



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



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Akhand Jyoti

The Light Divine

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Who Cannot Speak

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Holistic Use of Human Resources

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Awaken the
Immense Power of Mind

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Life is Priceless,
Live it Happily



H. H. Governor of Uttarakhand unveiled the 'Wall of Heroes' at Dev Sanskriti University, Haridwar.
It is a new initiative in the honor of sacrifices of our martyred soldiers.

॥ Om bhūrbhuvāḥ svaḥ tatsaviturvareṇyaṁ bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt ॥
(May Almighty illuminate our intellect and inspire us towards the righteous path)
- Rigveda 3/62/10; Samveda 13/4/3, Yajurveda 3/35, 22/9, 30/2, 36/3



Akhand Jyoti

The light divine

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Amrit Chintan

How to Attract Abundance?

We are made for happiness, to express joy and gladness, to be prosperous. The trouble with us is that we do not trust the law of infinite supply, but close our natures so that abundance cannot flow to us. In other words, we do not obey the law of attraction. We keep our minds so pinched and our faith in ourselves so small, so narrow that we strangle the inflow of supply. Abundance follows a law as strict as that of mathematics. If we obey it, we get the flow; if we strangle it, we cut it off. The trouble is not in the supply; there is abundance awaiting everyone on the globe.

Prosperity is a product of the creative mind. The mind that fears, doubts, depreciates its powers, is a negative, non-creative mind, one that repels prosperity, repels supply. It has nothing in common with abundance, hence cannot attract it.

- Orison Swett Marden

‘Akhand Jyoti – The Light Divine’ Editorial Team
Wishes its Readers a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous
Deepawali – The Festival of Lights (November 7, 2018)

See yourself living in abundance and you will attract it. It always works; it works every time with every person. - **Bob Proctor**

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Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation
for all abundance. - *Eckhart Tolle*

Unprecedented Problems Demand Innovative Solutions

As the present century is approaching its youth, new challenges have started confronting humanity. In our daily busy schedule, we may not be able to guess the depth of this change, but the speed with which the circumstances are changing, coming days are certainly going to bring some new problems. If we do not tackle them now, they may take such a horrible form that finding solutions to them would be almost impossible.

What are these problems that are challenging the very existence of humanity? Before discussing them, let us first see what issues terrified earlier generations and that appeared deadly to them. If we turn the pages of history, the main problems threatening the entire humanity were starvation, drought / famine, epidemics and wars. The historical scripts of every country, religion or sect - generation after generation - indicate to the fact that people used to consider these problems as divine wrath, freedom from which appeared impossible.

If we take the case of famine, then about a few hundred years back during a famine death of millions of people used to be the normal event. A French General has portrayed a vivid picture of the famine that hit France in 1693-94 in his diary. One's heart will start quivering after reading this narration even today. He has written that in the city, where he was posted, people started killing and eating cats, dogs, and even horses to satisfy their hunger. Some people were thirsty for each

other's blood. During the period of 1692 to 1694 approximately 2.8 million people died of famine. In Estonia also, one fourth of the population was killed due to famine in 1695. The same situation occurred in Finland in the famine in 1696, and Scotland during the famine of 1695 to 1698.

Today we have emerged from the struggle with famine in most of the countries of the world. An individual may encounter a situation in which he may have to remain without meeting his basic needs for a day or two; but it is very rare that the entire country or continent is passing through the circumstances of famine or starvation. With this viewpoint in mind, the problems of today are less challenging than in the past.

Unfortunately, today's problems are more related to overeating than hunger. In 2014, the number of obese people was 210 million in the world, while the number of people suffering from malnourishment was not even 80 million. According to research, half of the world's population will be obese by 2030, resulting in 80% of them having heart disease. In 2010, there were 800 thousand people dying from hunger as opposed to 3 million people dying due to obesity. It is clear that in this century the challenges have changed.

The second problem our ancestors faced was devastating plagues and pandemics, such as the Plague of 1347-51 in Europe, declared by historians as the "Black Death." This plague resulted in the

There was never a night or a problem that could defeat sunrise or hope.

- Bernard Williams

deaths of an estimated 75 to 200 million people, which was one-fourth of the population of Eurasia. During that plague England's population was reduced to one-half. In a similar fashion, in 1520 in Mexico, Small Pox killed half of the population. The local people there believed that wrath of certain Gods was responsible for this epidemic, and they kept on praying to them, while in that period their population was reduced to 200 thousand from 2.2 million.

A similar event took place in Hawaii due to flu, which continued from the first to second world war. During the first world war 40 million soldiers were killed in the war, while the number of deaths due to "Spanish Flu" was 50 to 100 million. These are the figures from one such epidemic; if we add up all the other diseases we can only imagine the total havoc caused. However, in the present era, the circumstances have changed drastically. Advances in medical field have improved vaccinations; antibiotics and other medicines have been discovered, and cleanliness also has improved. This has given the human beings protection from such pandemic epidemics and an increased life-span.

It is due to these efforts that, in 1975, the World Health Organization declared that small pox has been eradicated from the planet. Although we still have challenges such as SARS virus, Bird flu virus, Ebola, and Swine Flu; however, they are not as catastrophic as the epidemics of the past. The total number of people who died from SARS is 1000, which can be considered insignificant compared to the number of people who died from Spanish Flu. In the present times, we have different kinds of challenges, due to lifestyle disorders, such as people dying from heart attack, and cancer. In this century we need to be wary of these demons.

The third problem that our ancestors faced was war and enmity. The "Might is Right" motto was prevalent on this planet for a very long time. After the Second World War, this humanitarian challenge was also curtailed. Hundred years ago, the war and related unpleasant happenings were the cause of 15% of the world's deaths, but today it is responsible for only 0.5%. However, the crime rate today has increased tremendously. While the death toll from the war in 2012 was 1200, crime related deaths were 5 lakhs. People dying from diabetes were 15 lakhs, while deaths from suicide were over 8 lakhs. In the present era, sugar has become more deadly than gunpowder. In the past, people never talked of 'stress', but in the present era it has become a common ailment. In spite of possessing all the material luxuries, people at large are not happy and contented.

The biggest crisis confronting the world today is that created by unmitigated emissions of pollutants in the atmosphere. Industrial effluents being discharged into rivers are also gradually poisoning the sources of drinking water. Chemical fertilizers and insecticides, too, are finding their way into food items and thereby affecting health. Global temperature is also rising due to greenhouse emissions. According to estimates it may lead to temperature increases of 2.6 to 4.8 by 2100. If this happens, it may be catastrophic for life on Earth.

Trees and forests, which help in conserving environment, are being recklessly destroyed. Consequently, there is a progressive increase in the expansion of deserts, migration of productive nutrients of soil, devastation by floods, abnormalities in monsoon and many other natural disasters.

After every storm the sun will smile; for every problem there is a solution, and the soul's indefeasible duty is to be of good cheer. - *William R. Alger*

Thus, it is clear that the challenges of present times are completely different from that of the past. In order to solve them we will have to go to the root of all these problems. Let us contemplate over thoughts of the seer sage of present age Acharya Shriram Sharma in this regard:

“There is eternally a conflict between two major trends in the world. One is the belief that an abundance of desired resources (whatever way they are earned) will lead to happiness and progress. A second school of thought believes that the state of one’s mind is the creator of circumstances — that our thoughts determine our situations. By a process of thought it becomes possible to earn the needed resources and utilize them for good. In the absence of this process even adequate resources seem to cause insufficiency and dissatisfaction.

In philosophical terminology these two trends are known as materialism and spirituality. The stubborn attitude resulting in the principle of – ‘I am always right and you are always wrong’ - has forced both the parties to stick to their own view points. However, it has to be realized that the wealth earned by immoral ways does not allow people of the same clan to live in peace; there is an incessant fight among them for a bigger share of the loot. Not only this, they create a situation where not only do they incur ill-fame and suffer from self-condemnation but also ruin the whole

environment. They neither themselves live in peace nor leave others in peace. Nature always provides enough for everyone when they live in harmony and share the resources. But insatiable thirst and greed do not allow man to rest and tempts him to accumulate more and more in his own small bowl.

The only recourse is to change the thought process. Then the problem which once appeared challenging will disappear. When an individual looks through colored glasses the whole world looks colored. The only way to solve the problem is to discard the colored glasses and observe the world as it truly is. The entire creation is filled with treasures, but we can claim a right only to what is needed for our survival. The remaining part belongs to other living organisms and the inanimate things. If everyone lives contentedly within their limits, then they can live happily like good children. But when children misbehave and try to snatch each other’s rights they not only upset the harmony, they also get punished by their guardians.

Let us not imitate bad children. Wisdom, honesty, responsibility, courage, and other virtues should be our ideals. Proper distribution, division, and utilization are expected from us.”

Let us follow the advice of Acharyasri in solving the present-day problems.

With prayer-filled wishes to our readers

(Pranav Pandya)

Don't bother people for help without first trying to solve the problem yourself.

- Colin Powell

Let us Become the Voice of Creatures Who Cannot Speak

This creation of Almighty is truly vast and wonderful. Man has been given the responsibility of maintaining balance in this universe. Whether we perceive in terms of science or spirituality, it has to be accepted that man has been bestowed with special abilities that have not been given to any other species. Be it the incredible capabilities of human body or the extraordinary abilities of the human brain or his amazing talent in developing science, technology and culture – man has been given immense abilities and special powers.

The impartial God must certainly not have had any special disposition towards a human being when he gifted these special abilities, because along with abilities come responsibilities. God must have chosen man to collaborate with Him in maintaining the harmony and balance in this vast universe. To accomplish this, God has given man with a special quality known as ‘*Samvedana*’ – emotional empathy. It is the presence of these emotions that marks the progress of a human being in the truest sense. If a person does not possess altruism and emotional empathy, then he is as good as a dead person. If a human being is devoid of humanity, then would it be appropriate to call him a human being?

Humanity is not just about being empathetic to fellow human beings; it encompasses a much wider spectrum. One needs to harbor compassionate emotions for all forms of life in this vast creation. Today, when we hear the innumerable incidents of cruelty towards animals and other creatures, we are left to wonder if man

has forgotten his humaneness. Is he not aware of his responsibilities as a human being towards other constituents of this universe?

When one thinks of an incident that occurred in Bengaluru, one’s mind goes into a spin. A woman thrashed a dog for giving birth to its puppies in front of her house, so much so that neighbors had to intervene. The fault of the dog was merely that it gave birth to its babies at that doorstep. The woman was so livid with rage that she dashed each of the newborn puppies on the road with so much force that all the 15 of them were killed instantly.

This ghastly act was done by a woman, who was looked upon as an epitome of motherly love. Such incidents make us wonder if they have a heart at all. These people remind us of the *asuras* and *rakshasas* as described in our Puranas. Some similar behavior was exhibited by students of a medical college where two students threw an innocent dog from the top of a building merely for their amusement and to capture an interesting video to post on their social media. They were neither ashamed nor apologetic for this insane act. One can only wonder what kind of medical professionals and doctors these students will become, being devoid of the basic quality of humanity!

Survey in the recent past has shown a steady increase in incidents of cruelty towards animals. These have become everyday news. Dogs, cats, horses and other domestic animals become the

It's not so much the journey that's important; as is the way that we treat those we encounter
and those around us, along the way - *Jeremy Aldana*

first targets for abuse and cruelty. Statistics show that among the cruelty on animals, 70% are dogs, 21% are cats and the rest of them being other domestic animals. There are many other ways in which animals and birds are being harmed by humans.

40-50 million animals are slaughtered for manufacture of fur clothes in the western countries. Animals like Fox, Raccoon, Rabbit, Chinchilla, and Mink are included in this list. China even has barbarous methods for killing these animals like – breaking their necks, passing toxic gas for mass killing and giving them electric shock with high voltage current. How can we forget about the bags and belts made out of crocodile and snake skin? We forget while using these products that several animals have been killed for no reason so that you may use that bag or coat!

Japanese government and the poachers kill thousands of whales every year. In the name of medical research and medicine preparation, more than 500 million to 1 billion mammals are killed in the laboratories. There are many such examples to show that the cruelty against animals has reached its peak in this century. More than 1400 billion animals are slaughtered to feed the non-vegetarians in the world.

Just in England that has a human population of 6 crores, 2.5 billion animals were slaughtered to be plated up in the year 2009. Among this 60 crores were chicken and other poultry, 30 crore cows and bulls for beef, goats for mutton and pigs for pork are included. Seafood includes billions of fish, octopus, oyster, prawns and other creatures. We cannot protect the life of any of these creatures in the universe, but still we are killing them to satiate our hunger. What kind of humanity is this?

Eating other creatures for food; killing other animals for the sake of our comforts and treatment; troubling them for our entertainment – all these are throwing challenges at our fundamental human nature. The way we treat animals and birds in circuses and zoos will surely put humanity to shame.

In England, it is legal to hunt for foxes. Be it that or the trophy hunting in Africa, or cock fighting in England or bull fighting in Europe – 250 million animals are killed in the name of entertainment in America alone. Such instances have become quite common during movie making. All this statistics goes to show the despicable mindset of man.

Don't be led to believe that there is dearth of laws and rules in this regard. When you look at our own Indian constitution, it clearly proclaims that each citizen must be compassionate towards other creatures. Killing animals has been announced to be a crime in the purview of law. There is a fine of Rs.25000 and jail time of 7 years for those being cruel to animals. But more often than not, only poachers or those who kill animals for their skin normally get punished in this category. Those who misbehave and are cruel to animals in different walks of life are somehow ignored by the law. It could be that even people have become indifferent to such incidents and their conscience and humane qualities are asleep.

It is not about police and government arresting these people and punishing them. It is about the steep decline in our empathy and compassion towards other beings. Family planning can be enforced as a rule but *brahmacharya* cannot be developed in people with that. Emotional steps need to be taken to clear the emotional

I call him religious who understands the suffering of others.

- Mahatma Gandhi

pollution that is rampant in people. We need to question our inner selves – how can you see the torture of these innocent animals? If we love and respect the omnipresent God, then how can we tolerate the cruelty that has befallen on a part of His existence?

Param Pujya Gurudev had this exactly in his mind when he kept reconstruction of emotional well-being as one of the goals of Gayatri Pariwar. If the emotions of a person develop in the righteous and progressive manner, then his personality gets molded in a manner that others would want to emulate and follow. A person has high thinking when each and every moment of his life is spent on actions that target at the refinement of his character, actions and temperament so that he contributes to the welfare of humanity. Compassion and love for all beings in the universe is the central aspect for achieving this.

