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Freedom of choice - A basic human characteristic

Human being is endowed with basic freedom of choice. Nature provides him with a variety of options to choose from. It is upto him to exercise this God-given gift either positively or negatively. Thus, he is the maker of his own destiny. This fundamental freedom is a great boon to the human race. However, if used negatively, it can also turn into a bane. It is sad to say that for the vast majority, this freedom proves to be a bane, because they choose to misuse this freedom for destructive rather than constructive purposes.

Destruction is far more easier than creation. What can be easier than ruining oneself ? In fact, doing nothing in the direction of self-upliftment in itself amounts to self-destruction. One who is not consciously progressing in soul-growth, is knowingly or unknowingly sliding down the scale of consciousness into the dungeon of darkness.

Once a point was raised in the *Satsang-Sabh*³ of *Maharshi Raman*. Some people were saying that a human being is superiormost amongst all the creatures, while some others were arguing that a human being is worse than the animals, because sometimes conduct of animals appears to be far nobler than that of humans. Both the sides requested the *Maharshi* to elucidate. *Maharshi* said “ The truth is that a human being is a combination of mortal body and immortal consciousness. The one who follows the body and its cravings goes on groping in the darkness and the one who investigates the inner realms of consciousness, ultimately realizes the Supreme Consciousness and thus his real *self*”. This is the Eternal Truth.

CONTENTS

1. *Amrit Chintan : Freedom of choice – A basic human characteristic*
2. *From Editor's Desk*
3. *Scientific Basis of Gayatri Mantra Japa*
4. *Some Scientific Aspects of Yajña – Environmental Effects*
5. *Some Yoga Mudrās for Balancing the Five Vital Elements*
6. *The Miraculous and Mysterious Dimensions of Consciousness-Force Hidden In the Human Organism*
7. *Truth Alone Will Triumph*
8. *Steps Towards Achieving Spiritual Greatness*
9. *Atmosphere of Living Divine Faith at Home*
10. *The Cardinal Importance of Faith in Human Life*
11. *Be not Overpowered by Despair*
12. *The Path to Happiness and Peace*
13. *Marriage is a Sacred Bond and Pledge*
14. *The Disaster of Deforestation*
15. *My Life: Its Legacy and Message (Serial)*
16. *Amrit Vani: Awakening Divinity in Man
(continued from previous issue)*

From Editor's Desk

It is heartening to know that our efforts in the launching issue of this magazine have been well received by our readers. It has also established a mutual bonding of hearts. With each successive issue this kinship of souls will go on deepening. It will be a source of joy for us to respond to your comments and queries and keep you abreast of the latest activities and plans of our *Mission* through this column.

Recently, we celebrated the Vasant Panchami Parv, which is the sacred day of spiritual awakening of our Gurudev, the seer-sage of this era, Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya. Vasant (spring) symbolizes the vibrant upsurge of life and joy in Nature. The spirit of Vasant inspires us to be vigorous, hope-filled and creative.

This first decade of the new millennium is expected to be a very crucial and critical phase for humanity when the whole world will be facing the accumulated adverse consequences of the blind and single-tracked pursuit of materialistic power, pelf and possessions. The only hope of deliverance from the clutches of the Devil of Darkness lies in global efforts for foundation level transformation of human souls. It is only thus that the epochal change as envisioned by seers like our Gurudev, would occur and usher in the dawn of the Golden Age of Truth. But this would be preceded by a grand churning – a decisive battle between the forces of the evil and the good. It will be an epochal clash between the culture of crass consumerism and self-aggrandisement and the culture of humane values of compassion, loving kindness, feelings of interconnectedness with all that exists and altruism.

The advancement of science and technology has provided us with enormous ranges of creature comforts. And, we have used it to move further towards the wrongly chosen valueless philosophy of life and comfort-driven mode of living, generating restlessness, tensions, stress and a horde of new diseases and disorders. It is indeed a pity that man, the intelligent being, has chosen this dark path of self-inflicted pain and suffering for himself and of total annihilation of Life on Mother Earth - the wonderful creation of Nature. Call it a quirk of destiny or a vicious plan of the devil, a demonic dance of unethical and immoral urges, intellectual corruption and all round pollution of earth, waters, skies and human psyche, of horrifying dimensions, is holding sway over the hearts and minds of mankind.

The New Year begins with the chill and fog of winter, which thaws and clears with time. But the deeper and thicker smog of delusion that darkens and weighs down human thinking seems to grow thicker and thicker with each succeeding year. Though everyone seems fearful, tense and concerned in one way or the other and yearns for peace and happiness, no one really seeks it aright through true knowledge, farsighted reasoning and ennobling ethical values which alone can be true panacea for the ills from which humanity is suffering. Who then is going to save humanity and the future of life on our beautiful planet?

The Divine Culture – the (Vedic) Indian Culture of cultivating divine values in mankind, the culture that emanates from the vision of “world as one family” (*Vasudhaiv Kutumbkam*) provides the key to true healing. Today, the revolution in Communication and Information Technology has made the earth a “Global Village”. However, the interconnection is confined to globalization of trade and information exchange alone. What is more important is to link the minds and hearts of the people worldwide. This can be achieved only through the Vedic principle of “*Aya@ Nija; Paro Vetti...*”, which calls upon us to expand our individual self identity beyond the petty and illusory confines of “you” and “me” to the ever-inclusive sense of WE.

In order to bring about a positive course correction in the dismal and abysmal human scene we will have to resolutely turn our civilization towards perennial uplifting and ennobling

cultural values and collectively come out of morass of degrading consumerism to simplification of our life style; from metro-cities to mostly self reliant towns and villages; from market-oriented self-advertising way of life to family-centred and sharing simple life-style; from mere bread-earning education to aquisition of true knowledge; from extrovert senseless talking to focussed introspection.... We, the readers of "Akhand Jyoti" should listen to this wake up call and bear the responsibility of being the torch-bearers in this *Mission* of individual and collective self tranformation . The *Yug Nirman Yojna* of this *Mission* was conceived and planned by the immortal Himalayan Rishis and it was implemented in detail by Yug-Rishi Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya for foundation level social, intellectual and cultural tranformation. Now is the time to expand it world-wide with greater and greater participation of the masses. Future generations, our world, our planet and humanity will be grateful forever if we could take effective steps towards this soul-level regeneration. The guidelines, the plans, the organizational structure are all in place; we just have to participate in the implementation. Our contributions according to our capacities, in this soul-awakening campaign, are sure, with Divine Grace, to bear the desired fruits.

We have to begin with ourselves. Two aims should be the focus of our every activity, throughout this year. These are: more focused endeavors of *j^ovan s³dhan³* and propagation of *vidy³*; devotional worship by means of *up³san³*, *az³na*, prayer, *ard³sa*, etc; and the daily and regular practice of the self-elevating and self purifying regimen of yoga, meditation etc. However, since 'All life is Yoga', *j^ovana s³dhan³* has to be practiced with every breath. *J^ovana s³dhan³* means – holistic refinement of body, mind and soul and manifestation of their inherent divine qualities through vigilant self control and effacement of the ego through selfless service. Conscious control of senses; quietude of mind; judicious and wise use of time and material resources are the four basic and essential disciplines to be adopted for *j^ovana s³dhan³*.

Vidy³ (true knowledge) should be acquired by every seeker of peace, happiness and purposeful life. It can be attained by regular and attentive study and contemplation (*sw³dhy³ya*) of inspiring literature and enlightened words of eminent personages in the field of spiritual search and by keeping the company (*satsang*) of such saints by listening to their discourses, discussions and participating in constructive activities guided by them. Setting some noble goals from what has been heard or learnt, self-analysis to evaluate self-progress in that direction, and determined faithful attempts towards improvement are integral parts of this process of *j^ovana s³dhan³*. The year 2003 is being observed by our *Mission* as the year for global dissemination of *vidy³*. For this, the branches of the *Mission* spread over nearly 80 countries are divided into seven zones. Extensive programmes of teaching and training will be undertaken in earmarked sectors with particular emphasis on enlightening talented youth. Back home this will be carried out by the *Mission's* 2400 branches and zonal centres by speeding up the on-going *Gyan Rath*, *Jhola Pustakalaya*, *Dipa Yagya* and short-term training courses and *S³dhan³*-sessions. These will be complemented with added activities of constructive welfare and self-reliant development programmes by establishment of local centres for self-employment, enterpreneurship, rural development and reformative and reconstructive activities. We look forward to your cooperation in your area of interest and expertise.

The current issue will unfold new secrets of the spiritual dimensions of human self and elucidate some facets of *Vidy³* and the Rishi Culture along with practical guidance for a happy contented family life Let us join in prayer for concrete positive outcomes of our spring time resolutions and also extend a joyous welcome to the blazing sunshine of summer, whose advent is not too far away.

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Scientific Basis of *Gayatri Mantra Japa*

The entire Vedic Literature and the sages and savants of the *shastric* scriptures have given paramount importance to the *Gayatri Mantra* and have discussed in detail the methods of the *japa*¹ and *s³dhan*² of this great *mantra*. There is no scripture, which does not sing paeans of the preeminent benefits and supramental effects of this *mantra* that encompass the personal, global and the cosmic realms of existence. It is said that even if one performs the *japa* and *dhy³n* (meditation) of this *mantra* with fervent faith without going through all the prescribed ascetic disciplines of higher-level *s³dhan*³s, he attains all the blessings and boons of this *mantra*. Not only the immanent inspirations and the marvelous configuration of specific syllables and sonic patterns, the psychological and spiritual core of this Vedic *Mantra* is also so sound that it appears to be founded on profound scientific basis. Let us look at some of these aspects to understand the impact of its *japa*.

The amazing structure, functions and complexity of the human body has been the center of deep attention for thousands of scientists, biologists, anatomists and physiologists since long. Still a lot remains unknown, especially the body's fine network of nerves, molecular functions, endocrine system and the brain. In comparison, what has been experienced and known about the human body and brain by rigorous *yoga-s³dhan*³s seems to be more thorough and significant. In the deep state of trance through devout *yoga s³dhan*³s, the *Rishis*, the *yogis* of the Vedic times, had found this body a miniature reflection of the entire cosmos, as mentioned

in the quote – “*Yat Brahm³nñĀe Tat PiñĀe*”. The extrasensory components like the *ĪaŪ cakras*, *upatyik³s* and the marvelous nerve network hidden in it are found to be like nuclei and canals of cosmic energy. Having the model of the limitless cosmos in its small structure makes the human body the supreme creation in the physical manifestation of Nature. *Japa-s³dhan*³ is a scientific method devised by the *Rishis* to activate the extrasensory energy centers within to facilitate the sublime flow of vital spiritual currents in this majestic living system.

The *japa* of Divine Name or Mantras has been an integral part of all modes of worship or prayer in every religion – be it Hindu, Sikh, Islam, Buddhist, Christian, Tao, Bahai, etc. As the specific pattern of controlled wind-flow through the holes of a flute produces specific sonorous tune, likewise, the vibrations induced by the repeated rhythmic chanting of a specific *mantra* generate specific pulsation of *pr³nā* and stimulate the extrasensory energy nuclei in the body accordingly. The *japa-s³dhan*³ of *mantras* is therefore practiced to educe supernatural talents and potentials.

The preeminence of the *japa* of *Gayatri Mantra* lies in its unique intellectual, emotional and spiritual effects in addition to other soul-elevating effects of *mantra-japa*. This *mantra* contains the essence of divine knowledge and wisdom. Even its literal translation implies a prayer for the refinement and illumination of our mind and intellect and for well-being of the world. This is why the Vedic *Rishis* revered *Gayatri* as – *Vedm³t³*, *Devam³t³* and *Vīwam³t³* (the origin of the

Vedas, the Mother of godly-beings and the Mother of the whole world respectively). Not only the Hindu religion, but also the follower of other religions and paths of spiritual seeking revere this sacred mantra. Mahatma Gandhi referred to it as the basis of the world religion of the future.

The structure of *Gayatri Mantra* is in perfect tune with the science of cosmic sound. It will not be possible for us to analyze its sonic pattern and the resonance of its subtle vibrations in this small article. We shall mainly elucidate the major steps of psychological elevation and evolution of a *s³dhaka*'s consciousness by the *japa* of this *mantra*.

Japa is a scientific process of inward orientation of mind. The *japa* of the *Gayatri Mantra* enables a harmonious linkage and flow of the individual consciousness (of the *s³dhaka*) with the cosmic consciousness. If a beginner understands the psychological impact of *mantra-japa* or has intrinsic faith in it then meditating as per the requirement of the *japa-s³dhana³* will not be difficult for him. With prior conditioning of the mind, the rhythmic process of *japa* also helps in controlling its waywardness. Once this stage of training of the mind is over, the progress of meditation and hence the *japa-s³dhana³* moves quite smoothly and at an uninterrupted pace.

In terms of mental and emotional enlightenment, *japa* (*japa-s³dhana³*) involves the following: (i) *Training* – repeating the same mantra; (ii) *Recognition* – imbibing the inspirations of what has been repeated; (iii) *Recollection and Contemplation* – recalling the mental connection during meditation and reestablishing the broken links with the inner self; (iv) *Retention* – Deepening the faith (in the *mantra*) and sincerity to the level of inner experience and intrinsic emotions. In terms of

spiritual elevation these correspond to – (i) *Self-Analysis*; (ii) *Self-Refinement*; (iii) *Self-Development*; (iv) *Self-Realization*. These are gradual steps of the realization through *japa-s³dhana³*. Although we don't find the multiple activities and exercises like *yoga* practices in it, the *s³dhana³* process of *japa* is so effective that just with the sincere performance of this single practice, starting with self-analysis, we can reach the supreme goal of self-realization.

The great significance of *japa* is not due to chance, or without any firm basis. Had it been so, such a large number of devotees and yogis of the *Gayatri S³dhana³* would not have been advised to waste time in practicing more and more *japa* for longer and longer durations. The aforesaid principles of psychology and spirituality work towards success of *japa*. These can elevate the devotee's personality out of the darkness of ignorance into the light of divine wisdom. The four principles mentioned above work in the subliminal domains of the consciousness to remove the layers of ignorance from the subconscious and thus help in the emergence of light of spirit within the individual soul.

Training is an integral part of education. It is indeed the first *samsk³ra* to be cultivated for personality development. We may never find an educated person who has not undergone training in one form or the other. From nursery rhymes and tables to revision and continuous practice of problem solving in higher classes – the process of training by cramming and repetition is very common; this is also necessary for the inculcation of any desired tendency. The same is true about the impact of *japa* too; the effects of the mantra-vibrations cannot be felt without rhythmic repetition.

The “*dhi*” element of the *Gayatri Mantra* refers to prayer for the awakening of

intellect. Just uttering it once or twice cannot have the desired effect. Our mind is like a barren, uneven, hard landscape, which frustrates all attempts at its calming and refinement. In order to make the seed of *s³ghan³* germinate and sprout, the field of mind needs to be cleared, ploughed and irrigated with the help of *japa*; one has to peep inside and identify, mercilessly uproot and throw out the debris of accumulated evil tendencies. Sowing the seeds of virtues is not possible without this cleaning of deep rooted negativities. *Japa* can also be likened to cleaning, sharpening and glazing. Its repeated friction and subtle pressure calms down and cleanses the mind so that it could clearly reflect glow of the spirit. Every devotee of *Gayatri* should therefore perform *japa* everyday for a fixed number of times at a fixed place, during fixed intervals of time. The arbitrary mode of excessive watering on some days and keeping the land dry on the others does not serve the purpose of proper irrigation of field. The same is true of the training of mind by *japa*. Regularity, sincerity, patience and consistency should be observed in this practice, as far as possible. This should also be continued over a long duration – depending upon the *s³dhaka*'s inherent tendencies and mentality- till the dawn of the rays of success in the *s³ghan³*.

