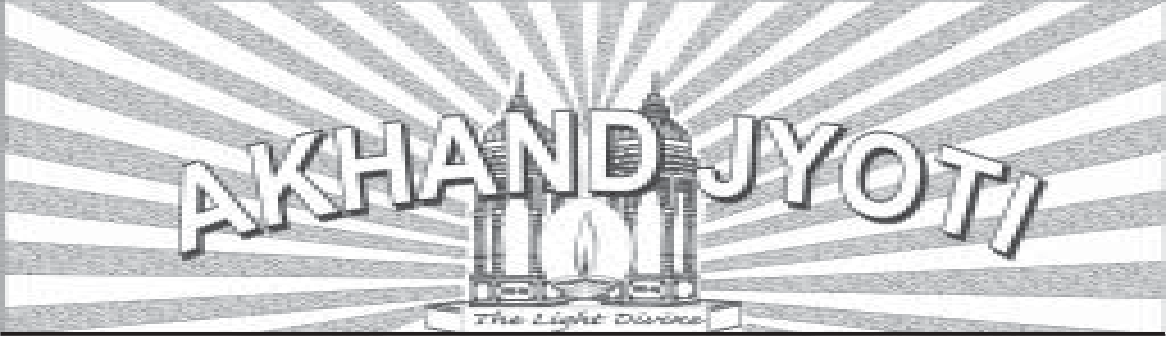


|| Om bhurbbuval swah tatsaviturvarasyah bhargo devasya dhimahi dihiyo yo nah prachodayat ||  
( May Almighty illuminate our intellect and inspire us towards the righteous path )  
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## **SUPREME AIM OF HUMAN LIFE IS ATTAINMENT OF LIFE ETERNAL**

Just as passing through the cycles of days and nights we do not die, we retain our identity; similarly, life does not end with dissolution of the physical body. It is eternal.

Everyday the Sun rises in the East and sets in the West. Moon becomes invisible on the no-moon day and can be seen in its full glow on the full moon day. In between, its phases of brightness go on increasing or decreasing. In spite of this visible change, there is no change in Moon's original form. The process of birth and death too is similar. This may be called a game of hide and seek between awakening and deep sleep. For the body, the cycle of childhood, youth, old age and death is natural. Even after bodily death, the self-identity of the soul remains firm like a steady axle.

Why fear death? It is a pleasant change akin to the process of changing old clothes and putting on new ones. No one can stop this process of continuous change. One who takes on mortality through birth in the body will definitely die. In view of this inexorable Law of Nature, there is no need of any fear, grief or sorrow. Wisdom lies in realizing this eternal truth of life and in trying to make each link of this series more organized. Today's efforts ought to be directed towards making the tomorrow more joyful and progressive. The aim of our present cycle of physical embodiment should be to consciously and constantly strive to tread on the righteous path towards realization of our true identity as sparks of the Supreme Light and Life Eternal.

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*From Chief Editor's Desk :*

## CHAITRA NAVRATRI PARVA

### **The most favorable time for augmenting Divinity**

The coming *Chaitra Navratri Parva* – March 21-30, 2004 – is envisioned to be of a very special significance for the cultivation and augmentation of the indwelling divine virtues and energies for *Gāyatī Sādhaks* who undertake the prescribed *sādhanā* practices and austerities during this period with enlightened faith, fervor and focus. Our sages had found, through their seer vision, that the interplanetary configurations during the two *Navratri Parvas* of nine days each falling in the months of *Chaitra* (March-April) and *Ashwin* (October-November) are exceptionally surcharged with divine energies and vibrations – which can be accessed and assimilated by the individual human consciousness through intensive *sādhanā*. Seers with prophetic vision have proclaimed that human consciousness is going through a rare transformative phase during this first decade of the third millennium. This *Navratri Parva* (March 21-30) is all the more auspicious and helpful for spiritual *sādhanā* consciously aimed at self-observation, self-purification and self-transformation. Practices like fasting, *jap*, abstaining from gross bodily and sensual gratification are initial and preliminary steps in our pilgrimage towards our Spiritual Essence – our true Home and Self. These are essential aids and preparations towards cleansing, purification and ennoblement of our psyches – which are cluttered with the debris and dirt of our ego-centered *sanskars* accumulated over countless number of earlier embodiments. Objective self-observation is essential for clearly seeing and pinpointing the hordes of beastly tendencies hidden in the deep and dark recesses of our inner being. This enables us in resolutely uprooting and sweeping out these devilish drives from our hearts and minds. Simultaneously we have to imbibe, implant and nurture by regular practice the ennobling and altruistic qualities of compassion, kindness, caring and sharing – motiveless loving service.

Conscious and concentrated *Gāyatrī Jap* – done in the state of calm and quiet mind – leads the *sādhak* to light - and bliss - filled dimensions of consciousness through contemplation and meditation. In this connection we would like to draw the attention of *Gāyatrī parijans* to Gurudev's masterly and illuminated exposition of the essence of *Gāyatrī Sādhanā* in the booklet – *Upasana ke do Charan: Jap aur Dhyān*. This booklet has proved to be a superb manual of guidance to sincere and serious *Gāyatrī Sādhaks*. For us *Gāyatī Mā* symbolizes the Primordial Creative Force of Supreme Divine.

We the members of global *Gāyatī Pariwar* are *Gurusattas*' spiritual progeny and hence the inheritors of the monumental attainments of their *Sādhanā* and *Siddhis*, which they have bequeathed to us as invaluable spiritual assets. We are entitled to draw upon their assets to be able to become superconductive channels for the transmission of the effulgent Light of the Spiritual Sun for foundational transformation of human consciousness. Initially we can start with focused contemplation on the form of *Gurusatta* or the Deity (Rising Sun for *Gāyatrī Sādhaks*). This steadily leads to an effortless plunge into the formless Eternal Source. This is what is referred to as LET GO AND LET GOD. The Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram has succinctly expressed such an aspiration in her prayer.

*“O Lord! I pray to Thee to guide my foot steps and enlighten my mind, so that at every moment and in all things I may do exactly what Thou wants me to do.”*

The *Gāyatrī Parijans* are ardently urged to intensively and fervently undertake *Jap-Dhyan Sādhanā* during coming *Navratri Parva*. It is an inner attitude of aspiration, purification and surrender that matters the most and not the technique we adopt.

The period of one year between *Vasant Parva* of 2004 and 2005 has been designated by the *Gāyatī* Mission as the year for intensive and in-depth dissemination of *Gurudev*'s vision of the descent of the Heavenly Era on Earth – through implementation of the Mission's seven-point programme of individual and social transformation.

Let all of us, brothers and sisters of *Gāyatī Pariwar*, resolve to give our best towards the fulfillment of the world-redeeming vision and will of our Master – the World Teacher, Pandit Sriram Sharma, Acharya. With Divine force and formless all-accomplishing blessings we will definitely see positive change coming into visibility in human affairs before the advent of *Vasant Parva* of 2005.

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# THE MYSTERY OF IMMORTAL BEINGS IN THE *HIMALAYAS*

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This is an incident of 1942 when the king of Kumaon invited an army officer of Western Command, LP. Farrel for a picnic trip to the hills. There was a special reason for inviting Mr. Farrel; in spite of his being a Britisher he was very much interested in Indian religion, philosophy and culture. He had a few opportunities of witnessing demonstration of miraculous feats of some Indian *yogis*. He had become a pure vegetarian. That is why he always welcomed any opportunity to go towards the Himalayan wilderness, with the hope of meeting some saint or *yogi* who could initiate him into spiritual *sādhanā*.

Mr. Farrel, the king and the queen and their entourage reached a place near Nainital full of natural beauty. It so enchanted them that they decided to camp overnight there. So, the dozens of tents were pitched and the lonely place got filled with the hustle and bustle of servants. Gossip, merriment, eating and drinking went on till midnight. Everyone went to bed and due to exhaustion of the whole day's exertions, immediately slipped into deep sleep. The first phase of the sleep was hardly over when Mr. Farrel felt that there was someone near his cot. He waked up and clearly listened—"We need the place where your tents have been pitched. You vacate this place. If you are unable to understand, then you should come to that northwestern hill in front of you. I will explain you everything." "But who are you?" – saying this Mr. Farrel got up from the bed

and lit his torch. But there was no one. He came out of the tent but there too no one could be seen nor heard anyone's footsteps. After a momentary fear he became normal and then went back to his bed again for sleeping. It was 3.30 AM on his watch.

Despite his best efforts he could not sleep. Somehow he was keeping his eyes shut. Again he felt someone's presence. Still lying on the bed he opened the eyes and he saw a shadow of a person standing in front of him. This time again he uttered the same words. In order to identify that person, as soon as Mr. Farrel lit the torch, even the shadow vanished. His body started shaking and perspiring. This army officer who did not get frightened even by watching the horrible bloodshed in the war, momentarily got un-nerved and dumbfounded by mere imagination of a supernatural being. He lay awake in his bed with his eyes closed till the morning but heard nothing. A strange attraction was arousing within him to see the hill mentioned by the shadowy presence. He put on his clothes and shoes and silently came out of the tent and walked towards that hill.

Describing this incident Mr. Farrel has himself written: "The way to the place where I was directed to reach was very difficult, narrow and dangerous. I was not at all able to climb up by myself but I was constantly feeling that somebody was showing me the way and was providing me the energy to climb up. After a hard effort of

three and a half hours I could climb up. It seemed difficult to go ahead due to heavy breathing and perspiration. So I sat down on a square stone, lying down on it to take some rest. Hardly two minutes had passed and the same voice awakened me. 'Mr. Farrel! Now you put off your shoes and slowly climb down the stone and come to me. With these words in the ears, I looked around and saw that a saint, with very weak constitution but brilliant splendor on the forehead, was standing in front of me. Leave aside the acquaintance, I had never met or seen him earlier. Then how could he know my name? He was here, then how did his shadow reach in my tent in the night? There was no communication link like a radio or a microphone etc between us. Then how could his voice reach me? Several such questions arose in my mind. Putting a stop to the unending trail of questions the *sadhu* said- whatever you have heard and seen cannot be understood by ordinary human mind. For this purpose one has to do long *sādhanā* and the practice of *yoga*, abandoning the worldly pleasures and attraction of the senses. There is a specific purpose for which you have been called here."

Farrel could not make out whether the saintly person was a human being or a god. The thoughts arising in his mind were being constantly read by that person like an open book. Mr. Farrel climbed down the rock and in a short time reached the place where the *Sadhu* was sitting. The place was so small that only one person could take rest there. There was nothing except the fire burning in the *Dhooni* (firepit).

Farrel further writes- "The *Sadhu* patted me on the back with his weak hand and I was stunned how could this electricity like power be there in that old body. My body

that was almost breaking with pain due to exhaustion - now seemed light like a flower. As an humble gesture of respect for him I knelt down and touched his feet. I had seen many *sadhus*; but I have always felt that *sadhus* and saints who had influenced Indian philosophy and increased its dignity were not those who were roaming around on the roads but they were truly such secluded and devoted persons only. Their physical bodies might weigh 80-90 pounds but intensity of their energy and power was more than that of thousand bombs and they were the storehouses of knowledge."

The *Sadhu* told me- "I have inspired a youth to reach the place where your tents have been pitched. He was my disciple in his previous birth. His *sādhanā* is half-completed. Now I want to guide him again to undertake his *sādhanā* and penance for the universal welfare. But the memories of his previous birth are dormant. The impressions and circumstances of this birth are attracting him. Therefore he is unable to take up the *sādhanā* again. I have called him through subtle inspiration. If he comes here and is unable to locate the directed place, then he will get confused. In that event, whatever I want will not become possible, Therefore, please vacate that place immediately."

Mr. Farrel said - "Lord! Please tell me also a few things about my previous birth"? The *Sadhu* replied- "My son! These *siddhis* (accomplishments) are not for demonstration. They are meant for some special purposes and it is better they are utilized for that only. Of course, if you wish you can be present at the time when I show him the events of his previous birth. Now you go. People are searching for you in the camp. I too am in a hurry."

Mr. Farrel returned to the camp. Indeed, people had been searching for him. Mr. Farrel narrated the incident to the king. They then left that place and pitched the camp some 200 yards away.

By the evening of that day a young man did indeed come searching for that place. After satisfying himself in all respects, he sat down there. In the meantime, Mr. Farrel also reached there. His curiosity was getting more and more intense as the time passed. In a short while *sadhu* too reached there. Mr. Farel and the young man touched his feet and stood waiting for his instructions. That place was in the centre of a grove of trees.. After lighting the fire *sadhu* did some *puja*, recited some *mantras* and told us to sit down in a meditating posture. A ray of light emanated from his forehead and a circular spot of light appeared on the trunk of a thick tree. Then whatever was seen in the spot was just like a cinema where they saw the characters actually walking and talking. Like a movie, they saw the events of the previous birth of that youth with their own naked eyes. In between that youth used to get excited and would say – ‘Yes-yes I had done that’.

At the end, that youth touched the feet of that *sadhu* and said ‘ “Lord! Now my attachment with the mundane world is broken. I am ready to take up the unfinished *sādhanā* of my previous life. Please guide me so that I can complete the unfinished task.”

The *Sadhu* said – “My son! Today you take rest here. In the morning, you return to your home. At an appropriate time, I will call you.” After that Mr Farrel did not know when that youth was called again? What he became later and with what name he became popular? But he became a staunch devotee of Indian religion and spirituality.

This incident has been narrated by Mr. Farrel himself in an article in the May 17, 1959 issue of *Saptahik Hindustan* (a weekly Hindi magazine).

A similar incident is narrated to have happened in the life of a famous Indian yogi Sri Shyama Charan Lahiri, popularly known as Lahiri Mahashay, in the book “An autobiography of a Yogi”, by Swami Yogananda. Lahiri Mahashay happened to be Yoganand’s Dada Guru. He too was called by Babaji, an immortal *siddha* of Himalayas, who taught him the science of *kriya yoga* so that this knowledge does not become extinct. Indian scriptures are filled with descriptions of immortal souls like Shiva, Bhairav, Hanuman, Ashwatthama and many *siddhas*. There is a story in Kalki Purana, which goes like this. When Lord Kalki saw that the entire world has sunk neck-deep in perversities like sex indulgence, anger, greed, attachment, ego, laziness, etc. and the light of the souls had been extinguished, he decided to guide the masses groping in the darkness of ignorance. The darkness was dense. The entire world was badly trapped in the materialistic pursuits and the pleasures of the senses. Lord Kalki felt that he lacked the power required for this awakening of the masses. Then his spiritual mentor Parashuram called him to the Himalayas and made him undertake a penance at a place where he (Parashuram) had himself done it. This penance awakened the enormous power, which was needed for the transformation of the era, within Kalki. Lord Parshuram was born in *Vedic Yuga*, which came much earlier than the *Kaliyuga*. His presence in Kaliyuga too is an indication of his immortality and a testimony of the fact that immortal souls like him are still present in the Himalayas. Dr. Hari Dutta Bhatta, Shailesh has given an

interesting description of his mountaineering experience of Janwali (Garhwal) hill, which is 22000 feet above the sea level, in Dharmayuga (Hindi weekly, 23 rd August 1964 issue). He was convinced that some supernormal power saved him and his group from getting buried under a landslide. All these incidents prove the fact that immortal souls possessing fierce supernatural power are still present in the Himalayas and they will remain there for an infinite time.

