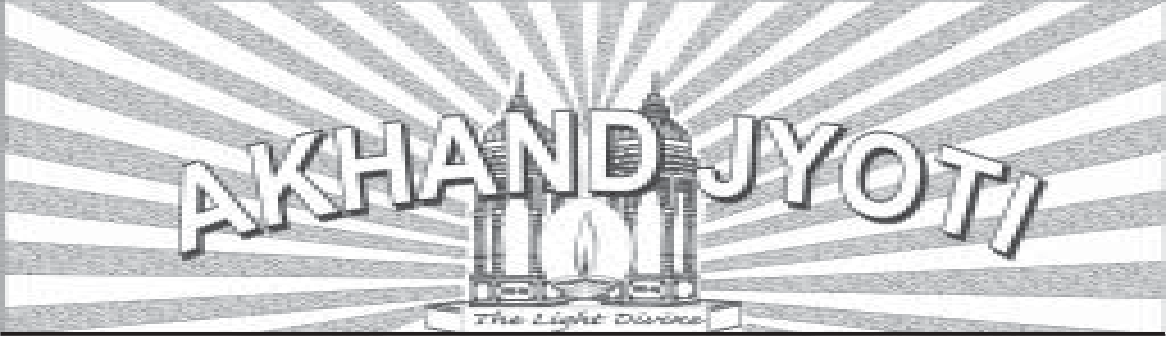


॥ Om bhurbbuval swah tatsaviturvarenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi dihiyo yo nah prachodayat ॥
(May Almighty illuminate our intellect and inspire us towards the righteous path)
Akshat 142:31-32 and 142:1; Tigrata 1:11, 119, 162, 163



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We hear our own echoes and see our own reflected images

Happiness is normally sought in worldly objects, relationships, incidents and circumstances. Such a search is misplaced. Had this been true, people who possessed ample resources and who did not have to face any adversities, should have been always happy and satisfied. On the other hand, people who are poor and who are living against heavy odds should all have been unhappy.

Happiness is an attitude of mind, which is determined by a person's viewpoint towards life. A person endowed with true humility has an attitude of glad acceptance of all that life brings to him; and this is what self-refinement and self-transcendence mean. More a person cultivates this attribute, happier he will be.

One who has the habit of faultfinding, negativity and seeing evil in others will remain a captive of this self-destructive attitude regardless of favorable circumstances as for as outer life is concerned. It is like dirtying one's own clothes by himself throwing mud on them. On the other hand, mind can definitely be so trained as to see the good, even though covered, in all persons and situations. It is one's own echo that is returned by the dome.

A ball thrown against the wall rebounds to the place from where it was thrown. It is one's own personality that is reflected by others and gives pleasant or unpleasant impressions accordingly. That is why this world has been given the analogy of a mirror. The mirror honestly reflects the image of the viewer.

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The crucial need of the hour is to decisively meet the challenge of all-pervasive “Crisis of Faith”

With this issue, the English edition of Akhand Jyoti completes one year of its publication. The warm welcome and appreciation of its readers and subscribers, received as a feedback by us, is highly encouraging. The *Gurusatta*'s message and teachings have provided the much-needed light and guidance to its readers in today's crisis-ridden world. It will be our sincere endeavor to provide the readers with still more inspiring and enlightening material in each successive issue during 2004.

Humanity is passing through extremely testing times – perhaps, its deepest crisis of recorded history. At the core of this malignant malaise of human psyche is the all-pervasive “crisis of faith”. Moral and ethical values have been wantonly disregarded. Reckless and blind pursuit of unbridled sense-gratification has destroyed the sanctity of time-tested institutions of marriage, family and mutually caring social order. Cities, towns and even villages present the same dismal scene of crass selfishness and sickening self-indulgence. Young couples want to get separated from their parents. They disdain our tradition of joint family. They are even unashamedly uncaring towards their own parents, forgetting that their own children will follow their example and mete out similar treatment to them in their old age. How long will this debauchery of “eat, drink and be merry” continue? Time is flying at its own pace. We don't know when our own beloved children will banish us into the stifling confines of old age homes? It is happening all around us and it is saddening.

Ostentatious religiosity is very much on the rise in the forms of *Devī Jāgraṇ*, *Pāth*, *Kathās*, etc. with ever increasing audiences. But there is no sign of authentic spirituality in the lives of those who throng to these congregations. True spirituality ought to reflect as love, compassion, and caring service in daily conduct. However attractive may be the physical appearance, if vibrancy, zeal and liveliness are not present within, it is like a lifeless statue. Today's religiosity is just like that. The exhibitionism “We are believers”, “We are religious”, etc. is increasing; although within, we may be cowards, escapists, or negativists. Our dissolute and vulgar thoughts, emotions and imaginings are incessantly sapping the vital energy of life.