The second step in the *s³ghan³* is to assimilate in practice what has been learnt. Observation and analysis of the lower self cluttered with impurities is of no avail unless it is coupled with simultaneous attempts at cleansing out and refinement. *Japa-s³ghan³* helps in developing the inner strength and determination towards self-cleansing and self-refinement. The advanced spiritual masters affirm that the *japa* of *Gayatri Mantra* brings about rapid removal of ingrained vices and evil tendencies. Progress in this direction further

accelerates inner purification, as it deepens the *s³dhaka*'s meditation and thus reinforces the linkage of the *s³dhaka*'s higher inner self with the indwelling divinity which the *mantra* invokes.

During this process one experiences ups and downs in the mental and emotional domains. The baser instincts and tendencies accumulated during innumerable births of the fallen soul in different forms before the present life are not easy to be uprooted and thrown out. These *kusamsk³ras*, coupled with the ignorance-driven ego, struggle hard to obstruct the process of inner purification in the initial phases. However, with the continuity of the *japa-s³ghan³* the devotee realizes that he is not the body but the eternal soul and therefore gains the light and courage to fight and eliminate all the hurdles in the path of self-realization. He consciously and gladly undergoes the prescribed austerities to loosen the hold of internal evils and passions. He understands that only the path of selfless service leads to true happiness, and that spiritual life is far more superior to life wasted in the pursuit of materialistic success and power. Nothing can then stop his march towards self-awakening.

Human ego-centered false self and its gross appearance is only a vehicle for the manifestation of his soul. This world of mirage is not his true home. He is guided by divine grace on his journey back to his real home- the realm of eternal light. Just, as the puppet show would be absurdly haphazard if even a few threads that control its movements are broken or loosened, as the young kid is orphaned and becomes helpless due to the sudden demise of his parents, as the house becomes dark in the night if its electrical power supply is cut, similarly the soul, the individual self, suffers an illusory, ignorant, and evanescent

existence if its subliminal linkage with divinity is broken. We are way-lost children in the wilderness of this illusory phenomenon; groping for the sunlit path leading us back home.

Finding this sunlit path and reestablishment of this lost connection with the source by awakening of the true inner consciousness is the third factor of *japa-s³adhan³*. In the powers of *japa*, the inner self awakens and recognizes its soul-identity; the soul too recalls its divine nature. As this retrieval of lost memory progresses, it ponders upon its origin more deeply and gets anxious to unite with the source. This intensifies the reactivation of its sublime connection with the divine self. It calls upon the divine Mother (*Gayatri*) to save and protect it from illusions, diversions and pitfalls of the worldly cycle. This stage purifies the *s³dhaka*'s gross and subtle bodies; his mind now gets educed and illuminated by positive and righteous aspirations. His personality is gradually suffused with nobility.

The fourth stage signifies a still higher state of spiritual maturity. With deeper and purer engagement in the *japa* of *Gayatri Mantra*, the *s³dhaka* sees the light of his soul in the radiance of the subtle body of the sun – the cosmic center of this *mantra*. As this realization intensifies, he begins to experience, in deep trance, the unity of his soul with the cosmic soul (God). He then sees the identity of his soul as a reflection of the *Brah[®]* – conveyed in the Vedant Philosophy as “*Ayam³tma Brah[®]*”, “*Tatvamasī*”, “*Soah[®]*”, “*Cid³nandoaha[®]*”, etc. This state is referred to in the *Shastras* as *sam³dhi*, *turiavastha* or *para siddhi* – the state of ultimate beatitude, absolute bliss and supreme accomplishment.

Japa s³adhan³ alone, if performed with sincerity, purity and intrinsic faith, leads to this state of eternal bliss and light. It is

therefore referred to as the key to the deeper science of spirituality and also revered as a *yaj³ōa*. *Japa yaj³ōa* alone is a complete source of ultimate self-realization.

By the divine energy immanent in the Vedic *Mantras*, we can attain supramental knowledge and actualize the potentials that are otherwise unbelievable, unimaginable and unreachable. Understanding and attainment of such extrasensory faculties are yet beyond the scope of the modern scientific advancement. *Japa* is therefore not well recognized or practiced by many of the so-called scientifically progressive people. We do see many of the erudite scholars, great scientists and elites engulfed in the sorrows, delusions and sufferings of the world despite their talents and resources; whereas there are some illiterate but spiritually elevated souls endowed with divine bliss and wisdom attained through sincere *japa-s³adhan³* of the *Gayatri Mantra*.

The energy locked up in the *mantras* is essentially spiritual in nature. The specific configurations of the Vedic *Mantras* are said to be derived from the subtle science of syllables and sound. The *rishis*, who had realized the cosmic and spiritual dimensions of the omnipresent eternal sound, had compiled these mantras. The consistency of the rhythm and amplitude of the *mantras* are therefore of vital importance. The prescribed modes and number of *japas* every day for specific *sadhana* are also enjoined accordingly. The *s³dhaka* should follow these with due sincerity and punctuality. Sometime slow sometime fast speed or pitch of *japa* or performing the *japa* in a half-asleep or inconsistent way does not serve any purpose. Sitting with erect spine and in a state of mental peace, regularity of timings for *japa* are essential prerequisites for steady and sure progress.

Purity of the body and mind is another prerequisite for concentration of mind and proper meditation. It is advised to do the *japa* with the help of a rosary so that counting will also be automatic with the mechanical move of the hand on its beads with each complete chanting of the mantra, without disturbing the mental concentration. The *up³ni^u* type *japa* is said to be the best for the beginners. Here, one chants the mantra so that his tongue and lips may move but the voice is inaudible. Once one has perfected the rhythmic chanting of the mantra he may check the timings of specified number of *japas* according to his natural frequency and may use a clock (alarm) instead of a rosary, as per his convenience.

Any one who sincerely and rightly performs the *japa-s³dhan³* of the *Gayatri Mantra* begins to gradually progress through the aforesaid four stages of psychological and spiritual refinement and attains the ultimate goal.

His mind and intellect are transformed and illuminated with divine love, light and wisdom and he awakens to the supreme reality of truth, consciousness, bliss (*sat-chita-anand*) beyond the limits of time and space. Material well-being and elimination of worldly problems accrue to the *sadhak*, but these are mere byproducts of the spiritual illumination. Nothing remains to be gained or aspired for thereafter. Everyone, without any constraint of caste, creed, gender or social status, is entitled to undertake this scientific experiment of *japa-s³dhan³* of *Gayatri Mantra* and be the recipient of divine grace.

Notes:

1. *Japa*: Repeated rhythmic enunciation or chanting (of a *mantra*).
2. *S³dhan³*: Devout spiritual endeavor aimed at self-realization.
3. *Japa- s³dhan³*: *Japa* accompanied by meditation and specific religious practices.

The royal envoy had come to the village to meet Dadu Maharaj. He saw an old man clearing the thorns and rubbish on the tracks near the village boundaries. The visiting officer rudely inquired about Dadu Maharaj's address. The old man just pointed to a hut nearby while continuing with his job. The officer considered it an insult that the laborer did not even salute him or talked to him; he therefore abusively shouted at the old man before proceeding in the direction shown.

The officer reached Dadu Maharaj's hut; there was no one in the house so he waited for a while. Suddenly he saw the same fellow entering the house holding the collected thorns and rubbish on his head. He welcomed the officer saying that he was Dadu. The officer felt ashamed of shouting at the renowned saintly poet because of ignorance. He apologized for his abusive behavior. Dadu Maharaj said – "it is not your fault my child. It is the ignorance of your prejudiced mentality, which discriminates between people on the basis of their caste or profession. Be that a laborer or a king or anyone else, once you learn to see the spark of God existing in every being you will never utter a bad word against anybody; all your vices will vanish with the revelation of this light."

Some Scientific Aspects of Yajóá

Environmental Effects

There are two basic energy systems in the physical world: heat and sound. In performing *yajóá*, these two energies, namely, the heat from *yajóá*'s fire and the sound of the chanting of the *Gayatri* and other *Vedic Mantras*, are blended together to achieve the desired physical, psychological and spiritual benefits.

The fumigation, vaporization and sublimation of specific substances in the *yajóá*-fire constitute a verifiable scientific method of sublimation of matter and expansion of its colloidal state, generates ions and energy with positive effects in the surrounding atmosphere through the specific sonic waves of the *mantras*.

Fumigating Substances Used in Yajóá:

In order to get an idea of the various chemical changes that take place during the performance of *yajóá*, it is essential to know the various substances used and offered in the *yajóá*-fire. These can be broadly classified into two types: wood (*samidh* ³), and a mixture of odoriferous and medicinal herbs (*havan s³magr*⁰)^[1,2].

Wood: Wood has to be dry and free from dust, insects and worms. Wood is cut into small pieces of varying sizes called *samidh* ³s depending upon the size of the altar or pit (*kuñÁa*) in which the *yajóá* is to be performed. Santalum Album (sandalwood), Aquilana Malaccensis and Valeriana Wallchii (borax wood or *agar* and *tagar*), Cedrys Libani (cedar or *deodar*), Mangifera Indica (mango), Butea Frondosa (flame of the forest or *pal³ya*), Aegle Marmelos (bengal quince or *bilva*), Ficus Religiosa (the holy fig or *p⁰pal*), Ficus Bengalensis (banyan or *bargad*), Proposis

Spicigera (sponge tree or *Shami*), Ficus Glomerata (wild fig or *g₂lar*) are considered appropriate for this purpose.

The *haviÁya* or *havan s³magri* should be prepared with a proper combination of the following. **Odoriferous Substances:** These are usually saffron, musk, *agar*, *tagar*, sandalwood powder, cardamom, nutmeg, *javitri* and camphor; **Substances with Healing properties:** clarified butter (*ghee*), milk, fruits, lin seeds, and cereals like wheat, rice, barley, various millet, gram, peas, etc; **Sweet Substances:** sugar, dried dates, resin, honey, etc; **Medicinal Herbs:** These are used as per the specific requirements. Some commonly used herbs are Tinospora cordifolia (tinospora/guduchi or *giloya*), *Bacopa Monieri* (*bacopa* or *br³hm*⁰), *Convolvulus Pluricaulis* (*shankh pushpi*), *Mesua Ferrea* (cobra's saffron or *n³gkesar*), *Glycyrrhiza Glabra* Bois (liquoric root or *mulhati*), Red Sandalwood, *Terminalia Bellirica* (beddanut or *bahéÁ*³), Dry Ginger, and *Terminalia Chebula* (chebulic myrobalans or *haraÁa*). Different combinations of these and/or other special herbs are used for the treatment of specific diseases through *yajóá*-therapy.

Products of Combustion:

The interpretation of the process of combustion in a *yajóá* on a scientific basis is rather difficult due to the following reasons: (i) The properties of substances, which are used here vary; (ii) The conditions under which combustion takes place inside the *yajóá*-fire are very sensitive to the shape of the *kuñÁa* and the type, quantity and arrangement of wood etc; (iii) the variation in the temperature and

thermodynamic effects is quite significant from the top to the bottom of the *kuñĀa* and it also depends upon the shape and size of the latter. The products of combustion depend on the factors like — (a) The nature of substances used and their proportions; (b) Temperature attained; (c) Controlled supply of air and (d) Interaction amongst the various products formed.

Distillation of Wood:

Besides the complete combustion of the cellulose material of wood, it is also subjected to distillation. This happens due to the way *samidh*^s are arranged in the *kuñĀa* (also called *yajōa kuñĀa* or *havan kuñĀa*)² and the levels of temperature and air supply which prevail in it.

Vaporization of Odorous Substances:

The temperature attained by the *kuñĀa* varies between 250°C and 600°C, while in the actual flames it can rise as high as 1200°C to 1300°C. At their boiling points, the volatile constituents vaporize and their gaseous forms get diffused. Also, when cellulose and other carbohydrates undergo combustion, steam is formed in copious quantities by the combination of the hydrogen of the decomposed organic molecules with the oxygen. This is how the substances like thymol, eugenol, pinene, terpinol etc., are dispersed to in the surroundings and the aroma of a *yajōa* can be smelt at a considerable distance.

In addition to steam, smoke is emitted in large quantities and solid particles existing in a decomposed state offer sufficient scope for its diffusion. Thus smoke also functions as a colloidal vehicle for the spreading of volatile aromatic substances. This process depends on the inside and surrounding temperature and on the direction of the wind.

Combustion of Fatty Substances:

The fatty substances used in *yajōa* are mainly *ghee* and other fatty substances of vegetable origin. *Ghee* helps in rapid combustion of cellulose of wood and keeps the fire alight. All fatty substances used are combinations of fatty acids, which volatilize easily. The combustion of glycerol portion gives acetone bodies, pyruvic aldehyde and glyoxal etc. The hydrocarbons produced in the reactions again undergo slow combustion and as a result methyl and ethyl alcohols, formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, formic acid and acetic acids are formed.

Photochemical Process:

The vaporized products diffused in the atmosphere are also subjected to photochemical reactions in the sunlight. They undergo photochemical decomposition, oxidation and reduction reactions. To some extent even CO₂ is also reduced to formaldehyde as follows:



From an environmental angle, the reduction of CO₂ caused by *yajōa* as explained above and the liberation of oxygen cannot be overemphasized. Similar kinds of other useful reactions take place in the presence of specific radiations from the sunrays. This may be perhaps the reason it has been recommended that *yajōa* should be performed during sunlight.

Inverted Pyramid Shaped Yajōa KuñĀa:

The word 'pyramid' means 'the fire in the middle'. This meaning is closely associated with the inexplicable energies emanating from its center and shape. The pyramid shape is widely known to generate and store a special energy field, which possesses bacteriostatic properties. The inverted pyramid shape of the *agni kuñĀa* allows controlled generation and

multidirectional dissipation of energy. It acts as a generator of unusual energy fields and spreads them in its surrounding atmosphere. Apart from the pyramid shape, some other special symmetric geometrical designs are also used according to the kind of energy fields and the cosmic currents one wishes to generate by the *yajóá*. Specific types of *kuñÁas* are recommended for different kinds of *yajóás*. The shapes and properties of the common *agnihotra* pot and some *yajóá kuñÁas* are illustrated in reference no. 3 cited below.

Chanting of Sanskrit Mantras:

The power of sound vibrations has since long been acknowledged in the field of science. With substantial amplification these vibrations can penetrate the energy spheres at the subtle and cosmic levels. All the alphabets of the Sanskrit language are endowed with special impulsive phonetics, which send out harmonious wave patterns when pronounced.

With the advent of spectrographic techniques and instruments like the Multichannel Tonograph and Retrometer, it has now become possible to study the sound effects of mantras in relation to *yajóá*. The patterns of chanting of the *mantras* are so designed that they latently contain the essence of the music or the quintessential sound of the torrent of life-sustaining energies emanating from the cosmic energy center of the corresponding *mantras*. (The cosmic energy center associated with the *Gayatri Mantra* is the Sun). The chanting of these *mantras* produces vibrations, which are soothing to human mind and all plant and animal life. These vibrations also help in spreading specific energy waves in the surrounding atmosphere while the oblations are offered^[3-5].

Purification of Environment by *Yajóá*:

The huge industrial complexes, rapid urbanization, deforestation, air and water

pollution, ozone-depletion, radioactive wastes etc., have disturbed and destabilized the natural harmony of human, animal and plant life cycles. The ecological imbalance caused by these criminal acts of the so called 'civilized man' has resulted in a disastrous threat, not only to the human survival but, also to life as a whole on our planet.

Experimental studies show that the incidences of physical ailments, sickness and/or diseases become less in the houses where the *yajóá* or *agnihotra*^[3] is regularly performed because it creates a pure, hygienic, nutritional and healing atmosphere. It renews the brain cells, revitalizes the skin, purifies the blood and prevents growth of pathogenic bacteria. *Agnihotra* is basically a healing process. "Heal the atmosphere and the healed atmosphere will heal you", says Dr. Madhukar Gaikwad^[6].