Modern scientists are also actively engaged in the research for finding the elixir of life. Zoologists of Russia, France, Britain, Germany, USA, etc. have been investigating for a long time the process of aging and death. On the basis of the results obtained so far, they have concluded that death is not an inevitable phenomenon. Aging is a kind of disease. If it be possible to find a cure for it, a person could live for a thousand years. The modes and methods of *kayakalpa* (rejuvenation) mentioned in Ayurveda also prove this fact.

In fact death is the result of collapse of life sustaining mechanism in the body. The gradual reduction in the efficiency of the body organs is the cause of senility, leading to death. If the life sustaining mechanisms are kept healthy and if the process of cell renewal is kept intact, a human being could be kept alive for an infinite time. Genes are immortal so there is no inevitability of bodily death.

After studying *Ayurveda*, one can easily conclude that ancient seers and scholars had identified several herbs, fruits and chemicals, which help in the rejuvenation of the body. There is a popular phrase. "A person does not eat food; it is the food that eats up a person." Our physical body is nourished by blood. The latter provides

oxygen to the entire body. Oxygen and other nerve fluids sustain consciousness in the body. All this is accomplished through emotions. It is the thoughts and emotions that give rise to secretions of hormones. These hormones control the metabolic processes within the body. Therefore, it appears that the responsibility of keeping the body healthy rests with our emotions and thoughts which are the real essence of life. There is a bird called 'Salyon', which gets sick after laying eggs. After investigation it has been found that after laying the eggs, her pituitary gland (which is centre of thoughts and emotions), gets excited and it starts secreting a hormone called A.C.T.H in huge quantities, which leads to her sickness. This has been found in the case of some other creatures as well. This shows that, if a person makes his thought process robustly positive and keeps his food light, he can keep himself alive and active for a long time.

Modern science has no knowledge of the thought control mechanism. Is there any power in the sentiments, which can catch in its purest form the life (genes) floating in the sky? This *vidya* (knowledge) is known only to Indian *yogis*. But now scientists too are agreeing with this. For example in 1975 some zoologists of Strasberg carried out an experiment for changing the genes of a duck. Two ducks, one of Campbell variety and the other of Pekish variety, were chosen. The DNA of the first were injected in the second and that of the second one were injected in the first. This gave rise to change in the color of both. Within a few days the dust colour of Campbell started appearing in the Pekish variety and the neck of Campbell variety started getting white.

Science can perform only a few experiments of this type. Changing one or

two chromosomes is the first step towards success. The reproductive cells of a human being contain about 10 billions pairs of nucleotides and every pair has 46 chromosomes. It is difficult to change the behavior of a person without changing them. Then there are several cells in the body, which after being formed never change. The question of keeping them healthy is much a more daunting task. It will take a long time for science to search the solution for this. But that knowledge already exists in the science of *yoga* and Indian chemical methods. This needs unbiased scientific research of a different type. This depends on appropriate environment in addition to difficult *sādhanās*. For this purpose scientists have suggested that atmospheric temperature should be subzero. Mr Clark in his book 'Space Odyssey' has written that in order to undertake space voyage lasting for 200 to 400 yrs, it will be essential to keep the space

voyager in the sleeping state at sub zero temperatures. Looked at from this scientific finding, the existence of immortal beings in the perennially frozen regions of the Himalayas cannot be considered as a myth. In fact, Himalayan region has been a special haven of true *Yogis* and Mahatmas from times immemorial. The likes of great *yogis* who have lived in this sacred region cannot be found elsewhere. It is said that there is Gyangaj Yogashram in Tibet, which is a training institute for yogis. Hundreds of such yogis are reported to be living and researching into the mysteries of the inner realms. This Siddhashram isolate in the subtle-physical realm is not accessible or visible to ordinary persons. Only psychically awakened and gifted Sadhaks have the privilege of entry into this Siddhashram.

\* \* \*

*Brahmaji, the presiding Deity of Creation, created the living beings. He asked man, the highest of the living beings: "What is your highest ambition?" The man replied: "I am certainly very intelligent, but I want to progress more and more in wisdom to the extent that none could equal me". Brahmaji gave him two jholas (cloth bags) and said: "Keep them suspended from your neck. Be always on the look out for the virtues of others and collect them in the bag in the front. Do not notice your own plus points; deposit them in the backside bag, out of your sight. This way your wisdom will keep on increasing".*

*Man was pleased, but he mixed up the instructions of Brahmaji. He hung the front bag in the back and the back one in the front. Consequently, he would always brag about his own imagined merits and learn nothing from the virtues of others. He did remain intelligent, but within the narrow confines of his own perception. Others considered him a braggart and a fool. So many of us commit this folly and instead of augmenting the potency and quality of our intellect by learning from others we remain engrossed in self-praise.*

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# PEACE PILGRIM'S STEPS TOWARDS INNER PEACE

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*Peace Pilgrim (1908–1981) was a modern American saint and sage who spread the message of peace in individuals and the society at large throughout USA from 1953 to 1981. She walked on foot for 25,000 miles from 1953 to 1964 – literally WALKING HER TALK. In short, her message was – overcome evil with good; falsehood with truth and hatred with love. We sum up below the gist of her teachings for the benefit of our readers.*

*- Editor*

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## **1. ASSUME RIGHT ATTITUDES TOWARDS LIFE**

- Stop being an escapist or a surface liver, as these attitudes can only cause inharmony.
- No problem comes to you that do not have a purpose in your life.
- Problems are opportunities in disguise.
- If you do not face problems you would just drift through life.

## **2. LIVE ALL THE GOOD THINGS THAT YOU BELIEVE IN**

- Bring your life into harmony with the laws that govern this universe. Obedience to these laws pushes us towards harmony and disobedience towards inharmony.
- If you know but do not do you are very unhappy person.
- Make a quick relinquishment. Tapering off is long and hard.
- If I believe something I live it.

## **3. FIND YOUR PLACE IN THE LIFE PATTERN**

- Every one of us has a special place in the life pattern. Seek your part in the life pattern in receptive silence.
- The secret of life is being of service. Do all the good things you feel motivated towards.

## **4. SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE**

- Simplify your life to bring the inner and outer well being into harmony.
- We measure in terms of money, in terms of material things. But happiness and peace do not lie in that direction.
- Unnecessary possessions are unnecessary burdens.
- Cluttered lives are out-of-harmony lives and require simplification.
- Wants and needs can become the same in human life.

- There is a great freedom in simplicity of living.

## **5. PURIFY THE BODILY TEMPLE**

- In your diet stress vital foods - fruits, whole grains, vegetables and nuts.
- I enjoy my food; but I eat to live and do not live to eat.
- I am stronger than that cup of coffee!
- Get as much sunshine and fresh air and contact with nature as you can.
- I take my exercise by walking and swinging my arms.

## **6. PURIFY YOUR THOUGHTS**

- It is not enough to do and say right things. You must think right things.
- Those who do unloving things hurt themselves spiritually.
- Positive thoughts can be powerful influences for good.
- Negative thoughts can make you physically ill.
- Be sure there is no unpeaceful situation between you and any other human being.
- Never think of any effort as being fruitless. All right effort bears good fruit, whether we see results or not.
- If you love people enough, they will respond lovingly.
- Every moment of our lives we create through thought. We create our inner conditions. We help to create the conditions around us.

## **7. PURIFY YOUR DESIRES**

- Get your desires centered so you will desire only God's will for you.
- After you have become an example, you can inspire others to change themselves.

## **8. PURIFY YOUR MOTIVES**

- Your motive should never be greed or self-seeking or self-glorification.
- If you are to find inner peace, your motive must be an outgoing motive; it must be service.
- Every moment is a new opportunity for service.
- The joy of living is giving. You will never be happy unless you are giving.
- Know that every right thing you do, every good word you say, every positive thought you think - has good effect.

## **9. RELINQUISH SELF-WILL**

- Once you have relinquished self-will you have found inner peace.
- The beginning of the spiritual growing up is when you feel completely willing to leave the self-centered life.
- Concentrate on giving so that you may open yourself to receiving.
- Results should never be sought or desired.
- The spiritual life is the real life. All else is illusion and deception.

## **10. RELINQUISH THE FEELING OF SEPARATENESS**

- All of us all over the world are cells in the body of humanity.
- As long as you work for your selfish little self you are way out of harmony.

## 11. RELINQUISH ATTACHMENTS

- No one is truly free who is still attached to material things or to places or to people.
- We must be able to appreciate and enjoy the places we tarry and yet pass on without anguish when we are called elsewhere.
- In our spiritual development we are often required to pull up roots.
- Anything that you cannot relinquish when it has outlived its usefulness possesses you.
- Material things must be put into their proper place.
- A great many of us are possessed by our possessions.
- You do not possess any other human being. You can only live in harmony with your fellow humans if you have no feeling that you possess them.

## 12. RELINQUISH ALL NEGATIVE FEELINGS

- No outward thing – nothing, nobody – can hurt me inside.
- Recognize that all of your inner hurts are caused by your own wrong actions.
- If you realize that those who do mean things are psychologically ill, your feeling of anger will turn to pity.
- Worry is a useless mulling over the things we cannot change. If you live in the present moment you will be less apt to worry.
- Since this is the only moment that you can live, if you do not live it you never really get around to living at all.

\* \* \*

It is a proven truth that the lives of those valiant souls who listened to the call of their inner conscience became beacon lights for millions of people during their own lives. "Budha" preached the gospel of "BUDHAM DHAMAM SANGHAM SHARNAM GATCHAMI". He showed the way of liberation from worldly sufferings. All who cared to listen to his call walked along with him leaving everything behind. Buddha's teachings of the eight-fold path transformed the whole value-system of his times. He brought about a spiritual revolution. The same miracle was performed by "Gandhiji". A handful of unarmed *satyagrahis* had the conviction and courage to fight and vanquish mightiest empire of the world though a non-violent struggle for freedom. Now again we are living in a unique period of spiritual and cultural revolution. The whole of world is on the verge of revolutionary change of consciousness. Indian culture is destined to be the vanguard of this momentous advent of a new era.

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# HOW TO ENRICH OUR CREATIVE TALENTS AND MEMORY?

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*Yām medhām devagaṇāḥ  
pitaraścopāsate |Tayā māmadya  
medhayāgne medhāvinaṁ kuru svāhā //*  
-Yajurveda 32/14

O Fire - God incarnate! Bestow on me the brilliance (of intellect), which is prayed for by the gods and the spirits of the ancestors through devout adoration.

Everyone is interested to find some sure - shot formula to increase memory power. The student community, in particular, feels its need more acutely. How to memorize a lesson fast? How to retain and not forget what has been learnt? Such questions keep cropping up in the minds of students. In search of their answers, they indulge in all sorts of tactics, including recourse to some medicines/drugs.

The drug companies, too, on their part exploit this vulnerability of the students. Through attractive and high - power advertisements and false promises of miracles they are ever eager to make a fast buck. It is not known whether the really needy ever derive any benefit or not from the advertised drugs. This much, however, is certain that the so-called recipe of strong memory remains a much sought after mirage. In this connection, we should know and for certain that such wishful miracles do not happen anywhere in the universe. Every action, every event is defined and regulated by set rules of cosmic order, be they in the realer of physical laws or the spiritual. The same principle operates with respect to

memory. This has a science of its own, its own techniques. Those who know and understand it are able to derive benefit easily, while the ignorant ones waste their time in futile ventures and feel disappointed on crucial occasions. SO it is better that one should thoroughly understand the correct techniques of firmly committing some thing to memory and use them properly.

Those who suffer from memory problems have some standard complaints: What can I do, I just cannot memorize; I had indeed memorized this, but forgot it; I can recollect but only piecemeal, and so on and so forth. There are contrary claims too - of committing a thing to memory in just one reading, or recollecting exactly every detail of what had been read, or memories of long bygone times being still vivid in the mind etc.

There is an instructive anecdote, which will help in understanding these diametrically opposite statements relating to memory function. This anecdote is from the life of Vivekanand. Those days Swami ji was in *pravrajya* (ascetical wanderings) within India. He had a *gurubhai* (brother disciple of a common teacher) as companion. A continuous routine of *swadhyaya* (self-study), *satsang* (company of the truth seekers) and rigorous *tapa* (austerities) was being followed. Whenever he could lay his hand upon a good book, Vivekanand would not miss reading it. In every new place, his first search was a good library, and when he

came across one he would make full utilization of its treasures. At one place, in course of this *pravrajya*, a library impressed him much and he decided to stay at the place for an extended period. His *gurubhai* would fetch for him a variety of books in Sanskrit and English, which the Swamiji would return the next day after reading them. This routine of issuing fresh books daily – and quite voluminous ones at that- and receiving the same the very next day perplexed the librarian. He enquired of the *gurubhai*: “Do you take all these books daily only to look over them cursorily? If so, I will show them to you here itself, why carry so much weight all the way to your place of stay? Hearing this remark of the librarian, the *gurubhai* replied in all seriousness: “It is not as you think. My *gurubhai* does read these books seriously before returning them”. Surprised at this reply, the librarian said: “If it is so, I would very much like to meet the gentleman”.

The next day, Swamiji met him and said: “Sir, do not be perplexed. I have not only gone through the books, but have also memorized their contents”. Having said so, he handed him back some previously issued books and repeated verbatim many important passages from them. For the librarian, this spectacle was nothing short of a miracle. Very humbly, he asked Swami ji the secret of his super-human memory. Swami ji laughed and said: “There is no miracle or mystery in this. It is simply a technique of mental concentration”.

This technique has certain stages. The first stage is that whatever is read or listened to should be with a calm, composed and concentrated mind. Indeed, the sense organs are mere doors through which messages are sent to the mind. It is the mind

which is the real thing. The more the holding power or capability of the mind, the more the information which can be imprinted on it. In fact, memorizing something or recollecting it is but a mere process, which is called memory (*smriti*). But the storehouse of memory is talent or intelligence (*medha*). In each individual, this talent exists in direct proportion to his mental composure, tranquility and concentration. For this very reason, things read, heard or seen in a hurry, or in state of instability, or casually and perfunctorily do not register in the mind.