Emotional empathy is the most important quality to possess if we want to transform the era. And it also becomes our responsibility to awaken this emotion in the hearts of others around us. If the emotionally elevated people of Gayatri Pariwar do not take the responsibility of showing the right path to those who oppress and harass animals, who else will? Our parijans established Goshalas all over the nation to protect cows and conserve

the native breeds from extinction. We have to make similar massive and compassionate efforts to protect the lives of innocent animals.

Wherever Goshalas are being managed by Gayatri Pariwar parijans, if we can allocate some place for saving and rehabilitating animals from distress and cruelty, we would have set a wonderful example that humanity is still not wiped out from the planet. Others could be inspired by our efforts. Each and every volunteer of Gayatri Pariwar is capable of setting such an example. We can rescue animals that are on the receiving end of harsh and cruel behavior from people and protect them by simple methods.

All those people who have been misbehaving with animals, causing them pain and misery should do this self-introspection and judge their actions. The hide of animals is put into use after they die, but crown jewel of this creation – man is bent upon skinning the animals while alive. This is surely a situation where the pillars of righteousness are crumbling. People have gone astray from their fundamental human nature and have to be brought back on the right path. Who other than Gayatri Pariwar parijans can better accomplish this task! Let us all step forward and raise our voice to protect these voiceless animals. If we cannot become their voice, who else can?

Our bodies have five senses: touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing. But not to be overlooked are the senses of our souls: intuition, peace, foresight, trust, empathy. The differences between people lie in their use of these senses; most people don't know anything about the inner senses while a few people rely on them just as they rely on their physical senses, and in fact probably even more.

- C. JoyBell C.

Can I see another's woe, and not be in sorrow too? Can I see another's grief,
and not seek for kind relief? - William Blake

Meditation is A Magnet for Noble Thoughts

Throughout our lives we keep reflecting upon one thing or the other. This in effect means that we beckon these things or thoughts to come to us, but we simply forget that it is we who have invited them. All these thoughts which we summon to our mind, and on which we ponder or reflect, cast an effect on us. But we remain ignorant of this phenomenon, ignorant of the purpose, justification and power of all these things in our life. When a thought comes to our mind, we delve deep into it, flow with it for some time, and then this thought is gone. Another one emerges, gradually intensifies, and then it goes away too.

Thoughts and emotions have their own intrinsic power, a sort of magnetism. When a thought or emotion becomes intense, it starts drawing something from the nature whose type depends on the drawer's own specific character or build pattern. Yugrishi Param Pujya Gurudev was well aware of this fact. That is why he conceptualised 'Vichar Kranti Abhiyan'; and to keep its flow unhindered, laid the foundation of Akhand Jyoti with a view to keeping the people in contact with noble thoughts.

Thinking comes to every person. But generally the scope of this thinking is limited and narrow. Not everyone can elevate his thinking to a higher level. It is beyond their capacity. But a narrow thinking also makes the personality narrow. Normally our thinking is more inclined toward the negative aspects rather than the positive, but such negative thoughts are highly damaging.

Sri Maa (Reverend Mother) says in 'Matrivani' that any negative thought, or fear, or apprehension does not remain confined to us only. It draws similar forces from the nature and the surroundings. Often we are anxious that we may fall ill or we may meet with an accident. What we do not realise is that by this very process of such thinking, we are in a way inviting such events to occur to us.

Sri Maa says that by repeatedly pondering over whether we are falling ill we are drawing the negative energy of this illness or its germs towards us. And one day we may really fall ill. We may wonder how can a mere thought bring illness, but it should be known that thinking too is an art. Thoughts and emotions have their own dynamism, and this is of great importance.

Through the mechanism of thought, we become receptive to the forces about which we are thinking. We do possess some knowledge about the working of our body. When the body is healthy its strength is greater, when it is weak its strength is lesser. But we are not fully aware of the potency of thought and emotion, of the power of our mind and heart. Consciously or unconsciously, we keep receiving something or the other from the nature. If we remain alert to this continuous interplay between the mind and the nature we can do great many things in life.

Right thinking can perform miracles to the body and the mind both. We can see such bodily miracles in athletes, wrestlers or gymnasts. They

Meditation is the discovery that the point of life is always arrived
at in the immediate moment. – *Alan Watts*

can flex their bodies in such impossible ways or display such awe inspiring feats as to make us wonder how this is possible!

If asked, they would credit this performance to regular practice. By a regimen of exercise, massage, diet control and general disciplined routine they have moulded their bodies into a powerful instrument. Some can perform even greater physical miracles like bending a thick iron rod, or tearing apart an iron plate with bare hands. And all this is made possible through focused mind and precision practice.

We do occasionally think about the body or see its possibilities. But the mind has much greater potential and greater miraculous powers up its sleeve, and we hardly think about the mind!! When rainy season comes, clouds gather about in the sky, rain drops start falling and this rain makes the soil fertile. When seeds are sown, they sprout forth and grow into plants. There is greenery all around. The colour of the earth is changed. Meditation is something like this. It changes the colour of our life.

Meditation reminds us that hitherto we have been conscious about our bodies and physical activities, but we should be many times more conscious about the ongoing activities in the

mind. We can achieve many things with the help of the power of mind. Our talent, our skill, our thoughts-all are matters of the mind.

Meditation converts the mind into a '*Kalpavriksha*' (wish granting tree). It makes the mind so powerful that whatever we think about, it begins to happen. Why is it so? We can understand this phenomenon this way. We put several pins or small iron objects on a table, and now place a magnet at some distance. All the scattered nearby objects get pulled towards the magnet, move towards it and attach themselves to the magnet.

The process of meditation gives birth to this very magnetism in the mind. But an important point to note here is what exactly are the items we are pulling towards this magnet. Which elements or forces from the nature we are drawing towards us? All the '*tapascharya*', practices and processes of the spiritual path are designed and meant for this very attainment, viz., purifying and strengthening of our thoughts and emotions, and generating an extraordinary magnetism within, a magnetism which pulls towards it the positive energy and power from the nature. Divinity, and ultimately godliness itself, will spontaneously get attracted and move towards us. That is meditation.

It is never too late to turn on the light. Your ability to break an unhealthy habit or turn off an old tape doesn't depend on how long it has been running; a shift in perspective doesn't depend on how long you've held on to the old view. When you flip the switch, it doesn't matter whether it's been dark for ten minutes, ten years or ten decades. The light still illuminates the room and banishes the murkiness, letting you see the things you couldn't see before. It's never too late to take a moment to look.

– Sharon Salzberg

Meditation is offering your genuine presence to yourself in every moment. – Thich Nhat Hanh

Experiments on Vedic Mantras: Interaction of Sound with Thermal Energy

Maharshi Aurobindo has stated that – the human intellect has, no doubt, achieved a lot by deciphering, through scientific developments, the secrets of Nature at certain cosmic as well as atomic and micro levels. However, the greater part – that, dealing with the consciousness, still remains to be probed. We shall focus here on some such aspects in the context of *mantra sādhanā*.

Vāṇī – voice, including the speech of the thoughts and the emotions – happens to be most significant among all the apparent or latent potentials of consciousness bestowed upon the human beings. This divine bequest has been at the root of making the communication and expansion of knowledge and information possible in real terms. It would be frightening to imagine the status of the human society without this wonderful gift of *vāṇī*. Apart from its obvious role at the social and educational levels, the *vāṇī* – being a tool for manifestation of *śabda*¹ – also plays a crucial role in spiritual developments. As mentioned earlier, the *mantra-sādhanā* triggers an ‘explosion’ of the power of *śabda* via the medium of refined *vāṇī*.

It is well known that we are able to pronounce uncountable variety of phonemes and syllables with enormous flexibility of pitch and amplitude because of the simultaneous movements and associative functioning of the lips, teeth, throat and the vocal cord along with the tongue. If it were only a single component, say the tongue

alone that produced ‘voice’ then the human beings would have been able to utter only a limited number of phonemes (sounds) like most animals and birds. The simultaneous movement of several interconnected components of the vocal system also creates vibrations in the linkages of the latter with the nervous system and the brain and thus makes the human voice so special. These vibrations (generated by the flow of our *vāṇī*), because of their connections with the brain, also induce micro-subtler effects on many intra-body functions as well.

Wonders of Sonic Energy:

The dreaded dangers of noise pollution on the one hand and the amazing applications of the ultra and infra sound on the other, illustrate that – the syllables and words spoken or heard are much more than mere carriers of information. That, music is more powerful as a means for creativity, sentimental thrust, medical therapy, improvement in agricultural production and psychosomatic health than as a tool for entertainment – is also well recognized by the world. Music has now become an important part of school education in the high-tech countries like Japan in order to help create the feelings of compassion, co-operation and discipline among the children.

It is a scientifically established fact that sound is a source as well as a form of energy. It is found that even the ordinary audible sound, if

Words have energy and power with the ability to help, to heal, to hinder, to hurt,
to harm, to humiliate, and to humble. *Yehuda Berg*

repeated continuously at a constant frequency and amplitude can produce so much thermal energy as would be produced by the boiling water. The principles and methods of *Mantra Vigyāna*² are aimed at sublimation of sound to its original expression – *Śabda*, and constructive orientation of the enormous energy generated by such explosions. The different practices of *japa*³ and *yagya*⁴ associated with the *mantras* are devised according to the *mantra vigyāna*. While the role of sonic and (bio)electrical energy is evident in the *japa* processes, that of the thermal energy is more evident in the *yagya* based practices.

Effect of Mantra – Decipherations in Yogic Science:

The combination of specific syllables and vowels in the *mantras* is so designed that the *japa* (rhythmic chanting with meditation) of a particular *mantra* would have definite effects on some specific functional centers and sublime domains of the mind and body. The latter include – the *ṣaṭ cakras* (six extrasensory energy-nuclei), the three extrasensory ‘knots’ (*granthis*), the three *nāḍīs* (extrasensory energy currents/canals along the endocrine column), *daś prāṇas* (ten streams of vital spiritual energy), 72000 nerves and muscles and the 54 *upatyikās* (bundles of *nāḍīs*) endowed in a living human-body.

Several types and steps of *japa* have been described in the ancient texts [1]. Apart from focused generation and use of the physical forms of sonic energy, the most significant and unique field of the science of *mantras* deals with the sublime force of consciousness and the associated realms of spiritual energy. The role of

inner faith and emotional and sentimental depth, together with mental concentration is therefore given more importance in the practices of *mantra vigyāna* and several ‘rituals’ are advised as exercises for necessary mental control, before the *sādhana* (*anuṣṭhāna*)⁵ of a *mantra*.

At the physical level, the sonic waves of a *mantra* generate specific currents of energy by vibrating even the tiniest particle in and around the *sādhaka*. At the subtle level, via the spiritual power of *śraddhā* of the *sādhaka* in the *mantra*, it amplifies the ‘Consciousness Force’ of the *sādhaka*, which results in creation of a sublime domain of spiritual energy. Thus the *sādhana* of a *mantra japa* generates two types of energy spheres. These spheres of energy are termed respectively as the sonic sphere (*dhwani vṛatta*) and the emotional sphere (*bhāva vṛatta*). If performed with a steadily deeper *śraddhā*, the expansion, and strength (the power of attraction) of these energy fields reaches cosmic levels by long-term regular repetition of the *mantra* under prescribed spiritual disciplines. The perpetual rotation of the *Sudarśana Chakra* depicted in a hand of God Vishnu indicates the eternal power of these ever-active fields of the manifested (in Nature) and the transcendent energies of *Śabda*.

Yagya and Mantra — Sublime Confluence of Thermal and Sonic Energies:

Performing some kind of *yagya* is essential before commencing and after completing the determined *sādhana*s (spiritual endeavors) of *anuṣṭhāna* with *mantra japa*. In some *mantra sādhana*s this needs to be performed every day. *Yagya* is a simple process of sacrificing specific herbal preparation in the fire kindled in a

Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless. -*Mother Teresa*

specifically designed small inverted pyramid shaped pot (or pit) called *havan kunda*. The material used in *yagya* – including the dry herbs/ woods – is also purified by *mantra japas* and some *sādhana*s. The naturally broken dry woods from certain medicinal trees are used in the fire-pit. The constituents of the herbal preparation are medicinal as well as nourishing; the vapors/fumes released from *yagya* also help purification of surrounding air [2].

The volatilized and electrified particles of the herbal-material sublimated in the *yagya*-fire, because of the special design of the *havan kunda*, move upward in a spiral form at an ultra-fast rate. The loud collective chanting of *mantras* during *yagya* intensifies the thermal and electromagnetic effects of the latter to further energize the sonic vibrations of the *mantra* and expand them at unbounded high levels. The effects of the *mantra-japa* thus get compounded magnificently and offer manifold benefits to surrounding areas.

The thermal energy generated by the *yagya*-fire and the collisions of sonic waves with the thin screen of its flames help exponential amplification of the power of *śabda* in the *mantra* being chanted. The spiral waves of electrons (due to dense presence of negative ions) in the *yagya*'s vaporized fumes play the role of transmitters to 'communicate' the 'signals of the *mantra*' in the etheric whole. The positive effects of the *mantra-japa* that could otherwise be received in a limited space surrounding the *sādhaka* are thus magnified and spread in significantly large domains — even of cosmic dimensions in specific cases of *japa* by spiritually evolved *sādhakas*, if the *japa* is also accompanied by a *yagya*.

If such experiments of *mantra sādhana*s with *yagya* are performed under adept disciplines, the unique confluence of the thermal and sonic energies linked with the eternal flow of consciousness in the etheric medium — would offer global benefits at physical as well as spiritual levels. Such boons would range from purification of atmosphere, harmonizing the ecological balances, improvement in the physical and mental health of the masses to the spiritual enlightenment of all beings.

Possibilities of Scientific Research:

The use of fire and thermal energy in general has been advancing ever since the journey of human civilization. Scientific and technological advancement of the 20th century has also offered tremendous applications of sound. Scientific experiments on the conjunction of these energies – based on the principles of *mantra-sādhana*s and *yagyas* – should also be carried out in order to investigate the possibilities of viable global benefits, keeping in total harmony with multiple realms of life and Nature.