In this disheartening scenario of near total breakdown of ethical and moral values on the individual, familial and social levels there arises the crying need for spiritually redeeming efforts. In fact, such efforts were initiated quite sometime back through “*Yug Nirman Yojna*” by our Guide and Teacher - *Gurudev Pandit Sriram Sharma Acharya*. These efforts consist of a three-pronged *Tapasyā* of: *Sādhanā*, *Upāsanā* and *Ārādhana*. *Sādhanā* entails focused, conscious and ever-vigilant effort of self-discipline and self-refinement of body, mind and emotions so that they become free-flowing channels of divine energies. *Upāsanā* means regular practice of withdrawal of inner and outer senses into the silence of the Supreme Spirit, indwelling us as our own *Ātmā*, through meditation and prayers and thus get recharged by Divine energy – which could in turn flow as selfless service of society and other sentient beings. *Gurudev* has termed the last one as *Ārādhana*. He used to say that *Upāsanā* and *Ārādhana* are mutually complementary and a true *sādhak* of *Gāyatrī* egolessly involves himself / herself in selfless altruistic and ennobling service of society.

Results of scientific research studies done at Brahmavarchas Research Institute, on the trainees of long and short retreats being continuously conducted at Shantikunj, have conclusively proved that *Gāyatrī Sādhanā* has amazing transformative effects at individual, family and group levels. Shantikunj has emerged as an academy for training the people in the true art of living. The prime thrust of its activities is to orient the masses towards cultivating enlightened intellects, healthful lives, and tranquil minds, culminating in spiritual awakening. Every reader, parijan should visit Shantikunj with family at least once in a year and get the benefit of taking a dip in the spiritually charged consciousness field of this Teerth.

These days the number of parijans from India as well as abroad visiting Shantikunj has greatly increased. Everyone desires peace of mind. Therefore it is but natural that they come in thousands to this Abode of Peace. However, the inner peace is not possible without *Sādhanā*. *Sādhanā* means controlling and transcending the ego-bound lower self. For this purpose we will have to exercise rigorous control over our senses, emotions, thoughts, time and money. *Sādhanā* of *Gāyatrī Mahāsakti* helps in accomplishing this self-mastery. *Gāyatrī* is the *Vidyā* (Science) of conserving the *Prān śakti* (life-force, vitality). *Gāyatrī* is amrit (nectar), *Pāras* (philosopher's stone) and *Kalpavrikṣa* (mythological tree, supposed to bestow desired objects). There is no mantra greater than *Gāyatrī Mahā Mantra*. There is no *Sādhanā* superior to and simpler than *Gāyatrī Sādhanā*. It is a universal collective prayer for the gift of righteous wisdom. Therefore, the readers-parijans should try to recite *Gāyatrī -Mantra* with sincerity and regularity.

Gāyatrī Mission is dedicated to the spiritual transformation of society. In order to achieve this goal, a multi-pronged plan of action has been undertaken. Akhand Jyoti magazine as the mouthpiece of this Mission is greatly helping in the dissemination of Mission's message of universal peace, love and understanding. India can, by example, play a leading role in showing the way to humanity out of the present all-engulfing darkness and hopelessness into an era of Love, Light and Harmony. It is imperative for all of us, parijans, to vigorously try to expand the circle of readership of this magazine, the bearer of the divine message, so that more and more people, especially the youth, respond to the wake-up call of the impending Dawn. Let every reader-subscriber motivate at-least five new persons to become its readers-subscribers. Such a sincere campaign could, not in very distant future, raise the figure of subscribers of this English edition to that of its Hindi counterpart.

Let us resolve that we will enter the New Year with a firm resolve to further refine ourselves and thus, by example, help in the refinement of the society at large. We pray to our Gurusatta to give us wisdom and strength to contribute wholeheartedly towards the accomplishment of the Mission's objectives.

With love and prayer filled New Year Greetings and Wishes to all our readers,

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Mysteries of the Great Pyramids

The pyramids of Egypt have always been a center of curiosity and attraction. From common tourists to historians, archeologists and scientific researchers, everyone feels somewhat fascinated by these mysterious monuments. For what purpose the pyramids were originally built and by whom? How were they used in the ancient times? Answers to these questions still remain a matter of controversies and endless debate. For many years, the pyramids were thought to be royal graveyards made for preservation of the mummies. However, the majestic geometrical and archaeo-astronomical features of the pyramids and the amazing energy fields found by the researchers inside these gigantic structures reveal a gamut of new facets.

The word 'pyramid' originates from the Greek words '*pyra + mid*'. '*Pyra*' means 'fire' and '*mid*' means 'in the middle'. Thus, the literal meaning of pyramid would be – in the middle of fire (energy!). This indicates a possibility that the pyramids were constructed to serve as energy reservoirs or sources of accessing and preserving energy from the cosmos. The distinct geometrical features of these masterpiece designs also show the superb scientific knowledge of their architects.