The more clearly and deeply a thing is imprinted on the substratum of mind, the more vivid and detailed its recollection will be. If for some reason, this imprint is not clear in one attempt, the process should be repeated. It will be helpful if the important points are jotted down, since the process of writing, by itself, generates steadiness and concentration. The third important point in connection with memory power is that one should be conceptually clear about the subject or points which are sought to be memorized, because it is easy to retain in memory those facts or events which touch our inner chord. Interest in and aptitude for the subject matter is another important consideration; again concentration comes as a matter of course when the topic is of interest to us. In addition to all these, an essential requisite is that our nervous system be stable and strong. Those who lead a regulated and disciplined life are found to have a sharp memory and they can also absorb information very fast. One cannot lay too much emphasis on the distinct correlation between an orderly and disciplined life style and highly developed and sharpened memory as well as creative abilities.

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# GUIDELINES FOR SHARPENING THE INTELLECT

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*Indra yaste navīyasīn girām mandrāmājījanat |  
Cikītvīnmanasaṁ dhīyaṁ pratnāmṛtasya pīpyuṣīm ||  
- Rigveda 8/95/5*

O Supreme Lord of perfect majesty!  
Bless the one whoever sings new and beautiful encomiums to you with the intellect which is endowed with supreme wisdom and which enlightens the mind.

Everyone is desirous of increasing his mental and intellectual capabilities. This craving is more endemic to the student community. Most of them are on the lookout for some formula or technique that may enhance their mental power. It is seen in all spheres of life that the more intelligent are able to make progress and achieve success while the dullards are left behind in the race. This phenomenon has become almost a truism, to the extent that intelligence and success have come to be viewed as synonymous.

How may the unintelligent become intelligent? And how can the intelligent ones further increase their brainpower? The answers to these questions have never been properly known or learnt. The results of research investigations made in this field generally remain unavailable to the common mass of people. Ignorant of the effective tools of intellect development, the majority of people resign themselves to their present mental level, branding it as destiny or fate. But the reality is otherwise. With the grace of God, combined with dedicated human endeavor, worthwhile goal is achievable.

But before we embark on this venture, let us be clear about what exactly is meant by intellectual capacity. Most people have a misconception about the true

nature and function of the intellect. They identify intelligence with trickery and chicanery of all sorts. For them, being intelligent means an ability to fix things up and grab the desired object by hook or by crook. But those who are aware of the reality know that intellect or *buddhi* is, in fact, an instrument manifesting as a process of analysis, deliberation and discernment. An application of this process leads to the development of understanding, determination and far-sightedness.

Analysis is made of the prevailing circumstances, available facts and the past experience. It helps in giving a right direction to the course. Deliberation means refining the thoughts and imaginations, properly arranging them and giving them a focused orientation. Discernment is the faculty to discriminate between the right and the wrong, the judicious and the injudicious, the true and the false. One in whom all these three dimensions of intellect are harmoniously activated is endowed with an outstanding capacity of understanding. He is able to perform the right action at the right time. He can easily untangle complex issues and situations. His decisions are quick and accurate, and stand the test of time. There is a spontaneous development of farsightedness and perspicacity in him. His clear-sighted competent mind seldom fails to make correct assessment about the future course of events.

In this context, the thoughts of the great seer, scholar and indologist Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj are worth reflection. The name of Gopinath Kaviraj should not be unfamiliar to whoever has an interest in Indian culture, philosophy

and the science of spirituality. Kavirajji was, besides being a great scholar, also an advanced *sādhak* (spiritual seeker). Once, while he was a professor, a student met him. Him was very unhappy, frustrated and depressed; Kavirajji called him at his residence and very attentively heard his tale of woes. The student's problem was that in spite of regularly attending the classes he was unable to grasp the lessons being taught. In other spheres of activity, too, he felt intellectually handicapped. This sense of inadequacy had even driven him to suicidal attempts.

Gopinathji was deeply touched by his plight and encouraged him: "You need not get perturbed by this. The Mother of the universe who transformed an ignoramus like Kalidas into a great poet will also bless you with a sharpened intellect. Only you will have to make some efforts for this." The boy gazed at him hopefully. Gopinathji continued: "The first step in increasing the mental ability is steadiness. Beware that it is our flickering and instable dispositions that act as a hindrance to intellectual development. To surmount this obstacle, it is necessary that you practice three hours of continuous study daily, albeit increasing the period slowly and gradually. When the body is steady, the mind also becomes stable, and this is conducive to the development of intellect. The next stage in this sequence is concentration of the mind. For this, it is essential for you to focus totally on the subject of your study. Even if you are unable to follow it, keep on trying to grasp the meaning with full concentration and diligence. A continued practice of concentrating the mind will automatically increase your power of comprehension".

Besides these two main elements, there are many subsidiary points; namely (1) curiosity, i.e. an earnest desire to know more

and more about a thing; (2) company of the wise – we should try to cultivate contact with the learned, the thinking, and the intelligent persons; (3) self-encouragement – rather than wallow in pessimistic thoughts, it would be necessary to develop confidence in one's own ability; (4) functional utility – we should try to know the functional utility of the knowledge we want to acquire; an awareness of such practical applicability makes the subject more easily comprehensible; (5) pool of knowledge - acquisition of information from different sources also helps in the development of intellect; (6) deep insight - if you cultivate a keen eye, you will realize that the whole nature and our entire surroundings are imparting some lesson every moment; (7) student mentality – one should consider oneself a perpetual learner and always remain eager to learn new things; (8) faith in the Divine Grace – it compensates for the deficiencies and drawbacks and makes life meaningful.

The *Gāyatrī Mahāmantra* is the bestower of *sadbuddhi* (the righteous intellect). By taking recourse to this powerful *mantra*, innumerable persons with poor intellect have been able to acquire superior intelligence. A regular chanting of this *mahāmantra* leads to steadiness of body and mind and one-pointed concentration. Besides, the subtle and powerful vibrations generated by the *mahāmantra* activate and energize the whole nervous system. The correct method of *Gāyatrī sādhanā* and its processes can be learnt by reading *Gāyatrī Mahāvijñāna* (The Super Science of *Gāyatrī*) which has been published by Shanti kunj, Haridwar. The *sādhanā* of the elemental force of *Gāyatrī* is not only beneficial for the development of intellect but is also a sure-shot recipe for enhancing the memory power.

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF NORTHEAST ANGLE IN VASTU SHASTRA

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It is said that even though we may not have control over the astrological effects of the stars but *Vāstu* certainly plays a role in positively modifying these effects provided we make wise use of the teachings of Vastu Shastra. Astrology emphasizes the importance of the positions and motions of planets and stars whereas Vastu Shastra is founded on the significance of directions. It is said that the state or condition (of a system) can't affect a direction but the directions (because of the geomagnetic, electromagnetic and subtler effects) do influence the state or condition. This is how *vāstu* is believed to have relation with one's horoscope and influences one's stars to some extent. Thus, apart from the scientific basis — in terms of optimizing the favorable geographical impact and energy fields of natural powers and minimizing the negative or harmful effects — the significant role of *vāstu* also emanates from the deeper mathematics of astrology.

Experts of Vastu Shastra affirm that if the house one lives in is constructed in concordance with the principles and guidelines of this vedic science of architecture, one would be able to live without falling a victim to adversities and tensions even in this age of materialistic rat-race, loan based possessions, stressful competitions and struggles. With a little care in the relative positioning and arrangement of the living room, dining room, study room, bed room, office, clinic, shop, etc, one could

expect to live, by and large, a peaceful, happy and prosperous life of goodness and nobility. Let us look at some excerpts to get an idea of what exactly the scriptures say in the above context. Vishwarkarma, the founder of architectural knowledge, instructs that a plot selected for the construction of a house should be first divided into sixteen parts (to get the segments and angles on both sides of the eight principal directions). The map of the house should take into account the directions, which are auspicious or inauspicious for specific purposes. The different rooms, location of doors and windows in each should be planned accordingly. For example, the second chapter of “Vishwarkarma Prakash” – a masterpiece of Indian architectural heritage, cites —

*Īśānyām Devatāgeham Pūrvasyām  
Snānamandiram |*

*Āgneyām Pākasadanam  
Bhāṅḍārāgaramuttare ||*

*Āgneya pūrvayor madhye da  
Dhimanthanamandiram |*

*Agnipreteśāyormadhye Ājyageham  
Prašasyate ||*

*Yāmyanairatayormadhye Purīṣatyāga  
Mandiram |*

*Na iṣṭā tyāmbupayor madhye  
Vidyābhyāsamandiram ||*

*Paśchimānilyormadhye Rodanārtha Gr  
ahamasṛatam |*

*Vāyavyottararmadhye Ratigeham  
Prašasyate ||*

*Uttareśānyormadhye uśadhārthantukārayet |*

*Nairatyām Sutikāgeham Nṛapāṇām  
Bhūmimichchitām ||*

Meaning: The worship and meditation chamber or temple should be constructed in the *īśāna* angle (corner of the plot/house in the northeast direction); bathroom in the eastern direction, kitchen in the *āgneya* angle (corner in the southeast direction), strong room or locker (safe for money and jewellery etc) should be made in the *vāyavya* (northwest) direction and storeroom in the north. The portion between the northeast and eastern direction should be used for storage of dairy produce: milk, curd, buttermilk, butter, ghee etc. The sector of the plot/house between the south and the southwest (*nairatyā*) direction should be used for toilets and septic tank. Study room should be in the west or between the southwest and the west directions. The portion between the west and the northwest (*vāyavya*) direction is best suited for constructing the solitude chamber (where one could sit in the moments of sadness and grief) and/or the family conference room (where people in the joint family could discuss family matter of mutual concern). The entertainment space should be provided nearby or in the northwest direction. Living rooms for the married couples should be made somewhere between the northwest and north direction.

The portion (of the plot or the house) between the north and the northeast (*īśāna*) direction is best suited for the construction of clinics, hospitals or the room for patient-care. The corner in the southwest direction should be used for labor room (for the birth and nursing of infants). The dining hall should be placed in the west; bedroom in the south, the reception or drawing room should lie between the east and northeast and the grocery store and cattle shed (if any) in the

northwest direction. The weapons' room (or room for security guard's duty), if any, should be in the southwest angle. The northwest direction is also suitable for garage (parking space for vehicles, if any). The garage could be made in the southeast direction as well, but the northeast direction should be avoided for this purpose. The well or water-tanks should be made in the east, west or north directions.

The above scriptural description is a broad classification that could be used as per the rooms or the utilities required in the house (or any building) being constructed. If felt necessary, one can also make minor alterations or modifications in the existing settings of the house or building already built and in use, in order to minimize the adverse effects or to gain extra benefits of *vāstu*. The scriptures unequivocally affirm the favorable and auspicious effects of architecture and interior designs as per the guidelines of Vastu Shastra. The houses constructed in contravention of these guidelines are often found attracting adversities such as theft, disputes, court-cases, severe losses, poverty, acute illness, etc.

The treatises like “Vishwakarma Prakash” attribute special importance to the *īśāna* angle (the northeast direction) in the selection and architectural map of the plot, construction of the house (building) and even the exterior and interior structure and settings of the rooms. This direction is regarded as highly surcharged with divine energies. This is why the scriptures guide – “*Īśānyam Devatāgeham*” (temples, shrines and devotional meditation centers/rooms should be constructed in the northeast corner....). As the Sun rises from the East, one naturally gets maximum (vital) energy from it in this direction. The northeast direction is enriched

with the confluence of this energy pool with the magnetic and subtler energy currents of the earth and the etheric hole. The *rishis*, the Indian sages of Vedic Age had mastered this knowledge. This is why the sacred pilgrimage centers and ashrams of spiritual training in the ancient times were established in this direction near the holy rivers. We can still feel the distinctly enchanting, energizing and enlightening ambience at such sites.

Modern scientists are well aware of the vital role of the heat, light and enormous kinds of energy radiations sent by the Sun on the earth. These are the determinants of the atmospheric and other changes, energy balances and natural phenomena on the earth. Although under a different approach and in a different language, the principles and theories of Vastu Shastra thoroughly take into account these interconnected effects together with the geological and geophysical aspects. The manifestations of God or the divine powers described in the *vāstucakra* and invited and worshipped during the sacraments of Vastu Pooja are mostly the invocations of the energy currents and forces emanating/radiating from the Sun.

India is the land instinct with sanctity and religious rituals. Spiritual energy is actively pervading in its sublime environment, in every aspect of its culture. This is why the Vedic knowledge of *vāstu* is also associated with religious rituals here. Thus adoption of the principles and disciplines of Vastu Shastra also helps in spiritual endeavors and growth. The views of Vastu-expert Shri Gauru Tirupati are worth noting here. This scholar from Andhra Pradesh has written in “Vastu Sandesh” that the secret of Vastu Shastra lies in ideal and harmonious utilization of the five basic elements (the *panca tatvas*) and the hidden

powers of Nature in the house. This is why enlightened persons prefer designing and constructing their houses according to the guidelines of Vastu Shastra.

Shri Gauru also cites the examples of the great shrines of Badrinath, Kedarnath, etc in the Himalayas and those of the historic temples of Jagannath in Puri and Balaji at Tirupati etc, whose construction is in tune with the Vedic principles of Vastu Shastra. This is why these pilgrimage have been the source of attraction and uplifting experiences for millions of devotees and visitors from different parts of the globe since immemorial times. The shrines built as per the Vastu-instructions are said to work like (small or big) reservoirs of cosmic energy. This explains the emphasis laid in the Indian cultural customs upon preserving at least one room or corner of the house (in appropriate direction) for home-temple. Idols or pictures of Gods are also enshrined and worshipped in some hospitals, trade centers, etc owned by the believer in Vastu Shastra.

As the home-temples or worship-chambers happen to be given paramount importance in a building according to Vastu Shastra, the *īśāna* angle (northeast direction) being the principle axis of the location of the former also gets a prominent role in archeology. The east and the north directions are of significance in the Indian culture. The Vedic literature refers to the sun as the “soul of the world” and it is also regarded as the source of vital power and health. The sun rises in the east, therefore meditating on the soothing radiance of the rising Sun in this direction in the early hours of the dawn is of great devotional and spiritual significance. The vedic scriptures on yoga describe the extrasensory energy centers like the *sahastrār cakra*, *brahmrandhra* and *āgyā*

*cakra* to be subtly located in the north pole (cerebrum region) of our brain. Meditating on the rising sun activates these centers and thus awakens supernatural talents and powers.

The idols of deities are enjoined to be kept so that the devotee faces the north or the east direction during worship. The Shastras recommend specific devotional practices for specific attainments. The directions, which the devotee faces during such *sāadhanā* are also of deep significance— it is said that the devotees praying for wealth should face the north, those aspiring for knowledge should face the east and those searching for peace and happiness should face the west.