Research experiments on *yagya* carried out in modern laboratories in the last decade or so, have shown that the positive effects (including anti-mycobacterium activity, release of anti-oxidants, etc) of *yagya* are significantly low or absent in the experiments of *yagya* (in exactly same conditions, using the same type and quantity of medicinal wood, etc) sans herbal medicines and/or sans *mantra*-chanting [2, 3-5]. These findings encourage the possibility of further research. Controlled experiments may also be designed in this regard to perform large scale *yagyas* with consistent collective chanting of the selected

Speech has power. Words do not fade. What starts out as a sound, ends in a deed.

-Abraham Joshua Herschel

Vedic Mantras and test the changes, if any, in the *ionosphere* thereby.

Comprehensive research in the science of *mantra* and *yagya* would demand an in-depth study of – (i) the physical (including chemical and biological) and subtle powers of sound and heat; (ii) the power of attraction and the astronomical structure as well as sublime domains of the cosmic centers associated with the *devatās* of different *mantras*. For instance, the manifold physical and subtle power-currents of the Sun and the effects (on *sādhaka*'s mind-body and inner-self) of meditation upon its subtle body (*savitā*) should be researched in the context of the *Gāyatri-Yagyas*; (iii) fundamental principles of transformation of matter and energy; and (iv) human psychology and the deeper science of inner emotions and sentiments.

While the physical powers of sound and heat have been recognized and used by the modern science at a very advanced level, a lot remains to be deciphered on their sublime fronts. The studies of transcendent 'cosmic nuclei' of *mantras*, and the depth of the inner emotions and spiritual powers in the inner self, would also demand detailed study of the Vedic texts, before one investigates the scientific methods for experimental investigations and applications of *mantra japa* and *yagyas*.

Interpretations of Vedic texts on *Mantra Vigyana* and *Yagya* indicate that the net-effect of the vibrations of specific thermal and sonic energy waves generated by the combined effects of different *yagyas* and *mantras* augments the vital elements necessary for

maintaining creative synergy between various components of Nature. This is why Nature appears exceptionally kind and friendly in the regions where *yagyas* (with *mantra anuṣṭhāna*) are performed regularly for substantially long periods of time. Ecological balance, strengthening of the ionosphere and ozone layer, increase in the quality and quantity of the agricultural products, etc are most likely offshoots of the positive effects of *yagyas*. (Several of these have also been observed as part of recent scientific research [2]).

The feasibility of the aforesaid astonishing effects could be better understood if we realize that — emotions and vibrations of churning of consciousness-force in the inner self, being manifestations of *Śabda* also exist as some kinds of 'super-ultra' or 'micro-infra' sonic waves, i.e., the waves that are finer and subliminal expressions of *Śabda* as compared to the ultra and infra sound waves. Whatever we think deeply or feel intrinsically is indeed an expression in the 'voice' of our inner mind. The *mantras* and *yagyas* are like scientific devices and procedures used to transmit and receive such sound waves at different horizons of the reflections of *Śabda*.

Throughout human history, our greatest leaders and thinkers have used the power of words to transform our emotions, to enlist us in their causes, and to shape the course of destiny. Words can not only create emotions, they create actions. And from our actions flow the results of our lives.

- Tony Robbins

Raise your word, not your voice. It is rain that grows flowers, not thunder. - Rumi

Notes:

1. *Śabda*: Eternal, Cosmic Element of Sound.
2. *Mantra Vigyāna*: Science of cosmic and subtle dimensions of sound and *Mantras*
3. *Japa*: Repeated rhythmic chanting with meditation (mental, emotional engrossment).
4. *Yagya* (*Yajña*, *Homam*, *Havan*): Fire-ritual, a process of controlled sublimation of herbs.
5. *Mantra-sādhana* (*anuṣṭhāna*): Continuous *Japa* of mantra for a pre-determined long duration of time every day with spiritual meditations, and observance of ascetic disciplines.

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Uttering or chanting spells, mantras or prayers shouldn't be regarded as a romantic excursion to a distant past, or faraway place, or as an escape from our everyday stresses, for relaxation or entertainment. These sounds are meant to be experienced as the timeless unity of energy currents. The chanting of ancient esoteric sounds enables us to realize we are never separate from the one continuously existing omnipresent vibration of the cosmos.

- Zeena Schreck

Words have a magical power. They can either bring the greatest happiness or the deepest despair. - **Sigmund Freud**

Indian Culture Aims at Optimal Use of Human Resources for Holistic Well-being & Progress

Indian Culture emphasizes four vital endeavors - namely, *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Mokṣa* - for accomplished human life. *Dharma* refers to adoption of religion in the truest sense, which incorporates inculcation of virtuous tendencies, righteous conduct, and fulfillment of altruistic duties with generosity and emotional compassion. *Artha* (wealth) deals with generation and mobilization of worldly resources and prosperous progress. *Kāma* means creative zeal for fulfillment of desires and attainment of happiness. These, as propounded in the Vedic Cultural principles, are the components of holistic development of life eventually aimed at *Mokṣa* — absolute enlightenment, emancipation from all sorrows and attachments, transcendental ascent, and attainment of absolute peace and beatitude.

The *rishis* (Vedic sages) - the founders of Indian Culture, had laid down broad guidelines for four different stages (called *Āśrams*) of life, according to age, for healthy, happy, and purposeful life in consonance with Nature. The “*Varṇa*” system of social engineering recommended by them aimed at holistic progress with best utilization and development of one’s potentials as per his/her aptitude and tendencies. The system of *Āśram* and *Varṇa* was so formulated that there would be adequate space for *Artha* and *Kāma* in appropriate forms, in different phases and states of personal and social life, while maintaining *Dharma* as an integral part of all.

Āśrams: Optimal Division of Life-Span

The *āśrama* system in the Vedic Society: Average span of 100 years of human life those days was divided into four phases, namely, *Brahmacarya*,

Gṛahastha, *Vānprastha* and *Sannyāsa*. The respective age groups of these four *āśramas* were broadly classified as — childhood to 25 years of age, 25-50 years, 50-75 years, and 75+.

The first phase was spent in the *Gurukulas* under the adept guidance of sagacious masters for cultivation and growth of moral values, training in ascetic disciplines, acquisition of knowledge, mental and intellectual development, constructive orientation and chiseled refinement and augmentation of talents, and other constructive potentials, etc. The overall development of personality shaped in this phase used to produce noble citizens who would contribute to the flourishing growth of society in their *Gṛahastha Āśrama*. Depending upon his/her spiritual inclinations and purity of intrinsic tendencies, one was also allowed to remain life-long “*Brahmacārī*” and pursue the path of *sādhana* and spiritual enlightenment.

The *Gṛahastha Āśrama* pertained to one’s married life and worldly progress and enjoyment along with discharge of familial and social responsibilities. Both husband and wife together used to contribute to the happy nurturing of the family, and cultural and economic growth of the society. Resources for all-round growth of the society and upkeep of the elderly and disabled persons were mobilized by the *gṛahasthas*. The charities and donations of honestly earned wealth by *gṛahasthas* used to provide for sustenance of people in the other phases of life as well. Having fulfilled the duties towards the family, the *gṛahasthas* used to devote full time and efforts

The Divine Truth is greater than any religion or creed or scripture or idea or philosophy

- Sri Aurobindo

for the altruistic welfare of the entire human society in the *Vānprastha Āśrama* after attaining the age of around 50 years. For this, they would even move around from one place to the other and offer voluntary services of their life-experiences. The *Sannyāsa Āśrama* was spent in devotion and in attaining deeper knowledge of meaning and purpose of life aimed at evolution of the inner self and spiritual ascent towards *Mokṣa*.

Trends of Life Today:

In the modern scenario, the first phase seems to have been stunted by mostly bookish knowledge, and media-influenced and ‘fashionable’ mobile-phone and internet-driven, lop-sided growth of the child without necessary grooming of character, or nurturing of inner strength and values. Despite its becoming more and more costlier and stressful, education seems to have confined itself mainly to give some degrees that would somehow give one a ‘license’ to get a ‘white-collar’, money-fetching job. The last two *āśramas* seem to have become obsolete. In one way or the other, people remain chained up to the last breath in the domain of the *Gṛahastha Āśrama*, that too in an adulterated form, which now mainly revolves around possessive activities focused at comforts and pleasures of ‘me, my spouse, my children and ‘my’ grandchildren and may be, ‘my’ other near relations’. This is why, in spite of enormous growth of materialistic resources and high-tech luxuries, we do not find even a fraction of inner peace and glory of the Vedic Society.

Modification of the nature of *Gṛahastha Āśrama* is therefore crucial in the present times. Incorporation of the Indian Cultural values of “*Idam Na Mam*” could bring about basic qualitative changes in the structure of society. *Idam Na Mam*-it’s not mine-reminds us that whatever we have acquired or achieved would not

have been possible without the direct or indirect contribution, help and cooperation of many others in many ways. It teaches us to be thankful to them and to shoulder our share of responsibilities towards the good of the society as a whole; it also inspires us to be grateful to Mother Nature for its countless boons. Adoption of moral disciplines and altruistic attitude by the parents and teachers would naturally inculcate these values in the children and thus, to a significant extent, fill the lacuna in the present education system.

From materialistic view point as well, it is important to note that as only a particular age-group and hence only a fraction of the population was required (and supposed to be) engaged in earning in the Vedic social system, there never was a problem of unemployment and poverty. Moreover, the social system and the commitment of masses towards their duties were such that people did not have to worry, and stock piles of property for their old age or for their (grand) children. Also worth underlining is the fact that because of their chaste attitude and inner strength and contentment, people weren’t driven by sensual passions. Population-balance, natural resource conservation, etc were therefore auto-regulated in the Vedic society and no governing body was required to impose such controls.

How first two *āśramas* can be modified to have all-round positive effects in the modern way of life — has been prudently guided by the Acharya Shri Ram Sharma [1-2]. His authentic and reasonable interpretations of the terms *Vānprastha* and *Sannyāsa*, explain that contrary to the common belief of modern day ‘rationalists’ these *āśramas* have nothing to do with escaping from the world or evasion of social responsibilities. In fact, these *āśramas* pertain to expansion of the interests and efforts beyond the peripheries of

Life is life - whether in a cat, or dog or man. There is no difference there between a cat or a man. The idea of difference is a human conception for man’s own advantage. - *Sri Aurobindo*

selfish attachments to the wider domains of noble service and welfare; the creative use of one's knowledge, experience, talents and resources is emphasized during these later phases of life.

The Varṇa System: Quality-based Distribution of Social Responsibilities

The unique and most comprehensive aspect of the Vedic teachings, with regard to socio-cultural and economic spheres of human life, is that every individual is regarded here as both a divine and a social being and thus the importance of both the inner and the outer worlds of a person are given due consideration. The *rishis*, being scientists of spirituality, had a reach into the deepest depths of human mind and heart and the sublime horizons of consciousness.

The Vedic socio-cultural system, as propounded by the *rishis*, therefore emanates from classification of social responsibilities considering the intrinsic tendencies, aptitudes, and abilities of the individuals and the social needs. Accordingly, four social groups were formed. The Rigveda (1|22|15) refers to these four groups as *Catvāra Varṇa*, namely, *Brāhmaṇa*, *Rājanya* (*Kṣatriya*), *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra*. The four *varṇas* are described as essential components of the body of the omnipresent divine cosmic being -thus implying, in rhetoric language, that a member of the human society is a divine child by virtue of sincerely transacting his social duties. As explicitly defined in the Yajurveda [30|5] the origin and identification of the four *varṇas* pertain to what social duties one bears as per his/her liking and abilities:

Brahmaṇe Brāhmaṇam, Kṣatrāya Rājanyam, Marūdbhyo Vaiśyam, Tapase Śūdrām |

Broadly the following qualities and duties characterized the four *varṇas*.

Brāhmaṇa: One who is truthful, who observes non-violence; who lives for attainment and

dissemination of (pure) knowledge; who lives an austere, chaste, altruistic life and does not accumulate material comforts and wealth; who is endowed with immense inner strength dedicated to divine values; who observes ascetic disciplines of self-refinement and practices *yoga sādhanā* and spiritual elevation; who conducts *yagya* for the welfare of all. (*c.f.*, for example, Yajurveda [33|81]: *Pāvakavarṇāḥ Śucayo Vipascitobhīstomairanuṣata*; Yajur.[34|56]: *Uttiṣṭha Brahmanaspate devayantastvemahe*; Atharvaveda[5|19|4]: *Tejo Rāṣṭrasya Nirhanti*; Athar.[12|5|1,3]: *Śramaṇa Tapasā Sraṣṭā, | Svadhyā parihitā Śraddhayā Paryuḍhā |*)

Kṣatriya: One who has valor, courage, skill and determination to destroy the enemies; who is dedicated to the protection of the society (nation) and is ready to sacrifice his life for this cause; who is fearless and wise and whose personality radiates vigor, strength of character, enthusiasm and alertness; who has all qualities of a good king who makes his nation strong. (*c.f.*, for example, Rigveda [8|67|1]: *Tyānnu Kṣatriyāna Ava Ādityānyāciṣāmahe* || Atharvaveda [5|17|3]: *Tathā Raṣṭram Gupitam Kṣatriyasya* || Samveda [17|59] *Vayam Dhanā Śūrasātā Bhajemahi* || Yajurveda[22|22] *Rāṣṭre Rājanyah śūra..... ||*)

Vaiśya: Who can generate wealth; who can mobilize the expansion and utilization of wealth; who has skills of fair trade; who is industrious and enterprising; who bears the responsibility of providing and managing the material resources for the society. (*c.f.* for example, Rigveda[4|24|9-10]: *Kṛiṇāti.... Avikritah* | Yajurveda[30|17]: *Tulāyai Vāṇijam...* | Atharvaveda[3|15|2]: *Ye Panthāno.... Dhanamāharāṇi* || Atharvaveda[3|15|4] *Prapaṇo Vikrayāśca.... Caritamutthitam Ca* ||).

I am neither a child, a young man, nor an ancient, nor am I of any caste. - *Guru Nanak*

Śūdra: One who is strong and good at physical labor and handicraft (e.g. fine arts, pottery, carpentry; weaving, etc; who may not like mental work and intellectually skilled works but has talents of body (e.g. gymnastics); who is industrious and offers his services in the performance of heavy tasks demanding physical vigor and mental alertness; whose hard work offers essential services and constructive contribution (c.f. for example, Yajurveda[30|5] *Tapase Śūdrām*| Yajur.[18|48] *Rucanno Dhehi... Rucham Viśyeṣu Śūdreṣu* || Atharvaveda[19|32|8]: *Priyam Mā ...KṛṇuŚūdrāya* ||)

Vedic society never prohibited any member of any *varṇa* from gaining education and aspiring for enlightenment by study of the Vedas. For example, the Yajurveda [26|2] asserts that the laborers in the *Śūdra varṇa* also have a right to study the Vedas and it encourages them to do so (*Yathemām Vācham..... Śūdrāya Cāryāya Ca*||).

