility) and adoption of spiritual discipline for inner purification. *Arāadhanā*: Generous service, philanthropic act for the welfare of all.
- F4. *Bhāva-Samvedanā*: The most evolved and purest form of emotional sensitivity that generates compassion, generosity, self-less service and unalloyed saintly love for all beings through the deep core of the inner-self.
- F5. Training is provided via *sādhanā*-courses and specialized workshops free of cost, and sans any constraint of creed, caste, faith, education or social status. (For detailed information see [www.awgp.org](http://www.awgp.org) or contact [shantikunj@awgp.org](mailto:shantikunj@awgp.org))

**We must all learn a good lesson - how to live together. That is the new challenge of the new world... learning to co-exist and not co-annihilate. - Jesse Jackson**

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It is indeed pathetic that despite living in the Nature’s limitless treasure of joy, we shut our inner self in the narrow barriers of prejudiced convictions and selfish passions. As a result, we get entrapped in the smog of abrupt, fallacious, irrelevant thoughts and often remain fearful, jealous, worried and depressed in one way or the other. All our misery is an outcome of our inner bankruptcy. It’s time we realize it and improve ourselves right from the root of our thinking rather than attributing our failures and sorrows to – “ill omen”, “lack of resources or support” or “destiny”. – Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya

A new world is not made simply by trying to forget the old. A new world is made with a new spirit, with new values. – Henry Miller

# Scientific Spirituality & Management

Today, any reference to the word “management” gives an impression as if it were about business or corporate management. This is because, in the present times, commerce, marketing, finance, and related issues have taken center stage in the world. “Development” too has become synonymous to economic development. However, the meaning of the word “management” is significantly wider. It encompasses all aspects of orderly organization and systematic and efficient use of available opportunities, resources, and potentials in life. It is thus the key to development on all fronts of life. Specialized policies, planning, strategies and training are required for specific kinds of management on different fronts. Different schools may adopt different approaches for this purpose which may often be debated. But one fact remains universal, that is management in all domains of personal, professional, and social life depends upon one’s ability of managing his/her thoughts and emotions and translating them into action.

As emphasized by a renowned thinker, Rudolf Steiner, in the context of holistic education, it is most important to achieve balance in the three different ways a person relates to the world —through thoughts, emotions and actions. Considering that emotions and thoughts are faculties of mind, role of spirituality becomes prominent in attaining this balance. As stated in “Bhagwat Gita”, the undisciplined mind acts as our enemy whereas a trained and disciplined mind acts as our friend. Other related ancient Indian scriptures also deliberate upon the depth of mind

as a medium of expression of Consciousness-Force and teach spiritual practices for self-control, training and evolution of mind.

Ancient Indian science of spirituality describes four-fold functions of the mind as associated with the four domains of the inner-self: memory and experience which are functions associated with *Mana* (conscious & subconscious mind), cognition, conceptualization, reasoning, analysis and deliberations — associated with *Buddhi* (Intellect), intrinsic tendencies, convictions, determination and decision making — manifested expressions of *Chitta* (unconscious mind), and the ‘I’-consciousness or ego (*Ahankāra*). This science is vast and also deals with transcendental realms of Consciousness-Force. Here we shall discuss only the practical aspects relevant to holistic management in our lives today.

Methods of scientific spirituality derived from the ancient Indian science, focus at awakening and prudent and constructive use of the immense power of thoughts and emotions. In more practical terms, this also amounts to augmentation of IQ (*Intelligence Quotient*) and EQ (*Emotional Quotient*) both. As we might have experienced, a person with high IQ is more productive, introvert, cautiously expressive, ambitious and detached. He is expert, talented and logical. He may be an efficient professional, executive, academician or scientist. However, he may not always be so good on personal and social fronts of life. High EQ person is cheerful, socially poised, committed, methodical, ethical, sympathetic,

**No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.**

- Theodore Roosevelt

and has spontaneity and a power to cope with uncertainties. He not only is excellent in self-management, but can also be a great manager and leader in his chosen field of profession or social work.

In the early days of scientific development, genetic configurations and brain were regarded as regulators of intellectual and emotional functions. However, deeper and more advanced studies show that the brain functions, including hormonal secretions and activation of specific centers in the rational and emotional lobes are natural manifestations and not originators of emotional and mental states. Then what originates, relates, and evolves intelligence and emotions? Let us now look into some deeper aspects of their interdependence, genesis and evolution to understand the importance of scientific spirituality in their management.

#### **Nature of emotions, thoughts and intelligence:**

In spite of being invisible, the potential of thoughts is greater than any other power of the physical world. Every moment of human life is intensely interwoven with thoughts. The key of the ascent or descent of one's life lies in his thoughts. People with greater strength of the inner self and elevated levels of *prāṇa* (vital spiritual energy) can attract and influence many others by the aura of their consciousness energy and the enthralling force of their thoughts. This is how they can effectively lead and shape the mass movements.

Thoughts are most powerful expressions of intelligence and emotions, and are also the natural links between the two. Propositions of spiritual insights that are now accepted by the modern psychology underline the importance

of thoughts; it is regarded that — a person is formed and molded by one's thoughts. Savants also remark that “Thought is a natural process not necessarily related to one's deliberate act or the character or value of the act”, and that, “All teaching is a ‘revealing’ via the usual agency of the world and its perception. All ‘becoming’ is an unfolding. Nothing can be taught to the mind, which is not already concealed as potential knowledge in the unfolding soul of the creature”.

A natural quest then arises – Why the knowledge hidden in the folds of mind, or the unbounded intelligence of the soul is not expressed or manifested in the thoughts and actions of every one, every time? Why is there a need for any training, education, value-system, etc?

The *advaita* principle of Vedanta Philosophy and the Upanishads provides the complete answer. The gist of this is – Each being is a manifestation of the *Brahm*<sup>1</sup>. The enormous diversity among different people or beings is because of the *samskāras*<sup>2</sup>. *Samskāras* form the emotional trait and tendencies of the mind and are also responsible for the intrinsic desires and nature of the individual self. Intrinsic desires as per the activated mental tendency trigger corresponding emotions and then thoughts and actions in succession<sup>[1]</sup>. Spiritual practices deal with purification and control of the *samskāras*. Disciplines of value system, rational educational training, moral conduct, etc are meant for controlled orientation of the emotions, thoughts and actions triggered by them.

As emotions are intimate and easily experienced reflections of our *samskāras*, these play a key role in our spiritual endeavors, adoption of value system and molding of our thoughts, character

**In a high-IQ job pool, soft skills like discipline, drive, and empathy mark those who emerge as outstanding. - Daniel Goleman**



and actions and hence in the management of our life. Scientific spirituality — the universal science of refinement of intrinsic tendencies, awakening of conscientiousness, wisdom and awakening of inner-self — should therefore be an integral part of holistic management.

**Emotional maturity, values and spirituality:**

It is well-known that emotions trigger impulse to act; and the tendency to act is implicit in every emotion. There are seven prime emotions, namely, anger, fear, joy, love, surprise, disgust, and sadness — each prepares the body and also the rational (or so called ‘intelligent’ mind) for a different kind of response. Emotions guide us to face danger, painful loss, perseverance, bonding with a mate; building a family, etc. In short, emotions are the core of our sensitivity as human beings.

However, emotional excitement, be that of any kind, is undesirable. For example, emotional explosion may lead to brutal crimes; excessive sorrow puts one into depression; laughter due to over-joy is also an explosion of emotions and may lead to emergencies. Growing cases of emotional excitement, emotional imbalance, violence,

selfishness, meanness, and deterioration of other factors affecting personal and social values have intensified the need for improved Emotional Intelligence of the common man today.

Emotional Intelligence<sup>[2]</sup> pertains to self-control, zeal and persistence, the ability to motivate oneself, one’s character, sentiments and moral instincts. Prime sign of emotional wisdom is emotional honesty: being real and true to self. It builds personal power, awareness, inner guidance, respect, responsibilities and connection. Emotional fitness implies being transparent and getting along with circumstances and people under different circumstances. This is why it is so important in personal and professional management. Its immediate benefits include authenticity and hence social respect, resilience without compromising with values, ability of constructive discontent, initiation and renewal of trusting relationships.

Emotional intelligence (EI) builds core character, potential, integrity, purpose, integrity, commitment, and unique and high purpose; it initiates self-motivated evolution. What is

Just imagine you’re four years old, and someone makes the following proposal: If you’ll wait until after he runs an errand, you can have two marshmallows for a treat. If you can’t wait until then, you can have only one – but you can have it right now. It is a challenge sure to try the soul of any four-year-old, a microcosm of the eternal battle between impulse and restraint, id and ego, desire and self-control, gratification and delay... There is perhaps no psychological skill more fundamental than resisting impulse. It is the root of all emotional self-control, since all emotions, by their very nature, lead to one or another impulse to act.

- Daniel Goleman

Leadership’s First Commandment: Know Thyself. - Harvard Business Review

rightly termed by modern thinkers<sup>[2]</sup> as emotional alchemy includes sensing opportunity, creating suitable future, ability of natural situational transformation, and adaptive decision-making. Further advancement of EI arises with spiritual refinement and endows one with the faculties of emotional feedback-based intuition, emotional intuition, intuitive emotional energy, intuitive flow, intuitive innovation, and intuitive intelligence.

Self-inspired adoption of ethical norms, transmutation of personal value system and expansion of social values for the welfare of all are successive outcomes of progress in emotional intelligence.

#### **Personal values:**

Personal values evolve from interaction with the external world and can change over a period of time. Integrity in the application of values refers to its continuity; persons have integrity if they apply their values appropriately regardless of arguments or negative reinforcement from others. Values are applied appropriately when they are applied in the right area. For example, it would be appropriate to apply moral values in times of happiness as well as in times of despair. One's *samskāras* (and hence his/her natural tendencies), circumstances, and experiences influence one's personal value system; it is also a universal fact that one's personal values, integrity and emotional intelligence are mutually dependent. For example, if one respects personal values of others and reacts prudently, it indicates his dignity of emotional maturity. Selfless love, care, courage, bravery, integrity and compassion are examples of universal emotional-values associated with high emotional intelligence.

#### **Key to improvement of EQ:**

‘Daily introspection and self-analysis to avoid mistakes, to overcome shortcomings of today and to determine feasible plans for execution of something that improves self-behavior or action tomorrow’ — this simple practice of ten minutes before sleep and five minutes before leaving the bed (after waking up) works like effective autosuggestion. It induces courage, self-confidence and emotional stability with gradually increasing impact. Yoga-practices of *prāṇāyāma* and meditation lend essential support for calming of mind. Balanced diet, physical exercises and self-restraint (*samīyam*) are prerequisite for best effects. Emotional depth and enlightenment are then achieved through sincere practice of *Upāsana*, *Sādhanā* and *Arādhanā* (*Upāsana* — inculcation of sensitivity and invocation of divine thoughts and qualities hidden in the inner self by heart-felt prayers, and meditative practices; *Sādhanā* — refinement of thoughts and deeds, self-transformation by self-determination in light of the teachings of spiritually illumined sages, and noble works of great personalities, and *Arādhanā* — admiring and beautifying God's creation by helping the needy and making thoughtful use of time, talent and resources with a cheerful and caring attitude for the upliftment of more and more people).