Whatever directions are prescribed in Vastu Shastra for the palaces, big buildings or major constructions, are equally applicable for small flats or rooms. For example, in a two room flat, one may place the idol or picture of the *iṣṭa devatā*<sup>1</sup> in the northeast corner of the house or any one of the rooms. The size of the worship spot should be such that it does not occupy excessive space. For example, in small rooms, it could provide just enough space for one person to sit for devotional practice at a time. In case it is not possible to find a corner in the northeast direction, it will be most suitable to keep the idol or picture of deity facing the west so that the devotee would face the east while sitting or standing in front of it. Facing the east helps in rapid progress in mental concentration and is of special significance for the devotees of Gayatri Meditation,

There should be only one place of worship and devotion in a house. This being the focus of reverence for every member of the family becomes surcharged in its holy ambience and also helps in maintaining

understanding, peace, harmony and love, in the family.

The northeast direction is referred as a sacred direction in Vastu Shastra. We should also maintain a state of cleanliness and purity in this direction in our house and workplace. No heavy item (e.g, almirah, table) should be kept in this direction; and should also avoid keeping a broomstick or any other sanitary item there. If not used for any devotional purposes, this corner (direction in the house) may be left clean and empty even if it happens to be located in the living room or the bedroom. Keeping dirt and debris in this corner of the house is said to attract malevolent effects such as difficulties, losses, tensions in personal (familial) relationships etc. However, the readers of Akhand Jyoti should be well aware that the Vastu principles and effects, like effects of any other forces in the gross manifestation of Nature, are only secondary to one's inner strength and dedicated endeavors towards soul growth. One need not panic if it is not possible to follow some or even none of the guidelines provided in the Vastu shastra..

We should not forget that our *rishis* had taken full measure of the dimensions and limitations of human life and had provided humanly practical remedies against challenges of destiny or circumstances. Likewise they have also laid down guidelines to minimize or eliminate the negative effects, if any, of having a house designed against the Vastu principles. We shall endeavour to discuss these in the succeeding instalments..

**Notes:**

1. *Iṣṭa devatā*: Divine manifestation that is the focus of one's devotion.

**(To be continued)**

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# CONCENTRATION

## AN ESSENTIAL PRE-REQUISITE FOR SPIRITUAL UNFOLDMENT

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*Karmayoga, bhaktiyoga, layayoga, nādayoga, dhyān-dhārnā, japayoga, etc.* whatever *sādhanās* exist; they are all meant for achieving the refinement and purity of the innerself and the concentration of mind. Any *sādhanā* done with a fickle mind cannot be *yoga*.

*Rasatva mansācaiua cancalatvam swabhāvataḥ |*

*Rasbaddho manobaddham kim na siddhyati bhūtale ||*

- *Barahopanishad*

Meaning: Mercury and the mind are habitually unstable. If these could be controlled, there would be nothing that cannot be achieved in the three worlds.

The reflection cannot be seen clearly in disturbed and muddled surface of water. In the same way, so long as the mind is unstable, the innerself cannot be felt. Therefore, with the help of *sādhanā*, one should try to steady the mind. *Sādhanā* will purify the innerself and with increase in purity, concentration will also increase. Therefore, patiently, one should engage the mind in *sādhanā* and should try to quiten it gradually. Without controlling the mind, a *sādhak* cannot succeed in *sādhanā*.

Psychologists say that in a state of calm and quiet mind a great subtle energy field emerges from the deep recesses of the soul. It is very difficult for the ordinary people to get a feel of this energy field. A disciplined mind helps in physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Among the various types of *yogas*, for example, *karmayoga, bhaktiyoga, layayoga, hathayoga, ragayoga, tapayoga, etc.*, only *japayoga* is the simplest and most practical. *Japa* (recitation) of a *mantra* helps in achieving concentration.

The goal of a *sādhak* is to become more and more introspective. Therefore, closing the eyes, the mind should be fixed on the import of a *mantra*. The recitation of *mantra* should be done along with meditation. A *japa* done in this awakened manner helps in controlling the waywardness of mind and in making it introspective.

The scattered sunrays cannot burn even a thread, but when the same rays are focused with the help of a convex lens, a spark of fire is produced, capable of burning anything. Similarly – “*yadā pancavatiṣṭhante gyānam manasā saḥ.*” That is, when five *karmendriyas* and five *gyanendriyas* are not attracted towards their objects of desire, the mind becomes stable. In meditation, when the external world of objects and the false

ego-self are forgotten, it should be assumed that the mind is getting quietened. Thus regular *sāadhanā* of concentration will lead the *sādhak* to higher dimensions of consciousness beyond the ordinary mind, instinct with paranormal ranges of light, life and bliss.

There are several unique occult powers lying dormant in the deeper layers of our consciousness. If the gunpowder is scattered on the ground and is lit, it will burn like ordinary things and nothing special will happen. But if the same gunpowder is fired through the barrel of a gun it can even pierce through the hardest steel. In the same way, if our mind remains shallow and scattered, it

will be ineffective in attaining anything worthwhile and we will lead a life without purpose.

The acrobats of a circus perform miraculous feats as a result of their concentration and practice. *Siddha purushas* with concentration of their spiritual and mental energies are able to become the masters of several *siddhis*. Therefore one should practice purification and concentration of mind and make it steady, calm and focused. This will help in achieving material and spiritual progress and growth.

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If a person does not try to help himself even God cannot help him, as it is the law of nature. All those who think God will do everything for them without their exerting themselves should wake up and start working hard.

A person was a devotee of Hanumanji. Once he was going somewhere on his bullock-cart. It got stuck in a swamp. He started chanting Hanuman-Chalisa and expected his bullock-cart to come out of the swamp by the grace of Hanumanji. A passerby Pandit reminded him, “Friend, Hanumanji did not know the location of Sanjivani herb exactly so he brought the whole mountain. You at least shall try to push your cart.” The man did the same and by this small help bulls, too exerted and pulled the cart out. God or a saint can help you to get out of the swamp of ignorance only if you awaken your dormant inner strength, develop your inherent qualities and capabilities. Param puja Gurudev has written in Pragma-Puran, “*Atmashakti purika tu shakti sa paramatmana*” meaning God-strength is complementary to self-strength.

## YOUR HEALTH: GUIDELINES FROM AYURVEDA – V

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We have been discussing about — what Ayurveda says about the role of food in maintenance of vigorous health? There is an interesting and important episode described in the text of Ayurvedic Medicine. While discussing with *rishi* Punarvasu – the author of “Charak Samhita”, some *vaidyas* (Ayurvedic doctors) raised the query “*Ko’rūka?*” (Meaning: “who does not fall ill?”). Somebody said – one who eats *chyavanprash* every morning. “Who takes *lavan bhaskar* and *triphal* regularly” said some others; eating *chandravati* every day was described by another *vaidya* as the source of health. Finally the fundamental principle of natural maintenance of good health was expressed by Vagbhatt as – “*Hitbhuka, Mitbhuka, Ritbhuka*”. *Hitbhuk*: means eat that which is nourishing for your health and do not eat merely for taste. *Mitbhuk*: means eat moderately (only that much which is essential for sustenance of the vitality and stamina of the body). *Ritbhuk*: means eat that which is earned and prepared by righteous means and also what is suitable in a particular season.

Broadly speaking, the above principles are not new to us. We all might have read or heard about these in one form or the other. But how many people (including ourselves) really pay due attention to these? In view of the life-style adopted by most of us today and considering the growing pollution in the gross and the subtle environment, we ought to be more careful about healthy food. This

series is bringing us the pearls of knowledge from Ayurveda – the science of leading a long, happy and healthful life. In the last issue we had mentioned about the twelve categories of naturally nourishing food as described in the Charak Samhita. Here we look at these in detail to have some practical tips on what should we eat every day and how?

1. *Śūka* Grain (Cereals): Wheat, rice, barley, maize, millet, corn etc, are principal ingredients of Indian cooking. The cereals are natural sources of nourishment for human body. Carbohydrates are their major constituents. They also contain about 6 to 12 % proteins. The presence of minerals and vitamins is, however, nominal in the cereals; only vitamin B is found in greater quantity in their outer sheath. The shelf life of these cereals ranges between one to two years after harvesting. Sprouted cereals have more nutrition value and are richer in proteins and vitamins.

2. *Śamī* Grains (Pulses and Legumes): This category of grains consists of grams and pulses, which are rich in proteins. Gram, green gram, kidney-bean seeds, red and yellow gram and lentil, black-gram, soyabean seeds, dry-peas, etc. fall in this category. These are main source of proteins for vegetarians. The protein contents and mode of metabolism of these are healthier and more compatible with the metabolic functioning of the human body as compared to those in the non-vegetarian foods (meat, chicken,

eggs etc). Use of fresh sprouts of whole pulses and legumes in balanced quantities in breakfast and main meals is an excellent means of maintaining natural health.

3. *Kandamūla* (Tubers and Roots): Potato, sweet tuber (sweet potato), carrot, beetroot, turnip, radish, etc are members of this class of naturally healthy foods. They are rich in carbohydrates and are important sources of balanced calories in our bodies and activation of metabolism. These, if eaten in appropriate quantities, are good means of strength and energy in the body system. These could even be used as substitutes for varieties of cereal dishes. The *rishi-munis* of the ancient times used to take only *kandamūla* as their main food. The term *phalāhāra* for the food prescribed during fasts refers to these only.

4. *Phal* (Fruits): As we all know, vitamins, minerals, natural glucose and carbohydrates are present in substantial proportions in fresh fruits. *Amalki*, apple, *bilva* (wood-apple), banana, black-plum (rose-apple), dates, figs, grapes, guava, mango, orange, pomegranate, papaya, sweet-lime, etc are easily available fruits in almost all parts of India. According to Ayurveda, these fruits also have medicinal properties. Fruits like apricot, cherry, pineapple, strawberry; etc could also be used when available. Ayurveda emphasizes that fruits should be eaten in their specific season, and should be naturally ripe. Over-ripe or rotten fruits are harmful. Raw fruits would be difficult to digest and will not have the desired natural qualities. Care should be taken to avoid eating fruits preserved in cold storage and those ripened through the use of chemicals like carbide. These have severe negative effects; frequent use of such unnaturally ripened

fruits might cause dreaded diseases like cancer.

5. *Śākas* (Vegetables): Fresh vegetables are important ingredients of a healthy food. They provide us with essential vitamins, minerals and compounds. Use of different types of green beans, bitter gourd, brinjal, cabbage, cauliflower, cucumber, green-gourd, ladies-fingers (*bhindi*), tomato, etc is very good for health. Different types of vegetables supplement each other in fulfilling the body's requirement of vitamins, minerals etc. Likewise the use of fruits, specific vegetables should also be consumed only in the specific season of their natural growth. Use of vegetables of one season in another season is prohibited in Ayurveda.

6. *Harit* (Greens Leafy Vegetables): Coriander-leaf, fenugreek-leaves, green peas, mint-leaves, radish-leaf, spinach, etc should be part of a healthy diet. Iron, calcium, and other minerals and vitamin C and E etc, present in these green leafy vegetables or salads, are essential for our body's proper nourishment.

7. *Śuska Phal Va Tilahan* (Dry Fruits and Oil Seeds): Almond, cashew nut, chestnut, coconut, groundnut, peanut, pistachio, etc are very rich in proteins. The oils inside these provide natural lubricants and fats necessary for the body's mechanical and other functions. The edible, oily-seeds of sesamum, mustard, etc also serve this purpose.

8. *Ikśu* (Glucose rich substances): Molasses, sugarcane, sugar, treacle, and other glucose rich substances fall in this category. These are often used to sweeten the drinks and eatables. These contain hundred percent carbohydrates, which are the major source of producing energy in the body.

9. *Ambu* (Watery or juicy substances): This category includes all edible substances that are rich in water-content. Fruits like watermelon, which contain about 90% water, are prominent in this category. Major part of our body-system is filled with water. We should fulfil the consistent requirement of its supply by drinking substantial amount of water. Fresh lemon squash, etc and juice of watery fruits, if taken in balanced quantities, also supply us with other nourishing substances along with water.

10. *Goras* (Milk-products): Milk, curd, buttermilk, cheese, etc fall in this group. Pure milk (esp. that of cow) and buttermilk are described as 'divine' food or best source of nourishment for *sadhaks*. Many people observe *kalpa* (long-term fasting) only with the intake of milk or buttermilk. Milk (especially, cow-milk) is said to be a whole food in itself. Curd is also nourishing food with several medicinal qualities, if taken fresh and in appropriate quantities in different seasons as per one's *prakrati* (level of *tridosā*). Fresh cheese and its products (if not fried) are wholesome sources of calories. Buttermilk (*takra*) is referred in Ayurveda as an important medicinal food. Condensed milk and milk powder might be easy to preserve and use, and may help in making delicious dishes, but these are harmful to health, particularly in the cozy life-style we have adopted and because of the chemical synthesis processes used in their preparation. Use of condensed milk and milk powder or dairy whiteners should therefore be avoided as far as possible. In view of the reports of adulteration of milk by mixing urea and other chemicals, contaminated water, etc, these days, we should be careful in verifying and ascertaining that milk and its products are free from toxins.

11. *Sneha* (Oils and Fats): Butter, *ghee* (butter clarified by boiling and straining), edible oils and fatty substances, if taken in balanced amounts, are also part of a healthy diet. These are highly rich in calories. (On an average, about nine calories are gained from one gm of any of these substances). These help in fulfilling the requirements of lubrication of body parts (especially, joints) and energy production in the body-system. They also generally contain vitamins A, D, E and K. However, excess use of these substances is harmful to both physical and mental health. Extra care should therefore be taken to keep the level of proportion of this category to the essential minimum in our daily meals.

12. *Krattāna Va Yaugika* (Cooked Food and Edible Compounds): Ayurveda considers 'cooked food' as a separate class of food. All the categories described above are independent of each other and, as we know, most of the constituents of these could be consumed raw or sprouted. Cooking changes the natural properties of food ingredients. However, eating this class of food is important because proper cooking (esp. of cereals and pulses) makes the food easily digestible and many of the new edible compounds produced under this process would also be of vital use in the metabolic system and other body-functions. Cooked food could consist of members of more than one of the above classes and help giving new combined positive effects. The concept of cooking as referred in Ayurveda is quite different from what it is for most of us today.

Cooking today is mostly aimed to make the food more delicious; different experiments are tried out by the catering experts in this regard and ever new 'dishes' and new recipes are derived. Deep fried food,

varieties of spices and arbitrary combination of foods of non-compatible natural qualities are harmful to our health according to Ayurveda. But we don't think of it as long as the food is palatable. The use of pre-cooked food-ingredients and the so-called "fast foods" should be avoided, as it has very adverse effects on our body-system. Apart from lacking in nourishing value this type of 'modern' food is very likely to impair the normal functioning of our digestive system and cause harmful mutations due to the chemicals in the preservatives, the artificial flavors and the chemically processed cooking involved in its preparation. Having looked at the different categories of edible foods described in Ayurveda, let us now see what the Ayurvedic Principles tell us about — what, how much and when to eat? Why to eat and how to eat?