There are several other hymns in the Vedas and Vedic scriptures including the *Brahmanas-Aranyakas* that describe, in detail, the duties and social importance of each *varṇa*. All the *varṇas* are recognized as respectful components of the society. It is only the *avarṇas* (who do not abide by the norms and duties of any of the four *varṇas*) that are condemned in the scriptures as *dasyu* or *dāsa* because of their selfish, audacious and anti-social activities.

No Role of Creed, Caste, or Family-Lineage:

In the original Vedic texts, nowhere there is mention of *varṇa* defined by birth or creed. Moreover, no concept of caste existed in the Vedic social system. Many of the *rishis* -most revered seers and sages in the *Brāhmaṇa varṇa* -were born to a *Śūdra*; for example, Maharshi Vyasa, who scripted the Puranas, Saytakama Jabala,

who was the most eminent disciple of Maharshi Gautam, etc. Rishi Vishwamitra, Valmiki, Kvaish Aylush and several others were also born in non-*Brāhmaṇa* families. Even change of *varṇa* was allowed in the ancient Indian society; for example one could become a *Brāhmaṇa* at any age if he/she acquired higher knowledge by dedicated endeavors, adopted the necessary ascetic disciplines of thoughts, emotions and conduct, and transacted noble duties accordingly.

As analyzed by Muni Yask in Nirukta [2|3] — “.... *varṇo varṇoteḥ*” — because of chosen way of life and activities, it is termed “*varṇa*”. Lord Krishna also preaches in the holy Gita (4|13): *Cārturvarṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśah*| Meaning: The four *varṇas* are created by me (God), according to the different classes of qualities and deeds of people. This shows that, at least, until the Mahabharata war, there was no distortion of the *varṇa* system. The gigantic war of Mahabharata devastated the then Indian civilization and also totally ruptured the socio-economic structure; by the medieval times, the society was ruptured and got trapped into cultural decline and superstitious customs. What we see today is an offshoot of further tidal changes that are largely dominated by opportunistic, egotist and material and comfort driven progress.

The philosophy of the *varṇa* based social structure offers rare clues on how to balance social concerns with economic growth, choosing the best of the rightist (capitalistic), leftist (communist) and centralist ideologies for the balanced welfare of all.

Implications: Guidelines for Modern Times

As we all know, the root cause of evils and agonies in the human society are greed, ego and

Pity and need make all flesh kin. There is no caste in blood. - *Edwin Arnold*

ignorance. The untoward tendencies, passions and fallacies generated from these pose numerous hurdles at every step towards the development of an ideal society. The *varṇa* system aimed at diminishing the spread of these vicious tendencies by associating the duties of each *varṇa* with divine law. Today as well there should be awareness among people about the necessity of spirituality in every walk of life for everybody's well-being and viable progress. The much-desired awareness and sense of responsibility among the masses, and harmony in different components of the society will lead to social harmony and spiritual upliftment.

The blind pursuit of acquisition of wealth, honor and power to indulge in insatiable egotist passions is a major cause of corruption in all fields of human activities today. Remarkably efficient control over these was ensured in the *varṇa* system where no single individual of any *varṇa* was entitled to have all of these simultaneously — honor, power, wealth and unbridled sense-indulgence. The *Brāhmaṇ*'s character and deeds bestowed distinct honor upon him from all directions. But the power remained in the hands of the *Kṣatriyas*, who shouldered the responsibility of governing the society and protecting it. Because of generating and augmenting wealth for the progressive management of society, this was naturally owned by the *Vaiśyas*. The *Śūdras* being associated with physical labor or creative handwork, did not have to worry about unpredictable changes and future planning for the society etc, and so they were more relaxed and carefree than the other three *varṇas*. Though there was difference in nature of works, none was regarded as higher or lower in any respect.

The materialistic resources were also shared with others happily as per his/her genuine needs. The organization of duties and life-styles broadly

prescribed for each *varṇa* was such that no individual could possess anything without discharging his due responsibilities towards the well-being of the society. Mutual respect and cooperation among all the four *varṇas* created an ideal society blossoming with illumined joy and all round progress.

As analyzed by some scholars of modern times, the four *varṇas* encompass both the social instincts and individualism amongst the human beings [3-4]. In such a model of social engineering, every member is both a “means” and an “end (accomplished goal)” of holistic progress of the society. As a social being he works for the welfare and progress of the society on the altruistic philosophy of “*idaṁ na maṁ*.” As a divine-child, he strives for physical well-being, and mental, intellectual and spiritual evolution of his real “Self”.

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When hatred's shared, discrimination walks the streets. - Anthony T. Hincks

Avoid Mistakes, Live Life Watchfully

We commit mistakes in our lives knowingly, unknowingly or out of habit; and then we also face their consequences. When realization sets in of the mistakes committed, it is our mind that feels sad the most and begins to work towards making amends. Sometimes however, it is not so easy to make amends; and as a result, feelings of remorse stay on with us for a long time.

The question is how do we commit mistakes? Mistakes happen due to our improper thinking and improper speaking. Often when we say or do something wrong, we realize the error and begin to wonder what would happen now and how do we correct this? Whatever we say or do definitely has repercussions on us.

According to a research study, display of negative emotions during conversations, especially with workplace colleagues, is the most harmful. Though it is usually not appropriate to judge whether a person is right or wrong by only hearing what he speaks. Many a time a person intends to say something but what he says gets interpreted differently by listeners. And, if the interpretation turns out to be wrong, it causes negative effect.

We all commit big or small mistakes in our lives. According to a study, 58 percent people accept that in a day at least once or twice they either say or do something which is not right. 22 percent people begin to feel regret immediately after committing a mistake, and about 11 percent realize much later that they

were wrong. The percentage of people who do not feel remorse at all is very small.

According to novelist James Joyce, mistakes pave way for new directions. Recently, due to an error of a senior employee at Amazon, there was a disruption in their network for 24 hours. This person had changed the route of the network by mistake. On realizing his mistake, he immediately sent a mail to his seniors and began to make corrections. For his error he offered to resign from his job as well, but wise managers of the company instead praised the prompt corrective actions he undertook. In their leadership meeting they mentioned about him and said that mistakes teach you a lot, but how you react after committing an error actually determines the outcome of an incident.

According to Dr Robert Woods, a psychological advisor, if a person is honest towards his work, he will not commit mistakes knowingly. However, if a person is committing mistakes knowingly and out of a planned machination, then he should be ready to face consequences which can be grave. The mistakes that we commit unknowingly, whether they are related to work or conversation with someone, can be corrected in good time.

When a person realizes that he committed a mistake unknowingly he feels sad and resentful. In such a situation it is necessary that he first accepts it and then courteously seeks pardon of the affected person. This

Success does not consist in never making mistakes but in never making
the same one a second time. - *George Bernard Shaw*

relieves him of guilty conscience. At the same time, it is necessary to reflect on why the error occurred, and if required should be openly told to everyone.

Mistakes can be very beneficial if a person learns the lessons and resolves never to repeat them. All the failures we face in life are primarily due to our mistakes. One wrong step takes us miles away from our intended goal of success, while each right step takes us closer to success. Only he is successful who stops repeating mistakes and completes his tasks in a flawless manner. When a person becomes so skilful in his task that he commits no error in executing it, he attains success.

Whenever a person starts learning a new task, he not only commits a number of mistakes he also keeps repeating them unknowingly. As he develops familiarity and gains dexterity the number of mistakes reduces and if and when a mistake occurs, he knows immediately.

In normal life too, the more alert and attentive a person is, lesser the mistakes he commits, whereas a person who lives life in stupor and lacks attentiveness makes a lot of mistakes.

When a person is intoxicated he commits many mistakes and does not even realize. After the effect of intoxication comes down, he realizes his mistakes and feels remorse for having committed them. Living a mechanical life is also like living in an intoxicated manner. A person living a routine, mechanical life does not pay sufficient attention to what he is doing. His mind wanders here and there during work and this lack of attention leads to a lot of errors. If we wish to not make mistakes it is necessary to be alert, focussed and watchful at work.

It is also necessary to be alert while conversing and interacting with others because otherwise these are the times when a person unknowingly commits errors and then has to face the consequences for a long time. Yugrishi Pt Shriram Sharma Acharya used to say – “Those who speak first and then think are foolish, while wise people first think and then speak.” Surely, when we think carefully before speaking our conversational errors reduce significantly and others around us begin to regard us a wise person. A courteous nature, sweetness in speech, forgiveness and alertness towards our life and our goal – all these help us to overcome our mistakes.

Certain words make people frown; certain words make people smile; certain words make people cautious; certain words make people ponder; certain words give people relief; certain words increase tension; certain words bring doubt; certain words give hope; certain words challenge gut; certain words empower courage; certain words increase fear; certain words invoke anger; certain words can trigger massacre; certain words can bring peace; Words can change thought, mood, actions and atmosphere in the twinkling of an eye... Not until we get to know how to truly present our daily deeds through our words, we shall always do good and in the end cancel every good deed we have done with just some simple words!

- Ernest Agyemang Yeboah

Mistakes are the portals of discovery. - *James Joyce*

Awaken the Immense Power of Mind

Traditionally, the body is supposed to be the centre of power. In general parlance, whenever we use the term power or force, we mean physical power. When people talk of strong men they generally mean persons with strong physique — wrestlers, weightlifters, bodybuilders, powerlifters etc. but this linkage is not right. We see everywhere numerous persons whose physical build or strength is not much, yet their wishes or directions are obeyed and followed by the physically stronger ones.

Mahatma Gandhi was physically frail, yet his words and thoughts brought about massive movements where lakhs and lakhs stood behind him, and the nation was able to achieve independence. The great Chinese philosopher Lao Tse, again, was not physically strong, but his thoughts cast such an impact on the whole of China, Japan and Korea that their whole philosophy is synonymous with his name. The thoughts of Acharya Shankar, Ramanuja, Madhvacharya, Patanjali, Confucius, Kant, Rousseau, Marx, Hegel, etc. have been exercising great influence on the educated and intellectual class everywhere in the world. The reason for this is not their physical strength but the power of their minds.

Man's real power is not what is visible from the outside. It lies in his mind which is guided by the emerging thoughts. These thoughts, when refined and organised, acquire tremendous potency and cast their influence far and wide. This is evident in daily life too. For lifting a

heavy weight, strong hands are needed. But the hands are not capable of doing this task by themselves. It is the mind which gives them command to do this.

The fact is that to utilise the physical strength properly, the creative power of the mind is required. For success in any work, mental power is essential. The capability of the mind is virtually limitless, but we utilise very limited part of it. We need to tap this hidden potential of the mind and use it in promoting the all-round progress of mankind. In order to augment this power it will be helpful to follow the guidelines mentioned below:

1. Fix the aim of life

Parampujya Gurudev has said that an aimless life is like a pendulum which moves constantly but reaches nowhere. Mind has immense potential, but until this potential is given a direction, no worthwhile result will come out. However, if an aim is fixed, it would be possible to employ the mind and the thought in that direction.

But before fixing this aim, we should first consider our present situation and surroundings. It is wise to keep the initial objective small and feasible. An unrealistic big aim will unnecessarily strain the effort and, if not realised, will cause mental tension. The path to bigger aim becomes easy through the ascending steps of smaller aims.

Whatever we plant in our subconscious mind and nourish with repetition and emotion will one day become a reality. - *Earl Nightingale*

2. Focus your thoughts

When the rays of the sun are scattered, the heat produced is not much, but when the same rays are concentrated at a point with a lens its heat burns the paper. The potency of a focused mind is similarly incalculable. Normally, we see people living their whole lives without any aim or objective. Such living does not lead to any notable quality or achievement in life. But if the mind is directed to a specific goal with full resolve, determination and concentration, many revolutionary changes begin to occur in life.

3. Keep the mind pure and positive

The types of thoughts which arise in the mind attract similar thoughts from the subtle world too, and our nature, mentality and personality begin to be formed accordingly. Negative thoughts give rise to impure mentality; and a person with such mentality descends to a very low level. A visibly small mistake in life may someday become a sore in life. Hence we need to resolve that we will always keep our thoughts pure and positive.

4. Enhance willpower

Hope, faith, determination, dedication, forbearance and patience – these qualities

reflect a developed will power and mental strength. These characteristics begin to spontaneously grow in persons who keep their mind balanced and pious. In whatever field such a powerful mind is applied, success invariably comes. Hence we should continuously attempt to discard disappointment, agitation, fickleness, envy and other such negative emotions from our minds.

5. Make the mind your friend

If the mind is made a friend and guided in the right direction, even difficult work becomes easy. For befriending the mind, it is essential to make it prudent, Whosoever has awakened his prudence and befriended his mind has been able to perform such feats in life as is comparable to those achieved by the great persons of the world. So, let us awaken our sleeping mind; only then will we be able to do with its help such work which is unique and priceless.

If we adopt the above prescriptions formulated by Param Pujya Gurudev in awakening the power of our mind, it will give birth to such an energy that will brighten the whole world with the glow of inspiration. With this very resolve, let us endeavour to awaken the immense power of mind and thought.

Dada Vaswani, when he was a small boy, saw a monk sitting near and asked him to give him some wisdom. The monk advised “My child, Be a Lion, not a dog.” “What does that mean? Would you please explain?” inquired Dada. “When you throw a ball in front of the dog, it will run after the ball. When you throw something at the Lion its attention is still on you, not on the object you throw. It will be waiting to grab you.”

“Always focus on the source, not the incidents, not the effects. Go to the source”

There is no limit to the power of the human mind. The more concentrated it is, the more power is brought to bear on one point. - *Swami Vivekananda*

Yug Gita – 15

How can One be Free from Attachment?

In an answer to the curiosity of Arjuna (2nd chapter, śloka 54), Lord Shrikrishna says -

*Viṣayā vinivartante nirāhārasya dehinaḥ
Rasavarjam raso'pyasya param dr̥ṣṭwā
nivartateH (2/59)*

Meaning: A person, by restricting the senses, may refrain from the objects of sense enjoyment; but the longing for enjoyment remains. However, this desire for sense enjoyment ceases for the one, who realizes the Supreme Being.