#### **Incorporation of spiritual science in management education:**

After recognition of EQ as a crucial requirement in management, importance of spirituality in management education is also being considered by many institutions across the world. For example, the Academy of Management, at New York now has a separate full-fledged division for theoretical and applied studies in Management, Spirituality, and Religion (MSR), which focuses

It is very important to understand that emotional intelligence is not the opposite of intelligence, it is not the triumph of heart over head - it is the unique intersection of both. - David Caruso

on interdisciplinary theoretical and applied research and pedagogy related to the relevance and relationship of spirituality in management and organizational life. Spiritual ambience at work place and use of spiritual attitude in customer care, etc are core topics of research-studies at several such institutions. Management educationists working in related areas should note that rather than mere theory, adaptation

of spiritual values in thoughts, character and deeds is more vital. The practical training and workshops with specific spiritual *sādhanās* conducted under the auspices of Shantikunj, Haridwar, and the approach to self-management and life-management courses and experiments with spiritual practices adopted at the DSVV University, Haridwar, have set excellent live-examples in this direction.

#### Notes:

1. *Brahmī*: Eternal, Omnipresent, Omniscient Consciousness-Force.
2. *Samskāras*: Intrinsic impressions assimilated in the unconscious mind since the earlier lives.

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### How to identify a high EI person?

1. He/she is bold enough to express his/her feelings.
2. He/she is not carried away by negative emotions.
3. He/she uses reason, logic, and reality to balance his/her emotions.
4. He/she is morally upright and believes in self-reliance.
5. He/she is not motivated by power, position and pelf.
6. He/she is empathetic - understands and shares the feelings of others.
7. He/she is emotionally strong and flexible.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to sense, understand, and effectively apply the power and acumen of emotions as a source of human energy, information, connection, and influence. - Robert K. Cooper

# Make Your Breath the Music of Life

The garland of life is woven with the thread of breath. If life is a *veena* (musical instrument), its cords are formed by breaths. The musical notes of this *veena* (life) ascend and descend with the ups and downs of breathing. If there is breath, there is life. If there is no breath, all expressions of life cease. The rhythms of breathing provide the smile to every moment of life. When there is obstruction and disturbance in this rhythmic flow, everything starts fading. Nothing then remains normal.

Body and mind both get harmonised through the lyric of breath. The flow of breath powers every bodily process. Without breath one can neither imagine the existence of body nor its beauty and glamour. It is breath which chisels the physical beauty; otherwise there would not be any difference between a beautiful statue and a beautiful human body. The former only looks beautiful, but it is not really so, because there is no flow of breath in it. Statue can be beautiful, but it lacks emotions. The varying shades of expressions and emotions are clearly visible on a human face because of the flow of breath. This is the difference.

Breath beautifies the glory of life. The daily changes in life are intrinsically entwined with the flow of breath. Anger, hate, compassion, enmity, attachment, envy - all are essentially different forms of the changing tunes of breath. This is not a matter of discussion or analysis but of perception. For example, a disturbance in the rhythm of breath generates anger; the sparks of

this anger then starts burning the self and the relationships. But the same breath also creates the sweet music of love and affection which fill life with fragrance, smile and happiness. In one moment envy is changed into affection and affection into envy.

In this rhythm and flow of breath lie all the events in life and all its immense potential. If the breathing is balanced, the life too is balanced and calm. But if the breathing is agitated, the circumstances and nature of life too get adverse. Problems start piling up in life. The mind gets entangled in coping up with these problems which, in turn, makes the breathing even more haphazard.

When the breathing becomes haphazard, peace and poise in life are lost; any spiritual progress gets blocked. If this disharmony continues for a long time, the situation becomes really serious. It gets converted into various kinds of mental and psychological ailments, thereby making the life still more unbearable and beyond redemption. The next natural corollary is break in the flow of breath.

Controlled breathing increases mind's power. A person begins to recognise his strengths and can tailor and perform his work accordingly. Uncontrolled breathing dents this power of mind. Vital force begins to decline. This weakening vital force pushes us to anxiety, conflict, ailments and depression. Any possible development becomes remote at this point.

Feelings come and go like clouds in a windy sky. Conscious breathing  
is my anchor. - Thich Nhat Hanh

Experts believe that the rate of breathing is maximum during sexual desire and activity. It becomes severely uncontrolled at this time. The more unregulated the rate of breathing, the more rapid is the decline in vital force. That is why, sexual activity is considered the biggest enemy of breathing. Another big enemy is anger. Anger too breaks the rhythm of breathing. Then comes anxiety. All types of negative thinking and bad conduct disturb smooth flow of breathing. Experts opine that the more even and composed breathing is, the more peaceful life would be. The rate of breathing is directly related to ageing. A yogi, by making his breath even and stable, acquires control over ageing, while the temperamental, the lascivious and the malefactors reduce their age and invite premature death.

The art of controlling the rate and rhythm of breathing is *pranayam*. *Pranayam* enables regulation of breathing. A person who achieves expertise in *pranayam* is a great person because he can check the degeneration of vital force and the wastage of life energy. *Pranayam* is the greatest invention made by mankind till date. It is a greater achievement than the moon landing and the mars missions, because wherever man may transport his physical being, the inner being

remains unchanged and static at the same place. Mere transportation of body has not much value; value and importance lie in elevation achieved through regulation of breath.

The importance of control over breath is underlined because of the changes it brings about in life. In other words, a change in the rhythm of breathing causes corresponding change in both the condition and the direction of life. Earlier, life appeared a drag and its every moment was heavy. To come out of this painful direction of life looked impossible. But now, with change in the pattern of breathing, all this impossible looking situation and mental condition get changed too. Right rhythm of breath produces enlightening states of *dhyana* and *samadhi* in life. But this regulation of breath should be done with full consciousness. When we are conscious and alert, breathing becomes stable. We can then 'see' this breathing and feel its soothing flow. There is no fixed method for acquiring this skill. We will have to learn to live consciously and also practise simultaneously God's remembrance with every intake of breath. The more this practice is intensified, the more the rhythm of breathing, and with it, the rhythm of life will change for the better.

Breathing is a rhythmic activity. Normally a person at rest makes approximately 16 to 17 respiratory incursions a minute. The rate is higher in infants and in states of excitation. It is lower in sleep and in depressed persons. The depth of the respiratory wave is another factor which varies with emotional states. Breathing becomes shallow when we are frightened or anxious. It deepens with relaxation, pleasure and sleep. But above all, it is the quality of the respiratory movements that determines whether breathing is pleasurable or not. With each breath a wave can be seen to ascend and descend through the body.

- Alexander Lowen

Yoga does not start or end on your mat, but is present in every breath you take.

- Evita Ochel

## Don't Speak Too Much

Silence has immense value in spiritual terms. Silence is described as mental penance, which can transform an ordinary human being into a saint. Without resorting to silence, no seeker can stride towards his spiritual goal. Amongst all spiritual practices, silence has a very special place. Even in worldly affairs and in dealings with others its importance is no less.

Silence increases sincerity in human beings. Everyone respects a sincere person and believes in him. In fact, during family disputes such people often get entrusted with a responsibility to resolve the issues and their decisions are readily accepted by everyone. In the neighborhood too, elderly people who remain silent are regarded truly wise and respectable. This reverence in society is no less valuable and it can be readily earned by just speaking less.

Even though it is not appropriate to derive personal gain from social recognition, the respect earned of others is a big gain in itself. It leads to refinement in one's actions, thoughts, sentiments and inner being and enhances inner discipline which leads to an indescribable feeling of serenity and contentment. It augments the sense of responsibility which is valuable in all fields of life. In addition, there are several more advantages - like a popular person's work never gets stuck, others empathize with him in his sorrows and sufferings, and always give support and help to him readily to the extent possible. These are highly desirable gains to achieve progress in life.

The dignity of a person increases by incorporating silence or developing restraint in talking. A mature glow gets established on the face. A dignified person creates a place for himself not just amongst his acquaintances but also amongst people in foreign countries or new places. It is often seen that in trains or stations or public places people create place for people who quietly stand away to sit; but care much less about the convenience of people who demand and fight for a place. It is common to see that argumentative and aggressive people remain standing, whereas quiet and gentle people get a place to sit. Simple conveniences like this many a time help accomplish great tasks, whereas minor inconveniences, if not directly, definitely create mental stress indirectly.

Restraint in speaking or silence increases the impact of speech. Silence has a great spiritual value, but even if this aspect is set aside and only its usefulness in routine life is looked at, it can be seen that if we speak only at the right time and do not waste our words unnecessarily, the profound power that gets accumulated with restraint in speech also springs forth along with our spoken words. The vocal chords that are well rested produce good quality of sound, which earns respect for the statements that are made, and a sincere, solemn voice generates a very special appeal amongst the listeners.

Unlike glib talkers, listeners suspect much less the veracity of statements made by people who speak less and usually value their statements

**He who does not understand your silence will probably not understand your words. - Elbert Hubbard**

much more. It is of no less importance if people value our statements, as this increases our influence and helps create an atmosphere of trust. By remaining silent an outlook of gentleness and simplicity begins to reside on the face, which creates magnetism not only in expressions, but in the eyes as well. This attraction makes strangers into friends and at times, makes opponents into associates. This also can be regarded as an extraordinary gain.

Nonrestraint in talking makes a person unnecessarily talkative. Such a person keeps blabbering at every minor, unimportant incident and as a result, it is natural that in his speech several negative qualities like excessiveness, exaggeration, worthlessness, impropriety, incongruity etc. get incorporated too. These traits get very quickly identified by others and then they not only stop believing him, but stop paying attention also to what he says. Many try to avoid company of such a person and some even resort to ridiculing and making fun of him. Talkative person earns disrepute of being a liar; and many a time people regard his truthful talk also as falsity. Silence or reticence saves a person from the defect of talkativeness and from the harm caused by it.

Talkativeness many a time leads to vilification of others and causes argumentation, disagreement, dispute and sometimes to bitterness and squabble. Such situations do not arise when one does not talk excessively. A person who practices restraint of speech quietly listens to others and does not get enthused to talk, argue and squabble with them. As a result, no one hates such a person. Instead he often becomes a mediator between two factions and at least for a short time his value increases in the eyes of others.

Silence enhances a person's forbearance. This is because the *pranic* energy that a person wastes in talking excessively gets conserved by staying quiet. This conserved energy increases a person's forbearance. It is a well-known health related fact that one who is weak is less tolerant as well. A strong person doesn't get angry as easily as a weak person. He is able to endure unpleasant incidents without getting perturbed. The practice of silence can surely help enhance physical and mental strength that furthers the quality of forbearance. It is a famous saying that a moment of silence can deter a hundred problems from arising. During a dispute when one of the persons accepts to be quiet, he plays an important role in not aggravating the situation further. In fact, a person, who is habitually reticent and quiet, does not let a situation of dispute to even arise in the first place. While speaking excessively, inappropriate statements can get spoken which can hurt others. Answering back increases anger and in place of resolving the situation, it gets more complex. The side that stays silent during an unpleasant situation often wins the support of the onlookers and earns the distinction of being gentle and less argumentative. Silence increases forbearance; and saving oneself from unnecessary fights and disputes due to this forbearance is a big gain in itself.