**What to eat?** – The principle of "Hitbhuk and Ritbhuk" conveys us that we should always eat properly earned, pure, seasonal and nourishing food. A balanced combination (depending upon the physical and mental labor required in one's daily routine) from the above-described categories of healthy foods would be best suited. For example, you may use wheat, barley, maize, and some pulses, curd, butter, groundnuts, oilseeds, etc, in appropriate quantities with larger amounts of green, leafy and other vegetables; some sprouts should always be part of your food. Don't eat over-cooked or deep fried food; use of spices, salts, sugars and oily substances should be restricted to the essential minimum. Desist consuming toxic substances, stimulating and alcoholic drinks, and non-vegetarian foods.

**How much to eat?** – The answer lies in the principle of "Mitāsi Syāt". Meaning, eat moderately. Howsoever nourishing or

healthy the food may be, it would cause harm if eaten in excess. So, be cautious about the quantity of your diet. Don't fill your tummy more than half its space, leave one-fourth for water and the remaining one-fourth for air. Those doing physical labor need more of proteins, carbohydrates and fats. But those engaged in sedentary and mental work or meditation-devotion etc, should take lighter foods such as boiled vegetables, thin *chapatis*, milk, sweet fruits, etc.

**When to eat?** – As per the *vedic* routine, one should eat only twice a day after performing *agnihotra* (*homaṁ*) in the morning and in the evening (before sunset). In today's circumstances, the best timings for the morning meal are any time between 8 a.m. to 12 noon and those for the dinner sometime before 7 p.m. This way the food is easily digested and keeps the body strong and energetic. In any case, be regular in the timings of taking your meals; avoid eating late in the night. One of the major causes of metabolic disorders and varieties of diseases caused thereby is that people keep watching TV and eat very late in the night. Remember! It takes about 8 to 11 hours for proper natural digestion of food. Eat only when you feel hungry. Eating is a kind of *agnihotra*. The *āhutis* are made in *agnihotra* only when its fire is lit well; putting the *āhutis* in half-burnt or smoldering wood would only produce smoke instead of healthy effects of *agnihotra*.

**Why to eat?** – Eat to maintain and strengthen the health and vigor of your body. Healthy mind resides in a healthy body. The first principle of the "Yug Nirman Satsankalp" guided by Gurudev implies – "We shall regard our body as the temple of our soul and maintain its sanctity and health by observing self-restraint and punctuality in our routine". The purpose of food is to

sustain healthy and harmonious functioning of the body system, the physical medium of our life, to enable us to perform our duties towards God and His creation. Food is not meant to satiate the greed of our tongue or stomach.

**How to eat?** – Take your food gracefully in a calm state of mind, paying full attention to eating; every morsel should be chewed properly. Food should be revered like the *prasāda* (offerings made to the Deity). Enough water should be taken before and after the meals. Water is like nectar for our vital functions. Drink at least a tumblerful of water before taking food. Don't drink more than half a bowl of water while eating. Drink sufficient water after about an hour of taking the meals. This helps in proper digestion.

The type of food and mode of eating should also take into account the seasonal effects. The rainy season is very critical with respect to healthcare through controlled food. In this period (known as *visarga kāla* in Ayurveda) the sun begins to move towards the winter solstice (*dakṣiṇāyana*). The *vāta* accumulated in the body due to the heat of summer begins to show its ill effects, it diminishes the appetite and causes gastric troubles, etc. Normal digestion also takes longer time in this season because of this *vāta*, which, if one does not take proper care in the selection of food and eating habits, catalyzes the *doṣa* of *pitta* as well. The rise in humidity makes this season risky towards the rise of *kapha doṣa*. People prone to cold and cough should therefore be extra careful about their food during the monsoons.

In view of these Ayurvedic observations, one should eat light and easily digestible meals and firmly resist from lavish, heavy stuff. Else the vicious effects of undigested food and associated accumulation

and rise of *doṣas* will invite one disease after the other, some of which might manifest gradually in the successive seasons. As a preventive measure, drinking water should be boiled in this season and vegetables and salads, etc should also be washed in clean, boiled water. A combination of sweet-sour-salty juicy substance should be used in food to reduce the *vāta* effect. Ginger should be used in food preparation to make it easily digestible. Vegetables like green gourd, lady's-finger are suitable, as these do not increase gastric problems; use of sprouts or pulses of green-gram and roasted or cooked maize is also beneficial.

Ayurvedic scriptures advise against the use of milk in the month of *shravan* (the second month of rainy season in India) and buttermilk in *bhadon* (the third month of rainy season in India); curd should be generally avoided during the entire season of monsoon. Viral fever, malaria, typhoid, jaundice, conjunctivitis, gastroenteritis and skin infections are quite common diseases (in India) during this season. Necessary precautions should be taken in this regard. Preventive herbal medicines may also be used as a support in high-risk areas. (Detailed information and the herbal medicines are available from the Ayurvedic Pharmacy of Shantikunj, Hardwar).

If preventive care is taken as regards taking healthy foods in the rainy season, the winter would prove to be beneficial towards enhancing the vigor and health of the body. Ayurveda also lays stress on spiritual effects of food. We shall present this information extracted from Vedic scriptures in the next issue.

**(To be continued)**

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# SOUL - AN ETERNAL ENTITY

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*A sincere and serious seeker of Truth, Nachiketa, inquires Yamaraj – The Lord of Death*

*Yeyam prate vicikitsā manuṣye,  
Astityeke nayastiti caike  
Aitad vidyā manuṣīśtas twaya ham  
Varanameś varastritayah*

Kathopanishad 1/20

“Oh Lord! Some people say soul exists, some say this body itself is the soul; while others say that soul does not exist after death. Please tell me – what is the truth? This is my third boon you have promised to grant me”.

Like Nachiketa, any human being, who has deeply involved himself in *Tapa-Sādhanā*, *Yoga* or long-term meditation and contemplation practices but has not yet realized his immortal self-identity, remains in this inquisitive state. Does the soul exist or not? It is a question of paramount importance. Those who are not able to solve this riddle go on groping in dark for a convincing answer but for those who have realized their true – self, life becomes a boon and bliss.

In this regard, the concepts of Hindu philosophy are very clear. Leaving aside a few thinkers like Maharishi Charak, who identified the sense of soul consciousness with the physical body, most of the Indian seers have considered the soul as an eternal entity independent of the body. Complex methods of *yoga* have been discovered with the help of which it is possible to take the soul out of the body when a person is alive and make it consciously enter the dead

body of another person. The following are few instances of such phenomena.

1. During a scriptural debate with Bhagvati Bharati, wife of Mandan Misra, Adi Shankaracharya became answerless on a question that required knowledge of sex. The latter requested for some time to be able to give a convincing reply. Coincidentally, during the same time, the king of Mahishmatinagar died. Shankaracharya made his soul enter the king's dead body. This process is called *Parkaya Pravesh*. Daily he used to take out the soul from his body, leaving his dead body lying in the jungle and his soul entering the body of king. During the night when Shankaracharya used to reenter his own body, king's body became dead. The use of two bodies by a single soul amply proves a separate existence of the soul.

2. In 1939, an army commandant L.P. Farrel of the Western Command saw with his own eyes near Assam-Burma border a *yogi* who came out from his old body and entered the dead body of a young man who then became alive. This incident has been published in the May, 1970 issue of Akhand Jyoti (Hindi edition) on pages 29-30.

3. Normally, it is believed that life is based on the process of respiration. But saint Haridas took *samadhi* for one month in the presence of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and several British officers and established that the relation of the body is related to the soul in the same way as the machine is

run by the electrical power. Without the soul the body becomes dead.

These are a few of the hundreds of recorded testimonies of soul's immortality. Indian philosophers are fully confident in this regard and assert –

*Vyatirekastad bharabharitwannatoopa labhadhiwat.*

Vedant. 31/3/54.

That is – “Body and soul are not one and the same. In the absence of the soul, body can not have perception of anything”.

The principles regarding the immortality of the soul and its independent existence apart from the body that were propounded by our sages are now getting validated on the touchstone of science. In this connection, great significance is being attached to the living cells forming the body. Dr. Stanley and his colleagues of the Rockefeller Institute of America have done rigorous scientific research to find out the difference between a living body and a dead body. Though they have not yet published their final results but if one considers their tentative findings in the light of Indian philosophy, they seem to be echoing the insights of the hoary Indian philosophy.

These scientists say that the living cells are produced by the various chemical processes automatically; that is, the soul is the body's chemical consciousness; but these cells are produced so long as they are related to protoplasm (which helps in the making of the body). This means that consciousness is related only to the consciousness. Accordingly soul should be considered independent of body.

It is a self-evident truth that after death all the bodily sense perceptions vanish. Why does a creature, which was eating, drinking, walking, sweating, excreting, coughing –

sneezing, yawning, thinking, talking, guiding and expressing - love, compassion, pity, or hate, malice and anger, stops doing all such activities after death, even though the body is the same?

The question confronting the scientists was the assumption that every existing entity should have the weight and that had the light not been traveling at astronomically high speed; it would have been possible to weigh the quantity of light. Whatever be the form of energy, whether it is light, electricity, sound, heat or magnetism, its definition is that it does not have weight. They are recognized by their effect on the objects. But the scientific enquiry is not complete by merely knowing the effect on objects. That is why the principles of science and psychology do not match and an eternal question, in this intellectual age too, remains unresolved.

Coincidentally, the attention of some scientists was drawn to this unresolved riddle. They found some clues, which proved to be very helpful in identifying the independent existence of the soul. Once Dr. Kilner of England was examining patients in the hospital. While checking a patient who was on the verge of death, he noticed, with the help of a microscope, some strange colours on the skin of that patient. Next day he got the patient's clothes removed and again examined his skin with a powerful microscope. He was surprised to notice that the coloured light that was seen on the patient's skin a day before was enveloping the patient from all sides in a layer of about 6 to 7 inches. It was also observed that whenever that light became dim, the pulse rate went down. After sometime, that envelope of light suddenly disappeared. Now when he tried to see the pulse, it had gone,

that is the patient had died. This left Dr. Kilner guessing whether the inner consciousness consists of a material akin to light, which is different from the matter what constitutes the gross body.

Dr. Kilner published this incident in several magazines and newspapers. These reports drew the attention of other scientists, too. An American scientist William McDougal considered this incident to be of great significance. He got made a balance which can weigh the person along with the cot and that was very sensitive. A patient who was almost on the verge of death was admitted and he was made to lie along with the bed on the pan of the balance and his weight was recorded continuously. As soon as the patient died, the machine's needle indicated about one ounce less weight. This shows that whatever be the constituent of consciousness, its subtle body should also possess weight. Dr. McDougal also measured this weight in other dying patients and found that it varied from ¼ to 1½ ounce. He also concluded from his investigations that lesser the weight, more intelligent and scholarly was the person.

The definition of Indian philosophers about the soul – that it is luminous, eternal, omnipresent and independent of the gross body but tied to it by the bonds of one's deeds has now become the topic of scientific investigation. Dr. James Watson, a scientist of Harvard University and Dr. Francis Chris, of Cambridge University have found that the

threads of knowledge and virtues (Chromosomes) are found in the nuclei of the living cells which form the body. These are like the knots in a thread. These knots are called genes. This nucleus is the light element and since it is the essence of life it proves that it constitutes that very aura of light. When this light goes out of the body, the latter becomes dead. This shows that the soul exists as a separate entity that is different from gross matter.

Human body contains around sixty trillion living cells. The genes found in these cells may have a length of about 5 feet. The length of genes found in sixty trillion cells would be 300 trillion feet. This is only an estimated length. In fact, it is infinite. If it were possible for a person to concentrate his knowledge in this sublime subtle consciousness, he will find himself in the omnipresent consciousness. This state has been called self- realization and it is attainable through rigorous *Sādhanā*. So long as a person does not realize his own Real Self, he remains a helpless creature tied to the material bonds ignorantly going through the endless cycles of births and deaths. Once he awakens to the truth of his immortal identity as an eternal soul, the same very creature washes away all the accumulated sins of previous births and enters the luminous realm of Eternal Life and Bliss.

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The nectar of religious sentiments can revive the life of humanity with the vital force of spirituality. Adoption of religion through heart would naturally transform the tendencies of possession into that of sharing, greed into generosity, passion into compassion, ego and hate into altruist service and love.... Where would then be a place for injustice, exploitation, crime or moral devaluation?

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## KEY TO ALL – ROUND SUCCESS

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*Kritam me dakṣine haste jayo me savya  
āhitah |  
Gojid bhūyāsamaśvajid Dhananjayo  
hiranyajit | |*

*-Atharva Veda 7/50/8*

“I have self effort in my left hand and victory in the right one. I can win cows, horses money and gold i.e. I am capable of achieving prosperity through focused self effort.”

How to be successful in our undertakings? This question frequently comes up in every mind, especially in the minds of youths. In childhood every thing looks like a fairyland. Many ambitions spring up in mind and subside but with the advent of youth a strong urge for getting in the chosen field of endeavor becomes strong and insistent. They go on trying to find new avenues of success but only a few actually succeed. There are many who give up as utter failures and go on lamenting their ill luck for their plight.

Many persons believe that success depends on luck. Such persons go on repeating the maxim “*Bhagya phalati Sarvda*” (Success is always achieved by luck). Persons with such an entrenched attitude of negativity slip into a mode of habitual laziness and indolence.

. For persons blindly depending on luck success is only a coincidence. It has no scientific procedure without any systematic process. Such indolent persons do not know the real meaning and purport of luck. What

we call luck is the result of our past actions. Virtuous actions result in good luck while evil actions fructify as ill luck. The results of our past actions known as luck can be altered by our present actions. Our ill -luck can be undone by our present virtuous actions and converted into good luck, while our evil actions weaken our good luck and take no time in converting it into bad luck.

Only those who know the importance of the great maxim. “We are the makers of our own destiny” move fast towards all round success -material as well as spiritual. There is an effective procedure for success with its constituent factors. These factors are mainly seven, like the seven continents, seven *chakras* and seven worlds. Energy streams of these seven elements give us the glory of success in life. These are:

1. Sustained hard work along with unshakable self-confidence.
2. Unwavering faith in divine grace.
3. Firm determination to achieve the object of pursuit.
4. Undaunted courage to go on pursuing the goal in spite of setback.
5. Art of warm relationship.
6. Equanimity in the phase of difficulties.
7. Exuberating cheerfulness.