The medicinal fumes emanating from the process of *agnihotra* have been observed by researchers in the field of microbiology to be clearly bacteriostatic in nature, which eradicate bacteria and micro-organisms, the root causes of illness and diseases. This must be the reason why the incidence of physical ailments, sickness and diseases becomes less in the households where *agnihotra* is regularly performed.

Purification of environment through the constituent electrically charged particles of the substances fumigated in *yajóá* is an obvious byproduct of this process. The observations of some distinguished scientists (as reported in the reference nos. [2-5]) are noteworthy in this regard. According to Dr. Hafkine, the smoke produced by burning the mixture of *ghee* and sugar kills the germs of certain diseases; inhaling it from some distance induces secretion from certain glands related to the windpipe that fill our heart and mind with relaxation. "Burning sugar and its smoke has a significant effect in

purifying the atmosphere. It kills the germs of T.B., measles, smallpox and cow-pox” – remarks Prof. Tilward. A Russian Scientist named Dr. Shirowich mentions that – “if cow’s *ghee* is put into the fire, its smoke will lessen the effect of atomic radiation to a great extent”. He also related this process to *yajōa*.

Particularly effective results with respect to the elimination or reduction in radiation were achieved through *yajōa*’s fire and ash. These observations are made by Dr. L. Matela Anatoninhowska of Poland after using P.S.I. techniques^[2].

Even without going into detailed chemical bacteriology, it appears highly probable that performing *yajōa* leads to the purification of air in view of the following (as reported in the reference nos. [2, 5]):

Removal of Foul Odors:

As already stated, under steam volatilization, the various volatile oils get diffused in the surrounding atmosphere along with steam and smoke. Since these oils have distinctly good smells, the foul odors are automatically neutralized. This aroma can be effortlessly smelt in the surroundings when *yajōa* is performed. It is due to the diffusion of substances like thynol, eugenol, piene, terpinol and oils of sandalwood, camphor and clove.

Removal of Bacteria:

As stated under products of combustion, the partial oxidation of hydrocarbons and decomposition of complex organic substances produce formaldehyde, which is a powerful antiseptic. It is also interesting to note that the germicidal action of formaldehyde is effective only in the presence of water vapor, which is also produced in large quantities in *yajōa*. The use of formaldehyde sprays for disinfecting of walls, ceilings etc., is common and such an effect is automatically produced when *yajōa*

is performed. The oxidation of hydrocarbons produces formic acid and acetic acid, both of which are good disinfectants. Use of formic acid for preservation of fruits and that of acetic acid in preserving vinegar is a common practice.

The antiseptic and antibiotic effects of the smoke of *yajōa* have also been examined by conducting laboratory experiments on rabbits and mice and it has been established that smoke emitted in *yajōa* is a powerful antibiotic. *Agnihotra* ash is also found to purify and cleanse the water, making it fit for drinking^[6].

Removal of Insects:

There are non-bacterial parasites like flies, ringworm, dice fleas etc., which are normally difficult to deal with since bacteriocides which can be used against them are also harmful to other living organisms. Such insects are generally immune to ordinary reagents. However they either get killed or are driven away when they come in contact with volatile oils like camphor, which are diffused in the environment during the performance of *yajōa*.

Effects on Plants and Vegetation:

The disinfection of air is not only useful to animal life but it also helps plant life. The aromatic substances, which get diffused in the air through *Agnihotra* offer protection to plant life against harmful organisms. This ensures a healthy plant growth. *Agnihotra*’s atmosphere and ash can be used as adjuvants in the natural farming methods – also known as the *agnihotra* farming methods. It is a holistic concept of growing plants in pure and healthy atmosphere and balancing the ecological cycles by performing *agnihotra* (*yajōa*) in the middle of the farm and using the *yajōa*-ash as a fertilizer. Several experiments have been conducted in the East European countries on the use of *yajōa* ash in soil treatment. These, too, have

shown positive effects and potential applications in Agriculture^[7].

Role of CO₂ Generated in *Yajōa*:

The wood and fossil burning in atmosphere is always controversial because of the generation of carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide and a consequent increase in the 'green house' effect. On this basis it can be argued that *yajōa* also produces CO and CO₂. It should be noted here that the way in which the *samidh*³s are burnt in *yajōa* is a process of slow combustion. It is not comparable to the burning of coal in the factories or household fire or running of steam engines etc, where oxygen is sucked in large quantities and CO₂ is emitted likewise. In the slow combustion process that takes place in *yajōa*, a small quantity of O₂ is utilized and CO₂ is emitted in a quantity that poses no threat to the environment. In fact whatever CO₂ is generated is readily absorbed by the surrounding plant life and vegetation and thus the CO₂ cycle is strengthened^[5].

Another important fact to be noted is that CO₂ produced in *yajōa* is not free CO₂. It is mixed with the vapors of other aromatic oils and antiseptic products. It acts as a vehicle in transporting such products to the surroundings.

The use of CO₂ as a cerebral stimulant to assist patients suffering from lack of ventilation is a common practice in the medical field. Its use in controlling and curing many mental disorders is also known to medical science. Small amounts of CO₂ inhaled by the persons performing *yajōa* act as a stimulant for inhaling more and more aromatic fumes which helps in curing mental disorders.

Results of Some Recent Experiments:

A group of scientists led by Dr. Manoj Garg, Director, Environmental and Technical Consultants in association with the experts from the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board had conducted experiments during the *Ashwamedha Yajōa* at Gorakhpur, U.P. These experiments were set up at about 20 meters east of the *Yajōashala*. The samples of 100 ml each of water and air collected from the surroundings were analyzed, using high volume Envirotech APM-45 and other sensitive instruments for testing water and air pollution. A summary of their results as reported in Akhand Jyoti, Sept. '97 p.22, (ref no. [1]), showed an average reduction by 75% in the level of Sulphur Dioxide and about 10% in Nitrus Oxide; and Over 70% reduction in bacteria in water samples in the surrounding area. Several medicinal minerals were present in the ash (*bhasma*) of *yajōa*. The average level of carbon monoxide was found reduced from 117 p.p.m. to 0 in some of the experiments conducted on domestic *yajōas* at IIT Bombay (unpublished results); There are some more ongoing experiments on recording different gas levels and respirable particles are currently ongoing, being conducted by some visiting scientists at Brahm Varchas Research Center of *Gayatri Teerth*, Shantikunj, Hardwar.

Yajōa, thus, appears to be a promising scientific, cost effective, eco-friendly method to counter the ever-increasing deadly pollution of the environment and purify and enrich the environment with healthy ingredients. May the environmental scientists and the experts of the Vedic Science of *Yajōa* come together to enable its global expansion. The Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya at Shantikunj, Hardwar is venturing to be a pacesetter in this regard.

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Notes:

1. Sublimation (in chemistry): The process by which a solid is converted, on heating directly, into a gas, without going through a liquid state. Only a small number of solids sublime; e.g. carbon dioxide, CO₂ and Iodine, I₂. Some solids that do melt to form a liquid still evaporate quite rapidly if kept below their melting-points; e.g. Iodine and sulphur. This is also sublimation, and can be used as a method of purification.
2. *KuñÁa* (*Agni-KuñÁa* or *yajóá-kuñÁa*): The pit or small metallic vessel of a special design for *yagy³gni*.
3. *Agnihotra* (*Havans* or *homa*®): Small-scale *yagya* that could be performed every-day at home.

TRUE PILGRIMAGE

Shravankumar's parents were blind. Because of this disability they were unable to go for pilgrimage on their own. In view of their earnest desire for pilgrimage, young Shravankumar thought of taking them to different tirthas, but he had a doubt; "What purpose would it serve, when you will not be able to have the holy *deva-darīanas* (sight of the sacred shrines and idols)?" he asked them. Then his father explained to him the meaning of pilgrimage. He told him that the merit of pilgrimage is not confined to *deva-darīanas*. Tirthas carry the spiritual vibrations of the great yogis and *siddhas* who had founded them; devotional practices at such places bring enormous spiritual benefits; one also gets the opportunity to attend the discourses of saints there. Physical vision (eyesight) is not necessary for these major gains of pilgrimage. This way, instead of wasting our time idly at home we will certainly be able to do something meaningful and worthwhile through pilgrimage."

Some Yoga Mudr³s for Balancing the Five Vital Elements

According to the science of yoga, the human body is made up of five basic elements – the *Panca Tatvas*¹. The five fingers of the hand are regarded as representative symbols of these vital elements in the body. Specific folds, mutual positioning or postures – called *mudr³s* – of the fingers in one or both hands were discovered by the Vedic scientists of yoga for maintaining the natural order and healthy distribution of the *panca tatvas*. Any disturbance, disorder or deficiency in these elements or the consequent disease or imbalance could be rectified and cured by appropriate practice of suitable *mudr³s*. Regular practice of these *mudr³s* is affirmed by the experts as an excellent method of ensuring a radiantly healthy and vigorous life.

The thumb corresponds to the source of balancing the flow of *agni tatva*. The *v³yu tatva* is controlled by the fourth (or the index) finger. The role of the middle finger in the *mudr³s* is for regulating the *ka³la tatva* in the body. The keys of regulating the *p⁰athv⁰* and the *jala tatvas* lie in the ring finger and the little finger respectively. Harmonious proportion of these elements helps in natural maintenance of a vigorous body and a happy mind.

It is really remarkable of human intelligence that it could understand the internal system of the body and its relation with Nature so deeply and create the natural science of health. Naturopathy, *Panchakarma*, *Ayurvedic* medication by *ras-bhasm* and Herbal medicines, Reiki, *Pranic* Healing, Aroma Therapy, Magnetotherapy, Yagyopathy, Allopathy, Homeopathy, Biochemistry, etc are all manifestations of this spiritual scientific

acumen of human psyche. The methods of treatment under each of these systems of healthcare indirectly attempt in correcting the deficiencies or disorders of the five vital elements, because an imbalance in their natural harmony is the root cause of bodily and mental ills.

The science of healthcare by *mudr³s* is a branch of “*Hathayoga*”. The practices of *Hathayoga* for health focus at regulating the natural flow of vital energy. Any obstruction or irregularity in its flow is believed to be the principal cause of disease. This could be triggered by any disorder in the level or activity of one or more of the *panca tatvas*. Different kinds of *mudr³s* help eliminating such imbalances by inducing specific kinds of bioelectrical currents pertaining to specific *tatvas*.

Many types of *mudr³s* of the body are taught and practiced under *Hathayoga*. Here, we shall describe only those that are formed by fingers and are effective in health care in a natural way by direct impact on the level and intensity of the *panca tatvas*.

(1) **Pr³ña Mudr³**: This is recommended for overall good health. As the name suggests, this *mudr³* helps optimal flow of the *pr³ña* (vital energy) in the body. Practicing this *mudr³* energizes and activates every cell of the body and thus helps in regulating the biochemical and physiological processes and induces youthfulness and alacrity.

This *mudr³* enhances vitality and immune system of the body. It invigorates the defense mechanism of the body and thus increases its capacity to fight against dreaded diseases. Its

regular practice is found quite effective in recovery against thyroid problems and several kinds of cancer. More the patient practices it, the greater would be the benefits.

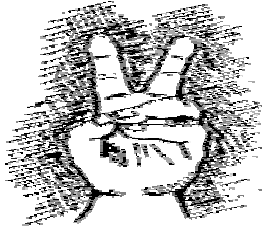


Fig1

As shown in Figure 1 here, this *mudr*³ is formed by joining the thumb, the little and the ring fingers so that these three would gently and constantly touch each other while the middle and the fourth fingers are kept apart in a stretched position. The hands could be kept in vertical or horizontal position as per convenience. Instant effect of the *pr*³*ñā mudr*³ is felt in the form of energetic vibrations in the closed eyes, while keeping one or both the hands in this posture. This *mudr*³ deals with harmonic compounding of the *jala*, *p*[•]*athv*⁰ and *agni tatvas*.

(2) **Jó³na Mudr³**: This *mudr*³ is useful for enhancing mental capabilities. Its regular practice over a substantial stretch of time helps in sharpening the memory, mental concentration and thinking process and in increasing the grasping/learning capacities. Several types of mental disorders are prevented and cured by consistent practice of this *mudr*³. It is beneficial for those suffering from insomnia. Short-tempered and impatient people can also get soothing improvement in their nature by practicing this *mudr*³.

The Sanskrit word “jó³na” means pure knowledge. It is linked with sagacity and enlightened wisdom. That, which enables us

discriminate between the right and the wrong and which shows us the light of truth, is “jó³na”. Great spiritual endeavors (*s*³*dhan*³) are required for attainment of *jó³na*. The *jó³na mudra* pertains to the yoga practices for such a *s*³*dhan*³. Lord Buddha’s idols and pictures often depict his hands in this *mudr*³.

Practice of this *mudr*³ smoothly increases the flow of blood-supply and circulation in the brain to help energize the neurons for instant action. This is how the *jó³na mudr*³ helps in curing many of the brain related problems.



Fig. 2

Only two fingers are used in this *mudr*³, namely, the tip of the index finger and the top of the thumb are mutually touched. The other three fingers are kept apart in a straight position (see Figure 2). Its instant effect is felt as slow relaxation of mind; retaining it for long induces a soothing sleep-like effect. If one keeps one or both the hands in this *mudr*³ while lying on the bed, he often goes to sleep. This *mudr*³ effectuates a balancing commingling of the *agni* and the *v*³*yu tatvas*.

(3) **Dhy³na Mudr³**: This *mudr*³, as the word indicates, is helpful in conditioning the mind for meditation. Keeping the hands stable in this *mudr*³ for sometime generates a state of peace in the mind. Regular and consistent practice for increasing the duration gradually releases the tensions, stresses and confusions that keep the

mind in perpetual turmoil. The calming comfort one feels in this *mudr*³ can be likened to what one would feel when he goes beneath the cooling shade of a huge tree after a tiring walk under the blazing hot sun. Quietude and relaxation of the mind are essential for meditation. The *dhy*³*na mudr*³ serves this preconditioning purpose. Therefore, those engaged in spiritual practice of meditation (*dhy*³*na s*³*dhan*³) are often seen in this *mudr*³.

This *mudr*³ induces relaxation in the entire body and thus freshens up its every organ and limb. That is why one feels infused with vibrant energy and enthusiasm after sitting in this *mudr*³ even for fifteen to thirty minutes. This *mudr*³ should be practiced while sitting, preferably in *sukh*³*san*³ (i.e. sitting with erect spinal cord with legs rolled round). For this, both the hands are kept on the lap – palm of the right hand is kept open above the palm of the left as shown in Figure 3. In a healthy state of mind and body, one can instantly feel the relaxing effect of this posture.



Fig. 3

If one can thus keep the mind calm, the practice of this *mudr*³ can gradually lead to the trance-like state of – total relaxation of the nervous system, free of any movements of thoughts. This *mudr*³ harmonizes the flow of the *panca tatvas*.

(4) **Varj**³**na Mudr**³: This *mudr*³ is quite useful as a remedy for several disorders of the

liver. It is also found effective in removing blood related problems. *Varj*³*na* implies the *jala tatva*. All the health problems caused by the deficiency of water are controlled and removed by regular practice of this *mudr*³. Water constitutes about eighty-five percent of our body. Reduction in this level disturbs the body functions. Stiffness in the body or disorder in blood properties often occur when there is a deficiency of water (*jala tatva*) or an imbalance in its proportion with *agni tatva*. Such ailments, including those of the excess of *agni tatva*, are gradually cured by the practice of *varj*³*na mudr*³.

This *mudr*³ is very simple (see Figure 4). The top ends of the thumb and the little finger are to be touched while keeping the other three fingers straight. A balance of *agni* and *jala tatvas* is achieved by practicing this *mudr*³.

Fig. 4

(5) **Ling Mudr**³: Weakness of chest and associated diseases are cured by the practice of this *mudr*³ over an extended period of time. Keeping the hands folded in this posture generates an energy current, which warms up the body. People are often seen putting their hands in this position in winter. Chronic patients of cough and cold can benefit a lot from its regular practice for thirty to fifty minutes a day. Regular practice of this *mudr*³ is an excellent antidote against diseases caused by cough or other chest ailments.