The ability to keep secrets is a special gift of silence. A talkative person neither can hide his own secrets and beliefs nor of the others. His uncontrolled tongue cannot rest peacefully till it can blurt out secrets. Instead, a person who has control over speech through silence can easily keep secrets with himself. In high offices and fields like trade and politics maintaining secrecy is very important. A person who remains quiet does not reveal his weaknesses easily. There is

**Silence is a source of Great Strength. - Lao Tzu**

no dearth of people in the world who are wicked, vicious and cheats, who try to extract secrets of others and then cause harm and pain. Practice of silence can very much help save oneself from such people. Many people get cheated in new places, market places, during travels and among strangers only because they mix too easily due to their glibness and also reveal all their secrets.

By not wasting energy in talking and giving importance to silence, thinking capability of mind increases. Intellect becomes relatively stable and balanced. A person with balanced thoughts can patiently reflect during harmful or beneficial situations. An intellect that has been sharpened through silence is very helpful in troublesome and difficult situations. It can be seen that whenever a person wants to think deeply he searches for solitude. He does not speak with others. It is not possible to both speak and think together. A thinker finds worthy solutions to problems only by entering into deep meditative silence. Mahatma Gandhi, for example, used to take up a fast of remaining silent for several days whenever he wanted to find a solution to a very complex problem.

The quality of silence increases concentration and efficiency of work. Whoever works in silence, works with more deftness and accuracy. A talkative person can never complete his task fully and in the right manner. A very effective example of this is in our scriptures

when Maharshi Ved Vyas decided to compose Mahabharata and needed the help of an efficient writer for transcription. He felt that it would not be possible to both contemplate on the episodes of the vast scripture as well as write them. Doing them together would have taken a very long time to complete the scripture. Only if he could speak and someone could transcript, could this great work be conveniently and efficiently finished in time. So he sought support of Lord Ganesh. When the whole Mahabharata had been written, Vyasji asked Lord Ganesh – ‘Ganesh ji, you did not speak at all during the work!’ Lord Ganesh replied – If I kept saying something in between, then definitely this task would have become not just difficult but impossible. Talking drains a person’s capacity to work, whereas working silently enhances interest in the task and it gets completed more quickly.

So if we think carefully, we would realize that by giving importance to silence we not only gain spiritually, but also gain aplenty even in worldly affairs. Silence is a divine attribute which must be inculcated. This however, does not mean that a person should not talk at all. The main intent behind extolling silence is that one must speak only as much as is necessary. Not talking unnecessarily and not gossiping needlessly are also regarded as being silent. We must enhance our strength by keeping a tight leash on our tongue and adopting thriftiness in our speech. This would yield great benefits in our lives.

In the silence of the heart God speaks. If you face God in prayer and silence, God will speak to you. Then you will know that you are nothing. It is only when you realize your nothingness, your emptiness, that God can fill you with Himself. Souls of prayer are souls of great silence.

- Mother Teresa

Nothing strengthens authority so much as silence. - Leonardo da Vinci



# Let the Mind of Historians be Free from Religious Bias

History is a science. It is not an imaginary tale from a fictional world. Imagination plays a key role in fiction. All the efforts of the writer are focused on making the story interesting for the readers. History does not belong to this category where facts can be manipulated at one's own will to make it exciting for the readers. History is a science that relies on logic, truth and proven facts. In contrary to these principles, incorrect depiction of history can become the cause for hostility in the society.

It is the history of the middle ages that has poisoned the society to view religious communities in negative light. The primary cause for this misrepresentation comes from British historians Miller and Smith who filled the history of middle ages with the strife and conflict of religious sects. Other Indian historians blindly followed suit and continued exaggerating these falsities. As a result of this, the so-called historians incessantly tried to prove that the only thing that transpired in the whole of medieval period were the clashes between Hindus and Muslims. The good will and cooperation that existed between the two communities was ignored and their differences were brought into focus by the historians.

The description of the middle ages by the historians is filled with incidents of conflicts between Hindus and Muslims. If you turn the pages of a history book, you will read about the way in which Muslims massacred Hindus and vice versa. You are then left to wonder if nothing

creative or constructive ever happened between these two religions.

In fact, the truth of that era was that it was a time of intense political struggle. And this political struggle has been conveniently labeled as religious conflict. Also, any clashes that happened for financial reasons were also given religious color.

Mahmud Ghazni was from Ghazni in central Asia. He was no preacher of religion. He was just a ruthless raider and plunderer of wealth. Between the years 1000 and 1027, he attacked India 17 times. Punjab, Mathura, Gujarat, etc were the most affected regions. The reason for waging a war was not for political or religious reasons. His only objective was to loot the prosperous provinces of India. This was why he looted the precious stones, gold and diamonds from the Somnath temple.

On the contrary, Akbar, Shah Jahan and Dara Shikoh were very generous. You cannot take the name of Mohammed Ghazni alongside these emperors. During Akbar's regime many temples and ghats were built. Many Hindu scholars, musicians and army commanders occupied prestigious positions in Akbar's court. He included the Rajputs during his governance and held them in great respect. Birbal was his favorite and all of us are familiar with the stories of Akbar and Birbal. Akbar loved music. Hence Tan-Sen was given an eminent position in his court. Akbar appointed Raja Todar Mal in the most trustworthy and important role of Finance

**The first duty of a historian is to be on guard against his own sympathies.**

- James Anthony Froude

minister. Shah Jahan allowed his elder son Dara Shikoh to study the Upanishads.

The poets like Rahim and Raskhan composed many devotional songs on Lord Krishna. These poets not only gave prominence to the emotion of Bhakti in their poetry but also held the Lord in high pedestal. By his devotion to Lord Krishna, Raskhan also proclaimed that there cannot be any differences based on caste, creed or religion when there is flow of pure emotion. Similarly, many faithful warriors in Shivaji's and Rana Pratap's army were Muslims. Even the general public lived in harmony. There was an atmosphere of brotherhood, cooperation and cultural exchange. Of course, political conflicts were also present.

There have always been exchanges with respect to various aspects of living and culture. Gulab Jamun, seviya and pulao of Muslims became favorite foods for Hindus. Similarly, they also adopted clothes like Kurta, Pyjama and Sherwani. In this manner, they both influenced

positively and inspired each other in many aspects. However, this harmony, cooperation and brotherhood were ignored by the historians. Their one-sided narration focusing on the conflicts between the two religions ended up creating the history.

The pride of our country, Shivaji Maharaj won innumerable battles, won many forts, but never harmed any mosque. He set an unparalleled example of integrity of character after he won a battle with a Muslim army (see the story in the box on this page). Shivaji always tried to establish harmony between Hindus and Muslims. His war was only against oppression and tyranny.

The solution to this historical problem can be obtained when the historians adopt an unbiased perspective and be free from religious predisposition. History should be comprised of facts and be free from fictional narratives. Indian historians should take this bold step and accept the challenge.

Once Shivaji's army defeated a division of the great Muslim army. Shivaji's commander was supposed to bring the defeated Muslim leader before his king; but before he did so, he brought the Muslim leader's daughter, Gauhar Bano. Shivaji's commander said, "O King, now that you have defeated this Muslim leader, you are entitled to seize all his possessions. That includes his daughter also. I would be so happy if you would take her as your wife."

King Shivaji said, "I should marry her?"

"She is such a beautiful young girl," said the commander.

King Shivaji looked at the girl and said, "It is true, I have never seen anyone as beautiful as you are! I wish my mother could have been as beautiful as you are! Then perhaps I would have had more beautiful features. You are like my daughter. You will not be harmed. You can go back to your father."

**What is history, but a fable agreed upon? - Napoleon**

## **Guru Guides the Disciple to Reflect on the Self**

Lord Shrikrishna has done a wonderful job of creating a longing for self-knowledge in Arjuna. That is why, in spite of denying engaging in war, Arjuna has come to his shelter seeking *tatva-gyan* (the essence of knowledge) which can make him progress spiritually and also make clear to him the meaning of *Yugdharma*. Whenever Guru or the Lord, be they Virjananda, Ramkrishna Paramhansa or Shriram Sharma Acharya, have sensed such a mental state of the disciple, they have thoroughly cleaned his inner being. Scolding of Guru is good for the disciple. How can a cloth be colored without washing it properly? The destiny of the disciple cannot be changed without this operation. Sometimes, we are in a dilemma why Guruji is scolding us when we have fully surrendered unto him. This is a natural reaction. Many of us disciples are fortunate to have received his scolding. Had it not been so, then possibly our egos and prejudices would have remained as such; and we would not have achieved that spiritual progress which we see now. If that progress has not been achieved by some of us, then perhaps we have not contemplated on the cause of scolding or our egos or prejudices are becoming obstacles in our progress. Arjuna has listened to Shrikrishna's scolding – '*kutastwa kashmalmidam vishame samupasthitam*' (2<sup>nd</sup> chapter, 2<sup>nd</sup> shloka). Now that he has surrendered and is keen to know *tatva-gyan*, Lord teaches him the same. His teachings should be imbibed by all of us. This knowledge has been guiding the human race since time immemorial; and in future too, it will liberate humanity trapped

in a dilemma. Very often, we are disheartened by small obstacles, physical ailments, family disputes, etc; and we are unable to find the solutions of the same. Then, the teachings of the Gita from 11<sup>th</sup> shloka (of 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter) onwards give proper guidance. Lord says –

***Ashochyananvashochastwam  
pragyavadanshcha bhashashe |  
Gatasoonagatasoonashcha  
nausochanti panditah || (2/11)***

That is – You are mourning for those who are not worthy of sorrow; yet speaking like one knowledgeable. The learned neither laments for the dead nor the living.

Lord says 'You are talking like the knowledgeable, but behaving like an ignorant. You are thinking what you should not think.' The so called wise people are expert in talking about the ideals but when it comes to imbibing them in their own lives, they prove to be laggards. It is the reasoning / logic that comes in the way of total surrender. That is why prior to imparting the knowledge, Lord tries to melt Arjuna's ego by scolding him. Lord is omniscient, Sadguru (spiritual teacher), transparent as well as seer. He is saying to Arjuna – 'Your arguments are seen lofty and you are talking like a learned scholar; but at the same time, you are also saying that you can live by begging but cannot fight in war.' It is not possible for Arjuna to live by begging because he is not an ascetic. By nature, he is a warrior.

**Those who can control their senses can acquire the sovereignty of the whole world.**

– Vidura (Mahabharata)

Ascetics alone are eligible for taking alms, that too when their renunciation is effulgent. The saffron clothes of *sannyasis* (ascetics) are representative of the flames of fire. ‘*Viraj homa*’ (sacrificial rite for renunciation) is done for adopting *sannyas* (renunciation). A *sannyasi* does his own *shraddha-tarpan* (the rites that are done after death) before adopting *sannyas*; and then forgets his original identity (name, family, etc). There was time when begging by such ascetics was considered auspicious. Mahatma Buddha too followed this tradition. But Pujya Gurudev was of the view – ‘The *dharma* of present times – the neo-*sannyas* of our times is *Parivrajya* – liberating the society from the shackles of suffering and decline by donating our time and resources.’ This can be easily understood in the context of Arjuna’s stand on begging. In the present times, we can follow *Yugdharma* and fulfill the need of our times by becoming a *parivrajak* of Pujya Gurudev’s Mission.