When these qualities become part and parcel of our life they gradually bestow on us sevenfold successes. These are: -

1. Material prosperity
2. Impersonal excellence.
3. Emotional maturity.

4. Holistic health
5. Sharp penetrating and clear sighted intelligence.
6. Intuitive perception.
7. Spiritual growth.

This is a universally well-tried and tested experience. We can also do an experiment.

Yugrishi Pandit ShriRam Sharma Acharya helped thousands of persons achieve all-round success in their lives. In Gaytari Parivar there are thousands of parijans who have risen from persons of modest means to become multi-millionaire. Similarly a number of persons of ordinary looking mental caliber have become highly learned scholars. This became possible as a result of particularly concentrated and single pointed individual endeavors magnified manifold by Gurudev's grace. This is a fact that Gurudev bestowed on them his spiritual powers of penance but it is equally true that these people also changed their life-style and way of thinking. Gurudev used to say that his yogic energy would also be ineffective in the case of those who do not change their life style.

Many years back a person approached Gurudev. Economically he was very poor, and also lacked good education. After visiting and trying a number of astrologers, tantriks, and occultists somebody advised him to seek blessing of Gurudev, being endowed with supernatural powers of goddess Gaytari. After giving him a patient

hearing Gurudev told him, "Dear child, first have firm faith that Gayatri is source of Veda i.e. Goddess of knowledge. Secondly she is also the Goddess of wisdom. Hence She blesses only those who are determined to cultivate and awaken knowledge and wisdom in them. If you are willing to do it I will teach you the method of doing it. Once you have knowledge and wisdom, you have the master keys to success.

That man expressed his willingness to do his best to put into practice Gurudev's teachings. Then Gurudev said, "Trust that sustained efforts coupled with blessings of God make every impossible goal attainable. To get blessings of God you have to carry on regular *Gayatri-Sadhana*. As regards the technique, the first requisite is to clearly decide the target and have an intense desire to achieve it. Instead of indulging in vain imaginations one should strengthen his main aim. The second point is to have strong faith. This faith should be on your own capabilities and in the Deity of your devotion. Third requirement is persevering and balanced effort undaunted by obstacles. You should never lose heart. You should maintain equilibrium in your efforts so that no tension could affect your capacity adversely. Fourth point is to accept and face situations as they arise. By following step-by step path of success you are sure to reach the goals you set for you.

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*He is an ungrateful person indeed, who even remotely thinks of turning his back on his benefactors – those from whom he has received love, affection, goodwill and cooperation.*

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## GUIDELINES FOR SHARPENING THE INTELLECT

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*Indra yaste navīyasīn giram  
mandrāmajjanat |*

*Cikityinmanasam dhiyam pratnāmṛtasya  
pipyuṣim || - Rigveda 8/95/5*

O Supreme Lord of perfect majesty!  
Bless the one whoever sings new and  
beautiful encomiums to you with the intellect  
which is endowed with supreme wisdom and  
which enlightens the mind.

Everyone is desirous of increasing his  
mental and intellectual capabilities. This  
craving is more endemic to the student  
community. Most of them are on the lookout  
for some formula or technique that may  
enhance their mental power. It is seen in all  
spheres of life that the more intelligent are  
able to make progress and achieve success  
while the dullards are left behind in the race.  
This phenomenon has become almost a  
truism, to the extent that intelligence and  
success have come to be viewed as  
synonymous.

How may the unintelligent become  
intelligent? And how can the intelligent ones  
further increase their brainpower? The  
answers to these questions have never been  
properly known or learnt. The results of  
research investigations made in this field  
generally remain unavailable to the common  
mass of people. Ignorant of the effective tools  
of intellect development, the majority of  
people resign themselves to their present  
mental level, branding it as destiny or fate.  
But the reality is otherwise. With the grace  
of God, combined with dedicated human  
endeavor, worthwhile goal is achievable.

But before we embark on this  
venture, let us be clear about what exactly is  
meant by intellectual capacity. Most people

have a misconception about the true nature  
and function of the intellect. They identify  
intelligence with trickery and chicanery of all  
sorts. For them, being intelligent means an  
ability to fix things up and grab the desired  
object by hook or by crook. But those who are  
aware of the reality know that intellect or *buddhi*  
is, in fact, an instrument manifesting as a  
process of analysis, deliberation and  
discernment. An application of this process  
leads to the development of understanding,  
determination and far-sightedness.

Analysis is made of the prevailing  
circumstances, available facts and the past  
experience. It helps in giving a right direction  
to the course. Deliberation means refining the  
thoughts and imaginations, properly  
arranging them and giving them a focused  
orientation. Discernment is the faculty to  
discriminate between the right and the wrong,  
the judicious and the injudicious, the true and  
the false. One in whom all these three  
dimensions of intellect are harmoniously  
activated is endowed with an outstanding  
capacity of understanding. He is able to  
perform the right action at the right time. He  
can easily untangle complex issues and  
situations. His decisions are quick and  
accurate, and stand the test of time. There is  
a spontaneous development of farsightedness  
and perspicacity in him. His clear-sighted  
competent mind seldom fails to make correct  
assessment about the future course of events.

In this context, the thoughts of the  
great seer, scholar and indologist  
Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj  
are worth reflection. The name of Gopinath  
Kaviraj should not be unfamiliar to whoever  
has an interest in Indian culture, philosophy

and the science of spirituality. Kavirajji was, besides being a great scholar, also an advanced *sādhak* (spiritual seeker). Once, while he was a professor, a student met him. Him was very unhappy, frustrated and depressed; Kavirajji called him at his residence and very attentively heard his tale of woes. The student's problem was that in spite of regularly attending the classes he was unable to grasp the lessons being taught. In other spheres of activity, too, he felt intellectually handicapped. This sense of inadequacy had even driven him to suicidal attempts.

Gopinathji was deeply touched by his plight and encouraged him: "You need not get perturbed by this. The Mother of the universe who transformed an ignoramus like Kalidas into a great poet will also bless you with a sharpened intellect. Only you will have to make some efforts for this." The boy gazed at him hopefully. Gopinathji continued: "The first step in increasing the mental ability is steadiness. Beware that it is our flickering and instable dispositions that act as a hindrance to intellectual development. To surmount this obstacle, it is necessary that you practice three hours of continuous study daily, albeit increasing the period slowly and gradually. When the body is steady, the mind also becomes stable, and this is conducive to the development of intellect. The next stage in this sequence is concentration of the mind. For this, it is essential for you to focus totally on the subject of your study. Even if you are unable to follow it, keep on trying to grasp the meaning with full concentration and diligence. A continued practice of concentrating the mind will automatically increase your power of comprehension".

Besides these two main elements, there are many subsidiary points; namely (1) curiosity, i.e. an earnest desire to know more and more about a thing; (2) company of the

wise – we should try to cultivate contact with the learned, the thinking, and the intelligent persons; (3) self-encouragement – rather than wallow in pessimistic thoughts, it would be necessary to develop confidence in one's own ability; (4) functional utility – we should try to know the functional utility of the knowledge we want to acquire; an awareness of such practical applicability makes the subject more easily comprehensible; (5) pool of knowledge - acquisition of information from different sources also helps in the development of intellect; (6) deep insight - if you cultivate a keen eye, you will realize that the whole nature and our entire surroundings are imparting some lesson every moment; (7) student mentality – one should consider oneself a perpetual learner and always remain eager to learn new things; (8) faith in the Divine Grace – it compensates for the deficiencies and drawbacks and makes life meaningful.

The *Gāyatrī Mahāmantra* is the bestower of righteous intellect. By taking recourse to this powerful *mantra*, innumerable persons with poor intellect have been able to acquire superior intelligence. A regular chanting of this *mahāmantra* leads to steadiness of body and mind and one-pointed concentration. Besides, the subtle and powerful vibrations generated by the *mahāmantra* activate and energize the whole nervous system. The correct method of *Gāyatrī sādhanā* and its processes can be learnt by reading *Gāyatrī Mahavijñāna* (The Super Science of *Gāyatrī*) which has been published by Shanti kunj, Haridwar. The *sādhanā* of the elemental force of *Gāyatrī* is not only beneficial for the development of intellect but is also a sure-shot recipe for enhancing the memory power.

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# *Sāadhanā*

## TOWARDS SELF-REALIZATION

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Spiritual *sāadhanā* is practiced to attain self-awakening. The starting point of any *sāadhanā* is self - introspection. Understanding the falsity of our egocentric identity through introspection is the first essential prerequisite on the path of self-realization. It enables the *sadhak* to pinpoint the ignorance-bred negativities lodged in the depths of our psyche. The second step is to cleanse our inner being of all the accumulated debris and weeds of ignorance and simultaneously sowing the seeds of self-elevating virtues in the cleansed and fertilized soil of our inner being; and vigilantly nurture these divine attributes of selflessness, humility, altruism, loving kindness, compassion, etc. Mechanically performing religious rituals and mistaking them as spiritual *sadhana* is a mere self-deception.

In order to accomplish *siddhi* or success, *sāadhanā* has been considered a must. It is a proverbial saying that *sādhak* accomplishes *siddhi*. Those who work to achieve *siddhi* but shirk the endeavor of *sāadhanā*, have to remain unsuccessful, even though they might accuse some persons, circumstances or stars etc for their failures. In this world, everything is purchased after paying its cost. One can collect only garbage lying on the road free of cost. In order to pick up precious pearls, one has to dive deep into the sea. That too, in order to become a successful diver, that is, to understand the minute aspects of this art and mastering it, takes a very long time.

It is said that *sāadhanā* is completed in twelve years and then its becomes worthy of giving the desired success. This is true not only for the spiritual *sāadhanā* but also for those done for the fulfillment of materialistic objectives. Those people are mistaken who think that duration of a month or fortnight is enough for becoming an artist, musician, singer etc. *Sādhak* has to cross several milestones. Of these, the first one is - overcoming the boredom arising out of monotony of the task. The child's mind remains unstable. It doesn't stay long, on any job. While playing, they start making a mansion of sand. It is not complete yet and their minds change. Now they start playing garden. Before it is completed, they start the third game, and so the sequence goes on. The impatience of mind wants the tasks in hand too, to be completed in haste. The bubbles in water can be formed quickly but they are short lived. From the point of view of fun and frolic, it is all right, but keeping in view the time and energy required for important tasks, impatience or haste has no place in *sāadhanā*.

Everyone must have heard the story of Shekhchilli (a typical nitwit ever living in fool's paradise). He was carrying a pot of oil on his head. While going he sank in the fantasy. He started thinking that he will buy a hen from the wages of carrying this oil. When the hens multiply, he will purchase goats. He then thought of buying buffaloes and then a mansion and finally he thought

that that he will marry – and the wife will give birth to children etc. The impatience was so much that the pot of oil fell down; with the result that instead of getting the wages he received the fist blows of his master. This story may be or may not be true, but it resembles the fantasies of most of us. Generally, people make big and attractive plans, but lack the concentration, assiduousness and patience required for the purpose and still want success. At the same time, they are also eager not to practice continuously and not to wait till they master the needed skills through hard work. In this haste, many people undertake one task enthusiastically and when it not completed in a short span of time, they get impatient. The resulting frustration leads to discontinuance of the project in hand and start of some other newer project. When it is not felt easy, it is also discontinued. Thus they go on leaving the tasks incomplete one after the other. For the failures they label the charge on others and curse the fate. In this way the morale is shaken and even the easier tasks, which can be done in the normal course, are not completed.

In order to achieve success in any important task, it is necessary to develop the necessary skills, collect desired resources and do hard work. In spite of this, sometimes unexpected problems crop up and it appears that they may lead to failures. Some people become nervous simply by this fear of failure.

Every failure demonstrates that there was deficiency of effort and resources needed for the task. Therefore, it should be continued with still greater determination and enthusiasm. Warriors like Rana Pratap and

Shivaji were confronted with gigantic problems and failures throughout their lives. But they never gave up and did achieve their goals. Jesus Christ dedicated his entire life to fulfill his mission of mercy, compassion and universal brotherhood. Even then he got no success during his short span of life, and was crucified by the dogmatic and ritualistic priests of the day. In spite of all the disgrace and torture that was heaped on him and the seeming failure of his mission during his lifetime, the history of the past two millenniums testifies to the success of his mission. He is worshipped and adored as one of the greatest saviors and path-showers of mankind.

The spiritual masters advise their disciples to go on moving along the chosen path life after life. If the target is not achieved during the span of one life then one should not get disheartened. The Divine Teacher assures in Gita:

*Bahunā janmanāmante jñānvanmaṁ  
prapdyat \_  
Vāsudevā sarvamiti sa mahātmā  
surdurlabhā \_*

-Gita VII / 19

“At the end of many births the man of knowledge attains to me; and sees that Vasudev, the Omnipresent Being, is all that is. Such a great soul is very rare.”

So, a sincere and serious *Sādhak* must continue his pilgrimage towards his Heavenly Home unmindful of the time it takes. There is assurance from the Divine Teacher Himself of the ultimate success of the effort.

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**As the moth eats up clothes, so does jealousy eat away man.**

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# SPONTANEOUS ILLUMINATION THROUGH GURU KRIPA

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*It is said that through cosmic serendipity the teacher appears the moment the seeker is ready to receive spiritual illumination and revelation. This is exactly that happened to the world renowned spiritual seeker, Paul Brunton in 1931, while he was meditating in the presence of Raman Maharishee at his Ashram in Tiruvannamalai (Tamilnadu)..*

*We humbly and gratefully share with our readers the vivid and enchanting account of this spiritual encounter and experience in Paul Brunton's own words – as recorded in his universally acclaimed master piece – “ A search in secret India.”*

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I return hastily from an exploration of some usually veiled sanctuaries of the great temple and enter the hall when the evening meditation period has run out half its life. I slip quietly to the floor and straightway assume my regular meditation posture. In a few seconds I compose myself and bring all wandering thoughts to a strong center. An intense interiorization of consciousness comes with the closing of eyes.

The Maharishee's seated form floats in a vivid manner before my mind's eyes. Following his frequently repeated instruction I endeavour to pierce through the mental picture into that which is formless, his real being and inner nature, his soul. To my surprise the effort meets with almost instantaneous success and the picture disappears again, leaving me with nothing more than a strongly felt sense of his intimate presence.

The mental questionings, which have marked most of my earlier meditations, have lately begun to cease. I have repeatedly interrogated my consciousness of physical, emotional and mental sensations in turn, but, dissatisfied in the quest of self, have

eventually left them all. I have then applied the attention of consciousness to its own center, striving to become aware of its place of origin. Now comes the supreme moment. In that concentration of stillness, the mind withdrawn into itself, one's familiar world begins to fade off into shadowy vagueness. One is apparently environed for a while by sheer nothingness, having arrived at a kind of mental blank wall. And one has to be as intense as possible to maintain one's fixed attention. But how hard to leave the lazy dalliance of our surface life and draw the mind inwards to a pin-point of concentration! Tonight I flash swiftly to this point, with barely a skirmish against the continuous sequence of thoughts, which usually play the prelude to its arrival. Some new and powerful force comes into dynamic action within my inner world and bears me inwards with resistless speed. The first great battle is over, almost without a stroke, and a pleasurable, happy, easeful feeling succeeds its high tension.