According to the natural constitution theory of the ancient Indian system of medicine, the excess of *jala tatva* or reduction in *agni tatva* as compared to its balanced proportion with *jala* results in cold, cough, running nose, chest congestion etc. Balancing the two in natural order is the best cure for such disorders; it also prevents further complications – e.g. asthma. The *ling mudr³* restores this balance.



Fig. 5

Figure 5 illustrates this *mudr³*. Both the hands are used here. First the palms are touched face-to-face then the four fingers of one are interlocked with those of the other to form a firm support around the palms in such a way that the thumb of both the hands stand straight and touch each other completely. As described earlier, the thumb is supposed to be the source of the flow of *agni tatva* in the body. Both the thumbs press each other in the *ling mudr³*. This pressure triggers a flow of *agni tatva* to establish the desired balance with the *jala tatva*; the positioning of the other fingers maintains the necessary consistency of this process.

(6) S₂rya Mudr³: Practice of this *mudr³* removes lethargy and dullness and, instead, induces alacrity and activity. The sun (*s₂rya*) symbolizes brilliance and energy. In its absence there is night when every creature feels tired, fatigued and sleepy. Sunrise infuses new life, energy and alertness in everyone; tiny insect, birds and humans, every one becomes active in their daily routines. The rise and setting of the

sun, in a way control the sleep and the awakening of the entire world.

Similar effects of educing alertness and energy are experienced by practicing the *s₂rya mudr³*. It eliminates all fatigue, heaviness and laziness in few minutes. The experts of the science of *mudr³s* claim that regular and long-term practice of this *mudr³* awakens supernormal powers hidden in the human psyche.



Fig.6

The ring finger and the thumb are used in this *mudr³* (Figure 6). The ring finger is folded down to touch the root of the thumb and the top portion of the thumb is made to touch its middle portion. The other fingers are kept in a comfortably straight position. The *agni* and the *p⁰athv⁰ tatvas* are mutually harmonized in this *mudr³*.

(7) V³yu Mudr³: The ancient Indian science of Healing (Ayurveda) refers to the disorders caused by gases or air pressures in and around the veins, arteries etc, as – *v³ta* ailments. Joint pain, arthritis, rheumatism, etc are common examples of such disorders. The *v³yc³ mudr³* helps control and cure the *v³ta* ailments. The optimum time of practicing it at a stretch and the overall duration would depend upon the stage and type of the ailments. It is also efficacious in recovery from paralysis attacks. Best results are obtained if this *mudr³* and the *pr³ñā mudr³* are practiced together, one after the other. This *mudr³* is generally effective in alleviating

toothache, headache, stomachache, etc. As in case of the other *mudr*³s, its practice by healthy people is an excellent preventive measure against all *v*³*ta* related problems.



Fig. 7

This *mudr*³ is similar to the *s*₂*rya mudr*³ except that the index finger is used in place of the ring finger in this *mudr*³. The index finger is folded to touch and gently press the root of the thumb and then the top portion of the thumb is made to touch the middle part of the finger in such a way that it also puts some pressure on the latter (as shown in Figure 7). This *mudr*³ regulates the mutual proportion and combination of *agni* and *v*³*yu tatvas*.

(8) P-athv⁰ Mudr³: Deficiency of minerals and vitamins causes weakness in the body. Although externally one may look healthy and strong, his body gets weak and ‘hollow’ from inside. Even a little exertion tires him. The *p-athv⁰ mudr³* is especially recommended for such persons.

The practice of this *mudr*³ removes the fatigue and strengthens the weak or tired organs of the body. The body begins to feel energized from inside. The energy of the body naturally strengthens and enthuses the mind, which was earlier dull and irritated because of the constant weakness of the body. A happy mood helps in cheering up and broadening the attitude and focusing the mind. Narrow-mindedness and prejudices are significantly reduced by the practice of this *mudr*³. The

tip of the ring finger is kept perpendicularly on the tip of the thumb in this *mudr*³ (see Figure 8) to induce gentle pressure. It restores mutual balance of the *agni* and the *p-athv⁰ tatvas*.



Fig. 8

In general, the effects of a *mudr*³ are evident if it is practiced with both the hands for at least about forty-five minutes every day. If this is not feasible to continue with a *mudr*³ for so long at a stretch, it could be practiced in two installments – for thirty minutes and fifteen minutes at suitable timings during the day.

The *mudr*³s are yogic postures to restore or maintain the orderly balance of the *panca tatvas*. These increase the vigour and potentials of the body and the mind. The concentration, clarity and calmness induced by their practice helps in disciplining and conditioning the mind for spiritual pursuits. It is indeed in our hands to benefit from these free gifts of nature and the science of yoga.

Notes:

1. *Panca Tatvas*: The five basic elements of the gross manifestation of Nature. Namely, *p-athv⁰* (solid matter on or inside the earth), *jala* (water, liquids and fluids), *v*³*yu* (air, gaseous states), *agni* (source of fire and energy) and *k*³*ia* (the subliminal etheric expansion).
2. *S*³*dhan*³: Devout spiritual endeavor aimed at inner refinement and self-realisation.

The Miraculous and Mysterious Dimensions of Consciousness– Force Hidden In the Human Organism

The most interesting and challenging topics of research in the recent times have been focusing on the mysteries of human body. Apart from the scientists and researchers of the modern age, the ancient sages and seers had delved even deeper into the marvels and intricate workings of the inner realms of the living human organism.

The modern age cutting edge biological researches have successfully made it possible to decode the human DNA sequence. However, despite the dedicated efforts of the geneticists, biophysicists, biochemists, and other researchers of the biomedical sciences, and despite the successful experiments on cloning genes and organisms and the synthesis of some biomolecules in the laboratories, the mystery of the origin and ultimate end of life remains unresolved. No theory of evolution has yet been able to scientifically elucidate the origin and manifestation of consciousness in living organisms or capture the moments of transition between life and death.

The essence of what the *Upanishadic* seers describe about the living system implies that the structure and functions of the human organism have not evolved in stages, as claimed by Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. Rather, this highly evolved system has always existed as a perfect creation of the Almighty. For instance, a hymn in the "Ishopanishad" cites that the entirety of *Brahm*³ – the Supreme Creator of the universe – is immanent in his infinite creation. Everything existing in the universe therefore is as complete and vast (in its subliminal world) as the cosmic expansion. The following *mantra* in the

"Chhandogyopanishad" proclaims the underlying unity of all phenomena in the ultimate source and substance of creation- the ³tm³.
Satya eĪoañi maitd³yatymidam sarvam|
Tatsayem sa ³tm³ tatvamasi Īvetaketo ||
Meaning: The spirit is the only and the ultimate source of all phenomena that exist in this universe. The spirit is the Absolute Truth and 'Oh! Svetaketu (addressing to the disciple), you are nothing but that eternal spirit.'

The ancient Indian scriptures also throw light upon the fundamental principles for the physical manifestation of consciousness. A human being is described here as – "A superb individual concretization of the subtle dynamic impulses that perpetually flow in the limitless expansion of the cosmos". The principle of underlying unity of the subtle structures of the cosmos and the microcosm of a human organism, and the eternal conjugation between the vital powers and energy currents within and beyond the living system of the human body, provide a scientific basis of the subliminal existence of the universe in the latter.

What is known or perceivable about the structure and function of the human body (including the brain) itself is so astounding that there remains little doubt about the validity of above assertions. A complex, subliminal and limitless ocean of electromagnetic waves, neurochemicals, and vital energy indwells in this visibly small but functionally omnipotent system.

Noting that the Indian Philosophy and Science of Spirituality and Life had focused on the conscious as well as the material existence of Nature, a fresh look at the inherent import of the scriptural texts in the light of the new

scientific discoveries might be useful in deciphering the mysterious realms operating within the living human organisms. The authentic descriptions and implications of the Upanishad texts may be regarded as theorems or conjectures for this purpose requiring theoretical and experimental research according to present day scientific methodology to prove, resolve, or verify the truth of their insights.

The eleventh *mantra* of the “*Ishopanishad*” says – “One who learns from the known (perceivable) as well as the unknown (subliminal), transcends the knowledge of death and eternity”. This indeed gives an important clue in the present context indicating that the integration of the material based modern scientific research with the science of spirituality and the subliminal world of consciousness would indeed offer in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the astonishing world of conscious energy process operating inside the deeper levels of human organism.

In continuation of the advancing research on human genes, neuropeptides and other biochemicals, the molecular biologists, neuroscientists and biophysicists have also discovered some macromolecules responsible for bioelectrical functioning in the human body. It is found that a powerful electrostatic field exists in almost every tissue of our body. These electrical fields activate the neurons in the brain under the energized control of small amounts of certain neurotransmitters and these also affect the cell membrane potentials and hence the inter-cellular communication in other parts of the body.

Because of the enormous bioelectrical processing in it, our body functions like a dipole magnet whose north pole resides in the central core of the brain and the south pole in the bottom center of the genitals. Scientific

observations show that its polarization process is similar to that of the earth and that this polarization begins at the level of a zygote itself. The meiotic process of chromosome synthesis and distribution in gametes occurs after this polarization.

An electro-sensitive micron image of even a child’s body shows dense halo of light near the brain and the genitals. The locations of the north and the south poles of the grand bioelectrical magnet of the human body match respectively with those of the *sahastr³ra* (extrasensory center in the reticular activating system) and the *m³l³dh³ra* (extrasensory center beneath the lowermost end of the spinal column). These subtle energy centers are referred in the *yoga*-scriptures in the context of the galaxy of vital electric and spiritual powers hidden in the *Kuñ³alin^a*. These two extrasensory centers respectively are said to be the subliminal inlets and outlets or the two ‘channels’ for the continuous flow of cosmic energy, vital currents and bioelectrical communication in the body’s micro-universe.

Dr. Harold Saxton Burr (b1889-d1973), a distinguished scientist at the Yale Medical School had carried out extensive work on the bioelectrical roots of life-energy. In his book entitled “The Field of Life” (John Wiley, 1972) he remarks that the high magnitude of the (bio) electrical potentials between the two poles of a tiny zygote is indeed astounding. This (bio) electromagnetic property naturally has a crucial role in enabling multi-cellular development of this single cell into the marvelous human body. In fact, as Dr. Burr describes, sperm itself is a dipole in which the upper pole carrying the nucleus is the center of information and the lower pole, the tail, contains electrical energy for transmitting this information. These poles are functionally active

in the DNA and RNA of the cells in the offspring.

The continuous and controlled flow of electrical currents between the involved cellular dipoles plays vital role in embryogenesis and complete development of the body. According to Dr. Jean Mark (Science, issue no. 1, 1981) electrophoresis is fundamental to various cellular processes occurring inside a living body. The balanced circulation and optimal activities of the Red Blood Corpuscles (RBC) and the White Blood Corpuscles (WBC) also rely on the ionic secretions through the membranes of these cells.

Significant work in the areas of electrophysiology is reported on the cardiac pacemaker and the conducting tissues, which control the pumping action of the heart and hence the healthy blood circulation. Electrophysiological phenomena have also been studied microscopically in the spinal cord (around the *suḷumn³n³Ā*) and the connecting sympathetic and parasympathetic ganglions. Transport of calcium ions across the cell membrane is important in the bioelectrical and biomagnetic properties of the cells and hence in the active transport across the cell-membrane and for intercellular communication too.

The terrestrial magnetic lines of force enter through the Geo North Pole and exit from the Geo South Pole. The reception and transmission (or dissipation) of cosmic rays also is most intensive at these poles. The electrically charged ultra fast solar rays are always concentrated and focused at the receiving center (North Pole) and are most dispersed at the exit center (South Pole). The South Pole works as the exit door for the dissipation of excessive heat, global pollution, unabsorbed radiation, etc. This natural flow of energy from the north to South Pole becomes

possible because of polarization. The polarization in the human body is equally important for the bioelectrical, physiological and biochemical processing. The vital charging and evolution of energy fields around the two poles of the body's magnet emit specific aura that is brighter and intense around the upper pole.

The spinal cord is the connecting channel of bioelectrical power transmission from the brain to the central nervous system and to all the sensory organs in fractions of a second. The spinal cord is made up of collagen tissues constituted by a compact assembly of these stable protein molecules. The upper end of this cord (covering the bundles of nerves) is positively charged and the lower end is negatively charged. In terms of tissue structure, this cord forms a coiled cluster at the lower end and spreads at the upper end as an elliptical surface in the reticular activating system of the brain. This core is the central repository or powerhouse of immense (bio) electricity, part of which is also used in the bodily activities from cellular to organ levels. Most of this storage remains subliminal. Further, due to the continuous flow of positive and negative currents and mutual reactions and consumption of ionic concentration in the varieties of processes going on simultaneously in the sensory operations, electrophysiological, metabolic, and motor activities, etc, it is difficult to measure the charge of this power field by electroencephalograph (EEG). The EEG can record only about 13% of the bioelectrical activities of the brain on an average.

As described earlier, the reticular activating system, the central region of the pineal, pituitary and the hypothalamus in the brain are given immense importance in the *yoga*-scriptures. The associated vital and latent energy domains and extrasensory power

centers are referred here as the *brahmarandhra* and the *sahastr³ra*. The *sahastr³ra* being the ‘north (upper) pole’ of the body’s magnet receives cosmic signals and subliminal transmissions.

Yoga s³dhan³s of successive refinement, activation and control of *sahastr³ra* bestow the potentials of attracting and absorbing the desired supernormal energies and impulses of cosmic consciousness through this extrasensory center. The necessary disposal of the vices (of the body and mind) and pernicious effects become possible through the *m³l³dh³ra cakra* (the south pole of the body’s magnet). The quality and intensity of the cosmic energy received by the upper end (the *brahmrاندhara* and *sahastr³ra*) of the dipole (bio) magnet of the spinal cord depends upon the mental enlightenment and spiritual elevation of the *yogi*.

As mentioned earlier, the cosmic radiations are received by the geo-north pole on the earth; and the untoward effects, and the excess or wastage after the consumption of the desired energy is discarded through the geo-south pole. This process is similar to the subliminal process of the attraction and absorption of cosmic signals (of the eternal *pr³ñā* indwelling the cosmos) by the *sahastr³ra* and disposal (after necessary consumption by the extrasensory centers along the endocrine column) through the *m³l³dh³ra*. In the context of *kuñ⁰ālin⁰s³dhan³s* the *yoga*-scriptures liken the *m³l³dh³ra* to a deep pond and the *sahastr³ra* to the majestic Himalayan peak of the *Kailash* mountain. The synchronicity and vital linkage of these two *cakras* (extrasensory centers) is realized through the electrification of *kuñ⁰ālin⁰* and results in ultimate bliss. The individual self, the

soul, unites with its eternal origin – (God) and attains self-realization.

The active level of spiritual charge in the *sahastr³ra* determines the intensity and glow of the aura around one’s face (especially the head). The mythological depiction of bright halo around the faces of the idols of deities or divine characters symbolizes this fact. The two volumes on “Psychic Discoveries behind Iron Curtain” by Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schneider (published by Bantam Books, New York in 1970s) mention a great deal about the aura of vital energy around living beings. A technique called Kirilian photography is said to have made it possible to photograph and analyze the aura as clearly as the polar spectrum at the terrestrial North Pole. Dr. Narendran, a neurologist at the Madras Medical College is reported to have recorded the halos of ‘light’ (vital energy zones) around different parts of the body including the fingers.

The Kirilian technique of sensing and recording of micro-ionic energy domains has been a remarkable scientific breakthrough towards the development of Thermographs and Electromagnetographs in the second half of the 20th century.

According to Dr. Narendran, the intensity of the aura increases with vital energy. It exists in plants, trees and even in the inanimate matter but it is difficult to photograph it due to its low intensity. A high voltage projection recording with the help of a modified design of Dr. Kilner Walter’s instrument (invented in 1949) is used for recording the aura around human beings.