This explanation is very significant. For self-control, we will have to strictly remove the desire for sense enjoyment from the core. One can do hard penance by the body, but it is useless if the mind is engrossed in sense objects. In order to control our senses, we will have to dive deep beyond the trio of *mana-buddhi-citta* (mind, body and intellect), to the pure form of Self (where the Supreme Consciousness resides). If this happens, then the mind will not get engaged in erotic thoughts; rather it will visualize the natural beauty of the body (which is an abode of God). Then along with the body, mind will also be controlled. Lord says that the longings of a person of steadfast wisdom automatically vanish by Self-realization.

What will happen if the longing does not vanish? This longing is actually 'addiction'. It captivates forcibly the mind of even a wise man. In śloka 60, Lord explains it as follows:

*Yatato hyapi kaunteya puruṣasya vipaścitaḥ
Indriyaṇi pramāthīni haranti prasabham manaḥH
(2/60)*

Meaning: O Arjuna! The senses are so turbulent that they can forcibly lead astray the mind of even a vigilant person of sound judgement.

There is no possibility of growth of any virtues or self-refinement without self-control. Uncontrolled mind neither likes any teachings nor is interested in one's cultural development. The sensuous mind chasing the mirage of sense objects destroys the abode of God (the physical body) made by great effort. Even a wise appearing person, after getting attracted by the maddening allurements of sense objects, may indulge in foolish acts. Then what can be said of less-qualified or ignorant person?

Can't we understand from the Puranic contexts of Sund-Upsund, protection of Amrit (nectar) by Lord Vishnu from Asuras and self-immolation of Bhasmasur that the senses are so powerful that they can confuse and destroy the wisdom of mind? It is very simple to preach from the stage – 'We should control our senses. O Man! Become a celibate.' But how to imbibe it in practice has been described only in the *sthitaprajña* context of the Gita. A śloka matching the essence of 60th śloka of this chapter is found in Shrimad Bhagvatam (canto 08, chapter 12, śloka 34). It is as follows:

*Mātrā svasrā duhitṛā vā naviviktāsano bhavet
Balavānindriyagrāmo vidvāmsam api karṣatiH*

Attachment is the source of all suffering. - *Buddha*

Meaning: One should not stay in a solitary place with a woman, even if she be his mother, sister or daughter; for the senses are so uncontrollably powerful that in the presence of a woman one may become agitated, even if he is very learned and advanced.

This advice of Shrimad Bhagvatam is for a common man to maintain the social order; and the elucidation given in the Gita is for becoming a spiritually enlightened perfect man. The indication is clear that one should be cautious enough regarding the control of senses; otherwise their allurements may attack the mind anytime.

Further, Lord says in 61st śloka –

*Tāni sarvāṇi saṁyamya yukta āsīt matparaḥ ॥
Vaśe hi yassendriyāṇi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā ॥*
(2/61)

Meaning: Keeping under control all the senses, the self-controlled person should meditate on me; since one, whose senses have been brought under control, is established in steadfast wisdom.

According to Yogeshwar, there is only one solution – only one way: using one's willpower, turn the mind from extroverted to introverted mode and establish it in Supreme Consciousness; and, for this purpose, resort to meditation. Lord says – '*Tāni sarvāṇi saṁyamya*' – that is, keeping all your senses under control meditate on me. There is no other alternative. Param Pujya Gurudev too used to say that we should learn to establish ourselves in Supreme Consciousness by meditating on Lord Savita (the rising Sun). While chanting Gayatri Mantra, we pray to Mother Gayatri considering Her to be Omnipotent and Omnipresent Mother Power to bestow on us

strong willpower so that we can control our ever-wavering senses. Lord is saying, again and again – '*yukta āsīt matparaḥ*' '*manmanābhava madbhakto*'. If the mind can be focused on some constructive or higher level goal and using strong willpower get engaged in accomplishing that task, then one can control the turbulent forces of senses.

Why is it essential? This has been explained in śloka (2/62) as follows:

*Dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ saṅgas teṣūpajāyate ॥
Saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmāḥ kāmāt krodho'bhijāyate ॥*

Meaning: A person continuously thinking about the objects of senses develops attachment to them; from attachment arises the desire to acquire them, and non-fulfilment of desires leads to anger.

America's sixteenth president, Abraham Lincoln, was very poor in his younger age. He was very fond of reading but he had no money to buy books. One day he borrowed a book, "Life of Washington" on George Washington from his neighbor. It rained heavily at night and due to the leaky roof of his house, the book got destroyed. He went to the neighbor and pleaded, "This book got ruined due to the rain water. I don't have money right now to pay back for the book but I can work on your farm and repay it." The neighbor agreed to it. He worked very hard and got that book. This was the first book in his library.

Stand in the reverent attitude to the whole universe, and then will come perfect non-attachment. - *Swami Vivekananda*

Lord Srikrishna is a genius in the science of thoughts. That is why, he puts forward this psychological fact that it is the nature of thoughts to go to the source again and again. It is like a spring of similar thoughts burst open in the mind. If these are positive or superior thoughts, then it is fine; but if it is a flow of negative or sensual thoughts, then certainly, it will surround the person with such thoughts. Scientists too consider this hypothesis of ideosphere fully scientific. That is why seers of yore have been saying – ‘*ānābhadrā kritvanto viśvataḥ*’ – the attachment to worldly objects is the result of continuously thinking about them. The more one thinks about the sense objects, more he gets attached to them and develops the desire to acquire them. Obviously all the desires cannot be fulfilled and hence anger is certain to arise. Swami Chinmayananda has written – ‘Where there are rotting sensual desires, there will be foul smell of anger.’

Such a person gets trapped in the web of vices that ultimately leads to destruction. If the huge gap between ‘desire’ and ‘its fulfillment’ can be filled by *satsang* (virtuous company) and *satchintan* (good thoughts), then one will not sink to such a miserable state. Fretting in the heart, expressing anger or boiling with anger – these are all obstacles in the path of becoming ‘*Sthitaprajña*’. Stress and psychological disorders arise due to the suppression of such desires. If one can transform the desire into an emotion rather than suppressing it, one can be saved from ‘stress’. This way one can save his energy as well. There is difference between anger arising due to atrocity, victimization or maltreatment and the anger arising due to non-fulfilment of the desires. Lord is talking of the second type of anger and he stresses that this

kind of anger is very dangerous. Next śloka (2/63) conveys the outcome of such an anger.

*Krodhād bhavati sammohah sammohāt smṛti
vibhramah
Smṛtibhramāṣhād buddhināśo buddhināśāt
praṇaśyati*

Meaning: From anger comes delusion; from delusion the loss of memory; from loss of memory the destruction of discrimination; from the destruction of discrimination one perishes.

Vasudeva is explaining all this because discriminative faculty of Arjuna is entangled in attachment and Lord is trying to liberate him from that state. He gives an example of destruction of discrimination of Duryodhana, when he admits ‘*jānāmi dharmam na ca me pravṛttiḥ*’ (which means I know dharma (righteousness), but I cannot get myself to follow it). It was this tendency that made him quarrel with his Guru and Bhishma Pitamah, which ultimately led him to destruction. Lord says that anger gives rise to delusion. An angry person cannot be called learned. Some people have a wrong notion in this regard - they consider that one who gets angry over his subordinates, wife and children, he is held in awe. However, this is not so; in fact, anger is the root of destruction. On the way, after delusion comes loss of memory. When delusion overpowers, we forget that we are the crown princes of God; we have come on earth to live our lives befitting a human being. We forget that we are superior among all the living species. Due to this mistake, we start behaving like demons. Loss of memory leads to destruction of discrimination; and when this happens, a person starts falling morally.

One should discard attachment to be happy. – *Chanakya*

This context can be easily understood with the example of Ravana. He was a scholar par excellence, valiant, an ascetic of highest order who got the boon from Lord Shiva, but the obstacles in the fulfilment of his undue desires gradually led him to destruction. Stopping the process of falling due to the destruction of discrimination and teaching a person to uplift himself – is real spirituality. Param Pujya Gurudev used to say – falling down is easy but rising up is tough. That is why he called spirituality as ‘*Zindagi kā śīrṣāsan*’ (upside down of routine life). One who has learnt this *śīrṣāsan* would make his life; he would learn the art of living; he would learn to control himself and instead of getting entangled in attachment would lead a life of sacrifice. This, in fact, is the art of making a human being.

Adya Shankaracharya has mentioned in ‘Vivek Chudamani’ that a *sādhaka* falls morally step by step in a manner similar to the ball

bouncing several times before coming to the ground. The destruction of discrimination can be saved when we recollect why we have come to this earth. All of us, Gayatri Parijans, should keep in mind that we are fortunate enough to be the disciples of Pujya Gurudev and we have been with him for past so many lives and participating in his gigantic endeavors of transformation of eras. We have been playing the role of divine beings. Forgetting the past, are we indulging in such activities that would lead to destruction instead of upliftment? If so, it is very essential to introspect and correct our paths, if we have deviated.

If a person controls his inner-self (*ātmavaśyairvidheyātmā*), uses his wisdom to keep himself away from attachment and performs his duties, all his sorrows will vanish and his intellect will get established in Supreme Consciousness. This is the state of steadfastness of wisdom.

[To be continued]

[Note: This is the translation of Hindi version of ‘Yug Gita’ (Part 1) by Dr. Pranav Pandya, published by Sri Vedmata Gayatri Trust, Shantikunj, Haridwar (2003)]

Napoleon Bonaparte was quartered in the house of a barber, while he was studying. Barber’s pretty wife got attracted to Bonaparte. She would try to talk to him and try to gain his attention but he would only focus on his studies. She was annoyed that her charm had no power to draw Napoleon. Few years later, when in command of the army in Italy, Napoleon passed through the village on his way. He stopped at the barber’s door and asked his former hostess if she remembered a young officer named Bonaparte, who once quartered in her family. “Indeed I do,” she replied pettishly, “a very disagreeable young man he was. He was always shut up in his room and if he did walk out, he never condescended to speak to anyone.” “Ah! My good woman!” Napoleon rejoined, “Had I passed my time as you wished me to have, I should not now be in command of the army of Italy.”

Most of our troubles stem from attachment to things that we mistakenly see as permanent.

- Dalai Lama

Solving Life's Problems – 2

Some people spend much less time picking a life partner than they spend picking out a car. They just drift into these relationships. No one should enter the family pattern unless one is as much called into it as I was called to my pilgrimage. Otherwise, there will be tragedy. I can remember a woman who couldn't get along with her husband and I could see they didn't have anything in common. I finally said to her, "Why in the world did you marry that man in the first place?" And she said, "All my girlfriends were getting married and he was the best I could do at the time." This happens all the time. Do you wonder why there are so many divorces? People get into the family pattern without being called into it.

Emotional attachment can be a terrible thing. When I was working with people who had problems it often was a problem of some emotional attachment that obviously needed to be broken. One was a sixteen year old girl. By now she is probably happily married to somebody else. I always say time heals all wounds, but she thought then that her heart was broken because her boyfriend had married someone else. Although she had a hard time coming through it, after a time she was able to look upon it philosophically. It does take time. In fact, sometimes people recover quicker from the death of a loved one than from a loved one who has left them.

On the Worry Habit

Live this day! Yesterday is but a dream and tomorrow is only a vision, but today well-lived

makes every yesterday a dream of happiness and every tomorrow a vision of hope. Never agonize over the past or worry over the future. Live this day and live it well.

Worry is a habit. It is something that can be worked on. I call it *relinquishment* of the worry habit. There are techniques that help. I talk to some beautiful church people and I discover they still worry. It's a total waste of time and energy. If you are a praying person who prays with faith, you would immediately, and automatically, take what you're worried about to God in prayer and leave it in God's hands—the best possible hands. This is one technique which is excellent. In the beginning you may have to take it back to God quite a number of times before you develop the habit (which I have developed) of always doing everything you can in a situation, and then leaving the rest safely in God's hands.

How often are you worrying about the present moment? The present is usually all right. If you're worrying, you're either agonizing over the past which you should have forgotten long ago, or else you're apprehensive over the future which hasn't even come yet. We tend to skim right over the *present moment* which is the only moment God gives any of us to live. If you don't live the present moment, you never get around to living at all. And if you do live the present moment, you tend not to worry. For me, every moment is a new and wonderful opportunity to be of service.

Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow, it only saps today of its joy. – *Leo F. Buscaglia*

On the Anger Habit

I'll mention here a couple of other habits. One of them is the anger habit. Tremendous energy comes with anger. It's sometimes called the anger energy. Do not suppress it: that would hurt you inside. Do not express it: this would not only hurt you inside, it would cause ripples in your surroundings. What you do is transform it. You somehow use that tremendous energy constructively on a task that needs to be done, or in a beneficial form of exercise.

The best way to talk to you about this is to tell you what some people actually did. For instance, one woman washed all the windows in the house, another woman vacuumed the house whether it needed it or not, and another baked bread—nice, whole grain bread. And another one sat down and played the piano: wild marches at first, then she'd cool down and play gentle things like hymns and lullabies, and then I knew she was all right.

There was a man who got out his manual lawnmower. Remember, the manual lawnmower has no motor. You may never have seen one! And he mowed his big lawn. I was staying next door to him. Then one day he came over and borrowed his neighbor's power lawnmower. I spoke to him about it and he said, "Oh, without the anger energy I could never mow that big lawn with a manual lawnmower." You see, it's really tremendous energy.

Then there was this man who saved his marriage. He had such a bad temper that his young wife was about to leave him and take their two small children along. And he said, "I'm going to do something about this!" And he did. Whenever

he felt a temper tantrum coming on, instead of throwing things all over the house which had been his previous custom, he got out there and jogged. Round and round the block, until he was all out of breath and the energy was all gone — and he saved his marriage. It worked. I saw him again years later, and I asked him, "Well, are you still jogging?" "Oh, a little bit for exercise," he said, "but I haven't had a temper tantrum for years." As you use the energy constructively you lose the anger habit.

These techniques have also worked with children. I recall one ten year old boy. I was trying to help his mother because she was having an awful time with him. He got temper tantrums and one time, when he was not having a tantrum, I asked him, "Of all the things you do what takes the most energy?" And he said, "I guess running up the hill in the back of the house." And so we found a wonderful solution. Every time his mother saw the sign of a temper tantrum she would push him out the door and say, "Go run up the hill." It worked so well that when a teacher told me she was having a similar problem with a boy about the same age I suggested she tell him to run around the schoolhouse, and that worked too.