We are talking in the context of skillful arguments of Arjuna for not participating in the war and his scolding by Yogeshwar Shrikrishna. Lord says – You should not grieve. ‘Certainly never at any time did I not exist, nor you, nor all these kings (for whom you are worrying) and certainly never shall we cease to exist in future (12<sup>th</sup> shloka)’. He says further – ‘Just as in physical body of the embodied being (soul) there is a process of change from childhood to youth and old age; in the same way, there is transmigration from one body to another. In this regard, wise are not deluded (13<sup>th</sup> shloka)’.

Lord is trying to liberate his disciple from attachments by explaining him the difference between soul and the body. Every Guru explains to his disciple the continuity of life journey by

making him forget the memories of the past and focus on the present. Guru knows our past, present and future and the ever-changing trends of the world. Therefore he tries to convey the message that one should not get attached to material things. In fact, without liberating from the attachment, it is not possible to comprehend the essence of spirituality.

Param Pujya Gurudev too used to hit on our shackles of attachment. Whenever someone would talk to him about joining him at Shantikunj, he would say – ‘If you can break the bonds of attachment in one go with your family, then only you should think of coming here. Otherwise, you will stay here and your mind will roam with your relatives.’ Whenever any volunteer would request to him for leave for attending the wedding of some relative or visiting some sick person, then Pujyavar would say – ‘Why are you going to participate in the marriage of son/daughter of chachaji, mausaji, etc? Now you have become *babaji*. You have a bigger responsibility. Even

*Sahasaa vidadheeta na  
kriyaamavivekah paramaapadaam  
padam*

*Vrinute hi vimrishyakaarinam  
gunalubdhaah swayameva sampadah*

Do not embark on an endeavor on the spur of the moment without analyzing its pros and cons. The absence of discrimination is the cause of great misfortune. Fortune, ever greedy for good qualities in men, embraces those who engage themselves in an endeavor after consultations and discussions with the men of knowledge.

–Mahakavi Bhairavi

The wise knowing the instability of youth and beauty, of life and treasure-hoards, of prosperity and the company of the loved ones, never covet them. – Shaunak (Mahabharata)

though you are going with your expenses, you are not trying to realize the value of time. Stay here and ask your relatives to visit Shantikunj for the blessings. They will be overjoyed; your money and mission's time will also be saved. If you attend the wedding at the mission's expense, then you are stabbing me. If you wish to visit some sick relative, then my son, I will pray for him. Are you a doctor who will cure him? Now you should keep away from fulfilling social obligations.' All this has been mentioned here to remind all that in order to walk on the path of selfless social service, one has to break the bonds of attachment and think of the soul instead of the body. This is the point that Pujya Gurudev emphasized from time to time. In the context of Yug Gita, if we can understand even today the pain of Gurudev and break the bonds of attachments and consider the global fraternity (Gayatri Pariwar) as our family, we can give shape to Pujya Gurudev's dreams of bright future. From the dialogue of Shrikrishna and Arjuna, if this fact can be digested by our central / provincial / local volunteers, then alone writing of these lines should be considered meaningful.

After hitting on the bonds of attachment of Arjuna, the Lord expresses his reaction to Arjuna's statement of grief – 'O Kunti Putra! Only the interaction of the senses and sense objects give cold, heat, pleasure and pain. These things are temporary, appearing and disappearing; therefore try to tolerate them (14<sup>th</sup> shloka)'. Earlier, Arjuna has requested the Lord (8<sup>th</sup> shloka) to suggest him the way of overcoming the grief that is drying up his senses. For this, the Lord replies that sorrows and joys go on coming and going; therefore, one should develop the habit of bearing them. Further, He says – 'That person of wise judgement equipoised in happiness and distress, who cannot be disturbed by these is certainly eligible for salvation (15<sup>th</sup> shloka)'. In 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> shlokas, He says – 'But know that by whom this body is pervaded, is indestructible. No one is able to cause the destruction of the imperishable soul. The embodied soul is eternal in existence; indestructible and infinite, only the material body is factually perishable. Therefore, fight O Arjuna!'

[To be continued]

### What is the meaning of Guru?

Guru - from gu (darkness), and ru (light) — is a person who is regarded as having great knowledge, wisdom and authority in a certain area, and uses it to guide others. Literally a preceptor who shows others knowledge (light) and destroys ignorance (darkness). The guru is seen as a sacred conduit for wisdom and guidance; and finding a Sadguru (True Guru) is often held to be a prerequisite for attaining self-realization. Literally, a Guru is a teacher. The word Guru means "heavy" or "deep," thus a Guru is a person "heavy" or "deep" in knowledge. Brahmanda Puran says - "Guru is Shiva sans his three eyes, Vishnu sans his four arms and Brahma sans his four heads. He is the Supreme Lord in human form". Indeed, 'Guru' is no less than a God.

Our desires are never gratified by indulgence. On the other hand, with indulgence, they only flame up like fire with libations of sacrificial butter. – Yayati (Mahabharata)

## The Pilgrimage - 4

Let me tell you a time when my love had to be non-verbal. I was trying to help a lady who had been so seriously ill that she could no longer drive her car. She wanted to get to her elder sister's house for a few weeks of bed rest so I offered to drive her there. I still had my driver's license at the time. On the way she said, "Peace, I wish you could stay with me for a while—my elder sister is so domineering. I just *dread* being alone with her." I said, "All right, I have a few extra days. I'll stay with you for a little while."

When we were turning into her sister's yard she said, "Peace, I really don't know how my elder sister is going to accept you."

She was quite right about her elder sister. When her sister took one look at me with my lettered tunic she ordered me out of the house. But it was late at night and she was so afraid of the dark that she said, "Not tonight, you may sleep on the sofa tonight, but the first thing in the morning you must leave!"

Then she hurried her younger sister off to bed way upstairs somewhere. Well, this was worse than I thought it might be. I certainly didn't want to leave my friend in this situation but what could I do? So I looked around to see if there was anything that might permit me to communicate with the elder sister. I looked into the kitchen and there was a mountain of dirty dishes and no dishwasher, so I washed all the dishes. Then I cleaned up the kitchen and lay down and slept for a few hours.

In the morning the elder sister was in tears and she asked me to stay. She said, "Of course, you understand I was so tired last night I didn't know what I was saying." And we had a wonderful time together before I left them. You see, it just gave me the chance to put my little message into practice. Practice is good; practice makes a person perfect, they say.

During my travels a saloon-keeper called me into his tavern to give me some food, and while I was eating he asked, "How do you feel in a place like this?"

"I know that all human beings are God's children," I replied. "Even when they are not acting that way, I have faith that they could, and I love them for what they could be."

As I rose to leave I noticed a man with a drink in his hand was also on his feet. When he caught my eye he smiled a little, and I smiled at him. "You smiled at me," he said in surprise. "I should think you wouldn't even speak to me but you smiled at me." I smiled again. "I'm not here to judge my fellow human beings," I told him. "I am here to love and serve." Suddenly he was kneeling at my feet and saying, "Everyone else judged me, so I defended myself. You didn't judge me, so now I judge myself. I'm a no-good worthless sinner! I've been squandering my money on liquor. I've been mistreating my family. I've been going from bad to worse!" I put my hand on his shoulder. "You are God's child," I said, "and you could act that way."

**If you realized how powerful your thoughts are, you would never think a negative thought. - Peace Pilgrim**

He looked with disgust at the drink in his hand, and then hurled it against the bar, shattering the glass. His eyes met mine. "I swear to you I'll never touch that stuff again," he exclaimed. "Never!" And there was a new light in his eyes as he walked through the door with steady steps.

I even know the happy ending to that story. About a year and a half later I heard from a woman in that town. She said as far as anyone knew the man kept his promise. He never touched liquor again. He now has a good job. He is getting along well with his family and has joined a church.

When you approach others in judgment they will be on the defensive. When you are able to approach them in a kindly, loving manner without judgment they will tend to judge themselves and be transformed.

On my pilgrimage a lot of cars stopped and people invited me to ride. Some thought walking meant hitchhiking. I told them I did not cheat God—you don't cheat about counting miles on a pilgrimage.

I remember one day as I walked along the highway a very nice car stopped and the man inside said to me, "How wonderful that you are following your calling!" I replied, "I certainly think that everyone should be doing what he or she feels is the right thing to do."

He then began telling me what he felt motivated toward, and it was a good thing that needed doing. I got quite enthusiastic about it and took it for granted that he was doing it. I said, "That's wonderful! How are you getting along with it?"

And he answered, "Oh, I'm not doing it. That kind of work doesn't *pay* anything."

I shall never forget how desperately unhappy that man was. In this materialistic age we have such a false criterion by which to measure success. We measure it in terms of dollars, in terms of material things. But happiness and inner peace do not lie in that direction. If you know but do not do, you are a very unhappy person indeed.

I had another roadside experience when a fine car stopped with a well-dressed couple inside who began to talk to me. I started to explain to them what I was doing. Suddenly, to my amazement, the man burst into tears. He said, "I have done nothing for peace and you have to do so much!"

### Three Basic Truths

Three things have a limited threshold:  
Time, pain, and death.  
While truth, love, and knowledge –  
Are boundless.

Three things are needed  
For humanity to co-exist:  
Truth, peace and basic needs.  
Everything else -  
Is irrelevant.

-Suzy Kassem

Life is like a mirror. Smile at it and it smiles back at you. - Peace Pilgrim

And then there was the time when another man stopped his car to talk with me. He looked at me, not unkindly, but with extreme surprise and curiosity, as though he had just glimpsed a live dinosaur. “In this day and age,” he exclaimed, “with all the wonderful opportunities the world has to offer, what under the sun made you get out and walk a pilgrimage for peace?”

“In this day and age,” I answered, “when humanity totters on the brink of a nuclear war of annihilation, it is not surprising that one life is dedicated to the cause of peace—but rather it is surprising that many lives are not similarly dedicated.”

When I ended my first cross-country walk I felt so thankful that I had not failed to do what I had been called to do. I either said or thought to myself, “Isn’t it wonderful that God can do something through me!”

Afterward I slept at the Grand Central Station railroad terminal in New York City.

When I came into the state between sleep and wakefulness, I had an impression that an indescribably beautiful voice was speaking words of encouragement: “*You are my beloved daughter in whom I am well pleased.*” When I came into full wakefulness it seemed as though a celestial orchestra had just finished playing in the station, with its echoes still lingering on. I walked out into the cold morning, but I felt warm. I walked along the cement sidewalk, but I felt I was walking on clouds. The feeling of living in harmony with divine purpose has never left me.

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There once was a king who offered a prize to the artist who would paint the best picture of peace. Many artists tried. The king looked at all the pictures and selected two out of them.

One picture was of a calm lake. The lake was a perfect mirror for peaceful towering mountains all around it. Overhead was a blue sky with fluffy white clouds. All who saw this picture thought that it was a perfect picture of peace.