Researchers in this field opine that the measurement of aura and the analysis of its spectra would be useful in understanding the mental state of patients and would therefore

provide better means for the diagnosis and management of psychosomatic disorders. Some of them express the view that the knowledge about this rather new field of bio-energy was available since ages but was largely hidden due to misinterpretation of the scriptural texts and unscientific practices like those of hypnotism, holography, etc.

Dr. Kilner had shown, using a dicyanin screen, that the distribution of ions around our body is affected by the number of dead cells being disposed off through the skin and that the extent and rate of decay is associated with the level of our vital energy. The aura is supposed to be formed in the intense ionic zones around the body. Hence a relation between the appearance of an aura and vital energy exists. He mentions in his book “Human Atmosphere” that the charged particles in the aura remain invisible due to their nano-structure and dispersed distribution. The glow of the aura around most people therefore remains dim or dull. However, people with supernatural powers and elevated spiritual energy can visualize and measure the aura around anybody.

The scientific methods of recording and analyzing the aura around the human body, and the scriptural reviews on the origin and knowledge of the subliminal fields of vital energy and the spiritual force associated with its glow, are discussed in detail in volume 17 of “The Complete Works of Pandit. Shriram Sharma Acharya”. The present discussion gives only a glimpse of some related aspects of the astounding living organism of the human body that have been deciphered in the modern laboratories. The subliminal world living inside the human beings is far more vast and mysterious than the perceivable world around it. The

s̄kim⁰karaña s³dhan³ – supreme spiritual endeavor of sublimation of the life force – is a consistent and phased process of the realization, expansion, transmutation and unification of the individual consciousness with the supreme cosmic consciousness.

As scientific research proceeds with discovering the subtler realms of life and consciousness in the human body, newer dimensions of supernatural powers would begin to unfold in this natural system. The principles and attainments of *s̄kim⁰karaña* would also then become more explicit and convincing and will inspire a greater number of people to undertake and benefit from the marvelous results of spiritual *s³dhan³s*.

Integration of science and spirituality would help in unveiling the subtle mechanism and depth of the universe of life in our body. This would also lead to an integrated scientific vision of the superiority of the power of consciousness over all other powers in the physical world and thus enhance our faith in its omnipotent eternal origin. This elevated reverence for its Supreme Creator should also educe our faith in the dignity of human life and humanity.

Notes and References:

1. *KunĀalin⁰* (also known as the gigantic ‘serpentine fire’ in the science of “*Tantra*”) symbolizes the sublime source of absolute life-force, vital spiritual energy and the latent reservoir of supernatural powers. It is also regarded to be the governing power of *m³y³*. This limitless force normally remains hidden and dormant and could be stimulated and elevated through arduous *s³dhan³s* of *KuñĀalin⁰Yoga*.
2. “*Pr³ñā Īakti – Eka Divya Vibh̄ti*” (Hindi text): Vol. 17 of “Pt. Sriram Sharma Acharya Vangmaya”.

TRUTH ALONE WILL TRIUMPH

Truthfulness is the ninth of the ten attributes of 'dharma'. Normally, this attribute is linked with the faculty of speech; i.e. to strictly speak what one has seen, heard or understood. This could do as a broad general definition. But it does not capture the essence of truthfulness which can only be defined as upholding the intrinsic core of righteousness. If the objective is noble then circumstances may warrant deliberate deviation from the literal definition. For, instance, if a patient is struggling against an apparently incurable ailment, words of encouragement and hope, strengthening his willpower and thereby increasing his chances of survival would better serve the spirit of truth than literally and heartlessly repeating the medical verdict. Such truthfulness is worse than an outright lie. Similarly, if there is estrangement between two closely related parties or persons, each feeling uncompromisingly righteous, the ends of truth will be better served by acting as a bridge through highlighting even in an exaggerated way the brighter sides of both sides and work towards reconciliation rather than widening the gulf through so-called plain speaking.

Time was when open confession of one's faults and demerits was not looked down upon; rather one's innocence and naivete invited indulgence and forgiveness. But now the situation has completely changed. Revelation of private secrets is now a matter of ridicule by the people who take sadistic pleasure in broadcasting a person's vulnerabilities and in soiling his good name and prestige.

Many instances can be cited when a newly married bride was led to confide in her

spouse about her past mistakes and then, instead of promised love and forgiveness, a highly vindictive attitude was adopted thereby making her life a veritable hell. The right thing to do is to keep completely mum about incidents of the past whose revelation is likely to create problems and misery. Truthfulness is considered a sign of nobility. A match between word and deed is indeed a virtue, and such qualities should be routinely practiced in daily activities. However, it is not falsehood to keep quiet about matters of the past whose uncovering is likely to raise a storm. Very often silence amounts to truthfulness in such circumstances.

The story goes that a cow escaped from the clutches of a butcher and was grazing by the side of the river behind an 'ashram'. The butcher, in her pursuit came in front of the ashram and inquired from the sage about the cow's whereabouts. The sage replied philosophically, "That which has seen speaks not, that which speaks has seen not." He was, of course, referring to the difference between the faculties of sight (eyes) and the speech (tongue). The butcher could not follow this symbolic language and returned disappointed. The cow was thus saved by this enigmatic truth thus prevented a big tragedy.

Personnel of the armed forces and intelligence agencies have strict instructions to gather information from others but not to divulge facts about themselves. This appears to be a clear encouragement to falsehood. But behind it is the exalted aim of national security and crime investigation. Hence, in such cases recourse to apparent lies can in no way be considered unbecoming or demeaning.

Dharmaraj Yudhishtira, while confirming the death of Ashwathama, simply added in a low tone, “*naro v³ kunjro v³*” either a man of this name or an elephant. Many an elephant had died in the Mahabharat war. Yudhishtir instead of clarifying the position took recourse to a half truth. Even Lord Krishna, sensing that Arjun might have to die instead of Jayadratha, created the mirage of a sunset with the help of his *Sudarshan Chakra*. Thus, Arjun's life was saved and instead Arjun was able to kill Jayadrath to fulfill his vow. The seemingly deceptive trick played by Krishna served the cause of truth by serving the life of the greatest warrior of the age fighting against the forces of evil.

All these epochal episodes are not meant to encourage falsehood, nor to paint truth as impractical. Honesty and truthfulness are indeed the basic moral and ethical values to be practiced in our lives. We must not indulge in adulteration, or profiteering; must use correct weights and measures, and have transparent book keeping. But by the same token, it is not at all necessary to play Harishchandra before a thief or a ‘thug’, reveal to him details of one’s money and valuables and thus facilitate and encourage theft and dacoity.

One ought to practice truthfulness and honesty in daily conduct. The less wheeling-dealing one resorts to, the clearer is the conscience, and less the chances of physical and mental disorders. Words of such a noble person carry spontaneous credibility.

Having said all this, it should be borne in mind that needless publicity of facts as that lead to harmful consequences for individuals and the society should be avoided. There are many occasions in life when silence is golden; it saves one from indulging in gossip, lies, twisting of facts, etc. which lead to mental

pollution, turmoil and tension.

The modern age abounds in persons of perverted nature who first contrive to be privy to a person’s secrets and use the information so gained to denigrate the poor fellow in public. The great number of such instances has led to the adage that it is wise to speak less, speak sweet and speak for the good. This gives the essence of practical truthfulness. Needless divulging of facts to all and sundry invariably harms the interests of many who tend to become foes. It is noble to adhere to truth, but it should be compatible with upholding of societal harmony and order, and personal dignity and peace of mind.

Truth always triumphs. This dictum can also be applied in favour of the exploited. Injustice is said to be like a paper tiger. The inherent rights of man are founded upon truth, justice and natural order. Hence, however powerful the exploiters be, they are bound to bite the dust one day. Similarly, malpractices, superstitions and meaningless rituals are all manifestations of falsehood. These castles in the air draw sustenance from an appeal to blend traditions and would crumble with one push.

Inner and outer activities to cleanse the psyche and to uplift public consciousness are part of practice of truth. Vices, such as taking intoxicants, have taken firm roots in society and are sucking its life blood like leeches. The moment darkness of ignorance is removed, these vices and malpractices would also cease to exist.

The soul is synonymous with Truth. Efforts to preserve its purity and dignity are also facets of truth. Truth also implies that social justice and brotherhood of man be established. To fight against the stubborn resistance to Truth by forces of evil is an action inspired by Truth-consciousness: an attribute of Divinity.

Steps Towards Achieving Spiritual Greatness

True greatness (as opposed to worldly bigness) can be attained by vigilantly pursuing high ideals. Once we are able to awaken our Inner Being and mould our lives in the light of inspirations coming from within, it is possible to attain greatness of the spirit even while living ordinary lives in the worldly sense. The basic hurdle in the way of attaining spiritual awakening is our false sense of identity – The Ego.

Ego can be dissolved through Divine Grace only; and hence the importance of constant remembrance, prayer and contemplation of God for true aspirants of the Divine. Cultivation of values like faith, compassion, love is essential in *S³dhan³*. But the love for God is the highest of all virtues. It is also called devotion, which is of greatest help in the realization of God. This has been the experience of all saints and seers of all ages and cultures. In fact, some embodied medium is required to augment the practice of devotion. Normally, the practice of augmenting greatness through the medium of devotion to God starts with devotion to *Guru* (spiritual guide). Therefore, in our religion and culture, *Up³san³* (worship by sitting nearby) has been considered the first and compulsory step in spiritual *S³dhan³*.

Among the various means of progress and upliftment, *Sw³dhy³ya* (study of spiritual texts) and *Satsang* (company of masters who have attained self-realisation) have been considered exceptionally fruitful and convenient. In a way “*Sw³dhy³ya*” too is *Satsang* of thoughts. But the proximity of awakened souls produces deep effect on the inner self. The nearness of saints fructify rapidly

through their speech, thoughts, aura and behaviour. There is no better way than *Satsang* for the refinement of self. Even incorrigibly wicked and immoral persons have been transformed into great souls by the effect of *Satsang*.

Satsang is certainly helpful in the task of soul-growth. However, under the present circumstances, hypocrisy that has spread in this field, produces more harm than benefit. One is bombarded with worthless, conservative, fatalistic and escapist thoughts in these *satsangs*. Unrefined and unscrupulous persons masquerade as *Gurus* and in order to increase their following advocate cheap recipes or tell mesmerising stories of some *dev⁰-devat³* (deities) and give false hopes of heaven or salvation to credulous masses. True seekers have to beware of such tricksters.

These days, by and large, the need of *Satsang* should be fulfilled through *Sw³dhy³y*. Of course, if genuine *Satsang* is available where one can get true guidance for the refinement of life, then one should avail of it and get its benefits. But there is no point in going to a place or a person where time is wasted in useless and ridiculous day-dreaming. One can get the benefit of the company of great souls at home by regularly studying their literature which brightens inner light, refines the character and produces harmony in our beliefs, deeds and behaviour.

***Sw³dhy³ya* does not mean merely reading books. Its true aim is to get inspiration for introspection. An ancient scripture says–**
Ratyaha@pratyaveki etajanaicaritam³tamana |
Kinnu me pasubhistulya@ kinnu satpuru³airiva||

Every person should go on vigilantly watching one's thoughts, emotions and deeds with a view to eradicate negativity and inculcate nobility. This method of self-introspection can also be called *Sw³dhy³ya*. Those who have done *Sw³dhy³ya* in this way have attained the supreme goal of life – self-realisation.

Unbridled self-indulgence is a most serious obstacle in the attainment of greatness. The circumstances of sorrow and pain, poverty and degradation in the human life flow from physical and mental indolence and self-indulgence.

Self-control is the key to heaven. It leads to inner peace and bestows divine knowledge, which illuminate the entire life of a human being. In order to achieve spiritual freedom and abundance, a well-regulated routine is a must. The meaningfulness of human life depends on whether the goal of salvation has been achieved by making purposeful use of this embodied life. This is achievable only through self-control.

It is certainly unwise to waste one's vital energies by reckless indulgence in worldly pleasures. A human being possesses unique qualities of will, discrimination, choice and thinking which put him apart from other creatures of this world. The Creator has gifted these qualities to man to achieve some great objective. This can be attained by the purity of thoughts and deeds which is possible only through self-control.

In this connection, this is what the Divine Teacher of the Gita says –

*Asanyat³tman³ yogodu³īpr³pya itimemati³ |
Vaiy³tman³ tu yatat³ iakyoav³ptumum³yata³ |*

Gita-VI /36

“It is difficult to attain yoga (union with the Divine) by those who lack self-control. Only those persons who have self-control are able

to succeed in their efforts towards self-realisation.”

Self-control is the cornerstone of the edifice of character. Virtues like compassion, detachment, sacrifice, etc. are qualities of a calm, quiet and controlled mind. Mechanical, unbridled, haphazard thoughts lead to similar deeds. If our minds and senses function as obedient, well-honed instrument (not as despotic masters), liberation will be ours even while doing our worldly duties. Living in the world but not of it.

Another deadly foe in the path of achieving greatness is ego. Due to their selfish view point, egotists inflict pain on others. But the evil tendency of exploitation of others on the basis of force makes a person fall. So long as this attribute remains, a person might collect huge wealth in the mundane world; but in fact he will be considered a pauper.

The wealth of a person, in no way, reflects his greatness. Had this been the case, physically strong people, rich people and the ill-famed leaders and dacoits would have been worshipped everywhere. They would have got applause of humanity. But, actually, this is not true. A person gets the honour of being called “great” only when he serves others wholeheartedly. There are millions of people who are living in adversity. Persons working sincerely for the uplift of such people may get the honour of being called great.

True greatness of a person is not determined by his transitory achievements in the mundane world. A person who is humble, kind, compassionate, pure of heart and generous, may be living an ordinary life but he is a great soul. Such greatness can be attained by a four - step self-effort: *S³dhan³* (self-discipline), *Sw³dhy³ya* (self-introspection), *Sanyam* (self-control) and *Sev³* (service).

Atmosphere of Divine Faith at Home

Human souls, lost in the mirage of worldly illusion, have a lurking sense of being cut off from the Source (The Divine Self); hence there is instinctive urge to remember their identity as children of immortality-God. This urge towards Divinity manifests as prayer, worship, meditation etc. Body cannot work without nourishment; purification of blood cannot take place without respiration. In the same way, forgetfulness of our Divine origin leads to a life of degeneration and desolation – ever fearful, purposeless and animal-like.

The happiness and peace in human life depend on a living and unshakable faith in our immortal origin in the Divine. The various methods of prayer and worship have been designed to nourish and augment this aspiration for manifesting divine life in ourselves. Materialistic means of pleasure can be earned by muscular and mental strength; but nobility in thought, deed and behaviour depends only on purification and refinement of our body, mind and intellect and by transcending the ego- our false self. True worship helps in bringing forward our real self beyond the ego. Therefore, there must be a prominent place for worship and prayer in the daily routine of our family.

Governments try to outwardly control the people and make them behave in a civil way through rigorous laws and regulations. But very little success has been achieved in this way. It is not possible to inculcate virtues like love, sacrifice, humility, magnanimity, etc. by governmental pressure or, for that matter, any outside force. Peace, harmony and order in this world can be established only through refining and ennobling the hearts and minds of

individuals. Such a transformation can come about only from within, it cannot be thrust from outside. The power to influence the heart rests only with faith and belief. Only living faith in the Supreme Being and its application in daily life can do it. It is the inner awakening in human hearts that can lead humanity from falsehood to truth, darkness to light and death to immortality. The seeds for such a transformation can be sown only in fertile soil of households where an atmosphere of faith, prayer, and worship pervades.

The worth of a person depends on his nobility of character. Thus a person whose emotions, deeds and behaviour have been refined in a consistent manner can face and overcome the obstacles and hardships of life and find the way to progress and prosperity. A disciplined person with his influence and behaviour, can turn unfavourable circumstances and bad-willed persons into favourable ones. On the contrary, a person who is full of vices will turn even favorable circumstances into their opposites. Vicious conduct and behaviour always produce a maleficent atmosphere and evil and hostile forces and beings haunt such a place.