The geometrical analysis of the 'Great Pyramids' at Giza (Egypt) shows that the base area of a pyramid divided by twelve times its height equals the universal mathematical constant π (*pi*). The ratio of

its vertical and horizontal edges is 1.618..., which is an important geometrical constant ϕ (*phi*). This perfection of mathematical formulae in its design can't be a mere coincidence. It is also a puzzling surprise that its depth below the earth's surface is exactly the same as its heights above the surface.

A billion times of the height of a Great Pyramid equals the astronomical unit (the sun-earth distance). It is also remarkable that the solar energy-radiations are found to be significantly dense on the earth at this distance at the inclination at which the pyramids are located. The north-south axis (diagonal) in the middle of the pyramid divides the earth in two equal parts; not only that, this division also halves the land and the water on the earth. These and similar findings affirm that the architects of the pyramids had accurate knowledge of the geometry of the earth and the solar system and they had made use of it for advanced level experiments and applications through these pyramid shaped laboratories.

The wonders of pyramids include the fact that these are situated right above the geo-center of the gravitational field. The total of diagonal lengths of a Great Pyramid is about ten-thousandth fraction of the radius of the earth. The original meter, which was defined as one ten millionth of the distance between North Pole and the Equator, is one-fortieth of its edge. It appears that the pyramids were also

used for certain standards of scale. If we multiply the number of days (= 365) in a non-leap year by 100 and add the number of hours (=24) in one day (the extra day of the leap year!), we get 36524. This happens to be the value (in meters) of the total peripheral surface of a Great Pyramid! The entrances of all the pyramids happen to face the East. Moreover their central axes at the entrance are directed towards the point in ecliptic reached by the sun at solstice (on the 21st June and 22nd December, when the sun is farthest from the equator and appears to pause before the earth returns nearer). These findings suggest astrological / astronomical applications of the pyramids.

Historical studies mention of an Egyptian Archaeo-architect and Priest named Imhotep, who had prepared the calendar of the year 4229 B.C.; it is amazing to note that his calendar also showed 365 days in a year. Such precision of calculations was also reflected in other information given in his calendar; this could be possible only by substantial knowledge of the movements of the planets and stars in and around our solar system. Usually very few planet/stars are seen in the sky over Cairo (Egypt), that too not so clearly as could be visible from other parts of the world. Then, what kinds of telescopes were used for astronomical studies those days? Were the pyramids serving as the observatories? This was also the common belief of the Arabs. However, the scientific authenticity of this possibility got accepted only after publication of the book "The Great Pyramid – Observatory, Tomb and Temple" by British Astronomer, Richard Anthony Procter in the late nineteenth century.

The learned author has revealed many important facts on applications of pyramids in planetary studies in the above book. According to him, the location of pyramids on the Equator is along the north-south geo-axis from where positions and movements of the planets and stars on the North Pole side could have been studied by the astrologers of ancient Egypt. The canals beneath the base of the pyramids lie straight in the direction of the Pole Star; the deviation angles of its rays could be measured here. These canals are dug beneath the earth's surface at an angle of 26 degrees and 17 minutes, which happens to be the angle of reflection of light there. The upward and downward directions of these canals are according to the angles of incidence and reflection of light. These dark wells of 200 ft deep canals thus illustrate the thorough knowledge of astronomy by the experts of those days.

The above are some notable facts on the construction of the pyramids. The atmosphere inside the pyramids is found more astonishing and has posed many challenges before the modern scientists. Nobel Laureate Luis Alvarez had tried to measure the energy levels inside the pyramids using a cosmic counter machine but he did not succeed, as his instrument stopped working in the energized fields here. Surprisingly, it happened during several trials; the instrument would start functioning fine as soon as it was brought out beyond a certain distance from the pyramids. X-raying the pyramids by groups of scientists coupled with the studies by renowned physicists like Dr. A. Goneid showed findings inside the pyramids that were beyond explanation by scientific laws. Dr. M. Mc Luhan of Ontario,

Canada and several others have also researched on these aspects and found that somewhat different forms of energy-fields than the electromagnetic energy (which is the energy so far known, pervading in the space) seem to exist inside the pyramids.

In view of these arcane energy fields of high intensity found inside the pyramids, the researchers opine that such marvelous scientific structures can't be graveyards. These must have been built for some super-level purposes such as astronomic studies, understanding of the cosmos, experiments on subliminal energy, and/or spiritual modes of devotion, etc. Many believe that the rare cosmic energy indwelling here could induce sublime transmutation. This view is strongly supported by Manly P. Hall in his celebrated work entitled "The Secret Teachings of All Ages" (first ed. 1928). He mentions that staying inside the pyramids used to empower the devotees with evolved spiritual energy. In his view, pyramids might have been constructed as spiritual energy centers for enlightened transformation of personality.