The other picture had mountains, too. But these were rugged and bare. Above was an angry sky, from which rain fell and in which lightning played. Down the side of the mountain tumbled a foaming waterfall. This did not look peaceful at all.

But when the king looked closely, he saw behind the waterfall a tiny bush growing in a crack in the rock. In the bush a mother bird had built her nest. There, in the midst of the rush of angry water, sat the mother bird on her nest - in perfect peace.

The king chose the second picture for prize. Why? “Because,” explained the king, “peace does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. Peace means to be in the midst of all those things and still be calm in your heart.”

When you find peace within yourself, you become the kind of person who can live at peace with others. - Peace Pilgrim



## 'Akhand Jyoti' Begins Its Journey - 1

### **Changed routine and a new resolve**

He was contemplating that meditation, worship or prayer should be an integral part of the daily routine of (his future) Ashram. A code of conduct should also be established. As far as possible, it should be followed by the inmates of the Ashram. No rule should be flouted due to sheer laziness. After staying for two days in Sri Aurobindo Ashram and studying its routine, Shriram noted down his experiences as well as his reactions. These were published in the form of an article titled '*Naye yug ka vidhan*' (The Constitution of New Era) in 'Sainik'. Some parts of the article were published elsewhere also. The zeal that was awakened in Sri Aurobindo Ashram about the integration of life and spirituality kept Shriram's mind busy all the time during his travel back home.

After returning to Agra, Shriram got engaged in his work as usual, but there was a passionate urge to do something new. After returning from the South, due to the gloom overshadowing the political atmosphere, he started realizing that it would not result in any substantial achievement if he remained stuck to the newspaper. The reasoning was that newspapers provided only the information. At the most they could charge the people with emotion for some time, but the real purpose was not served by that.

The inner-self of Shriram asked – "What purpose do you want to achieve?" No answer came. There was silence for a very long time. The dilemma continued for many days. On the other side, the

political activities were almost dead. Only an illusive enthusiasm was visible. There was no matter worth reporting in the newspaper. Congress had formed governments in the provinces; but the truth was that the British Rule and the Congress, both, were dependent on each other. In other words, both of them were in a dilemma, because neither was trustful of this partnership.

The newspapers started writing that both the sides should forget the past and trust each other. As the two sides were now working together, the mutual antagonism was gradually softening up. The personal secretary to Mahatma Gandhi wrote a letter to Sri G. D. Birla, in which it was mentioned – 'Contemplate on the fact that Mr. Garret, the commissioner of Ahmedabad, goes to station to receive Morarji Bhai and that he travels with him in the third class compartment for a long distance.'

### **Inspiration from *Akhand Deepak***

This letter was published in the newspapers. Congress volunteers were glad to read such stories. But Shriram was not enthused. He considered this success to be illusory, that was bound to fall like a castle of sand. By the time September (1938) arrived, he became very anxious. *Ashwin Navratri* was to commence the next day. In the evening, before going to sleep, he took a resolve to conduct special *puja* during *Navratri*. He also prayed to the Lord to lead him out of this dilemma. Next morning he got up and, after his daily chores, sat down for *Sadhana*. He concentrated his vision on *Akhand Deepak* that

Nothing can grow forever. Dissolution is needed for new growth to happen. - Eckhart Tolle

was lighted twelve years back. He immersed himself in its light. When the formal *Upasana* was over, he again looked at the *Akhand Deepak*. After that the sequence of words that came to his mind is like this: *Jyoti* (flame), *Deepak ki Jyoti* (flame of a lamp), *Akhand Deepak* (uninterruptedly lighted lamp), and *Deepak ki Akhand Jyoti* (uninterrupted flame of the lamp). Then this thought deepened – “A magazine titled ‘Akhand Jyoti’ has to be launched. The lighted *Deepak* established in the *puja*-room enlightens its ambience directly as well as indirectly. ‘Akhand Jyoti’, the title that has come to my mind with the inspiration of the *Akhand Deepak* should enlighten the world.”

Withdrawing himself from the world of news, Shriram decided to publish ‘Akhand Jyoti’ magazine; and within a few days also informed his friends and well-wishers about this step. The wages that he received when he was working for ‘Sainik daily’ were not so much that he could save anything. Further, the liberty of few years that was given by the spiritual guide for participating in freedom struggle was also over. So he again adopted the strict discipline in his *Mahapurashcharana Sadhana* as he had done before. *Japa-Tapa* was continuing as usual. However, he became stricter regarding food, daily routine and social contacts. Due to all this, there was no time or means for earning additional resources.

### **Taiji got mental peace**

Shriram went to his village, Aanwalkheda, and informed Taiji about his new resolve / program. She only asked – “Did your Gurudev ask you to do it?” Shriram nodded his head in affirmation. Taiji reproached lightly – ‘Now what will happen to *Swarajya* (independence)? Will you not work for it now?’

“Mother! We will certainly get *Swarajya* in a few years. Now I have to work for *Ramrajya* (perfect world). Gurudev is asking me to work for it.” – Shriram replied. On hearing this Taiji started singing softly the verses of Ram Charit Manas – “*Daihi devik bhautik tapa, Ramraj nahi kahuhi vyapa.*” (Meaning: In *Ramrajya*, there is no suffering of any kind to anyone.) Then she said – “Isn’t the same *Ramrajya*?” – Saying this she blessed him and thus permitted him to prepare for the publication of the magazine. She was happy due to another reason also; and it was that Shriram would no longer be entangled in *Andolan – Dharnas*, etc. The strenuous running about here and there would stop and there would be no worry of police raids or arrests. Taiji said – “My blessings are also with you for the task the Lord has assigned you. I have very little desire and that is already known to you.”

Shriram said – “Yes, Yes; I know very well. Neither I am leaving you nor will I take you out of the land of Thakurji (Lord Krishna).” Whenever a new topic arose in which there seemed some possibility of going somewhere, then there was only one insistence of Taiji that Shriram should not become an ascetic. This time again, she was trying to drive home the same point; but before she could begin, Shriram repeated his resolve. He stayed in Aanwalkheda for three more days. There was no person with whom he could discuss about his new plans. From this point of view, this was an unfavorable condition; but from the point of view of solitary contemplation, self-reflection and conceiving original ideas, this was an ideal situation.

### **Outline of Akhand Jyoti started taking shape**

While making the plan, Shriram filled several pages. When he thought on all the aspects, like

It is always darkest before the dawn. – Proverb

the contents of the magazine, writing, editing, printing, distribution, etc, it appeared that the task was not easy and that it would require some companions or co-workers; and these companions had to be such that they had some experience. The new venture could not be carried on with the help of neo-learners. The solution to this came from within – “We will see after reaching Agra”. Then another thought followed, “Due to the slackness in the Press-world, some workers might be searching new jobs. They can be employed.” This train of thoughts was interrupted by Taiji. She said – “I am observing from yesterday. What are you engrossed in? Is there any problem?”

“No Tai” – He said – “In fact my mind is tired and hence I am silent.”

Taiji said – “Then take rest. Don’t worry too much about ushering in of *Ramrajya*. All the resources will be collected. I will arrange. When will this property of the ancestors come into worthwhile use?” She kept her hand on the forehead of Shriram and shook his head slightly. Then she sat in front of him and said – “Will you take Bahu (daughter-in-law) and Om (grandson) with you?”

Shriram looked towards mother’s face. Taiji said, “Till now there were many co-workers in the press. So there was no problem. But when you

start new work, you will be alone. Who will share your load?” Taiji paused for a few moments and then said again – “Do it like this. Take Bahu and Shraddha (younger daughter) with you and leave Om and Daya (elder daughter) here. I will take care of them. Shraddha is very young, so she will need her mother.”

### **Preparation for going to Agra**

He didn’t reply to Taiji. So she said further – “You might be thinking that I promised you to take care of the children till the independence is achieved; but now I am changing. No! I stand firm on my resolve. Bahu will live in Agra and take care of you and will represent me.”

Shriram listened to this talk also silently. He didn’t resist. His silence was taken as acceptance of Taiji’s proposal. Accordingly Taiji started collecting at one place all the necessary household items like ration, utensils, bedding, clothing, etc. Shriram realized that the preparations were being made for his shifting to Agra with family. The space in the house, where he stayed in Agra earlier, was not sufficient for the full family. Further, one extra room was required for publishing ‘Akhand Jyoti’ magazine. The advice of Taiji to keep wife and younger daughter with him sounded good, but the arrangement of a house with more space was to be done. So he requested Taiji to wait for some time. Taiji agreed.

**[To be continued]**

“One of the great liabilities of history is that all too many people fail to remain awake through great periods of social change. Every society has its protectors of status quo and its fraternities of the indifferent who are notorious for sleeping through revolutions. Today, our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant and to face the challenge of change.”  
- Martin Luther King, Jr.

When you do things from your soul, you feel a river moving in you, a joy.  
- Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi

### Let's Focus on 'Now'

A fourth century (BCE) Indian teacher, philosopher, economist and royal adviser, Chanakya, has given us a great advice – ‘We should not fret for what is past, nor should we be anxious about the future; men of discernment deal only with the present moment’. The precious moment of the present is hidden in – ‘Now’, i.e., the existing moment. However, the mind does not stay in the present. Instead, it wanders either in the memories of the past (which has already gone, which has moved out of our hands and which will never ever return) or in the dreams of future (which is yet to come).

The mind lost in the pages of the past has already lost the past but continues to lose even the present, because it cannot live in the present moment. Another thing, if the memories of the past are good, pleasant and golden, they become the source of inspiration for the present. The present can learn from that golden past, get inspired from it and can make the optimal utilization of the present moment. But this happens rarely, as our mind does not remember the sweet memories of the past so much as it remains stuck to the bitter memories. Whenever the mind turns backwards, it brings the sad and remorseful memories and makes even the present unbearable.

The actual utility of the present moment lies in living it to the fullest. Living consciously involves being genuine; it involves listening and responding to others honestly and openly; it involves being in the moment (Sidney Poitier). However, the nature

of mind is either to turn backwards or to look beyond. It is easier for it to turn backwards because it has already lived that moment. Otherwise, it dreams about the future, which is yet to come. There is not much difficulty in dreaming for the future also, as the mind does not actually have to do anything for this. Neither is there any struggle involved, nor is there any challenge. It only has to dream idly. It is easy to dream about the future and when there is ease, when nothing needs to be done, the mind gets lost in various fantasies and imaginations and loses its present.

Whether it is the delusion of past memories or fantasies of the future, both take us away from action and hard work. For making endeavors and getting reward from hard work, one needs to live in the present. The wise and diligent people neither remain wandering in their past moments nor are busy in dreaming about the future. Instead, they focus only on their present. This makes them healthy, wealthy and wise. Lord Buddha has rightly said - “The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, worry about the future, or anticipate troubles, but to live in the present moment wisely and earnestly.”

One can make proper use of the present moment only if he can utilize all his capabilities and potentials in the present. Failing to do this would push the present into the deep pit of the past. Soon, existing moment would become the companion of the past. But, the wise and hardworking people make its best utilization before it becomes a part of past.

**Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today.  
Let us begin. - Mother Teresa**

One needs to live in the present for making efforts. There is no other alternative apart from this. Whatever may be the state of life, one has to live and struggle with it and accept its complexities and realities. One, who runs away from the challenges, struggles and adversities of the present moment, is an escapist. An escapist wants to avoid facing the problems of the present moment rather than trying to solve them. He never understands that his problems would become even more complex if he would run away from them. The reality is that not even a single step can be taken forward without solving the complexities and problems of the present moment.

By running away from the present, one remains in the night of dreams. In this night, he can fantasize many happy dreams and run away here and there in intoxication, but he cannot see the sunrise and the golden radiance of awakening. Dreams are not only confined to sleep. Our mind remains swimming in these dreams even when we are awake. Hence, it keeps on swinging between the past and future. Actually, both the past and future are grave intoxicants for the mind, which make it

drowsy and prevent it from overcoming it or gain consciousness. The mind remains stewed in this intoxication and this becomes the medium for escaping from the reality of life.

One who can liberate himself from these illusions is able to understand the glory and significance of the present. The moment of the present is meant for making efforts, being awakened, attaining new life and being liberated from the illusions. In this direction, let us follow the advice of an Indian Sanskrit playwright and poet, Kalidasa:

*Look to this day,  
for it is life, the very breath of life.  
In its brief course lie  
all the realities of existence,  
the bliss of growth, the glory of action,  
the splendor of beauty.  
For yesterday is only a memory  
and tomorrow is but a vision.  
But today, well-lived  
makes every yesterday a memory of happiness  
and every tomorrow a vision of hope.  
Look well, therefore, to this day.*

“Mindfulness has to do with waking up and living in harmony with oneself and with the world. It is examining who we are, constantly questioning our views of the world and our place in it, while cultivating appreciation for the fullness of each moment we are alive. It is the direct opposite of taking life for granted. It is empowering as well, because paying attention in this way opens channels to deep reservoirs of creativity, intelligence, imagination, clarity, determination, choice, and wisdom within us.”

**- Jon Kabat-Zinn**

Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future. - John F. Kennedy

## Are We Heading Towards Collective Death?

War statistics have revealed that the cost of killing a person in war is increasing more and more with time. In the times of Julius Caesar only rupees five had to be spent to kill a soldier. In Napoleon's time the expense went up to rupees two thousand per enemy soldier. Data say that during First World War America spent rupees one and half lakh to kill a soldier. In the Second World War the expense went up ten times more. During the Vietnam War, the average cost to kill an enemy soldier was raised to rupees thirteen lakh. In subsequent wars like Gulf war, Iraq war, Afghanistan war etc. all the previous records have been shattered and billions and billions of rupees have been incinerated for causing destruction. This intense craving for war, akin to that of demon Bhasmasur, is keen to kill and destroy others as well as ourselves. Modern equipment and weapons of war are regarded as great achievements of science but it can be clearly seen how lethal and destructive all these are becoming.

Progression of life takes a lot of effort, but its destruction is much easier. It is possible to burn down the whole village with a match stick, or take away someone's eyesight with a pin. Human intellect today is weaving its own

tale of destruction. Collective destruction may not happen but even then it seems that entire humanity is getting ready for suicide.

The plans for nuclear war are being made for this very reason. Rising population, destruction of forests and the greenery is forcing the atmosphere to warm up and spit fire. Even the sun seems to have got angry over humanity. Some researchers say that the sun is getting cooler and will cause ice to form on the earth and cover it with a white blanket. Another group says that the sun is getting warmer and it will melt all the ice in the poles, raising the level of water in the seas. Climatologists also believe that ice age will return on the earth after some time, but before that climate will get hotter and hotter and burn down the whole earth.

Whichever group's predictions may come true, it is no less worrying that today's conditions have deteriorated so much that the future of humanity is in grave danger. Our shortsighted, immature steps are the ones that are responsible for this state. If we take the right decisions even now and begin to walk on the path of respecting nature, it would be easily possible to change these complex circumstances. We would then begin to tread not towards a collective death, but a collective life.

“Anger and hatred cannot bring harmony. The noble task of arms control and disarmament cannot be accomplished by confrontation and condemnation. Hostile attitudes only serve to heat up the situation, whereas a true sense of respect gradually cools down what otherwise could become explosive. We must recognize the frequent contradictions between short-term benefit and long-term harm.”

- Dalai Lama

I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones. - Albert Einstein

## Know the Essentials before Expecting Great Results of *Sādhanā* -II

(Translation of excerpts of some discourses given by Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya as part of constructive programs of mass-awakening/social upliftment - continued from previous issue)

*Friends,*

I hope now you understand that *siddhi* (extraordinary attainments, supernormal potentials) through *sādhanā* is a gradual process which begins with sincere practice of self-restraint and *upāsanā*<sup>1</sup>. For practical training and experience of these you are most welcome to participate in the *sādhanā-shiviras* here (at Shantikunj, Haridwar, India).

Today, I will give you some guidelines to help you begin in proper direction. Practice of *upāsanā* essentially incorporates the following five steps. Make these an integral part of your routine. The principles behind these 'spiritual exercises' are universal. They are found in every school of faith (though under different terminologies) as they lay the foundational support along every path to spiritual ascent.

***Japa* – A universal mode of devotional prayer:**

*Japa* means repeated rhythmic chanting of *mantras* (Hymns) or prayers that were initially realized or uttered by great saints. It is integral to religious practices and devotional support in almost every religion. You can find the devout Hindus, Muslims, Christians holding the rosary and doing *japa* as preached in their scriptures. The Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Jews, Zoroastrians

(Parsees), Arya Samajis, etc also practice *japa* in one form or the other. Thus *japa* is a universal mode of *upāsanā*. As recommended by our *rishis*, for spiritual enlightenment, you should sincerely do the *japa* of the great *Gayatri Mantra*.

Only thing you must remember is that it should not be a mechanical action of moving the tongue and lips. Your *prāṇa* (life-force, vital spiritual energy) should flow with its rhythm. This will happen if you do the *japa* with mental and emotional engrossment, and with the spirit of intrinsic joy and unperturbed faith. The other four modes of *upāsanā-sādhanā*<sup>2</sup>, which I am going to discuss now, will lend the necessary support in your spiritual ascent and thus augment your worthiness for higher-level *sādhanās*. Similar to *japa*, these methods do not emanate from any particular doctrine and therefore do not belong only to a particular cult, religion, or school of faith.

***Dhyāna* is also universal**

Your mind should be deeply focused in the thoughts of divinity by way of *dhyāna* (meditation). Meditation is indeed a powerful and universally acclaimed method of soothing the mind and enhancing mental concentration. Most people need an object for imagination on which to focus the mind. As part of *upāsanā*, the

**Man is not the slave of circumstances. He is the creator, controller and master of them.**

– Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya

devotees meditate upon an image of their prime deity – such as manifestations of goddess Durga, Saraswati, gods Shiva, Krishna, etc. ‘Brilliance of natural light’ is regarded as a universal symbol of divine glow and spiritual eminence. This is referred as “*Khudā Kā Nūra*” in Islam, as “Light of God” in Christianity, as “*Ātma Jyoti*” in Hindu Philosophy. All religions, all schools of philosophy affirm its importance.

Meditation on the rising sun and its inspiring glow is recommended with the *japa* of Gayatri Mantra. Glow of the rising sun is regarded as a universal symbol of Gayatri – the Eternal, Omnipotent Origin and Ultimate Fulfilment of all knowledge, preeminent divine virtues and powers. Those, who think that “Gayatri”, because of being referred by a Sanskrit name, or because of being worshiped in the deity form of divine mother in Vedic Culture, belongs to Hindu Dharma, are ignorant. The Gayatri Mantra is universal; it is not confined to any religion or cult or any specific manifestation of God. It is universal in its essence and so is the meditation upon rising sun. As also taught in the yoga practice of *trātaka*, you should focus upon its soothing glow at the location of manifestation of the *āgyā chakra*<sup>3</sup>.

### **Swara Yoga – Soham Prāṇāyāma**

Another practice that you should link with the daily *upāsana* is *soham sādhanā*. As you all know, *prāṇāyāma* is a wonderful yoga exercise. *Soham sādhanā* is a special kind of *prāṇāyāma* in which, along with deep and consistent breathing, you also do an emotional meditation of selflessness. It is a part of *pratyāhāra* — a deeper level *sādhanā* in yoga— that accelerates spiritual progress. As part of this practice, you should concentrate upon the inhalation sound (“*so...*”) and exhalation sound (“*ham...*”) respectively with a feeling that

the Omniscient, universal self is entering deep within, and the “I” (egotism, selfishness), is being expelled out forever.

This being a *sādhanā* of *swaras* (the breathing currents) is independent of any faith or religion. It can be practiced by anybody at any time.

### **Devotional practice in sandhikāla**

You should also practice some form of devotional ritual (*sandhyā vandan*) and prayer, as it gives you an opportunity to remember God, to have proximity with divinity by sitting near a symbol of His manifestation. Different religions preach this practice in different forms but the purpose remains the same. For example the Muslims offer “*namaaz*” five times a day. Our system mentions of *trikāla sandhyā* (doing *sandhyā* thrice a day). As the name “*sandhyā*” suggests it should be practiced in *sandhikāla* — the period of transition of the day into different phases – from night to morning, morning to afternoon, etc.

Vedic texts prescribe *upāsana* by *sandhyā vandan* thrice a day — ideal timings would be early morning before and around dawn; around noon; and around sunset time. However, many of you may have time-constraints, so try to do it twice a day, for a few minutes at least — once in the morning and once in the evening. The practice of *japa*, meditation and *prāṇāyāma* should also be clubbed with the morning/evening *sandhyā*. However, depending upon your duties and unavoidable constraints, you fix up some time-slot for every-day practice when you may concentrate with a calm mind and practice regularly.

Once again let me emphasize that these practices of *upāsana* should not become mere rituals. Rather, even if done for a short period of 10-20

**Failure only indicates our half-hearted attempt towards success.**

- Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya



minutes every day, these should be performed through the heart, with your full attention, interest, faith, enthusiasm and emotional linkage. This is what amounts to making your *upāsana* lively (*prāṇavāna*) and spiritually correct.

I know you all are very busy. It is also likely that the materialistic trends of the world may create problems and compulsions that often divert your mind. Don't worry. Where there is will, there is a way! Adopt the following simple practices. These will be of great help in orienting your mind, your thoughts and feelings in the desired direction. I have practiced and benefited a lot from these. You may regard these also as sacred *sandhyās* to be practiced twice a day. In fact these two 'special' *sandhyās* are more important in today's life-style than those pertaining to worship.

#### **Contemplate before sleep and after getting up**

These are two special *sandhyās* of worshipping the deity of life, which are to be done lying on the bed — once when you get up and second time when you go to the bed to sleep. There are no restrictions of timings. Suppose you are working late in the night, you may get up late next day; even then it won't matter. Whatever time you get-up, consider that as the onset of your new day ahead. Similarly, whatever time you sleep, that would virtually be the end of the day's life for you.

You may sometimes (e.g. while travelling, or under some unavoidable circumstance) skip the worship-based *sandhyā-vandan* activities, but you must do these special *sandhyās* without any break. The practice of these special *sandhyās* is short and simple as described below.