We should patiently try to cultivate an atmosphere of faith at home and in society. Faith in God is the best way of inducing a person to move on the right path. Faithless people defy governmental rules and social punishment. Even the fear of police and jail is unable to reduce the crimes and criminals. But if someone believes in God firmly, and feels the presence of God everywhere, in every creature and in thing, then it will not be possible for him to offend anyone. How can a person

who has faith in an inviolable principle – “As you sow so shall you reap”, dare to go on an evil path leading to a dark future? Cheating and harassing others is equivalent to cheating and harassing the indwelling God. A person who has faith in God and who understands His Law of sowing- and –reaping can never act wrongfully.

A person of faith always thinks, speaks and acts righteously. Only hypocritical faith teaches that one can get rid of the effects of one’s sins by mechanically worshipping for half-an-hour a day and indulging in sinful pursuits in the remaining twenty three and a half hours. Similarly, the assumption of getting one’s desires fulfilled by simply bowing before the idols of gods is foolish. Genuine and true faith in God leads to a life of righteousness. In order to establish righteous conduct and behaviour in every sphere of life, there can be no effective medium other than living faith in God.

Firm belief in God as one’s protector, friend and guide makes one fearless and relaxed. Therefore, one who truly loves his family members, wife, children, etc. should consciously try to inculcate faith in the Supreme Being in them.

In order to develop the body and mind of the members of family, we arrange for them nourishing food and enlightening education. In the same way, efforts should be made to inculcate in them aspiration for spiritual growth. It is the head of the family who should set an example by himself doing regular worship and prayers. If any member of the house has bad habits like going to sleep late at night and getting up late in the morning, remaining dirty, carelessness in studies, extravagancy; bad company etc., all efforts must be made to pull him out of such harmful and ruinous habits. At the same time, they should be helped and encouraged to imbibe positive habits of regular

hours of sleep, personal cleanliness, wise use of money and resources, keeping good company, etc.

Edifice of a noble personality can only be built on Divine Faith.. As a result, body, mind, family, social conduct and behaviour, every thing becomes healthy, harmonious and blissful. Girls who imbibe belief in God in childhood, after getting married will serve as faithful and virtuous wives. They will consider it their religious duty to behave warmly and courteously towards each member of the husband’s family and will thus endear themselves to everyone. Every one will love them and will take good care of them in times of need. The welcome and love that a bride can not get by bringing plenty of dowry, will be hers by virtuous conduct based on faith in the Divine. Thus the parents who have imparted such a living faith to their daughter have given her the greatest wealth to make her future happy. On the contrary, girls who have grown in an atmosphere of indiscipline, atheism, luxury and intolerance, will produce a burning hell wherever they live. The responsibility for their ruin squarely lies with the parents. It is likely that they do it through excessive affection; but ultimately, this proves to be enmity of the worst kind.

The same holds true in the case of boys, too. If their minds could assimilate effects of good impressions and beliefs in religious values right from the childhood, they will faithfully perform their duties towards parents, in-laws, wife, children, friends, etc. Under such circumstances, naturally their families will be havens of health, happiness, peace and mutual understanding. With inculcation of faith in God in their children, guardians really ensure their satisfactory progress towards a bright future. Such parents and guardians are worthy of highest praise and respect.

The Cardinal Importance of Living Divine Faith in Human Life

Faith is one of those foundational principles of human life, which enables a person to evolve spiritually. Without faith, he cannot attain happiness even though he may have succeeded materialistically. Faith is the basis of happiness. Goswami Tulsidasji has written in his epic work Ramcharit Manas – “*P³rvat⁰ Īankarau Vande, Īraddh³ Vīw³s R₂piñau*”.

Meaning, “Lord Shankar is (the symbol of) trust and Goddess Bhavani is (the symbol of) faith. The realisation of God is possible only by the worship of both (trust and faith).”

Lord Shankar, also known as Lord Shiva, signifies the elimination of ego-based undesirable, evil and hostile tendencies in the human psyche, thus laying the foundation for the emergence of our true self. Trust (Shankar) coupled with unshakeable faith (Bhavani) leads to self-realisation.

Faith makes life joyful. Normally, man fears death because it means transition to an unknown realm. Loneliness is the cause of fear. To the extent faith in our true immutable self is strengthened, the fear of death recedes. A person living in an uninhabited, desolate place, with faith and trust in the indwelling divinity, loves the cosmos and interacts with it as manifestation of the all pervading self-spirit of which he himself is a spark. He feels he is a part of the infinite cosmos. The happiness he experiences through this faith filled vision flows from deepest recesses from his Being, which is one with The Cosmic Being. From this happiness emerges the joy of *3tma jō³na* – the realisation that man’s true identity is the soul that resides within the body and not the body itself.

It is like chasing a chimera to seek happiness through indulgence in the consumerist culture of the society. Happiness does not lie in any outside object or substance; it is an attribute of a living faith. Faith has the power to make any object lovable and a source of joy. For example, we experience joy by looking at the photographs of our beloved ones residing far away; devotees get happiness in worshipping their deity; etc. This is the result of faith. Faith makes a sculpture carved in a stone worthy of being worshipped as a living deity.

There is a famous story in the epic Mahabharata of a tribal boy called Eklavya. He wholeheartedly cherished wished to learn the art of archery from Dronacharya. Since Dronacharya accepted only the princes as his disciples, he refused to teach Eklavya. This did not discourage Eklavya. He made an idol of Dronacharya, gained inspiration from it as his guru and learned the art of archery to such perfection that even guru Dronacharya was amazed by his mastery.

In the modern times also, we find examples of people who, on the basis of faith, achieved wondrous success. One of the most notable examples is of Helen Keller, whose legacy inspires people even today. Helen was a deaf-dumb-blind American woman, whose faith in her capability to learn, speak and study was stimulated by her teacher Anne Sullivan Macy. She later went on to earn a university degree and scores of national and international awards.

In the absence of faith, man’s life would be dull and depressive. Had man not

been intrinsically compassionate and empathetic, his selfish instincts would not have been under control. His actions would have been propelled by excessive greed and would not have been merciful or kind hearted towards his own family. It is faith that has kept man and society alive. Faith in goodness inspires man to survive on minimal resources and face difficulties so that he can help the needy. Imagine a society in which people have no faith in goodness – there would be no joy in life. Faith inspires man to share and care.

Faith means self-confidence through trust in God. With the strength of the unwavering faith in the basic goodness of the cosmos, a person is able to gladly face the challenges, trials and difficulties of life. During times of adversity, faith acts as a bulwark of strength; and enables a person to keep to righteous path of self-realisation and self-fulfilment. Faith is a gift of divine grace.

Ancient seers, gurus, sages and teachers used to first assess the level of faith of their disciples/students and before initiating them into the profound teachings of *Brah@-Vidy*³. If the disciples/students did not meet a certain criteria of faith, secret knowledge was not imparted to them. Only those who passed the test became eligible to gain the much sought-after knowledge of the spirit. Incidents relating to this fact are aplenty in scriptures. For example, disciples such as Jabali, Aruni, Upmanyu and Nachiketa were given initiation into spiritual *s³dhan*³ at a very young age by their gurus because of their intense single-pointed faith; such supreme wisdom would not have been otherwise gained even through most arduous *s³dhan*³. King Dilip and his wife became beloved disciples of guru Vashishtha because of their faith. Guru Vashishtha had given them only one work to do – to take the herd of

cows of the Ashram for grazing. For a couple raised in an atmosphere of royalty and affluence; this was certainly a challenging and humbling task. They were not acquainted with the difficulties they were to face in fulfilling their guru's wishes. Yet their faith gave them the courage to take up the challenge. They

***Akietraviksetraavidam Hyapr³U Sa
Praiti Kietraavid³nuiilā; |
Etadvai Bhadramanui³sanasyota
Strutim Vindatyamjasⁿ³m ||***

– Rig Veda 10|32|7

“One who does not know the way ahead takes guidance from someone who knows it. One who learns from a truly knowledgeable teacher, gets the right direction. This is indeed a great benefit of learning under the disciplined guidance of a noble *guru* that even an ignorant but disciplined student is endowed with the

performed the task with utmost dedication, devotion, care and ego-effacing humility.

Faith is also the basis of love towards one's family members, religion, culture, nation and humanity. Man is bound by a co-operative culture, at the root of which lies faith. Students have faith in their teachers; they also have faith in the authors whose books they study. When we go shopping, we have faith in the quality of products we buy. We receive respect when we express our faith in others; this enhances our inner sense of happiness and well-being.

In Hinduism, faith is considered a fundamental attribute of nobility and occupies a prominent place in the Hindu culture. Faith has been the basis of man's all-round progress. Therefore we must cultivate faith in the basic goodness of the Divine Dispensation.

Be not Overpowered by Despair

In human life, hope and despair alternate like day and night. Hope augments our vitality whereas despair drains off our life energy, pushes us down in the dungeon of despondency and darkness. Sometimes despair even pushes a person to commit suicide. On the other hand, a terminally sick person may start healing by vibrations of prayers of hope and health. Therefore, a person desirous of health, happiness and peace must not allow himself to become a helpless victim of the dread disease of despair.

Despair, to some extent, is related to mental weakness caused by some malfunctioning in the body. Sometimes there are invisible changes in the internal harmony of the body. This in turn affects the mental state of a person. Even a minor biological disturbance may affect the mind. Chronic illness can also cause a feeling of hopelessness. Sometimes moods of despair and worry overtake us due to constipation, polluted air, lack of rest, over-busy life, etc. But causes like these can be rectified with a little common sense; for example, by following the laws of nature, taking recourse to a balanced routine and regular exercise (deep breathing, walking, etc) in clean surroundings like parks, open areas, etc.. The latter cures the mind too.

Sometimes despair is also related to the habitually negative mental disposition of a person. Whatever the cause or causes, it is not only possible to save oneself from prolonged moods of despondency but also to keep it away altogether.

To some extent the cause of our despair is our refusal to accept the reality of

hard facts of life. A person has his own likes and dislikes, but he should not expect the world to dance to his tune. Of course, one is free to have his own preferences but it is naïve to expect others to behave according to his wishes, whims and fancies. This world is run by universal laws of diversity and change. We encounter situations and persons which are not always to our liking. All forms and names in this world of ever-changing flux and foam are evanescent – whether they appear pleasurable or painful to us individually. Wisdom lies in gladly or stoically accepting whatever the Godhead of life gives us: wellness or illness; pleasure or pain; profit or loss; etc and death – which is the gateway to greater life on the other side of the curtain.

We can live peacefully and purposefully only when all life situations are accepted as they are – their present moment reality. It is wellnigh impossible that during the whole span of life one does not encounter any odds. If you have been overwhelmed by adversity, have been denied the fulfillment of your desires, and see no ray of hope; then there is only one way of salvation – Get up and move ahead accepting the challenges and hardships of life. Then only you will be given the wisdom and strength to reach your goal.

Many people become chronically remorseful and unforgiving by thinking about the mistakes committed by them in the past or the disrespect shown, or harm done to them by others. Others get worried by imagining the dangers of future. But both these conditions are signs of mental ill - health. Remembering and thinking about regrettable incidents of the past and getting

worried is like exhuming a dead body. The remedy lies in forgetting and forgiving. Similarly, it is also unwise to paint a horrible picture of the future in the mind. Often such negative imaginations turn out to be phantoms. Future will reveal itself in its own time. If at all, one has to think of the future, let one visualise it positively. Whatever moments of happiness and peace come in living present must be embraced and utilized fully.

It is not at all possible that a person is surrounded all the time by adversity and there is perpetual darkness. There is certainly sunny side of life. We should appreciate and concentrate on these positive aspects.. If we do so, despair will disappear. But normally we worry about the shadowy side of life and, as a consequence, what we get is dark despair .

Despair results from an attitude of crass selfishness. Those who are driven by selfish motives and those who keep themselves busy throughout life in the pursuit of their own selfish ends, become chronic victims of despair, dissatisfaction and worry . This is a psychological truth. On the other hand, people who are motivated towards welfare and service of others, are vibrantly alive with hope, enthusiasm and happiness. Therefore, we can get rid of despair by lovefully serving others and helping the needy. Despair keeps away from the life of other-centered persons. Even if one is able to grab the biggest selfish end, he will still feel a void in his life, which will give rise to despair and despondency. Selfish life is a fertile ground for despair.

Sometimes despair is also caused by a fixed mechanical routine. Often people after retiring from government jobs pass their remaining life in despair. Similarly people who are self-employed or keep themselves totally engaged in their soul-killing routine without any

worthwhile, soul-nurturing interests like, art, music, literature, games, entertainment, social contact, travel, pilgrimage, religious rites, etc. also become victims of suffocating despair.

***Sa Vai Satyameva Vadet |
Etaddhvai Deva Vratam
Caranti Yatsatyam |
Tasm³tte Yaïo |
Yaïo Ha Bhavati Ya Evam
Vidvantsatyam Vadati |***

“Speak the truth. Gods live in the light of truth, this is why they are invoked worshipfully. The wise person who always speaks the truth also attains this glory.

– *Shatpath Br³hman*

1|1|1|4-5

Despair is also caused by too much self-centredness and a nagging sense of self-reproach. It is just human to be lured into unethical immoral acts through ignorance or under baneful influences; and the only true repentance for these is not to repeat them by getting rid of the causes, and firmly taking to righteous way of life. Constant brooding and harbouring a constant sense of guilt and self-condemnation pushes one into the bottomless, dark pit of despondency and despair. Do not allow yourself to be a permanent hostage to the demon of despair. Be free, get going and firmly tread the path towards self-awareness and self-enlightenment.

The Path to Happiness and Peace

Every one aspires for a satisfied, cheerful, progressive and fulfilling life. But only a few seem to have it.... Moreover, most people are often found complaining and suffering from varieties of tensions, fears, quarrels, jealousy, scorn, loneliness, infirmities, scarcities, diseases, etc. It is said that – “where there is a will there will be a way” or “necessity is the mother of invention”. But, that does not seem to quite work in this case! Man longs most eagerly for joy and peace of mind but hardly finds them. The reason is – nothing can manifest without a cause; goals or ends can’t be achieved without appropriate means. A wish alone remains only a dreamy desire unless backed by zealous and prudent efforts.

For every worthwhile goal there are some principles and some disciplines that define the optimal path to reach it. Every objective has some specific prerequisites to be met, certain methods to be followed to accomplish it. Half-hearted, haphazard or inappropriate approaches prove to be futile and bring irritation, depression and despair in return. Those dying to get a sky-flower have to wait life-long in vain. Their eyesight may freeze in staring to have a look at it but they won’t get even a glimpse of this ‘mirage’ in reality. Just feeling thirsty and crying for water does not pour the drops of water in our mouth.

Man burns and ruins himself in the fire of unending cravings. His dire desire for fulfillment always remains unfulfilled. We want to be happy but often find that the circumstances of life pull us back into the mire of discontent, desperation and worries. Can’t we ever come out of this vicious cycle? Is the

aspiration for happiness impossible to be met? No! It can and should be fulfilled if pursued rightly.... But, How? Let us look at the basic principles and the methods towards achieving this goal.

What is happiness? It is an emanation of inner harmony and peace reflected in a pure heart. What is sorrow? It is an outcome of infirmity, an image of ignorance. *Ānanda* (bliss) is a divine attribute. The eternal complementarity of Shiva and Shakti, Krishna and Radha, Ram and Sita, Vishnu and Lakshmi, Purusha and Prakrati described in the Vedic scriptures is absolute. So is the pair of *ānanda* and *ānandamayō iakti*.

Life-force cannot express itself without the physical body. The Supreme Creator would also remain ‘non-existent’ without its expression in the creation and manifestation of Nature. We would not have been able to conceptualize or realize the presence of God without having the faculties of thoughts and emotions....