In the next stage I stand apart from the intellect, conscious that it is thinking, but warned by an intuitive voice that it is merely an instrument. I watch these thoughts with a

weird detachment. The power to think, which has hitherto been a matter for merely ordinary pride, now becomes a thing from which to escape, for I perceive with startling clarity that I have been its unconscious captive. There follows the sudden desire to stand outside the intellect and just be. I want to dive into a place deeper than thought. I want to know what it will feel like to deliver myself from the constant bondage of the brain, but to do so with all my attention awake and alert. It is strange enough to be able to stand aside and watch the very action of the brain as though it were someone else's, and to see how thoughts take their rise and then die, but it is stranger still to realize intuitively that one is about to penetrate into the mysteries which hide the innermost recesses of man's soul. I feel like some Columbus about to land on an uncharted continent. A perfectly controlled and subdued anticipation quietly thrills me.

But how to divorce oneself from the age-old tyranny of thoughts? I remember that the Maharishee has never suggested that I should attempt to force the stoppage of thinking. "Trace thought to its place of origin," is his reiterated counsel, "Watch for the real self to reveal itself, and then your thoughts will die down of their own accord." So, feeling that I have found the birthplace of thinking, I let go of the powerfully positive attitude which has brought my attention to this point and surrender myself to complete passivity, yet still keeping as intently watchful as a snake of its prey.

This poised condition reigns until I discover the correctness of the sage's prophecy. The waves of thought naturally begin to diminish. The workings of logical rational sense drop towards zero point. The strangest sensation I have experienced till

now grips me. Time seems to reel dizzily as the antennae of my rapidly growing intuition begin to reach out into the unknown. The reports of my bodily senses are no longer heard, felt, remembered. I know that at any moment I shall be standing outside things, on the very edge of the world's secret.

Finally it happens. Thought is extinguished like a snuffed candle. The intellect withdraws into its real ground, that is, consciousness working unhindered by thoughts. I perceive, what I have suspected for some time and what the Maharishee has confidently affirmed, that the mind takes its rise in a transcendental source. The brain has passed into a state of complete suspension, as it does in deep sleep, yet there is not the slightest loss of consciousness. I remain perfectly calm and fully aware of who I am and what is occurring. Yet my sense of awareness has been drawn out of the narrow confines of the separate personality; it has turned into something sublimely all embracing. Self still exists, but it is a changed, radiant self. For something that is far superior to the unimportant personality which was I, some deeper, diviner being rises into consciousness and becomes me. With it arrives an amazing new sense of absolute freedom, for thought is like a loom-shuttle which is always going to and fro, and to be freed from its tyrannical motion is to step out of prison into the open air .

I find myself outside the rim of world consciousness. The planet, which has so far harboured me, disappears. I am in the midst of an ocean of blazing light. The latter, I feel rather than think, is the primeval stuff out of which worlds are created, the first state of matter. It stretches away into untellable infinite space, incredibly alive.

I touch, as in a flash, the meaning of the mysterious universal drama, which is being enacted in space, and then return to the primal point of my being. I, the new I, rest in the lap of holy bliss. I have drunk the Platonic Cup of Lethe, so that yesterday's bitter memories and to-morrow's anxious cares have disappeared completely. I have attained a divine liberty and an almost indescribable felicity. My arms embrace all creation with profound sympathy, for I understand in the deepest possible way that to know all is not merely to pardon all, but to love all. My heart is remoulded in rapture.

How shall I record these experiences through which I next pass, when they are too delicate for the touch of my pen? Yet the starry truths, which I learn, may be translated into the language of earth, and the effort will not be a vain one. So I seek, all too roughly, to bring back some memorials of the wonderful archaic world that stretches out, untracked and unpathed, behind the human mind.

- *Man is grandly related and a greater Being suckled him than his mother. In his wiser moments he may come to know this.*

- *Once, in the far days of his own past, man took an oath of lofty allegiance and walked, turbaned in divine grandeur with the gods. If today the busy world calls to him with imperious demand and he gives himself up to it, there are those who have not forgotten his oath and he shall be reminded of it at the appropriate hour.*

- *There is That in man which belongs to an imperishable race. He neglects his true self almost completely, but his neglect can never affect or alter its shining greatness. He may forget it and I entirely go to sleep in the senses, yet on the day when it stretches forth its hand and touches him, he shall remember who he is and recover his soul.*

- *Man does not put the true value upon himself because he has lost the divine sense. Therefore he runs after another man's opinion, when he could find complete certitude more surely in the spiritually authoritative center of his own being. The Sphinx surveys no earthly landscape. Its unflinching gaze is always directed inwards, and the secret of its inscrutable smile is self-knowledge.*

- *He who looks within himself and perceives only discontent, frailty, darkness and fear, need not curl' his lip in mocking doubt. Let him look deeper and longer, deeper and longer, until he presently becomes aware of faint tokens and breath-like indications, which appear when the heart is still. Let him heed them well, for they will take life and grow into high thoughts that will cross the threshold of his mind like wandering angels, and these again shall become forerunners of a voice which will come later - the voice of a hidden, recondite and mysterious being who inhabits his center, who is his own ancient self.*

- *The divine nature reveals itself anew in every human life, but if a man walks indifferently by, then the revelation is as seed on stony ground. No one is excluded from this divine consciousness; it is man who excludes himself. Men make formal and pretentious enquiry into the mystery and meaning of life, when all the while each bird perched upon a green bough, each child holding its fond mother's hand, has solved the riddle and carries the answer in its face. That Life which brought you to birth, O Man! Is nobler and greater than your farthest thought; believe in its beneficent intention towards you and obey its subtle injunctions whispered to your heart in half-felt intuitions.*

• *The man, who thinks he may live as freely as his unconsidered desires prompt him and yet not carry the burden of an eventual reckoning, is binding his life to a hollow dream. Whoever sins against his fellows or against himself pronounces his own sentence thereby. He may hide his sins from the sight of others, but he cannot hide them from the all-recording eyes of the gods. Justice still rules the world with inexorable weight, though its operations are often unseen and though it is not always to be found in stone-built courts of law. Whoever escapes from paying the just penalties, which the gods impose, Nemesis -remorseless and implacable -holds such a man in jeopardy every hour.*

• *Those who have been held under the bitter waters of sorrow, those who have moved through shadowed years in the mist of tears, will be somewhat readier to receive the truth which life is ever silently voicing. If they can perceive nothing else, they can perceive the tragical transience, which attends the smiles of fortune. Those who refuse to be deluded by their brighter hours will not suffer so greatly from their darker ones. There is no life that is not made up of the warp of pleasure and the woof of suffering. Therefore no man can afford to walk with proud and pontifical air. He who does so takes his perambulation at a grave peril. For humility is the only befitting robe to wear in the presence of the unseen gods, who may remove in a few days what has been acquired during many years. The fate of all things moves in cycles and only the thoughtless observer can fail to note this fact. Even in the universe it may be seen that every perihelion is succeeded by an aphelion. So in the life and fortunes of man, the ebb of privation may succeed the flood of prosperity,*

*health may be a fickle guest, while love may come only to wander again. But when the night of protracted agony dies, the dawn of newfound wisdom glimmers. The last lesson of these things is that the eternal refuge in man, unnoticed and unsought as it may be, must become what it was once -his solace, or disappointment and suffering will periodically conspire to drive him in upon it. No man is so lucky that the gods permit him to avoid these two great tutors of the race.*

• *A man will feel safe, protected, secure, only when he discovers that the radiant wings of sublimity enfold him. While he persists in remaining unilluminated his best inventions shall become his worst impediments, and everything that draws him closer to the material frame of things shall become another knot he must later untie. For he is inseparably allied to his ancient past, he stands always in the presence of his inner divinity and cannot shake it off. Let him, then, not remain unwitting of this fact but deliver himself, his worldly cares and secret burdens into the beautiful care of his better self and it shall not fail him. Let him do this, if he would live with gracious peace and die with fearless dignity.*

• *No dust can ever settle on the grave grandeur of these ancient truths, though they have lain in time since the early days of our race. No people have ever existed but have also received intimations of this deeper life, which is open to man. Whoever is ready to accept them must not only apprehend these truths with his intelligence, until they sparkle among his thoughts like stars among the asteroids, but must appropriate them with his heart until they inspire him to diviner action*

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## **FIRST CALL OF GURUDEV - TESTS AT EVERY STEP**

(Autobiography of Poojya Gurudev Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya )

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The matter of *Gurudev's* invitation to the *Himālayas* went on increasing like *Matsyāvatār*. There is a story in the *Purāna* that a tiny fish happened to enter *Brahmā's kamandalu* (water pot). When *Brahmā* took water in his palm for sipping, it magnified and covered the entire palm. *Brahmā* dropped it in a pitcher, where instantly it became double the size of the pitcher. Then *Brahmā* threw it in a nearby pond, where it outgrew the dimensions of the pond. Finally, *Brahmā* released it into the ocean, where the tiny-looking fish magnified itself to cover the whole of the ocean. It was then that *Brahmā* understood the mystery that the tiny fish was the incarnation of *Vishnu*. *Brahmā* then praised the Lord and sought His directions. The *Matsyāvatār* (*Vishnu* incarnated as fish) then dematerialised itself, after fulfilling the purpose of the incarnation. .

The chain of events in my life was almost similar. My spiritual life commenced when *Gurudev* got me initiated into *sāadhanā* by Malviyaji, who had performed my *yagyopavit* (sacred thread) ceremony and had explained to me the procedure of *Gāyatri jap*. I was then a small child, yet I regarded it as a gospel truth and followed it strictly without any interruption. I followed the principle of 'No food without *sāadhanā*'. This will continue till the last breath.

Thereafter, at the age of fifteen I had the vision of *Gurudev* in the form of light. He had directed me to perform *Gāyatrī Mahāpurascarana sāadhanā* for twenty-four

years so that I may become a true *Brāhmana*. I was also directed to visit the *Himālayas* from time to time, as and when called, to get myself spiritually recharged, after undergoing rigorous tests. After each such encounter, I was entrusted with new and greater responsibilities. Whenever I stumbled *Gurudev* picked me up in his arms.

Hardly a year had passed after my first *darsan* of *Gurudev* in my room of worship on *Basant parva* in 1926, when I received a telepathic invitation in early 1927 to visit the *Himālayas* and meet him again on *Basant pancami parva*. This first pilgrimage lasted for about a month. Although I was not in any haste, I was eager, no doubt, to see that which, till then was unseen. Others would not have even thought of visiting that region in that season of peak winter and face the hardships, loneliness and danger from wild and ferocious animals. My higher self had to wage a stiff battle against phantoms of fears, safety, security and disinclination to risk hazards for noble aims. This state of dilemma hardly remained for about twenty-four hours. I informed my family members and started for the journey exactly the next day. They kept mum because they knew that my decisions did not change. It has been my practice throughout life, like *Matsyāvatār*, to appear in toughest tests and come out of them with flying colours.

My first invitation to the *Himālayas* was my first experience of its kind. I had no prior information about the hazards which I

would be required to face there. In those days there was road and bus conveyance facility from Devprayag up to Uttarkashi only. The entire track after Uttarkashi had to be trodden on foot. The distance between Rishikesh to Devprayag had also to be covered on foot. I had no experience as to what essential luggage should be taken which could be carried in a back-pack. I had taken some more luggage, which I had to distribute to co-travellers, and I retained only that much which was essential and which I could carry while going on foot. *Gurudev* wanted to test me whether I had the capacity to face adverse circumstances. Anybody else placed in those circumstances would have become nervous, turned back or would have fallen ill. But *Gurudev* wanted to practically teach me that adverse circumstances could be faced and made favourable if the will-power was strong. For achieving something significant in life, one has to be strong in spirit.

It is said that in old days *Risis* used to live in this region between Rishikesh and Gomukh and the region above Gomukh was the abode of gods. Circumstances, however, changed after the ice-age and gods withdrew into their astral forms and they still roam in the astral space. *Risis* of yore shifted to the region above Gomukh. The region below Gomukh is now visited by tourists. Although there are some cottages here and there, it is rare to find any person who may be called a *Risi* in the region below Gomukh.

I had heard that *siddha yogis* (enlightened saints) lived in caves situated in the upper *Himālayan* region but I did not find any proof of it. It is an inhospitable region and it is well-nigh impossible to physically survive there over a long period of time. Casually people do visit but they do not stay there. I came to know from *sādhus*

whom I met that they were there out of sheer curiosity in the hope of getting something miraculous from some one. They had no philosophical background and their lifestyle was hardly that of an ascetic. After a brief acquaintance, they used to express their wants. I felt unhappy and marched ahead wondering how such people could provide spiritual inspiration to the pilgrims.

In comparison to these *sādhus*, I found petty shopkeepers in *cattis* (halting places) of higher moral and ethical standards. They were simple good people. On purchasing flour, pulses, rice etc. they gladly supplied utensils for preparing food free of cost. They sold tea, *bidis*, match boxes, gram, jaggery, *sattu*, potatoes etc., to the travellers. Pilgrims were often devoted but poor. Locally made blankets were available in the night on hire at the *cattis*.

Cold season and walking on foot, both these were difficult tests. Residents of these places used to shift in this season to the lower regions for their livelihood and for grazing their cattle. Similarly, *sādhus* and hermits also shifted to lower regions to escape the unbearable intensity of cold, icy weather. There used to be utter silence in cottages in the villages. I had to undertake my pilgrimage under such difficult conditions from Uttarkashi to Nandanvan.

There was loneliness throughout with no proper arrangement for boarding and lodging. Wild animals used to roam about freely. Cold icy winds kept blowing all the time. The sun used to remain hidden for long hours behind high hilltops. It was visible at about 10 a.m. and disappeared behind the mountain peaks at about 2 p.m; Even though there was sunshine on the peaks, there used to be dim darkness at the foothills. Hardly some stray person was met on the trail.

People stirred out only when there was some inescapable work like death of someone. For me the entire region wore a deserted look. My only inseparable companions were my palpitating heart and thinking mind. I was being put to a test whether or not I could undertake a long journey under such difficult conditions. My faith rooted in the heart told me that so long as providence wills me to live, no one can kill me. My mind contemplated that there was life in trees, in flora all around. Birds live on them. Fish live in water. Wild animals wander in the forest. They remain alone and quite unclad. I told myself, “When there is profuse and riotous play of life in the forms of flora and fauna, all around, how could this region be called deserted? It is unbecoming of you while professing the maxim *vasudhaiv kutumbakam* to feel yourself cut off from the flow and manifestation of universal Life in myriad forms, of which you are an indivisible portion. Is it not a fallacy to consider human beings alone as living entities?”