#### **What to Do?**

Soon after getting up in the morning (or at whatever time you may get up!), take a deep breath to feel your existence. Think of the new day ahead as the beginning of a new life. Contemplate upon the eternal origin and nature of life and its purpose. Give a thought to your existence as a living being; ponder over the fact that you are a manifestation of the Soul. Make a small, practicable resolution for the day ahead which will make you a better person, will help waning out some of your shortcomings to some extent. Leave the bed with a feeling of being filled with new joy and energy.

After going to bed at the end of your day, think as though you are in the last phase of your life. Sleep will end the one-day's life span you had got since you got up. So it is time to ponder over the good and the bad you did during the day. Do thorough and impartial introspection. Try to find out where you could have avoided the mistakes or where you could have done better with respect to the circumstances at that time. Plan to diminish the evil, the wrong and to augment the good, the positive, the correct approach/activity/thought, for the next phase of life after sleep. Keep aside all your tensions and worries and sleep well, as though you were 'no more'. As you might have experienced, the thought of death allays your ego and the complexities and problems associated with it.

These simple exercises render great support in alleviating your stresses and your hidden infirmities, and rejuvenating you with new strength and hope. Regular practice of these will elevate your enthusiasm, interest and determination in self-improvement.

**An honest person is like a sparkling diamond among thousand beads.**

- Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya

Gradually all your sincere efforts, including your *upāsana-sādhanā* will become more lively and deep.

### Recognize the Value of Life

Life is indeed the most precious gift the Almighty has bestowed upon you. But most of you waste it in living for bodily requirements and sensory pleasures; but this is what every creature, even a tiny insect or micro-organism, does in its own way. Many of you ruin the precious gift of life in sinful activities. Had you recognized and paid attention to this invaluable treasure? Today you would have been truly the ‘wealthiest’ (in the truest sense of the word) and the ‘happiest’ person on this earth having immense peace of mind.

If you had torn off the leaf of ignorance from the chapter of your learning, you would have comprehended the meaning and purpose of life. This means, you would have acquired the ultimate knowledge — “*ātmagyāna*” (self-knowledge). Lord Buddha had attained this knowledge while sitting in trance beneath a poplar leaved fig tree (now known as “*Bodhi*” Tree) and he became a god. So you see how important *ātmagyāna* is? Do you know what it means? “Yeah!” some of you may respond. You might have heard the couplet from the holy “Ram Charit Manas” which says — “*Īswara Anśa Jīva Avināśī*” meaning: the “*jīva*” being a reflection of God is immortal. “Oh!” So you mean Mr. so and so (or Ms. so and so) is part of God? No, my dear, it is the *jīva* — the soul which is manifested in a (living) being, is a reflection of God. This *jīva* has forgotten its identity and has begun to regard itself by the name and form of the physical body.

You, the bewildered *jīva*, is living in dormancy. Just pause, and think! What for have you got

the human body and mind — full of marvelous capabilities which no other creature has got? Nature has already bestowed on you so many faculties and facilities! Was it all given only for sensory pleasures? Was it meant only for possessing material resources, for ‘producing’ children and collecting more and more comforts for them? Was it to be wasted in idleness or haphazard activities? Was it given for being misused in all kinds of bluffs, for being corrupted and maligned by misconduct and unethical activities? Certainly not! Friends, you have got this rarest-of-rare opportunity after thousands of lives, suffering through the adverse phases and odd conditions of enormous life-forms (*chaurāsi lākha yonis*).

Up till now, “getting up after sleep” has been only a natural biological activity for you, like that for any other mortal being; but please note that this biological process (of waking up after sleep) is confined to action of the physical body, of the extrovert conscious mind. The special *sandhyā* of contemplation, as I have told you just now, is to awaken the *jīva*, to remind it of its true identity. This is what the Upanishads teach — “*Uttiṣṭha, Jāgrata, Prāpya Varānnibodhayeta*” (meaning: awake, arise, and accomplish the high, illumined, and virtuous goals).

Thus, with the awakening of the body, you also try to awaken your inner self. Peep inside and think of the dignity of your original self, its impersonal reality; realize the enormous power hidden within you. Ponder over the reality of life beyond its worldly expression and contemplate upon the real purpose of your being; see what you are doing to fulfill its noble purpose. (Let me remind that if you do *swādhyāya* and *satsang* you will have the

**Try to be humane. If you succeed in it, you will succeed everywhere.**

- Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya

necessary background and light of thoughts, which will facilitate this contemplation).

These simple practices of contemplation before and after sleep will help you realize the importance, purpose and prudent use of life and thus gradually lead to *ātmabodha-tatvabodh*<sup>4</sup>. If you make the righteous use of what God has endowed you with, I am sure you will accomplish awakening of the self as well as of all those in your contact. Don't worry about what you have lost so far because of your ignorance. Cast out the dormancy now and make a new beginning. If you determine and make the right beginning, one day you will surely reach the high realms to receive divine light and love.

### **Expand the horizons of harmony and love**

Learn to live in harmony with Nature and with others around you. Let the spring of love rooted in your inner-self flow without any barrier. Please remember, there is one and only one condition to receive the love of the Almighty and this condition is – to love all beings. And, this condition is mandatory. So if you desire divine bliss and grace, learn to love His creation. Work to beautify His creation, to make, at your level best, this world a happy abode for all. You may gain worldly success and joys but will not get even a drop of the elixir of His love, if you remain confined to the narrow boundaries of your selfish interests. If you are self-centered and insensitive to others around you, you are no better than a cruel miser. Get rid of this sinner's tendency. Broaden your horizons of 'selfishness' to encompass the feeling of oneness with every being. This is a prerequisite for s<sup>3</sup>dhan<sup>3</sup>. Attempt to adopt an altruistic outlook. Look at the broad horizons of your interests with new perspectives. This is the only way to attain fulfilment in life with unalloyed bliss.

|| OM SHANTI ||

**One who has imbibed a virtue of loving kindness has indeed learnt the true art of living.**

- Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya

### **Notes:**

1. *Upāsanā*: A devotional practice of sitting near God, i.e., having an emotional proximity with divinity (that induces awakening of the divine qualities hidden in the devotee).
2. *Sāadhanā*: A process of self-transcendence. It begins with dedicated effort of self-restraint and self-refinement through control over mind and other senses.
3. *Āgyā Chakra*: An extrasensory energy nucleus, which if activated by suitable meditative *yoga-sāadhanā* will serve as the third eye (supernatural sense), the center associated with subtle source of the pituitary gland. The location of manifestation of this extrasensory energy centre lies in the region midway between the two eyebrows. This is where one is supposed to meditate upon.
4. *Ātmabodha-Tatvabodh*: Realization of the real self - the soul and beatifying experience of its omnipresent, eternal expansion.

# The Biological and Spiritual Perspectives of Human Evolution

How did life evolve? How does life express itself? According to the Indian Scriptures – the basis for life is contained in the accumulation of *sanskars* (impressions / traits with respect to morphology, physiology, and behaviour) stored in the *chitta* (subconscious mind), which envisages life accordingly. Science searches for the evolution of man in the inanimate elements, which has no scope for development in it. Growth and development are possible only by the animate. That is why the scriptures appear to be more relevant.

According to the western psychology, the person and his personality are assessed by his behavior. Effort is made to understand one's imaginations and thoughts and beyond this the habits. According to Indian Philosophy, a person's *sanskars*, which are stored in the *chitta*, are manifested as his personality. His life evolves accordingly.

Scientists studying human evolution have given their explanations on this topic in their own way. A deep understanding is necessary as to how the hereditary traits are transferred from one generation to next. The meaning of heritable traits is: automatic transmission of inherited traits from one generation to the next. For example, if the mother and father have black hair, their children will also have black hair. This is called heritable trait. Contrary to this, during the lifetime of a living being the attributes earned by them are called acquired skills/traits. For instance, if a person uses a heavy hammer a lot then his arm's muscles will be developed which is an acquired trait.

In the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century, Lamarck, did a remarkable job in the field of evolutionary biology. He was of the opinion - 'microscopic organisms appear spontaneously from inanimate materials and then transmute, or evolve, gradually and progressively into more complex forms through a constant striving for perfection.' The ultimate product of this goal-oriented evolution was thought by Lamarck to be humans. He believed that evolution was mostly due to the 'inheritance of acquired characteristics' as creatures adapted to their environments.

In 1859, Charles Darwin proposed a new theory of evolution by natural selection, in his book "On the Origin of Species". According to him, evolution by natural selection is the process by which organisms change over time as a result of changes in heritable physical or behavioral traits. Changes that allow an organism to better adapt to its environment will help it survive and have more offspring. The main points of the theory are: the struggle for survival and the survival of the fittest. Darwin said that the effect of the environment is produced by indirectly eliminating adverse traits and by instilling appropriate traits in the special environment. In this way, there are small and ambiguous changes that occur which get accumulated over time. In this manner, many differences emerge in between the branches, even though they originated from one source. However, Darwin was unable to join all the links, despite having collected tons of information.

**It is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive but those who can best manage change. - Leon C. Megginson**

In the scientific theories of evolution of species proposed so far, only the basic physical aspects have been considered. There is a dire need to interpret it from the consciousness point of view. In Yogic texts, the theory of bio-development has been analyzed with great efficiency and subtlety. This theory is called the Law of *Karma*. It can be called the constitution of life, because it is the law of nature. In order to comprehend this we need to first understand karma. When we perform any action, without any resolve and without good or bad intention, then the *karma* is not created. There is a difference between action and *karma*. One gets the results of action immediately; whereas fruit of a *karma* returns in the long term.

If a person is sitting near fire and his hand touches it, it gets burned; the result of this burning will not go from birth to birth. However, when our desires and emotions are added, attachment and hatred are associated, and our good and bad intentions are connected with some action over a long period of time, then its results mature in the form of *karma*. There are two aspects of *karma* - one is action, in other words how do we perform the action, and second is the intention,

that is, with what kind of mindset and spirit we perform the action. Our good or bad intentions create *sanskars*.

Maharishi Patanjali was a visionary who possessed the knowledge of this world and beyond. He proposed the concept of progression of life in the form of fruit of action (*karmaphal*). According to him, any event that occurs in one's life is the result of two things - one is *sanskars* and the other is fruits of actions. Maharishi Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras explains the seeds of *karma* and *sanskars* in great depth. He says that when we do any work, our emotions, our good or bad intentions, and the pace of *karma* play a major role. The energy which is present in the action, the concentration, the eagerness, the vitality with which we have been working, or are working, and after we are done with that work, gets stored in our *chitta* (storehouse of every action and thought). It will ripen and give results according to the law of *karma*. It results in the destiny.

Maharishi Patanjali says – Our acts create latent tendencies in the form of seed in our *chitta* and when it sprouts, grows and bears fruit in the

## We are all one

For there to be harmony and peace, everything must be balanced. And for there to be balance, there must be equality. And where there is equality, there will be justice. And where justice is honored and preserved, there will always be truth. Eliminate the concept of division by class, skills, race, income, and nationality. We are all equals with a common pulse to survive. Every human requires food and water. Every human has a dream and desire to be happy. Every human responds to love, suffering and pain. Every human bleeds the same color and occupies the same world. Let us recognize that we are all part of each other. We are all human. We are all one.