The roots of unalloyed joy also lie in the feel of art and culture. Every expression, every entity, every feeling has a basis, a nature of its existence. The same is true of happiness. The Upanishads describe its source of expression as the vigour and radiance of the (inner and external) mind and the body: “*Nayam ātmā Balaḥ nena Labhyaḥ*”; the weak (emotionally, mentally, or physically) and ignorant ones cannot get the delight of the soul, the experience of *ānanda*.

The Vedic Shrutis state – “*Balamupāsava*”: Worship your *bala* – strength, courage, inner power. The physically

weak, coward, ignorant, lethargic and dull persons also miss the real thrills of life. What to speak of happiness, even sustaining the normal life itself is too difficult for them. No one except the vigorous, courageous, awakened ones can attain and retain true happiness.

It should be noted that the words “*iakti*” and “*bala*” used here, don’t denote only their literal meanings (power and vigor). Rather, these refer to the grand majesty of human life, which is described in the scriptures to be expressed in seven faculties. The grand majesty (*mah³bala*) lies in the harmonious combination of all these seven facets of its expression. As the proper functioning of the human body and operations of human life pertain mainly to the ten senses and the mind, so does the sublime spring of *mah³bala* flowing through these seven streams of power. If there were any impurity, shortcoming or blockage in any one of these attributes, it would, to that extent, lessen or deform the total *bala* too.

The seven attributes for the expression of (*mah³bala*) are – (i) **Art**: graceful artistic mode of doing things, civilized etiquette, cultured behavior, etc fall under the art of living along with the sense of appreciation for creativity; (ii) **Health**: Mental and physical health; energy, enthusiasm, tolerance, industriousness, vitality of sense organs and alertness of mind; (iii) **Knowledge**: Reading-writing, essential information of use on the physical, mental, domestic, economical, social, religious, political, geographical, international topics; rational thinking, sound reasoning, wisdom, etc are included here; (iv) **Wealth**: Income or resources to enable smooth transaction of the essential personal and familial duties through honest means; (v) **Prestige**: Respect, faith, cooperation, affection and

benevolence of the relatives, friends and social acquaintances; (vi) **Friendship**: Association and support of the friends having integrity of character and caring concern; (vii) **Mental Strength**: Courage, valour, generosity, compassion, feelings of service and sacrifice, self-respect, responsibility, inner confidence.

These seven sources of inner strength are the key instruments for achieving fulfillment and success in any domain of life. Human life devoid of these powers is helpless and insignificant like those of the tiny insects. Only those, who possess this treasure of *bala* can boldly face the ups and downs of the worldly life and steadily cross the ocean of sorrows, adversities and ever new challenges. Perennial happiness is a boon of these seven attributes of the ‘God’ named “*mah³bala*”. Success crowns those endowed with the radiance of vigor, prudence, courage, integrity, assiduity, benevolence and majesty of spirit. Those lacking in *bala* face failures and being unable to fight the Nature’s law of ‘survival of the fittest’ are, sooner or later, cast away in the ‘struggle for existence’ . . .

Therefore, dear readers of “Akhand Jyoti”, arise and start cultivating unalloyed happiness in your life. The only way to do it is to generate power from within. Be strong; only then you will be able to cross the turbulent and turgid streams of agonies and adversities. Also remember that happiness and progress are not unilateral; neither can these be sustained in isolation. If you alone are stout, intelligent, resourceful and satisfied but others around you remain downtrodden, weak and ignorant, how will you be happy? How will you digest and enjoy lavish food if you try eating it while sitting amongst those starving to eat even a meal of coarse grains and those dying from hunger. . . ? Attempting to do so will be rather cruel on your part. The cry of their sufferings, their jealousy,

their oppression would also have a negative effect on your selfish attempts of 'enjoyment'. The real taste and joy of food appears when you eat it in a cheerful mood with your friends or family members.... A healthy person cannot remain healthy for long if he is to live with the patients of cholera, plague, tuberculosis or other contagious diseases. Likewise, the strength, affluence and abilities of a person cannot make him truly happy and calm if the people around him are plunged in the filth of infirmities, scarcities and agonies.

Know this, all aspirants for happiness! And therefore pursue the motto of "live and let live" as – "you rise and uplift the others too", "be happy and make others happy".... Sprinkle the shower of your strength, talents, resources and joy upon others as well.... "Power and Service", "Capabilities and Altruism" together should be the aim of your life if you really seek for lasting delight and progress in your life. This is the ideal of yoga. Literal meaning of "yoga" is combination of two things. You – the *s³dhakas* of yoga, the seekers of supreme enlightenment, should first recognize the key to accomplishment of *yoga-s³dhan³*, it is hidden in the two-fold objectives of "knowledge and compassion", "possession and generosity".

You should combine your selfishness with selflessness, cravings with satisfaction. Your body finds joy in comforts but your soul always seeks inner peace. The body needs vigor, the soul needs soothing feelings of compassion and loving kindness. Selfishness is desired by the body, by the worldly self, while altruistic pursuits

satisfy the inner self, the soul. Try to integrate the two. This yoga will enrich your life with enormous joy and light. This will bestow true happiness upon you.

A cart has two wheels. Our body also stands and moves on two legs. Clapping becomes possible with the active participation of both the hands. Man and woman both together make a complete human. The grand chariot of happiness in our life also has two august wheels, two golden pillars, two marvellous horses – one is "*bala*" and the other is "*sev³*" (compassionate altruistic service). Cultivate and harvest your *bala* and also employ it in *sev³*. Connection of the powerful poles of negative and positive charges generates a strong current of electricity. The commingling of the grand sources of potentials and social-service similarly produces the nectar of unalloyed happiness.... One experiences immense delight, enchantment and enlightened empowerment through heart after adopting this yoga in life.

Consider yourself as a soldier of the savior army of the Almighty, which has descended on the earth to generate and expand all round happiness in this world. "Rise and Uplift", "Be Happy and Make Others Happy" should be your theme songs in your march forward towards the goal of universal happiness, harmony and peace. Following these sincerely in every dimension of life is true devotion. God is pleased with such devotees. HE looks after their wellbeing and bestows such devotees with divine grace.

As the flower opens its petals to benefit from the morning sunrays, you should also let your inner self expand to let the eternal glow of truth enter within you. Fly with the wings of enlightened aspirations and wisdom; be fearless and believe in the goals of greatness. Have faith that it is possible to have a spotless, pious life; it is not impossible to refine yourself and lead a glorious life of piety and nobility.

Marriage is a Sacred Bond and Pledge

A person's real journey of self-growth from self-centeredness to other-centeredness begins with marriage. The seeds of ethics and morality that a child receives in his subconscious from the family and environment start sprouting and growing rapidly after marriage. The virtues of love and devotion, self-control and sacrifice, piety and forbearance, etc. have ample opportunities to develop fully in married life. The family is a school of achieving perfection in all spheres of life and the marriage marks an admission to this school. As the foundation of primary education is essential for the students in order to pursue higher studies; in the same way, the institution of marriage is of paramount importance in the proper nurturing of family life. In order to inculcate this objective, Vedas advise the bridegroom to proclaim:

*Gribhn³mi te saubhagatv³ya hasta³
may³paty³ jarda³tirayathas³j|
Bhagoaryya³m³ savit³ purandhiramahya³
tvadurg³sharpaty³ deva³j||*

That is – “Oh dear! On this auspicious occasion of our life, I take your hand in mine in the presence of invoked deities. Oh blessed woman! You be with me as a fortunate partner for a very long time. I hand over the control of my family in your hands, discharge your duties joyously.”

Indeed how happy is that moment when a bridegroom takes this solemn vow in the presence of invoked deities. His loneliness and indifference end there and a new life begins in which he gets all the means for attaining the noble objectives of life.

That day the division of household duties takes place. The husband undertakes

to earn the livelihood for the family and the wife take care of the home. The married life becomes successful only when both of them perform their duties with wisdom and devotion. It is against the Indian tradition to casually go through the rituals of marriage and then live a haphazard married life. The sacramental Hindu marriage is the beginning of the acid test of life. Therefore, total commitment to the vows and pledges taken alone can make married life meaningful.

This resolve of sacrifice and austerity leads to real happiness. If a person solemnly obeys the pledge taken during wedding ceremony, he can create an environment of heavenly bliss in married life. Wife is truly an incarnation of Lakshmi (Goddess of wealth). The human life remains charmless and stale in the absence of this wealth. How true is the following proclamation of the groom:

*Amoamasmi m³tva³ m³tvamasyamoham|
S³m³hmasmi -ktvam dyauraha³ p-ithvi
tvam||*

“You are Lakshmi. I was poor without you. Indeed there was no joy without you in my life. Oh beautiful lady! Our union is like *s³ma* (one of the Vedas) and its *-ac³* (verse), and the earth and the sky.”

In the abovementioned vedic *-ac³*, the *rishi* has given a very important elucidation of marriage. The institution of marriage is not solely related to a specific person but affects the entire society. Therefore, those marriages which are entered into without any consideration for the welfare of the person concerned as well as the society, lack the stamp of sanctity and commitment.

The desire to attain happiness is not satiated by mere sensual pleasure. The growth of humanity is accomplished not by enjoying the pleasures of senses but by the control of senses. Therefore the purpose of marriage cannot be the gratification of sensual hunger. The marriage is a pledge that is taken to keep intact the strength, sovereignty and honour of the future generations of the nation.

The Scripture says –

*T³vehi vivah³vahai saha reto dadh³vahai
Praja[®] prajanay³vahai putran vind³vahai
bah³n|*

That is – “The purpose of marriage is to live a mutually love-filled life and to provide the nation with virtuous and worthy offspring.” It is in order to keep this tradition alive that the wedding is given the shape of a sacramental rite in vedic tradition. But the methods of marriage that are being adopted these days often lack this sense of sanctity. The custom of child-marriage is really a mockery. A child, who does not know the purpose of marriage, considers married life a mere play. As a consequence, several social evils and immoral traits are bred by practices like this.

The latest fashion of love-marriage too does not have any worthwhile purpose. It is a mere craving of flesh whose dangerous outcome is visible soon after the honeymoon. The number of divorces are found more among the couples who have rushed into love-marriage. Such marriages are based on physical attraction and lack depth of soul-bonding. When they face the reality of life, they find the relationship on the rocks. Such marriages result from bodily attraction only. The foundation of love can not be based on the shifting sands of physical attraction or material affluence. Therefore, the increasing

trend of such marriages is harmful to our society.

The practices of mis-matched-marriage, child-marriage or attraction-marriage are not in accord with the Indian tradition. They are, in fact, a social curse. With these practices it is almost impossible to achieve the aims of vedic sacramental marriage. On the other hand, they create a plethora of family and societal dysfunctions.

These social evils have resulted from the change in circumstances and the pernicious influence of foreign culture. If the society so wills, these can be eradicated.

Sir Issac Newton is honored as the father of the modern physical sciences. That knowledge is infinite, is clearly expressed in his views on his own great discoveries: “I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only a boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.”

A healthy tradition ought to contribute to the overall well being of an individual and the society at large. It is wrong to consider any blind practice, whether it is new or old, to be authentic. It appears more appropriate to use discriminative wisdom while following the traditions.

A successful tradition of marriage is that in which the desire of the couple for sensual pleasure is controlled and the sentiments for each other remain warmly pure. The tendency should be more towards observing self-control than self-indulgence and a warm sense of sharing and caring. The primary aim of marriage should be to protect the family tree by giving birth to children; realization of depth in love and keep the family joyful and harmonious. Infact, it should be the sacred aim of marriage to practice self-giving for the good of others and ultimately realize the true goal of life.

Ancient system of Hindu-Vedic-marriages was fully scientific. It did not differentiate between male and female as is being done presently. Considering male to be superior and female to be inferior is the major fault of present age. In our ancient tradition of marriage, wife is given an equal status. The practice of considering one to be primary and the other secondary has been framed by ignorant people. It is the union of male and

female of the species that is the cause of perpetuation of the race. In order to fulfill this natural tendency this unsocial practice of discrimination must be dispensed with.

The basis for a fulfilling and happy life is –

Te santu jard-istaya; sampriyau royisñu sumansyam³nau|

Pasyema ĩarada; ĩata[@] j^ovema ĩarada; ĩata[@] ĩruñuyam ĩarda; ĩatam||

“We should be able to live a graceful life that is full of mutual love and warmth. Our sentiments should be auspicious. We should be able to see for hundred years, live a healthy life of hundred years and listen the music of spring for hundred years.” The sage of the above mentioned vedic -aca, has emphasized that the basis of happy and fulfilling married life is the sense of unity, intimacy and love between husband and wife. Therefore, marriage is not for self-indulgence but it should be considered a life long social and spiritual responsibility. Married life is an opportunity for two persons to grow from life partners into soulmates.

There lived a benignly disposed snake beneath the roots of an Ashwatha tree. A Brahmin living in the nearby area recognized the unique glow of the snake and started worshipping it.

Every morning the Brahmin used to keep a bowl full of milk near the roots of the tree. The snake would drink the milk and keep a gold-coin in the empty bowl in return. This way the Brahmin started getting richer by each evening. This also sparked a flame of greed in him.

Avarice overpowers even the otherwise noble hearted persons. So it happened with the Brahmin. One day he thought that there appears to be a buried treasure in the underground abode of the snake. In order to possess all the gold in one shot, one day he hit the snake on the head while latter was drinking milk and killed it. Hurriedly he dug out the roots of the tree but found nothing except soil and stones. His greed had ruined his own fortune and left him with nothing but repentance and a sense of sinful act.

The Disaster of Deforestation

Imagining Earth without forests is a horrifying picture to conceive. As its knowledge base has expanded and deepened, mankind has realised that forests are extremely important to the survival of humans and other life forms on earth. Yet deforestation continues unabated in different parts of the world. According to the World Resource Institute based at Washington DC (U.S.A.), the rates of rainforest destruction are 2.4 acre per second, 149 acres per minute, 214000 acres per day and 78 million acres per year. Literature survey and research by Stephen Hui reveals that British Columbia has about 40% of its original forests remaining, while Europe has less than half; the United States have approximately 1-2% of their original forest cover; more than 80% of the planet's natural forests have already been destroyed.¹ This article examines the importance of forests, the effects of deforestation on health and environment and an effective remedy to replenish the flora already lost.

Plants and animals, along with microorganisms, comprise life on Earth. Herbivorous animals sustain their life by consuming plants. Carnivorous animals and birds kill herbivorous animals for food; therefore indirectly they also depend on plants. Sea creatures eat aquatic plants and humans consume crop plants. A large variety of birds feed on seeds. There would rarely be any animal or bird who do not use plants directly or indirectly to satisfy their food requirements. It is thus not surprising that tropical forests are the home to 70% of the world's plants and animals (more than 13 million distinct species) 30% of all bird species and 90% of invertebrates.² Loss of forests has led to the extinction of thousands of species, estimated to be 50000 species annually.

Besides being the source for food, plants help us in a number of other ways.

Animals, including humans, inhale oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide; plants take up carbon dioxide and in return they release oxygen – this exchange is very important. Forests in particular act as a huge carbon dioxide sink. If there were not enough trees to absorb carbon dioxide, its accumulation would make the environment poisonous. Over the last 150 years, the amount of carbon dioxide has increased by about 25%.³ Carbon dioxide also contributes to global warming.