Now I'll tell you about another couple. They got mad at the same time, and they decided to walk around the block. One walked one way and one walked the other way, but they met at frequent intervals. And when they could meet amicably they walked home together and discussed what had caused their angers and what could be done to remedy it in the future. This was a very wise thing to do. You should never try to talk to someone who is angry, because that person is not rational at that time.

Worry often gives a small thing a big shadow. – *Swedish Proverb*

I'll tell one more story about a young mother. She has three children under school age and she said, "When I get mad I feel like running, but I can't. I can't leave my three small children. And I usually end up taking it out on them." I said to her, "Have you ever tried running in place?" And I could just see her running in place. She wrote to me: "Peace, it works wonderfully well. It not only gets rid of the anger energy, but it amuses the children!"

On the Fear Habit

Fear is also a habit. Fear can be taught and is taught constantly. Fear is perpetuated.

Now, I haven't the slightest fear. God is always with me. But I had a friend who was afraid of a certain ethnic group of people. Her husband had been transferred to another place and she found herself living among this group of people whom she had always feared. I worked with her and first got her acquainted with the music of these people, because she was a musician. Then I found a woman of this particular group who had two children about the same age as my friend's two children, and we went to see her. The two little boys ran off together, the two little girls ran off together, and then we proceeded to get acquainted. Of course, they became fast friends. I remember the time they attended one another's churches. It was a lovely thing. One Sunday they both went to one church and another Sunday they both went to the other church. It was very interesting that when they got to know each other they discovered that their likenesses were much greater than their differences. They came to love each other when they got to know each other.

I knew a lady who was a college English professor. Any time there was the slightest rumble of thunder in the distance she became hysterical. When she was a tiny child, whenever there was a thundershower her mother ran and crawled under the bed and, of course, the kids crawled under with her. She was taught by her mother to fear thundershowers — by example. That's the way children are taught.

Almost all fear is fear of the unknown. Therefore, what's the remedy? *To become acquainted with the thing you fear.* We had to learn all the safety rules before we could become acquainted with thundershowers, but it worked.

I'll tell you another story about fear. I've heard of women who are afraid of mice. And I've personally known women and men who are afraid of dogs. But this woman was afraid of cats. I'm not talking about a wild cat—just common, ordinary household cats. Now there were cats in her neighborhood. All of her friends had cats. Every time she encountered a cat she screamed, she ran, she became hysterical. She told me she thought every cat she encountered was about to jump at her throat. Now, a psychologist would say, "When she was a baby she was frightened by a cat; she's forgotten that but it still remains in her subconscious." This might be true. It doesn't matter. I said, "If you wish to lose your fear of cats you must become acquainted with a cat." "Oh no!" she replied. I said, "Well, are you afraid of a kitten?" "Not if it's small enough," she said. So I borrowed a cute, small kitten. They said I could either borrow it or keep it. I brought it to her and I said, "Now are you afraid of that?" "Oh, not that little thing," she said. "All right," I said, "now you must become acquainted. You must feed it, play with it." And

For every minute you remain angry, you give up sixty seconds of peace of mind.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

of course you know the end of the story. The kitten grew into a cat, but by then she was so attached to it she wouldn't give it up.

Some fears can come from experiences in former lives. In fact the last problem I told about may have had such a source. These are dealt with in the same way. You become acquainted with the things you fear.

There are a few places where you have to use a little different approach. I'll tell you one case where we used the gradual approach. This woman was afraid to sleep in a small room; she would go into a small room, but would not sleep there. This fear did come from a previous life experience. She came for help to where I was working. We put up a cot in the corner of the library (a very large room) for her. She was even afraid to sleep there alone, so I put up another cot and slept there with her the first night. Then when she had learned to at least sleep alone in the library, we put a cot in the dining room, the next smaller room. I slept next to her the first night, and then after that she gradually learned to sleep by herself. Then we tried the biggest bedroom that we had, and so on until she came to the point where she was able to sleep in a small bedroom.

You do not necessarily have to use this gradual method. We did because there are a few kinds

of fear that are easier to deal with using the gradual technique. Another one of them is fear of heights, and this also may come from prior experience. Let me tell you, some young, vigorous people have a fear of heights.

What I used to do when people had a fear of heights was to take them to a height where they felt comfortable and really didn't want to go any higher. Then I would stay with them for a while. I would leave them there with something to read, something to occupy them while they stayed at that height for a while. The next day we would go immediately to that height and then a little bit higher. Finally they reached the top, accustomed to the height, and no longer had any fear of it.

I have been asked if a certain amount of fear is healthy. I don't think any amount of fear is healthy. Unless you're talking about the fact that if you have fear about a street, you'll look up and down before crossing the street. But you see, I believe we are required to do everything possible for ourselves and therefore when I walk out onto a street I always look up and down. But I don't think that's fear. That's just being sensible. I don't connect that in any way with fear. For instance, I know that if there are little pebbles scattered over a smooth rock, I'm liable to slip if I step on those little pebbles, so I'm careful not to. I'm not afraid; it's just the sensible thing to do.

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Our happiness depends on the habit of mind we cultivate. So practice happy thinking every day. Cultivate the merry heart, develop the happiness habit, and life will become a continual feast.

- Norman Vincent Peale

I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. – *Nelson Mandela*

Life is Priceless, Live it Happily

Happiness is life's priceless gift; and, it completely depends upon us how carefully we handle this gift. Happiness is like water that gently oozes from under the earth and flows on continuously. If the source of the water is covered, the flow gets obstructed and the same is true with happiness as well. Just like water is stored inside the earth, happiness also is stored in our inner selves. But, due to our hectic lifestyles and everyday problems we cannot feel its presence in us and unknowingly begin to steadily obstruct its tender flow.

Happiness is a natural state of being, but when we begin to lead unnatural, artificial lives, we start to lose out on happiness. In present times, people have incorporated many kinds of artificialities in their lives which have led to creation of a number of problems. People put on different masks every day and use lies and falsities in daily dealings. To solve problems, people adopt all wrong means and unhesitatingly cheat others. As a result, instead of solving they end up creating newer problems. This then leads to stress and anxiety.

Instead of living in places with good air circulation, people choose air conditioned spaces. In place of increasing natural greenery, they create artificial greenery. Rather than growing grass in open spaces, people prefer putting green coloured plastic grass mats in homes. Instead of growing plants around their house to beautify surroundings people prefer keeping plastic flowers and artificial pots in their homes. Even to enhance their own beauty, in place of using

natural products people have begun to apply only artificial chemicals on their body.

Likewise to develop their personality instead of understanding and enhancing their innate unique qualities, people try to cover them up and artificially create a façade which is attractive and catches attention of others. Whenever we take up a task which is not really of our liking but we do it only to please others, we can feel happy only for a while. We may display happiness in front of others, but we cannot be truly happy. If we really wish to attain true inner happiness we must learn to listen to the voice of our inner being. Only then will we become deserving recipients of true happiness.

Our outlook also determines our level of happiness. Depending upon the way we look at and understand incidents that unfold in front of us, certain chemical changes happen inside our body. For example, when we find some new opportunity, happiness or hope in a situation, our body secretes hormones which in popular parlance are known as 'happy hormones'. Similarly, if we look at a situation through hopelessness and despair, our body begins to release stress hormones. So, by changing our outlook towards events, circumstances and objects and correcting our habits we can easily enhance our happiness.

It has also been observed that if a person spends even half an hour with nature his mind stays calm and happy through the day. A walk in the natural environment enhances physical and mental

There is only one happiness in this life, to love and be loved. - *George Sand*

health. Physical labour that causes sweating also increases our inner contentment and happiness. When a person performs physical labour, along with sweat, the body also releases special kinds of antibodies. Antibodies are proteins that help the body fight diseases. The body also releases a chemical called endomorphin which is helpful in balancing our emotions. This clearly shows that the way we look and think has a significant effect on our physical and mental health.

Additionally, undisturbed, deep sleep also makes our life natural and fills us with happiness. Sufficient and deep sleep helps in balancing the inner workings of our body. Our brain functions better when sleep is good and our decision-making improves significantly.

Music and dance also have an intimate connection with happiness. Waves of music help relax our mind, and vibrancy of dance fills us with joy. Everyone likes to watch dance and listen to music and these activities must be included in our daily lives. Humming music gives us happiness. Good music helps in reducing stress, gives relaxation and enhances inner happiness. Music has such a profound effect on human beings that scientists have begun to regard music as an alternative therapeutic means for treating several kinds of diseases.

With the information revolution, people have almost forgotten to write by hand. Earlier people used to write letters regularly and there used to be a strong bond between people and their pens. Now everyone expresses thoughts and feelings

through SMS, WhatsApp etc. and stays away from physical act of writing. Actually writing is also closely related with happiness. When we write down thoughts that get generated in mind, there remains no need to forcibly keep them in the active memory of our brain. As a result, the burden on brain reduces and it feels light and happy. This is why it is a good practice to write down thoughts that keep circulating in mind. Also, whenever good thoughts or good ideas appear in mind, they also should be written down and preserved. Good ideas are often like bubbles that rise and ebb fast. If they have to be preserved for posterity, then the best way is to write them down.

Being in touch with good thoughts and emotions also enhances our happiness. For this, it is necessary to collect good literature, read it regularly and contemplate upon it. This habit of reading good books is essential for our mental health. Reading helps in the creation of virtuous thoughts; and the latter then gently lead our personality in the right direction, and provide inspiration and guidance at opportune moments. The emotional and spiritual energy in good literature shows us the right path to take and provides us inner happiness. Reading good literature fills us with a sense of fulfilment.

So, there are many ways to be happy. Adopting these we can fill our lives with happiness. By being in touch with others, we can also expand the outreach of happiness. We must put in concerted efforts to incorporate these means of enhancing happiness in our regular routine.

Three grand essentials to happiness in this life are something to do, something to love, and something to hope for. - **Joseph Addison**

Smile in the mirror. Do that every morning and you'll start to see a big difference in your life.

- **Yoko Ono**

Soulmate and Collaborator of Life's Mission-3

The beginning of public contact

The house at *Chuna-Kankad* (ward of Mathura) was appearing to be small as the members of Akhand Jyoti family were increasing. Many curious people also started coming. When the people participating in Shriram's *Yagya*-campaign and other programs had any doubts regarding any subject, whether private or public, they would unhesitatingly come to Shriram for solution. Shriram, while conducting the *yagya*, would give the message that while offering *ahutis* (oblations) in the fire of *yagya*, one should also offer *ahutis* of one's evil traits and resolve to take up some aspect of selfless service. The more one does in this direction, more *punya* (spiritual merit) he earns.

When Shriram used to be away from home, Taiji would take care of the visitors. But soon she realized that sitting for public contact and guidance was not in tune with her nature. She was more inclined to remain engrossed in the adoration of the Lord. So she freed herself gradually from this responsibility and brought forward her *Bahu* (daughter-in-law), Bahgwati Devi. When *Bahu* hesitated, Taiji and then Shriram too explained to her – 'In the coming days more and more suffering people will visit our home; and then it is you who will have to take care of them'. She hesitatingly agreed for public contact and that too only in the absence of Shriram.

When the number of visitors increased, the need for a bigger house was felt. Shriram came to know that there was a double storey Haveli having twelve rooms in the Dampier Park. The monthly rent of that house was rupees eight. From the point of view of openness and future expansion it was quite good. When Shriram went there, the neighbors told him that there was a legal dispute over that house between two families. Whenever any one of them had tried to sell or hire it, quarrel used to start. Then he searched some other houses. Finally, he settled for the house at Ghiya Mandi. There were nine rooms in it. The house was double-storeyed. This house, located by the road side, continues to be the office of 'Akhand Jyoti' (monthly magazine) to this day. The space was sufficient. Once the rent was fixed, 'Akhand Deepak' and the photo of Mother Gayatri were established on the ground floor. About forty people attended the house- warming ceremony.

Challenge in the new house

When Shriram was enthusiastically exploring the possibility of hiring this house, the neighbors warned him that the house had been vacant for several months. Even if someone came there, he didn't stay for long. It was said that evil spirits haunted that house. From their point of view, they were giving the right advice not to reside there; but Shriram said 'If the evil spirits are haunting, let them be there;

Not how long, but how well you have lived is the main thing. – *Seneca*

I will not have any inconvenience due to them;
I will befriend them.'

The people listening to this answer thought that Shriram was making fun of them, though it was not so. Shriram made his point clear – “We are *sadhaks* and devotees of Gayatri; therefore we don't keep any malice or enmity towards anyone.” He narrated the story of Madhavacharya: “Swami Madhavacharya did the *sadhana* of Gayatri for twelve years. He did *Japa-Tapa*, *Vrat-Anushthan*, everything sincerely, but no visible benefit was observed. He felt that there was no improvement in physical, mental or spiritual levels. He was very much disappointed. In order to achieve quick success in *sadhana*, a famous *Tantrik* Balyogi advised Madhavacharya to worship Lord Bhairav. Madhavacharya had a great fancy for attaining *Siddhis* (supernatural powers). He started worshipping Lord Bhairav. In just forty days, he could see the results of new *sadhana*. He heard the voice of Lord Bhairav – ‘Ask for a boon’. Madhavacharya opened the eyes to see him. But he could not be seen. The Acharya said – ‘Please give me your *darshan* (view)’. Bhairav replied – ‘You have done *sadhana* of Gayatri. I cannot appear before Gayatri *Sadhak*. I cannot face the effulgence of Gayatri *sadhana*.’ Madhavacharya asked – ‘But I have never felt the benefit of Gayatri *Upasana*’. Bhairav explained – “Your *Upasana* has annulled the results of sins accumulated in past lives. When the stage of getting the spiritual benefits arrived, you left that path. Though you have left that *sadhana*, its effulgence will always be with you.” The aim of this narration was to remove the worry of the neighbors.

Gambol of ghosts

After two-three days, it appeared in the night that there was brouhaha on the terrace. The sound of people running around was heard, as if they were loitering or playing Kabaddi. Shriram took a lighted lantern in one hand and a stick in the other and went upstairs. When he searched there, no one was found. He also looked on the nearby other terraces. Then he came down. After sometime there was again the same noise. Taiji said – “Shriram! It would have been better had we learnt from others' lessons and not come here. These are the evil spirits who are causing noise. Now we should search for a new house.” After a pause, she said – “Tell the concerned people right in the morning.”

As soon as Taiji completed her talk, there was an uproar in the upstairs, as if in the joy of victory many people started shouting. Shriram said – “We should not accept our defeat like this,

The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness, and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen.

- Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

Believe that life is worth living and your belief will help create the fact. - William James

otherwise what will Thakurji and Mother Gayatri say!” Taiji didn’t reply. She kept silent. There were intermittent noises upstairs. Shriram got up saying – ‘I too will have to sit upstairs. Let me see who is annoyed with us.’

Taking the lantern and a stick in his hands, he again went upstairs. From the door he said in a loud voice – “Listen! Whosoever you are, we have no fear at all. If you want to live here, you can do so gladly but don’t create trouble. We will not disturb you, but will also not tolerate your commotion.”

Peace restored

No answer came from any direction. Shriram unfolded his mat and sat on it. There was dead silence all over. Shriram heard a very light sound of footsteps, as if someone was approaching him slowly. He saw in that direction. No one was seen, but the footsteps were still heard. Shriram was staring constantly in that direction. It appeared that someone came very near, but soon it was felt that the (invisible) person had changed his mind and retreating footsteps were heard.

Shriram remained seated as usual. After ten-fifteen minutes, Taiji’s voice was heard; she was calling him downstairs. Shriram got up and said – “If you accept my advice, then do not create trouble; live peacefully. I will try for your salvation; pray to Mother Gayatri and perform *Yagya –anushthan*, so that you get peace. If you expect something else from us, we are ready to do it, but do not create commotion.” Saying this, Shriram went downstairs. After that day, there was no disturbance. The next *Poornima* (full moon day), Shriram performed

Yagya for the peace of those tormented spirits on the same terrace. Neighbors were surprised to watch all the drama.

The test of affection –resolve

Those days the world was suffering from the horrors of World War II, which was causing colossal misery – death and destruction – all over the world for past six years. Several industries / factories had closed down. The press located on Vrindavan road, in which ‘Akhand Jyoti’ used to be printed, also closed down. Prior to this, they faced the shortage of printing paper. Somehow, they managed to get the paper, but the printing was difficult to manage. At that time there were twenty two printing presses in Mathura. Out of them eighteen had closed down. It was becoming difficult to get ‘Akhand Jyoti’ printed.

‘Whatever be the means required, the magazine must come out in time’ – Shriram told confidently, while discussing the problems of home and family with his wife. He said further, “Akhand Jyoti is not only a magazine printed on paper, it is the light of ‘Akhand Deepak’ lit in our Puja room. Like the Deepak, the flame of ‘Akhand Jyoti’ must also be kept lighted uninterruptedly.”

“We are following the religion of love and affection” – said Mataji. (By that time, not only the children of neighbors, but also the people visiting the office of Akhand Jyoti started calling Bhagwati Devi as ‘Mataji’ (mother)). She said – “You have given me the responsibility of keeping the affection (oil) full in Akhand Deepak. Now let me also worry about Akhand Jyoti.” Saying this Mataji got up

The trick in life is learning how to deal with it. - *Helen Mirren*

and took out the jewelry box from the Almirah. Keeping it in front of Shriram, she said – “These jewels should be enough for starting a small press. Please keep them as pawn with the pawn-broker. We can use that money. In future, when we earn enough money, we will get them back.”

‘Akhand Jyoti’ – Mother’s love and affection

Shriram was wonderstruck by this initiative of Mataji. There was no scope for saying ‘no’ to the proposal. Plan was made then and there - ‘A hand – operated machine should be purchased. If a small treadle machine is available within the limited budget, that can also be purchased and the magazine should be published in time.’ In the same meeting of planning and taking the decision, Shriram told Mataji – ‘Your gesture is superbly in accord with your title (Mataji) – taking up the responsibility of distributing love and affection in the *Puja*-room and in *Gyan Yagya* too.’

After a close search, one small Indian treadle machine was arranged for rupees ninety. In normal days, its cost would have been around

rupees four hundred. Whatever amount of money was needed, it was made available on loan. The machine was fixed in one of the rooms of the office of Akhand Jyoti, located on the ground floor. The work was to be started immediately. So an employee, named Abdul, was hired as machine-man. Prior to printing the first page, coconut was broken. A *tilak* was applied on the forehead of Abdul and *kalawa* was tied in his right hand. As a *shagun* (auspicious gift), he was given a copper coin. Then he printed the first page. On that occasion, only twelve persons were present. One of them said – ‘It’s a courageous deed. In these times of economic depression, people are winding up businesses; Shriram has begun a new venture.’

Shriram heard this. Even if he had not heard, he was about to say – “It is Mataji’s courage and conviction which has made manifest this venture. ‘Akhand Jyoti’ is Mataji’s personified love and affection.” From that day upto the publication of Akhand Jyoti on due date, Shriram told this incident to many people on different occasions. It was also mentioned in ‘*Gayatri Charcha*’ and the editorial (*Apno se apni bat*) of ‘Akhand Jyoti’.

Gandhiji’s Satyagraha agitation was in full force. British government was highly frustrated to see Gandhiji’s success in his mission. One English officer even stated that “he can shoot Gandhi if he finds him anywhere”. It was not possible to hide officer’s statement from Gandhiji. Gandhiji also heard. Next day he went to meet that officer early morning at his residence. Officer was asleep when Mr. Gandhi reached his residence. Mr. Gandhi introduced himself to the officer, when he woke up and said – ‘Gandhi is in front of you. Now you can fulfil your pledge easily without any further delay and problems’. Officer felt very ashamed to hear Gandhiji’s statement. He could not say a word. In fact his heart changed for Gandhi from that moment.

Don’t gain the world and lose your soul, wisdom is better than silver or gold.

- Bob Marley

Benefits of Diary Writing

Writing diary is an extremely personal form of self-expression, which begins from the individual but its end is beyond all boundaries. It has an unending expanse. The content matter of diary writing includes significant events which occurred during the day, mental and emotional ups and downs, special meetings and memorable lessons. If this noble practice could be made a part of our routine as a means of introspection, it would not only prove to be extremely beneficial but it would also unleash newer dimensions. Various styles of writing begin to emanate from it on their own.

Diary writing is an effective means of self-analysis. With daily diary writing, we not only keep a watch on our behavior, but also look deep within the depths of our thoughts, sentiments and inner self. Consequently, we gradually get familiarized with the deeper layers of our personality. With this, the aim of our life becomes clearer and improves the quality of our life. After realizing the utility of life, the journey of life becomes even more thrilling.

The significance of diary writing as an effective technique of Psychiatry is noteworthy. Life becomes a hell on being overshadowed by the sentiments of stress and depression. Diary writing plays a crucial role in relieving the suffocation, frustration and emotional trauma of a stressful life. The burden of thoughts and emotions gets a safe outlet through the practice of diary writing. Therefore, it is not surprising

that nowadays it is widely being used as a tool of psychiatric treatment.

The significance of diary writing as a means of self-inspiration and a great force of motivation is unequalled. While writing the diary, we keep an account of our qualities, achievements, memorable moments and meetings. During the difficult times, depression, despair and disappointment, the pages of the diary act as a great force of motivation. Reading these pages in the dark moments of life gives rise to a new wave of enthusiasm and hope. Thus, our diary has a unique role to play as an affectionate companion of our lives.

The diary also has a distinct role in teaching the art of writing. The regular practice of diary writing helps in improving our writing skills. We begin to make proper selection of words and correct and accurate expression of thoughts. Not surprisingly, the habit of daily diary writing turns the person into an author, who could make use of this skill to compose creative works in various fields of life.

The significance of the diary increases even more as a platform of creative writing in the age of internet. Apart from giving expression to the fundamental expressions and thoughts of our inner self, it also works as a fertile land of creative writing, which could be elaborated in various ways. From travelogue to compilation of spiritual discourses and memorable incidents, all are the different variations and

Keep a diary, and someday it'll keep you. - *Mae West*

elaborations of the basic art of diary writing. In the present era of internet, the popularity of using blog as the web diary is known to all, which is increasingly being used not only as a medium of expression but also as a means to earn livelihood.

Writing diary as a spiritual experience has its own importance. If it is used as an honest auditor to analyze one's thoughts, feelings and actions, then it gets manifested as a spiritual experience. On one hand, it becomes the medium of conversing with God; while on the other, it becomes a tool for estimating the inner status and as an indicator of internal progress. In short, it could be said that the practice of daily diary writing becomes an effective medium of internal refinement, purification and self-development.

Moreover, diary could prove to be a priceless heritage and legacy for the future generations.

If one could get involved in this creative work with an experimental mind of a scientist, dedication and devotion of a seeker, curiosity of a student and an investigative mind of a researcher, then diary writing could eventually yield a valuable wealth of knowledge. It is a precious gift and legacy as the creative work of a dedicated mind. Also, it is a guide, motivator and elucidator for the generations to come.

We are now familiar with the numerous benefits of diary writing. So why should we not make it a part and parcel of our daily routine. In order to do this, we should sit down with our diary and pen in a quiet corner of our house during the peaceful moments of the evening or night. This process could be initiated by first mentally revising all the important events of the day, the ups and downs of our emotions, our significant achievements, memorable lessons and meetings and then making detailed expression of these.

Advice to explorers everywhere: if you would like to receive due credit for your discoveries, keep a detailed account of your journeys as Columbus did. On September 28, 1492, after four weeks at sea, he writes: "Dear diary...I mean journal. Yes, dear journal. That's what I meant to say. Whew. Anyway, we have yet to discover America, and the crew has become increasingly rebellious. I have decided to turn back if we have not spotted it by Columbus Day. Will write again later if not killed by crew. P.S. Last night's buffet was fabulous, the ice sculptures magnificent."

- Cuthbert Soup

Memory... is the diary that we all carry about with us. - *Oscar Wilde*

Utility of Hair on the Body

Our hair on the head not only augment our elegance, but also protect very sensitive centers in our body. These centers are full of energy; and hence the nature has itself demarcated these spots and concealed them with hair.

The greatest density of hair is found in the head region, while men also have thick hair in their beard. The health status of the person could be assessed to a great extent on the basis of his hair. They could also tell us about his age. The thickest hair are present in childhood and adolescence. They flourish well even in the teenage. But as the person progresses towards adulthood his hair begin to grey and there is increased incidence of hair fall.

Many types of beliefs have been associated with the hair since the ages. For instance, long hair were considered a symbol of prosperity and power in ancient Greece. The scientists have also confirmed that long hair is an indication of productivity and youthfulness. In ancient India, the sages and saints also had long hair and they used to tie them to form a knot. This hair knot on the head activated the bio-magnetic field of the head, which in turn stimulated the pineal gland located at the center of the brain. The activated pineal gland gives rise to a secretion, which is essential for the development of higher intellect.

According to the trichologists, when the hair of our scalp attain their complete and mature length, they naturally obtain phosphorus, calcium and vitamin D, which are extremely

essential for the proper functioning of various activities of the body. This improves our memory, vitality and toleration power.

At some places, hair have been referred to as the antennae of the body and they are considered as the channel which accumulates the astral energy and channelizes it towards the brain. Thus, they could be called as the conductor for the bio-magnetic energy of the body. Some researchers believe that the hair present at the top of the head regulates the energy flow within the body and balances the entire electromagnetic field, thus helping a person to augment his vitality and inner knowledge.

According to Indian scriptures on asceticism, the place of tying the hair knot is like the 'Navel Center' of the brain. In other words, it is also called the heart of the mind. This 'knot center' and the four directions affiliated to it are the seats of five chief abilities of prudence, determination, foresightedness, love and restraint respectively. The roots of all of these five powers lie beneath the knot center. Significance of this place increases because of being the heart of the brain and the site of such important powers. Therefore, the best way to keep this place healthy and safe is to keep it covered with hair.

Our hair have the potential of protecting our body against the adverse effects of the external environment. The hair protect the body from the direct and unnecessary impact of heat and cold. In this way, the body secures itself

Forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the winds long to play with your hair. - *Kahlil Gibran*

from the changing weather of the external environment and is able to maintain proper balance. The cover of the hair protects the sensitive regions of the body and prevents the occurrence of any disorder easily. This is the reason why the disciples had long hair in the ancient Gurukul tradition.

Indian culture has a tradition of shaving the head as a part of penance and also after the death of a close relative. The implication of this ritual is to quieten the heart and mourn. This is also followed in the Sannyasa tradition. This is because hair is an integral part of the body, which also enhances the beauty. Thus, people have a special attachment to them. But as renunciation and non-attachment are given special significance in the tradition of 'Sannyas', the ritual of shaving the head is included in this.

The hair of our head increase by about one and a half inches per month. Their age ranges from two to eight years, after which they are replaced by new ones. The hair of other parts of our body ceases to grow after attaining a certain length, but they are replaced with new strands every six months. The importance of hair of the head is more than those of other parts of the body and the former also demonstrate our determination. This is the reason that Guru Gobind Singh emphasized

on the importance of the hair, connecting it with the self-respect of the individual.

Protein is an important contributor to the formation of hair. Thick and long hair indicate that the person is physically fit. As far as the saints and sages are concerned, they do not accumulate resources so they do not have the means to cut their hair, nor do they have the time to look after their hair. Thus, their hair grow and get tangled as knots.

The way of tying the hair gives an identity to the person. Proper maintenance of hair increases their life but if they are not looked after properly then they may also become a reason for skin diseases. The body's life force flows in the hair. Therefore, the vitality of a person could be estimated on the basis of the condition of his hair. There are numerous pores on our scalp around the hair roots, which balance the external and internal environments and it is through them that our body is capable of establishing harmony with the environment.

The hair are most affected by our physical and mental conditions and this is the reason why they become weak and start falling when we are either sick or under stress or anxiety. The facts mentioned above clearly reveal the significance of hair.

A tree has roots in the soil yet reaches to the sky. It tells us that in order to aspire we need to be grounded and that no matter how high we go it is from our roots that we draw sustenance. It is a reminder to all of us who have had success that we cannot forget where we came from. It signifies that no matter how powerful we become in government or how many awards we receive, our power and strength and our ability to reach our goals depend on the people, those whose work remain unseen, who are the soil out of which we grow, the shoulders on which we stand.

- Wangari Maathai

Hair is a beautiful form of self-expression. - Carolyn Aronson

Theism, Spirituality, and Religion - 6

(Translation of a discourse - continued from the previous issue)

Friends,

We have had a long discussion on Theism and Spirituality. I suppose all your misconceptions, illusions, and doubts about these precious, universal aspects of a truly worthy human-life are now cleared. Another vital and more popular facet of human life is “Religion”. “Religion” is perhaps the most widespread, diversified and multi-shaded concept, which is less understood, and more misused and abused in practice by the human society.