- Suzy Kassem

One general law, leading to the advancement of all organic beings, namely, multiply, vary, let the strongest live and the weakest die. - Charles Darwin

course of time, then an event occurs in our life. This event might be good or bad, and based on this our life takes turns. When will this turn come, and what will be the outcome - is not predictable because there is a long gap between the action done and its result. There are some equations, some of which we can see, and some we can't see. The three things that are major contributors to the system of *Karmaphal* are the *chittabhumi*, *karmabeej* (seeds of karma) and law of divine justice. It depends on whether your *chitta* is fertile or deserted. In the deserted land the seeds of your karmas take a while. The one, who has illuminated *chitta* by penance or good deeds, has fertile mindset and their thoughts and resolves become the seed of actions (*karmabeej*). Whatever resolution arises in their mind becomes the very karma.

In the very same manner if your *chitta* is burdened by sins and bad deeds, then the good deeds will take a while to sprout. In contrast to this, if your *chitta* is illumined due to the good deeds, then maturity of the inauspicious deeds is delayed.

There is action and its result, there is merit and sin, and there are pleasant and unpleasant events. Sometimes we associate with one or the other. They do not have any shorelines, there is no door through which anyone can get out and get away from them. As long as the nature prevails, this process will continue steadily. To be free from them, we must first become free from karma. We should also overcome all the past karmas. In this way, one can achieve a holistic development and the true goal of life – awakening of one's true identity – Self Enlightenment.

## The Case of Supernormal Evolution

Param Pujya Gurudev was in the process of translating the Vedas and ancient scriptures. He visited Swami Krishnanand for a short while. Swamiji's cave was located in the pilgrimage of Gangotri. It was well known that Swami Krishnanand used to sit on the rock meditating for long periods of time. He would stand up only if any divine person arrived at his cave. When Gurudev arrived at his cave, Swamiji got up from his place and greeted him. Several years later Vandaniya Mataji, while visiting Gangotri asked her disciples to go to Swami Krishnanand's Ashram.

Swami Krishnanand was not alive at that time, but his disciples were there to greet them. While conversing with them, each time Gurudev's name was mentioned, they would stand up and face the Himalayas and bow their heads. When the visitors asked the reason for this unusual action, they said, "Perhaps you are not aware of Gurudev's supreme form. There was a time when he worshipped Goddess Gayatri, but now Gayatri Mata herself meditates on him. He is the Mahakaal now."

Creativity sparks originality which then manifests itself into what we call evolution. To depreciate imagination is to depreciate life. - A. Stone

# Change Your Outlook to Overcome Adversities

Path to progress and development goes through the rocky terrain of adversities. The person who fears difficulties in life cannot aspire for advancement. The sole meaning of progress is reaching the height. In order to do this, ardent efforts are required, unlike that needed for walking on the planes. On the other hand, no special efforts are required for moving down the slope; neither much time is spent in the process. If out of two people one is told to move down the slope, while the other is made to move uphill, we would find that the person moving upward would take four hours in covering the distance covered by the person moving downwards in just one hour. Also, the former does not need to put in any special efforts, while the latter would be found sweating profusely.

Adversities are natural companions on the path to progress. If this would not have been the case then everyone in this world would have become great; no one would have been ordinary or downtrodden. Overpowering the adversities is progressiveness.

What is the difference between a human being and an animal? The human being is progressive and progress-loving creature while an animal remains in the same state from beginning till the end. It does not know anything about progress. It does not have the wisdom of understanding the adversities, fighting them and protecting itself from them. It could only sense the danger through its fear instinct, under the influence of which it runs away, hides or dies fighting. When its fear instinct inspires it to run away it does that, and when it directs it to fight, it fights till death. This action is not decided by the brain. It cannot fulfil its duty after profound

contemplation. Fighting the danger or facing it does not involve its cowardice or valiance.

The special attribute of a man is that he performs his actions after contemplating on them prudently. One who does anything under the impact of impulses and frenzy should be considered to be in the category of animals. In spite of appearing as a human being from outside, he is still an animal from within. The aspiration to progress is a divine attribute of man. Thus, it is the duty of a person who considers himself as a human being that he should endeavor to make more and more progress in his life.

It is certain that the path to progress goes through adversities. Therefore, every person who aspires for progress should attain the ability to understand the adversities and how to overcome them.

What are difficulties? Difficulties are those adverse circumstances of life which create obstacles in the path of the person moving towards his goal. These circumstances could be either manmade or created by nature. The former category includes those impediments which one person creates in the path of the other due to competition, envy, abhorrence or arrogance; and this may take the form of trickery, forgery, deception, criticism, betrayal, opposition or controversy. The latter includes the sudden mishaps or accidents. Such type of obstacles could come in the life of any person at any point of time. Therefore, one should be ready at every moment to face them.

There could be numerous types of challenges. It is not always possible to predict about them in advance;

**We can complain because rose bushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorns have roses. - Alphonse Karr**

neither is it possible for any person to be prepared for every type of upheaval beforehand. Therefore, it would be wise to find out a way through which any sort of threat could be dealt with successfully. The sole and best remedy for this is – our attitude.

It is the attitude of the person through which he perceives his foes as companions and vice versa. It is the consequence of his perspective that sometimes the benefic could appear malefic or evil may seem to be noble. It is his outlook due to which sometimes he gets perplexed even by ordinary events; while at other times, he remains at ease amidst grave afflictions. All the conflicts regarding the virtues / vices of others are mere reflections of an outlook of a person. They do not have their independent existence. If a person could develop an outlook of equality then all the afflictions would be eliminated on their own.

Many such situations come in our life when our heart becomes agonized. Under such circumstances, one's actions lose enthusiasm while grief fills one's heart; and only hopelessness and adversities appear before him. But, such a state is harmful for the person aspiring for progress. Such a regressive atmosphere adversely impacts both - his time and potentials. Those who want to move forward should be happy, joyful and zealous at every moment.

All the hardships which could be seen in the world are the mere consequences of our perspective. When we are in darkness, the entire world appears dark. On the other hand, when we are in light, the world appears to be radiant. If our attitude towards our foes could become amiable, then the envy, hatred or abhorrence we experience on seeing them would vanish away and consequently, our inner joy and elation would remain uninterrupted and we would be protected from the loss experienced in its absence.

The same thing implies to circumstances and adversities. When we consider the hardships as our opponents and adopt an indifferent outlook towards them, we get gloomy and impatient as soon as they appear before us. This disturbs our mental balance and we are unable to find their solutions. In the absence of any solution, the adversities begin to impede our path to progress.

If we could keep a positive perspective towards difficulties and consider them as the divine instruments for making us more attentive, alert and dynamic, then we could use them to our advantage.

Positive attitude is the greatest benefactor of man. It can be attained only when the person begins to consider every activity taking place in the world as the will of God. One who greets favorability and hates adversities can never progress in his life. One who expects only favorability in life is bound to wander in the wilderness of failures. One who becomes the worshipper of favorability from his heart and mind and spares no room for adversities should always be prepared to become haphazard after being moved by the occurrence of adversities. Those who are happy in favorability and complain in adversities keep on moving back and forth like a pendulum; they cannot make any headway in life. Therefore, we should follow our duty and believe that every incidence occurring in the world is the will of God.

By doing so, there would be no instance of being gloomy or depressed. One who remains balanced in every situation and is free from grief, anxiety, fear and agony certainly reaches the peak of progress. This perspective of everlasting happiness may be developed by keeping immense faith in God and considering every incidence occurring in the world as His will.

**Some people see the glass half full. Others see it half empty. I see a glass that's twice as big as it needs to be. - George Carlin**



# The Key to Boost Memory Power

Oscar Wilde has said – ‘Memory ...is the diary that we all carry about with us.’ Memory is a remarkable power of human brain on the basis of which a person learns, gains experiences and endeavors to develop his life. All individuals have different levels of memory. Some have such a sharp memory that they can remember and replicate the actual incidences in a precise manner. But some people have a weak memory. They forget them soon and hence cannot recollect the events properly.

If the power of memory is lost due to some reason, we would not be able to recognize anybody, neither ourselves nor others. In such a situation, we would forget the objective of life. We would be perplexed as we won't understand what we are doing and where we are going. This means that we are able to lead a harmonious life, maintain relationships and fulfill our obligations only because of our memories.

An average level of memory is enough for leading an ordinary life, but a good memory and a sharp brain are essential for special tasks like studying, pursuing research work or accomplishing difficult goals. The stronger the memory a person has the

better he understands various things and excels in his work.

There could be numerous reasons for a poor memory. These may include a lack of sufficient sleep, fatigue, stress, consumption of intoxicants, etc. Excessive workload could also adversely affect our retention. When overloaded with work, we cannot complete any task properly; we forget many crucial details and facts related to it. Multitasking (i.e., doing many things at one time) is another impeding factor. Research has revealed that multitasking destroys the concentration of a person and also decreases his memory.

An effective way to increase memory is - concentration. In order to memorize anything there is need to focus on the subject matter in hand. When we concentrate on anything, we do not let our mind deviate; and hence, the work is done properly. The work done with concentration not only gives good results but also gives joy to the person doing it.

When we do something of our interest we may easily get engrossed in it. For example, while watching a movie or reading an interesting novel, we easily get lost in it. Our mind gets engrossed

In the egoic state, your sense of self, your identity, is derived from your thinking mind - in other words, what your mind tells you about yourself: the storyline of you, the memories, the expectations, all the thoughts that go through your head continuously and the emotions that reflect those thoughts. All those things make up your sense of self.

- Eckhart Tolle

Memory is the mother of all wisdom. – Aeschylus

and then we even forget about time. In the process, we easily remember everything - from the sequence of events to the names of characters and the story. In such instances, we don't try to memorize it, but those events get engraved into our memory. This engraving is so deep that it keeps surfacing in our mind very often.

According to experts, psychological pressures and negative mentality affect our memory adversely. On the other hand, positive attitude facilitates our cognition. In today's time, when our lives are getting stressed due to many external and internal

factors, keeping the positive attitude may help us in coping with various adverse situations and in maintaining our memory strong.

Thus, in order to augment the memory it is essential to keep the mind positive, tranquil and focused. Further, we should also learn to concentrate; because the more focused we are, the better we could remember. In some cases, it may also be necessary to incorporate neuro-stimulating nutrients in our diet. This will improve our nervous system and hence our memory.

## Lord! Make me an instrument of thy peace

*Lord! Make me an instrument of thy peace.*

*Where there is hatred, let me sow love,*

*Where there is injury, pardon;*

*Where there is doubt, faith;*

*Where there is despair, hope;*

*Where there is darkness, light;*

*And where there is sadness, joy.*

*O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek*

*to be consoled as to console,*

*to be understood as to understand,*

*to be loved, as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive,*

*It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,*

*and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

**- Francis of Assisi**

I regard memory not as a phenomenon preserving one thing and losing another merely by chance, but as a power that deliberately places events in order or wisely omits them. - Stefan Zweig



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