The World Commission on Forests and Sustainable Development believes about 25 percent of the total carbon dioxide emissions are a consequence of deforestation and forest fires.⁴ The predicted rise in the temperature over the next century is 0.3°C per decade.⁵ Deforestation has other perils too, writes Stephen Hui: “Rising sea levels brought on by global warming have the potential to threaten the locations of many major cities, much fertile agricultural land, the purity of freshwater supplies and the survival of some nations. The clearing of forestland results in increased erosion and landslides. Soil from areas of reduced forest cover can fill reservoirs created by dams. Thus a dam's ability and future capacity to generate hydroelectricity and provide irrigation would be significantly reduced.”¹

Deforestation has had a negative impact on rainfall, resulting in droughts and water shortage. According to the newsmagazine Outlook, Indian cities are “beginning to resemble deserts.”⁶ The statistical figures cited by it are evidently frightening. Of Delhi's 12 million population, about 30% get less than 25 litres of water per person per day; water demand in Mumbai is 3200 million per day whereas the supply is 2700 million per day; the supply deficit in Delhi is 700 million litres, in Bangalore is 300 million litres and in Chennai is 200 million litres⁶. Water shortage is being experienced

throughout the world, including U.S.A., Canada and Africa.

Because of an exponential growth in population, the need to build roads, houses and factories has stripped off a vast amount of land from forests. To compensate for the loss of land, attempts are often made to make the unused infertile land fertile and uneven land even for agricultural purposes. Yet they do not replace the land that is lost. Deforestation is also caused because of extra land required for agriculture, and livestock; and the demand for wood is quite high for construction and other business purposes. It is a matter of deep concern that trees are not planted at the rate at which they are chopped off. This is a double jeopardy. Now that there are less number of trees, the price of wood is quite high because of more demand and short supply. The decaying of leaves also enhances land's fertility. A decrease in the number of plants means a decrease in the number of leaves, thus a decrease in land fertility. It also means less food availability for animals, birds, thus creating a serious food crisis.

The loss of forests also causes desertification. The roots of trees dig deep into the ground, penetrating several layers. They hold together these layers and prevent the formation of dust and thus maintain the topsoil intact. In the absence of trees, dust is formed and heavy rainfall and high sunlight damage the topsoil in clearings of the tropical rainforests. In this way with every rainfall, the availability of fertile land decreases. The same effect is caused with heavy winds and storms. Therefore deforested areas appear desert-like. In such circumstances, the forest will take much longer to regenerate itself and the land will not be suitable for agricultural use for quite some time.

Forests also provide us with a wide range of industrial wood products that we use in daily life; for example lumber, panels, posts, poles, pulp, and paper. In addition to wood products, tropical forests give us a wide range of non-timber forest products, such as fibres, resins, latexes, fruits, and traditional medicines.

We often make suicidal blunders in judging the value of things; therefore money is preferred over things on which our existence rests. Research on the impact of deforestation leads to only one conclusion: cutting down trees means turning off our life support machine. Trees should be treated as our life partners and attempts should be made to ensure their abundance. If cutting down trees is absolutely essential then it is equally important that the same numbers of trees are planted. Unfortunately this is not happening on a scale it should.

The benefits obtained by cutting trees pale into insignificance compared to the disadvantages incurred. The only solution to this crisis is to create an awareness and enthusiasm in the people to plant more and more trees. Planting trees is one of the programmes run by Gayatri Mission Shantikunj Sansthan, Haridwar in several districts of India. The organisation vigorously conducts the programme to make people aware of the acuteness of the problem and inspires them to plant more and more trees.

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MY LIFE :ITS LEGACY AND MESSAGE

Gurudev Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya

(With this issue we start serialising revised English version of Gurudev's autobiography in Hindi – Ham^२r Vas^२yat aur Vir^३sat)

THE NEED FOR AN IN-DEPTH SURVEY OF MY PRESENT LIFE SOJOURN

There is always an inquisitiveness to know about the lives of persons who have made a mark in their specific fields of action and endeavour. It not only satisfies our curiosity but offers clues and guidelines towards the resolution of the problems of life. Be that as it may, biographical narrations are always entertaining, engaging and valuable in imparting insights and inspirations.

Friends have often been making queries about my life but I have generally put off answering such queries because outwardly visible events of my life are there for all to see as an open book. People have a propensity for magic and miracles. Numerous persons who have come in close contact with me as serious spiritual aspirants have been benefited by the divine grace working through me and they consider me a *siddha purjā* (an enlightened soul). They are keen to know about the secrets which have made my life a benediction and a blessing. In fact, the secrets will remain a secret during my lifetime as I have imposed a ban on their disclosure. If anybody wants to really know about my life story he should, at first, understand its underlying philosophy. Those searching for something truly mystical and out of the ordinary will probably get new direction from my way of life.

Although, there has been nothing ostensibly magical in this life, there is much that is substantial, which can help in understanding the real nature of spirituality (Science of the Spirit) and its definitively positive results. Being ignorant of its real nature, people are misled, they get disappointed, lose faith and regard spirituality as mere pretension or sham. Majority of the people these days consists of

those covert atheists who at one time had turned to formalistic religion enthusiastically but did nothing beyond following some mechanical rituals. Later, joy and zeal disappeared from these lifeless routines. How could faith be retained when whatever was held forth as culmination of these religious pursuits did not ever materialise?

My life story can act as lighthouse for genuine seekers of Truth. It is a way of life adopted by a rational and a realistic person and there is nothing obscurantist and pretentious in it. Stigma of failure cannot also be attributed to it. Persons who seriously try to understand that there could be a true path to attain the goal of soul-awakening, who do not fall into the trap of illusion of short-cuts, would not meet with disappointment and disillusionment. Had such persons read my story, understood the spiritual philosophy underlying it and followed the process of self-growth prescribed therein, it is certain that the number of such misled and confused persons would have been far less than what it is today.

There is another category of persons who are realistic and at the same time are endowed with insight. They wholeheartedly believe in Rishi traditions. They concede the supremacy of spirituality (Science of Spirit) over the physical sciences which deal with the working of apparent phenomena and are inquisitive about its real nature. Every fruit vendor says that her plums are sweet but the truth or otherwise of the claim is determined after actual testing of the fruit.

When righteous people act together towards righteous ends, the result is bound to be good. Thus, those who want to understand the nature of spirituality of the Rishi traditions will greatly benefit by the in-depth study of my

way of life. The whole of my life of the past sixty-three years since the age of 15, has been spent for this very purpose. The results are there for everyone to read like an open book and to be convinced that the right path must have been pursued to get these astoundingly sublime results. Such a sunlit path can be profitably followed by others. It is hoped that those who are drawn towards self-knowledge and the life-transforming power of spirituality, who want to see its re-effulgence, who want to test theories on the touchstone of the actual proof would find the perusal of these pages (truthfully narrating the process of my own self-growth) rewarding.

There is nothing peculiar or fascinating in my outer life apart from certain turning points, which are being published here. There is no scope in it for magic or miracles or for hopping and jumping about by way of fun and frolic. I have been spending my time single-pointedly in a well-organised and well-planned manner. Therefore, those looking for a march of glittering pageant of stimulating events will be disappointed. However, those interested in the verities and mysteries working beneath the foam and froth of the surface events will get a glimpse of the perennial unbroken tradition of the flow of spirituality and they would be able to understand the underlying causes of success and failure in life. They only reason which causes disappointment in the field of religious worship, which has defamed spirituality and made it ridiculous, is to consider formal ritual as everything and to pay no attention to the inner cleansing and refinement.

My outward actions and activities are like those of any ordinary person but they directly originate from the bedrock of Spirit and release the spiritual splendour and energy (*brahmatejas*) which bestows the capacity to accomplish something worthwhile and of decisive importance for the good of all.

There was no purpose in describing in detail the various events of life, except to satisfy some curiosity. What really mattered were the inner vision and steadfastness of faith which acted as manure and water for nurturing the tiny seed to grow into a mighty tree. In fact, it is the radiant personality of the devotee (*s³dhak*) that infuses life in *s³dhan³* and mere performance of rituals is nothing but a pastime. Ram of Tulsi, Hare Krishna of Soor, collective singing of devotional songs by Chaitanya, songs of Meera, Ramakrishna's worship of Mother Kali, did not become radiantly alive for these devotees merely by their ritualistic worship. Innumerable persons act in an absurd and mechanical manner; what they get is nothing but ridicule. When Valmiki changed the pattern of his life, he became illumined even by doing japa in an incorrect, reverse manner. Ajamil, Angulimal, Ganika and Amrapali were hardly literate but they had moulded their inner lives in conformity with spiritual ideals.

Practice of moving from ignorance to knowledge, from flaws to perfection, from humanity to divinity – is *up³san³*.

–Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya

It is rather a sad irony that people these days mistakenly assume that they have embarked on the path of self-realisation merely by uttering some words, performing certain rituals or making certain offerings to the Deity. They never try to transform their thoughts, character and attitudes in the light of the Indwelling Spirit which is a must for spiritual progress. I have always been cautious not to allow this falsity to enter into my way of *s³dhan³*. This path is realistic, practical and easy to be followed by and beneficial to the common mass of humanity. My way of life should be studied keeping this in view.

(To be continued....)

Awakening Divinity in Man

(Translation of the Hindi Discourse – continued from the previous issue)

Meaning and Purpose of Worship

Why do we worship the divine? To condition and remind our minds of our divine origin. True worship of God means only one thing –the cultivation of nobility in thoughts, motives, speech and action. If you think that by worshipping a particular God you will gain material success or fulfil a specific desire— then it is a wrong delusion. Worshipping God with sincerity results in enhancement of virtues like generosity, compassion and warmth in your psyche. It brings about a positive change in the attitude of the devotee towards life. If you have not performed worship in its true sense, then you are likely to be lost in a maze of lifeless mechanical rituals.

You should worship in such a way that you also get the gifts of grace bestowed on true devotees present and past. Your virtues, character, actions, behaviour, thoughts and sentiments must improve as a result of worship. This is what shows the activation of divinity in life. If you attain this state, great opportunities will knock at your door. Glance through the cultural history of India — all the great names in it are of those who served the noble cause for the good of all and not of those who earned scholastic laurels. Have you heard of Mahamana Malviyaji? He was an ordinary person who became a great personage through sincere worship of divinity as he conceived it.

Friends! When God is pleased, He does not give you the petty worldly things you hanker after. Rather, He bestows on you godlike qualities which elevate your soul. The lives of world's really great personage demonstrate this fact. None among them was

such who did not receive God's grace, guidance and cooperation of the masses they served. Give me one name of a great personality who was not endowed with any godly qualities of compassion, love, faith and service and who did not elicit spontaneous and loving cooperation from those who followed him. The noble values and principles of morality, ethics and spontaneity when adopted in conduct, help in enhancements of talents and resources. Saints adhere to great ideals of god like lives. They are never poor; required resources arrive at their doorstep. But they do not accumulate them; they generously share them with the needy.

When our minds are cleansed of all impurities and perversions, our material and inner resources are augmented. How many examples should I mention? The life of everyone who followed the ideal path of love-in-action and selfless service exemplifies this fact. They are true devotees in my view. I consider the worship and devotion of only those as true and worthwhile who could attract divine energies of their deity by the nobility of their character, by the magnetism of their virtues and by their single-minded determination at self-refinement and self-effacement. When deities are happy with your worship, they bless you with the attributes of a divine being: enlightened wisdom, compassion and selfless service. My concept of worship and divine blessings is somewhat different. I can say that a true devotee can attract divine energies by the force of his nobility; he can compel deities to help in pursuit of his noble aims. A true devotee in this sense is much stronger a deity; he can get God's help

whenever he asks as his right. God cannot ignore his call.

Those who worship God begging for a few worldly possessions or for fulfilment of ego-centric desires can't be true devotees even if they spend all their time in prayers and rituals. Glad consent to God's will is the real spirit of devotion; it is the prime condition to be fulfilled for being a devotee in its true sense. God has inalterably assured His devotee, in the Gita-*"yogakiema® vah³myaha®"* I will provide for all your needs. True, God does take care of his devotee but He has not promised to satisfy his cravings. "Yoga" and *"kiema"* mean taking care of your physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual well-being.

There should not be any confusion that it (God's arrivance) includes the fulfilment of your gross sensual hunger. Don't chase the mirage of passions and desires; it devalues the dignity of devotion and the pre-eminence of God's grace. The relation between the deity and the devotee is graceful and dignified only when the devotee doesn't beg for anything but rather offers to entirely give himself to the divine. God has already given you so much! He has created you. He is always taking care of your yoga-kiema, without your praying for it.

God is not a particularly embodied being. It is we who have conceived Him in various forms. If it is a must to give a definition, God could only be vaguely described as "an infinite ensemble of supreme moral principles, saintly ideals and nobility". Faith in divine values and ideals and a self-disciplined endeavour to live for high principles is true devotion and enlightened worship.

All you really need will be provided

Transparency of character is a great asset of a person through which he gets abundant support, affection and co-operation from all quarters.

This is real prosperity. Can any monetary or material resources ever provide it? People donated unasked all their wealth and resources at the feet of Buddha, moved by his compassion and absolute selflessness. Gandhiji's benevolence, his missionary zeal, his aspirations were all aimed at the welfare of the lowliest and the lost. This, together with the impeccability of his character, made him a universally acclaimed *mahatma*.

People from all strata of the society stood by him, cooperated with him and followed him. Millions of people voluntarily went to jails and sacrificed their lives for the noble cause of national freedom upon his call. Is such ethical and spiritual eminence attainable by us all? Yes, indeed, subject to only one condition – you too like *mahatma*, should be ready to be led by truth dwelling light of the spirit. Light, your shadow will follow you. But you seem to be chasing your own shadow, the shadow of *m³y³* – illusive worldly attractions and attachments – that seem to have overwhelmed you. You should learn to walk towards the light, towards God, noble aims and ideals. Such ideals are the attributes of deities like Hanuman and other emanations of God.

Friends, turn away from the mirage of cravings, passions, greed and discontentment, and let your prayers and worship reach the stage where your personality would be illumined by God's light, by the glow of divinity. This is true devotion. If you have cultivated virtuous tendencies and conduct, I assure you that you will get support and cooperation from people around you. Boons of enlightened progress will be showered upon you from all directions. This is what has been, and will continue to be, the source of God's blessings, the blessings of divine mother Gayatri. This has been the great tradition of devotion and of

devotees and will be so in the future too. If you understand this secret and learn the true meaning of worship and devotion, your *Gayatri Anushthan* here will be accomplished in the truest sense.

The self disciplining practices of this *Anushthan s³dhan³* are meant to refine your personality so that virtuous tendencies flourish in you. If this *tapāicary³* of yours is sincere and one-pointed then at the end of this *Anushthan* you will feel inwardly endowed with godly attributes of an authentically virtuous and noble person. When a person imbibes an attitude of loving service, he sees his own good in the welfare of others and experiences happiness in it. If you find them elevated in this

state of nobility, I would say you have attained true devotion and grace of the god.

You would be blessed by God, just as the great devotees of the past have been. I have tried and followed this path and have been blessed with sublime gifts in my life. I want all of you, who have come for this *s³dhan³* course of a condensed *Anushthan*, to get inspired and be blessed by divine grace. If this inspires you and you begin to practice it, I assure you that the result will be so fulfilling, so majestic that you, your country, your life, your God, this *s³dhan³* course and I myself will be glorified. May God bless you with his grace.

|| OM SHANTI ||

ALTRUISM IS A DIVINE PROPERTY

A nobly disposed person donated all his properties for welfare activities and also engaged himself in this noble cause. Soon he became popular among the masses. His glory grew with the expansion of his altruistic mission. His old acquaintances also used to congratulate him for his right decision at the right moment. He, in reply, would simply say – “Suppose your bag was full of junk then suddenly you find some precious stones. Won’t you throw away the junk and make room for the latter?” Seeing people nod their heads he would add – “So this is all that I have done”.

“I have not made any great sacrifice. I have only followed the voice of wisdom and chosen my way with farsightedness. The resources, the wealth I possessed would have only made me comfort-loving lethargic and would have inflated and increased nothing but my ego and avarice, if I had not made constructive use of them for the needy. I have thrown away that burden and risk. Getting rid of the bondage of possessions had inspired my altruistic faith and given me enormous strength. Whatever I have done (which you all praise) is only a result of that courage and prudence; it has bestowed an abiding sense of contentment and joy upon me and brightened my path of life”.