Religion in most parts of the world is often found associated with dogmatic convictions regarding moral duties, traditions, ritualistic sacraments, and ceremonial practices. Often, the so-called religious leaders are found propagating narrow-minded, orthodox, and rigid norms and doctrines in the name of religion. In several cases, orthodox practices and communalism coupled with blind faith and superstitions dominate ‘religiousness’. These illusions and misconceptions should be removed from the human society at the earliest. You, as seekers of spirituality owe this responsibility more. “Religion”, in truest sense, implies — adoption of spirituality in practice — in character, behavior, and actions.

In the spiritual training programs of our mission (*Yug Nirman Yojana/Vichar Kranti/ Pragya Abhiyan* of the All World Gayatri Pariwar), we have been emphasizing the importance of *Upāsana*, *Sādhana*, and *Ārādhana*. These are respectively the

core practices of *Āstikatā* (Theism), *Ādhyatmikatā* (Spirituality) and *Dhārmikatā* (Religiousness). I have explained to you the meaning, practical implication, and significance of the first two. *Ārādhana* is like a test of proper accomplishment of *Upāsana* and *Sādhana*. As such, the word meaning of “*Ārādhana*” is “adoration” and it is used in the context of adoration of God. People often interpret it as devotional prayer, in which there is invocation and adoration of the deity. But they miss the real point that worship of God in reality means adoration, careful nurturing, and constructive beautification of His creation – the world, the living beings and every constituent of Nature.

Human Life is a Precious Gift Entrusted with Responsibility:

The wonderful faculties of the body and mind, especially the intellect and many talents and creative potentials are distinguished gifts of God blessed upon humans. No other creature has got so much. But, with the precious gifts, God has also entrusted upon humankind some higher responsibilities. In fact, we are like ‘trustees’ of the Almighty. Religion reminds us that the precious gift of human life is like His property; we are supposed to carefully guard it and endeavor our level best to ascertain its adept utilization and further development. Religion guides us towards our duties as the crown prince of the Almighty, as the most evolved being in the gigantic creation of Nature.

This most beautiful system of the sun, planets and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being. - *Isaac Newton*

True Religion:

Gratefulness and generosity are universal elements of religion. Many of the rituals or festivals as part of our religious tradition are there to remind us of these essential duties. For example, offerings as part of devotional worship of a deity, symbolize our expression of gratefulness to the Almighty for the enormous blessings He has bestowed upon us. It's a pity that our 'act' of 'thanks giving' gets trapped only in the ritualistic and ceremonial part. Beyond this we hardly feel the limitless grace of God, the countless boons of Nature. In fact, as truly religious persons, as true human beings, we should live with a feeling of His presence everywhere, and it should make us modest and compassionate. It should always motivate us to express our gratitude by offering help to the needy in a constructive way, to help in the progress of society, nation, and the world at large, to help maintain ecological balance, purity, and beauty of Nature.

Religion should make us kind and generous. We should learn to prudently share, distribute, and deploy our resources for the betterment of more and more people and other living beings. For example, only a fraction of our physical and intellectual potentials and other resources should be sufficient for what is essential for our survival (e.g. food, shelter and clothing). Rest of what we possess should be deployed for the betterment of the society, the world.

Look at the trees around us. They grace us with so many invaluable things, free of cost! They grow and blossom but not for themselves. They keep offering what they possess to us and the

other creatures, in the form of wood, flowers, fruits, etc. They provide shelter to so many birds and insects. Humans can also rest under their shadow during summer, or take shelter under them and protect themselves from getting drenched in the rains.

The sheep also teaches us to give magnanimously. The wool grown on its body is cut and used for making warm clothes. It does not mind the pain it has to bear in this process. Because of its generosity, Nature keeps covering its skin with new soft wool. The cycle continues throughout its life. The bear on the contrary keeps the hair on its body for itself till its death. This selfish possession deprives it from Nature's gift of new hair. Its hairs are hard and harsh. Now you have to decide whether to become like the trees and sheep or like a bear.

Generosity is a Prime Sign of Humanity:

If you regard worldly success and status as the measure of progress in life, you are wrong. What is the point in acquiring high education, elegant positions and recognitions, if you can't envisage the path of ultimate good?

Rivers keep flowing and sharing their water to quench the thirst of the people, farms/soil, and offering it for many other purposes, along the way. Their water is always pure and they keep getting more of it from their natural source(s) and the rains. The stock of water in the ponds, which keep their water stored under their (selfish) boundaries stinks and rots over time. For want of external efforts of cleaning and deepening, their soil bed erupts and they eventually dry out or turn into pits of mire and filth.

The goodness of people depends on the intentions of their brains and not on their religion or ancestry. - *Merlin Franco*

Clouds in the sky empty themselves by showering all their stock of water on the earth. But they keep getting it back from the ocean. Plenty of such real examples are there in Nature to teach us what is a truly progressive path for us? In fact, the entire cycle of Nature, the source of existence of the universe, existence of life on the earth is sustained only on the universal principle of caring and sharing. If we can't learn from such observations and experiences, then what is the use of our intellect? What is our maturity-level if we can't think of the distant future; and, instead, keep running after immediate gains and selfish possessions?

According to universal norms of human-religion, not only cruelty and immorality, but selfishness, cunningness, apathy, etc are also regarded as inhuman, and hence, as sinful. Just pause and think, so many known or unknown people, even animals, trees, rivers and other components of Nature directly or indirectly contribute to sustenance of your life and support your progress. Don't you have any duties towards them? Don't you know that ungratefulness is against humane values?

Please remember, irrespective of whether you are a theist or atheist, irrespective of which line of faith you adopt, irrespective of whether or not you follow any ritual of a particular religion or cult, irrespective of whether you are illiterate or an eminent scholar, irrespective of whether you are a professional or a farm-labor, irrespective of whether you are affluent or poor [...], if you have inculcated generosity and compassion in your heart and you share your resources (including physical and mental potentials) for altruistic purposes, then alone you are a spiritual and religious person.

Spiritually Illumined Torchbearers of Religion:

The great saints-sages (*rishis*) of ancient India used to endeavor arduous spiritual *sādhana*s; they used to be busy in discovering the secrets of Nature and life, science of yoga, sharing the mystic knowledge (that they acquired through their awakened spiritual acumen) among their disciples, disseminating the light of human religion among the masses, and helping out in social-welfare and happy survival of all beings. They used to live austere life and earn their own living through hard work.

Great saints and reformers, torchbearers of human religion, have also been there in the later periods of history. In fact they were the ones who protected and nurtured the existence of human-values and saved the world from irreversible devolution and devastation in the times of utter delusion, distortion, and moral decline of the human society. Look at the lives of medieval saints. They had chosen poverty and had worked so hard for sustenance of humanity. For the upliftment of the down-trodden, they even lived like one among the deprived masses of their times.

For example Saint Raidas (Ravidas) used to do cobbler's work and Kabirdasji was a handloom-weaver. They were not even literate, did not read any religious texts or attended any scholarly discourses, but the voice and prayers that emanated from their saintly heart motivated spiritual elevation of many strayed minds, and spread the light of true devotion, true religion that inspired compassion in many cruel hearts. Such was the level of mystic knowledge hidden in the verses they sung that hundreds of doctoral

Spirituality is not a formula; it is not a test. It is a relationship. - Mike Yaconelli

theses and scholarly articles have been written on the interpretations and analysis of their works. Many researchers of philosophy, literature, religious history, and sociology are working on them till date. They were preeminent spiritual masters, torchbearers of human religion, distinct scholars, historic social-reformers, because of the beatifying purity of their hearts, depth of their devotion, and their saintly sentiments of compassion and generosity, and their intrinsic feeling of oneness with all beings.

Indeed, generosity — magnanimity of a compassionate heart is such a great spiritual virtue that it transforms an ordinary mortal being into a great person. You don't have to renounce your family or your work for this. In your normal (ordinary) life itself you can become a saint, if you feel the pains of others' sufferings through heart, if you expand your selfishness and do your level best to help the needy around you.

Three-fold Evolution of Humanity:

The Gayatri Mantra is revered as Vedmata — the mother of the Vedas, and hence the origin of all knowledge. The three segments of syllabic compilation of this mantra guide the three components of holistic wellbeing and divine evolution of humankind. These are — Theism, Spirituality, and Religion. Our mission of *Yug Nirman* is focused on eliminating the misconceptions, rectifying the distortions, and disseminating the true meaning, purpose and importance of these vital components of humanity to help righteous progress of humankind.

Towards this, let us remember and follow that theism (belief in God) is meaningful only if it inspires us towards divinity indwelling in every inner self. Spirituality begins with the very concept of theism — believing in the omnipresence of God and hence believing in our own selves as His reflection.

Theism is incomplete without inculcation of spirituality. If you are a seeker of spiritual progress, you must know that spirituality begins with prudent self-confidence, confidence in the fact that your inner self has originated from the divine self and therefore your being, your life, your conduct should be worth His preeminent grace. The path to spiritual progress begins with self-refinement and adoption of divine disciplines and qualities in your thoughts and conduct. Spiritual ascent leads to true religiousness. Adoption of “simple living and high thinking”, wholehearted participation in benevolent activities, sense of responsibility, dutifulness, selfless service for welfare of the society, cultivation of virtuous tendencies, are essential signs of religiousness.

Self-discipline, self-confidence, orderliness, punctuality, prudence, courage, sincerity, integrity and virtuous excellence of character, austerity, modesty, generosity, compassion (emotional sensitivity), and altruist deeds are the touchstones of theism, spirituality and religion. These explain the essence of all religious texts and spiritual preaching. These can transform an ordinary mortal into a great personality and lead to divine awakening and attainment of *siddhis* (supernatural potentials).

|| *Om Shanti* ||

Spirituality is indeed the master key of the Indian mind; the sense of the infinitive is native to it. - *Sri Aurobindo*

Don't let the family break apart

Family is a place, full of love, respect and affection for one another. Besides love and care, family members help in one another's success and growth. Essence of a family, is loving and caring feelings for each other, which creates a strong bond amongst the members. A place, where mutual feelings amongst family members are not pleasant, they lack unity and harmony. In fact such family members stay at a distance and sometimes separate from each other.

Family is not created by just blood relationship but also outside it. Anywhere, a group of people staying together and nurturing loving feelings, care and respect for one another, can develop a relationship, called a family. For example, students staying in hostels can make their own family; or even at work place, one can make a family kind of environment. Families are even created in orphanages and old age homes. In contrast, families with even blood relationship become distant, if there is no mutual understanding and care for each other. A place where family members fight on small things and taunt each other, without extending any kind of support, do not remain united for a long duration.

A good family not only develops their own family members, but also becomes an inspiration for the entire society and helps others outside their family to grow and succeed. In the present world, many kinds of conflicts can be seen in many families. It is often seen that couples fight and argue with each other after staying for some time with each other and take a hasty decision of leaving each other,

resulting in divorce for the sake of their freedom. This, in turn, breaks the relationship forever legally and separates husband and wife.

There are two important components of a family life; emotional support and inspiring each other during difficult situations. Every human being needs the above mentioned two supports for his survival and growth; and that's why family is very important for everyone. People living in a family environment, always stay attached to one another emotionally, and are ready to stand for one another. Having mutual understanding is the key to save a family. Having loving feelings and care for each other are the main factors to maintain a healthy family environment. That's why we are encouraged to celebrate birthday, wedding anniversary and festivals etc. together in a family. Celebration of birthday and anniversary makes every member of the family feel their importance and at the same time celebrating festivals together brings happiness and unity in the family. It's very important to make every member of the family feel his/her importance and role; and make him realize that family will be incomplete without him.

Life is like a play. Sometimes, we try to defeat others to go ahead and win. However in a family, such situations don't arise. Neither we play a game against each other, nor do we try to harm each other in a family environment. In contrast, in a family every member tries to help each other, irrespective of facing problems or going through financial loss. For example, if any member of a

The family is one of nature's masterpieces. – *George Santayana*

family gets sick, other members work hard to arrange for money to help him get treated and pay the debt, even if they themselves go through tough situations. Same way for children's good education, parents often go through all kinds of difficult situations, face all kinds of problem, take debt, and feel very happy for their kids' future. They never feel sad or unhappy to spend on their kids' education; in contrast it gives them happiness and satisfaction. So, it's the family where people bear their own loss for other family members and feel happy. Family is so important only because of such emotional support and care.

Every member of a family goes through different situations and therefore their problems also differ from each other. Major goal of each and every member of the family should be, to maintain peace and harmony in the family. Therefore, it's very important to understand each other to reduce mutual conflict. In the present world, family feuds have become very common. The reason is less heart to heart conversation, lack of mutual understanding and spending less time with each other. No matter how close we live, lack of mutual conversation in a family creates distance amongst the family members. It's important to discuss our feelings with each other to strengthen

family bonding. Unfortunately, society is facing a big problem of family or social interaction due to mobile world. Mobile phone is such a gadget in family life, which is keeping family members away from each other. People are spending more time on mobile, instead of talking to each other. It's the rule of the nature that whoever is given more importance and time, bonding gets stronger with those things or people. In present-day life style, our bonding is more with mobile than with our family members.

Families are facing many challenges these days; for example, financial stress, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law arguments, husband and wife's quarrels, lack of loving relationship between elders and youngsters. However, one can find solution for every problem by mutual conversation and sharing and caring or understanding each other's feelings. Even taking suggestions of elders for finding solutions of existing problems can help a lot in problem solving. Consulting psychologists and being open to the problems can be an alternative solution. Life will always have some or the other problem but if one acts wise, takes help of elders and works on reducing the problems, the family can become fragrant like a garden; and the society can also be saved from destruction.

Widen your circle of compassion

A human being is a part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feeling as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

- Albert Einstein

A family is a little world created by love. – *Author unknown*

बलौदा बाजार



कोण्डागाँव



Shraddheya Dr. Pranav Pandya, Head of AWGP, had intensive and warm meetings with the volunteers of Gayatri Pariwar during his visit to Chhattisgarh.

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Glimpses of Shakti-Samvardhan 108-kundiya Gayatri Mahayagya and Yuva Sammelan at Gayatri Chetana Kendra, Pili, Rajasthan from November 1 – 4, 2018. On this occasion, Ad. Dr. Chinmay Pandeyji launched BSNL's 'Anubhuti-141' – A subsidized plan for Gayatri Pariwar Members in Rajasthan Circle (Top right photo).

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