My pilgrimage went on and with it continued my thinking. As man is in the habit of living in a community he is afraid of loneliness. Darkness is another big cause of fear. Throughout the day man lives in the light. In the night lamps are lighted to dispel darkness. But darkness in wilderness is much more frightening. A *yogi* has to get rid of this fear. Fearlessness has been regarded as an important attribute of spirituality. In its absence, mind remains unsteady.

Another danger in this awe-inspiring silence of the wilderness of the *Himālayan* region was the fear of wild and ferocious animals who stalk freely in the darkness of the night in search of their prey. Any encounter with such animals in the night amounted to direct confrontation with death. In the all-pervasive

silence of the wilderness such animals came out even in day time in search of their prey and water. I had to face all these hazards during this journey.

During my halts at night, I met slithering black snakes and hissing pythons. Lions of small stature are also found in this area that are agile but less powerful than the ones found in the plains. Amongst animals that mainly live on vegetation, bear is the most aggressive. Wild elephants are found in Shivalik ranges and lower regions of the *Himālayas*. All of them, by nature, are harmless unless one sees them eye-to-eye or they apprehend being teased or provoked. They charge at once if there is the slightest feeling of fear or anger.

Pilgrims are often required to face pythons, snakes, iguanas, bears, panthers, tigers, and elephants. They leave the track and flee away when I they find persons in a group but they go on their own way if they see a person alone. In that event the person has to take a detour otherwise he is bound to be assaulted by them.

Such confrontations came my way ten to twenty times in a day. Seeing me alone they used to move fearlessly and did not leave the track. I had to do so to save myself. This description appears to be simple in print but it was extremely dangerous in reality, since it was a grim confrontation with death. Sometimes these animals stealthily walked by my side and sometimes they followed me. Fear of death is most numbing. Although they might not charge but their very sight appeared to be dreadful like actual death. When one had to face such encounters almost every hour of the day, palpitation of the heart was bound to increase. These ferocious animals often used to be in a herd or a pack. If they had attacked they would have cut me

into pieces, clawed my flesh out and my life would have at once come to an end.

But there also I had to muster courage and foresight. Death is no doubt great but not greater than life. If there is a feeling of fearlessness and love within, even these ferocious animals cool down and their nature is changed. During this journey there were about three to four hundred such confrontations but I summoned up courage every time and maintained a perfect inner equanimity and an attitude of friendship and fearlessness. I had a firm faith that death has a fixed time, so why should I not face death happily if I have to die here in such circumstances? Why should I be afraid of it? This attitude had to be evoked and maintained resolutely. Loneliness, darkness and messengers of death had all combined to frighten me and warn me to withdraw and turn back but my power of determination came to my rescue every time and my pilgrimage went on proceeding ahead.

I was being put to test whether I was afraid of loneliness. In a few days my resolve became stronger and the creatures of that region became my own kith and kin in spirit. Fear disappeared, loneliness became a friend. With this success in the first question paper, started the series of successes in others.

The next test was of stoically bearing the rigours of *Himālayan* winter. I thought that when by practice, mouth, nose, eyes, head, ears, hands, which remain exposed, did not catch cold, why should the covered parts of the body feel cold. In Norway, Finland and regions around the North pole the temperature was always below the freezing point and still Eskimos and people of other communities lived there. Here the altitude was only about ten to twelve thousand feet above the sea level. I thought the challenge

was not insurmountable and means could be found out to seek protection from cold. I came to know from a local man that on the outer surface of the mountains there was severe cold but insides of the caves were comparatively warm. There were some specific types of shrubs, which catch fire although they are green, and these can be used to make fire for warming up and cooking. There were vegetables like leaves of *langadaā*, *marcā* etc. which could be eaten raw. The knots on the stem of birch tree (*bhojpatra*) on being boiled, give a tea-like drink, which removes cold. If one sat on his feet in a pose so that his head touches the knees, he would not feel much cold. Feeling less or more cold also depended on one's imagination. Children run here and there scantily clothed, yet they do not feel any discomfort. One cannot speak about old and sick persons, but the fact remained that a young and healthy man cannot die of cold. I adopted these measures and got fully convinced of their efficacy. Cold became manageable. It also helps a great deal if optimistic thoughts are entertained.

One more thing about ferocious animals. Their eyes shine when they move out mostly in the dark. All animals, even lions, are afraid of human beings. If a person is not afraid of them and they are not teased they do not attack human beings. They can thus be befriended.

In the beginning, I was afraid of them. Then I recalled how wild animals are tamed and trained to perform miraculous feats in circus. I had read the description of a European lady of Tanzania, whose husband was an employee in the Forest Department, how she had tamed two tiger-cubs who had separated from their parents. They used to sleep in her lap even after they had fully

grown up. If there is authentic fearlessness and a genuine feeling of love a person can enjoy living in a dense forest. *Adivāsis* and *Bhils* often live in dense forests and they are not afraid of anything. Remembering such instances, I became fearless and thought that a day would come when I would live in a cottage in the forest and a cow and a tiger would drink water at the same place.

Mind in the mass of humanity is weak. It can become powerful, if it is properly trained. I dispelled fear from my mind and continued my pilgrimage in that region. Instead of expecting favourable conditions I thought of making my mind strong enough to be able to live unperturbed under all conditions. I moulded my mind in this direction and adverse circumstances, which, in the beginning, had appeared frightening, became easy and natural.

The mind came under full control by constant beating, thrashing and moulding during this pilgrimage journey of twenty days. I started feeling as if I was born in this region and have to live here until I die.

From Uttarkashi to Gangotri there was a perilous trail prepared by pedestrians. There was a footpath also from Gangotri upto Gomukh. Tapovan is beyond Gomukh on a still higher altitude and there was no proper track leading to it. It is also a plain plateau. One has to walk according to inner inspiration or by relying on one's fate. After it, there is a series of high mountains before one reaches Nandanvan. This was the place where I was summoned. I reached there at the appointed time and saw *Gurudev* standing there. Our joy knew no bounds. At first, he had visited my

house. This time I came to his abode. I ardently wished and prayed for such meetings to recur frequently throughout my life.

This time I was put to three tests: to live alone, endure the tempestuous fury of inclement and icy cold weather and to remain unafraid while surrounded by ferocious animals. I passed in all the three tests.

Our talks did not last for long, *Gurudev* said, "It was necessary to have strong will and determination to attain spiritual power. Adverse circumstances could be transformed into opportunities for self-growth. A person having the soul of a *Risi* should not be afraid even of death, what to speak of tigers and lions. You have to spend most of your time under such conditions."

I was taken to the cave in which he had his abode and was shown a place to sleep. I had a very sound sleep, the duration of which might have been twice or thrice the time of my normal sleep. My entire fatigue and weariness of the journey disappeared, as if I had not walked at all.

I took bath there in a flowing stream and performed worship (*sandhyā*) there. I saw *Brahma-kamal* and *Dev-kand* for the first time in my life. By the smell of *Brahma-kamal* a person enters into *yog-nidrā* in a short time. *Dev-kand* is taken out from the earth. It is like sweet potato and tastes like a water-nut. A ripe *Dev-kand* weighs nearly five kilos. It satisfies one person's hunger for about a week. These two were the only tangible presents of *Gurudev*. One helped in eradicating physical fatigue and the other in infusing the mind with high spirits.

**(To be continued)**

## **GOLDEN TIPS FOR LIVING A PURPOSEFUL LIFE**

(Translation of some excerpts from *Poojya Gurudev's* discourses on “*Jivana Sādhanā*”)

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### **Invaluable resource:**

Friends!

The refinement and sublimation of personality depends upon cultivation of virtuous qualities. All of you can shape your personality in a better way and transform it into a glorious one. Eminence and nobility of personality is an invaluable asset which leads to success in all domains of the physical (worldly) and spiritual life. Wealth, materialistic tools or support and cooperation of others alone is not sufficient for worthwhile achievements. These resources are useful and could be necessary, but above all this, the master key is sublimity of one's own personality. How to refine the talents? How to develop an elevated personality? How to endow it with virtuous qualities and potentials? This is the paramount question, the central focus of the “Art of Living”. Finding its methodology and proceeding accordingly – is indeed like achieving at least half the goal towards a brilliant and fulfilling life.

### **From crudity to chiseled refinement:**

*Jivan Sādhanā* means —transmutation and enhancement of potentials, abilities and conduct by self-endeavor. The subtle mental imprints of the previous lives in the chain of eighty-four hundred thousands *yonis* (different life-forms) continue to influence one's tendencies in the human life as well. As a result, in the crude state of human life, one's cravings, behavior and actions are often driven by beastly instincts and negative

mental tendencies. Until uprooted and thrown out, these *kusanskāras* (evil impressions on the mind) hinder the refinement of personality. Elimination of these untoward, negative and pernicious instincts, habits and desires by untiring efforts and simultaneous cultivation of ennobling character and deeds is the real *sādhanā* of human life. This *sādhanā* is no less exacting than taming and training a wild animal and to engage it in constructive activities as per our will.

As crude metal from the mines is melted and refined in the fire before it could be processed to make shining ornaments, likewise the impurities of the *kusanskāras* need to be burnt out in the ‘fire’ of devout ascetic practices (*tapa*) of self-restraint and penance. The endeavors towards self-refinement are simultaneously accompanied by those of self-development through cultivation of noble qualities, upright conduct and character, values of human life and promotion of the worthy potentials and talents. This is how we can ‘manufacture and design’ the precious jewels from the ‘gold-mine’ of capabilities gifted to us by Nature. We should root out– from the field of our life – all the thorny weeds of evil tendencies and weaknesses of our nature and remold ourselves as civilized and cultured human beings.

### **True success possible only through single pointed *sādhanā*:**

*Sādhanā* is the key to paranormal attainments and preeminent success in human life. *Jivan-*

*sādhana* should be an integral part of our lives. For this, we should introspect and analyze our thoughts, our conduct and our activities impartially and thoroughly. We should also develop positive attitude and sincerely endeavor to uproot the infirmities, untoward and evil tendencies lying dormant within us. This process of constant self effort of gradual refinement and upliftment also implies conscious self-development, widening of outlook and altruistic involvement in the sorrows and joys of others. Self-development is achieved by substitution of selfishness by selflessness. This is what leads to supernormal attainments and awakening of divinity in the human heart.

#### **Positive transformation of attitude:**

The corner stone of overall self-transformation is transformation of the attitude. Change your outlook towards yourself; think and feel yourself not as the gross body, the immortal soul, for which this life and the body is only a sojourn in the infinite journey. You are born for the self-realization, for enlightenment, unbounded spiritual progress. No doubt, you should take care of healthy sustenance of the body. But don't confine the goal of your life only to blindly pursue after the possession of its comforts and pleasures. Your attitude should be – “eating to survive” and not “surviving to eat”; take proper care of the body as an instrument for the optimum use of the faculties of your sense organs and the mind. Change your views and behavior on the personal, familial and social fronts of life accordingly. Once you turn your attention inward and look at yourself as the soul, you will find marvellous solutions to all your problems and worries; the door of immense joy and progress will be wide open before you.

#### **True devotion:**

Friends!

Life is a precious gift. Don't let worldly allurements and attachments overpower and overshadow the beatitude and sublimity of your real self and the pristine dignity of your life. Look at the life of Goswami Tulsidas, for example! When he was blindly driven by sensual attractions and attachments, he received nothing but disdain, scorn and agony. But once his inner self was lit by the light of devotion to God, the same man (Rambola) became the great, venerable saint Tulsidas – the author of the holy Ramcharit Manas of immortal glory! But see..., his devotion was not like ours...; we chant the mantras, rotate the rosary, but our minds remain restive and unstable - roving around our tensions, desires, and what not. His was a total self-surrender. Nothing mattered to him except the devotion to Lord Ram. Such was the potency of his inner fervor for his Deity that it could compel Lord Ram Himself to appear before him and bless him in His Embodied Form.

#### **Fight the Mahabharata within yourself:**

Mahabharata is said to be the greatest war ever fought on this earth. Friends! You should know that the first step towards spiritual upliftment is to fight this gigantic war yourself in the battlefield of your own psyche, to wipe out its accumulated vices and tendencies. Our lives remain enslaved to the insane appetites and tendencies of the mind until and unless we are able to win this perpetual war against hostile hordes of *Kauravas* entrenched within us. Winning this war means attaining ultimate victory; becoming omnipotent. Those who conquer their minds are called *manaswi*. Success lies at their feet; they are the ones who become truly great personalities, saints, divine beings.

If you care and aspire for elevation to higher domains in life, join the great battle against the evils lodged within you. The first step towards triumph in this battle is the adoption of the principle of “simple living and high thinking”.

**Rise and march towards higher goals:**

Friends!

If you adopt the principle of “simple living and high thinking” you would soon start attaining rapid progress in life. Simplicity of life-style will automatically eliminate your sense of scarcity. This together with the positive and constructive transformation of your thinking and feelings will enable you to make constructive use of whatever resources you have. You would be happier with the same set of tools, facilities and resources you had earlier. Not only that, by prudent use of your potentials you will also be able to help others. Even if you are not able to go out and work for social service or offer visible help to others, you must keep

your thoughts open for that; think good, think high; think like the great, the wise. Your imaginations, your aspirations must now be directed towards better, brighter and nobler objectives.

Leave the slippery path of decline; come out of the hell and look at beauty of the heaven; live for ultimate salvation. Salvation implies — emancipation from all evils, sensual attractions, selfish attachments, illusions and sufferings. Moving towards the heaven (divine paradise) means — pursuing those ideals and principles which bestow everlasting peace, unalloyed joy, pure knowledge and soul-contentment. Start bringing about the needed change in your thinking, living, behavior, actions from this very moment, so that you could march ahead towards the attainment of the preeminent goal of life.

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Once, while walking in the royal garden, King Vikramaditya asked the poet Kalidasa, “You are so talented, intelligent. You are an unequalled genius in the field of literature. Why didn’t God make your physique as impressive as your mind?” Kalidas understood the hidden sarcasm in the King’s remark, but didn’t say anything at that moment. After coming to the palace he ordered for two pots – one earthen and the other golden and filled both of them with water. After a while Kalidas asked the king, “Now tell me, Sir whose water is cooler?” “Of the earthen pot”, Vikramaditya answered. Smilingly Kalidas said, “As the coolness does not merely depend on the looks of the outer surface of the pot, the same way the talents do not depend on the appearance. Your majesty, don’t look for the external beauty, look for inner virtues. Spiritual beauty is sublime. Intellect and eminence are not related to body, but to soul.”