Historical reviews also indicate that as per the period of their construction, the pyramids do not appear to be originally constructed as the graveyards of the Pharaoh Kings of Egypt; neither their construction took place during the reigns of the latter. In his research dissertation on "The Pyramids of Egypt", published in 1964, I. E. S. Edwards has shown 3100 B. C. to 332 B. C. as the period of the rule of the Pharaohs in Egypt. Till the early 20th Century AD, the pyramids were also largely believed to have been erected during this period. However, advanced archeological studies and scientific analysis have shown that the pyramids are much older. British archeologist, Walter

Emory had examined the stones of the Great Pyramids of Giza using spectrographs and had estimated the age of these constructions to be between eleven thousand to fifteen thousand years. The Bodleian Library at Oxford has an antique treatise of Egypt, which is written on Birch Leaves. Abu Al Massoudi describes the pyramids as constructed prior to the disastrous inundation that had engulfed most parts of the earth and gave rise to its present form. As most of the modern historians approve the occurrence of this epochal flood disaster to be before 15000 years, the age of the pyramids is found to be older than fifteen thousand years from historical proofs as well. Similar supporting evidences of the recent times affirm that the great pyramids of Egypt were not built during the reign of the Pharaohs. Arabic researcher Abu Jed Al Balkhi has estimated the age of these pyramids as about thirty-three thousand years based on the results of Carbon-14 techniques applied to the organic remains of the later ages in these monuments.

It is important here to note the recent findings of distinguished anthropologist and archaeologist Prof. Tom Dillehay and Dr Dennis Stanford on the prehistoric global migration. They have thoroughly analyzed the archaeological data, the antique structures, data from excavated sites and the skulls, bones and soil/stone constructs obtained there, data on linguistic and geographic history and the data on anthropological research and evolutionary studies in genetics. Their research has annulled the hypothesis that Asians had migrated to America via the Bay of Bering about ten thousands years ago. Based on the results of this research, Prof. Tom Dillehay of the Archaeology Dept., Kentucky

University (USA) concludes that – there are proofs of human inhabitation in Chile since about 33,000 years; the migration of Asians towards the American continent had begun much before that. He also argues that even the frozen strait of Bering could not hinder this migration. According to Dr. Dennis Stanford of the Smithsonian Institute (USA) this prehistoric migration had taken place in three to four stages. The findings of these researchers also support what was written by Abu Al Massoudi and point out that the architects of The Great Pyramids were not the ancient Egyptians, rather some others who had reached there much before the advent of Egyptian or Greek civilization.

Who were these “others” who had constructed the pyramids? The observations of Bill Schultz and Ed Petit are worth noting in this context. In their book “The Secret Powers of Pyramids” the authors cite that the fame of ancient Greeks as the founders of Mathematics is there just because they were able to decipher some knowledge from a well developed science of much more older civilization. The classical Alexandria of Greeks could gather and propagate only a fraction of the gigantic knowledge available with the handful of great sages, the unknown migrants, who had reached the land of Egypt thousands of years before the dawn of Greek civilization. These strangers (migrants from some more ancient and advanced civilization) of yore — the founders of trigonometry, geometry, archaeology and astronomy – were the architects of the pyramids in the views of the authors.

The above findings and the studies of ancient Indian Culture indicate that the great sagacious migrants believed to be the architects of The Great Pyramids were the

Indian *rishis* (the seers, sages and scientists of Vedic Age), who possessed supramental talents and had realized the supreme knowledge. Many of their disciples had migrated in small groups to even the farthest corners of the globe¹ to spread the light of this supreme knowledge and sow the seeds of human civilization there. That the *rishis* possessed immense knowledge of the sciences pertaining to matter and the gross manifestation of Nature along with their expertise in spirituality and yoga – is clearly reflected in several treatises of the Vedic Literature. The following *ślokas* from the 352nd Chapter of the “Matsya Puran” cite the names of eighteen experts of archaeo-architecture and civil engineering of the Vedic Age:

*Bhṛaguratrirvaśiṣṭha Ca Viśvakarmā Mayastathā |
Nārado Nagnajiccaiva Viśālākśaḥ Purandaraḥ ||
Brahmākumaro Nandīśaḥ Śaunako Garg Eva Ca |
Vāsudevoanirūddhaśca Tathā Śukrabṛahaspatī ||
Aṣṭādaśaite Vikhyātā Vāstuśāstropadeśakāḥ |
Sankṣepaṇopadiṣṭam Yanmanve Matsyarūpiṇā ||*

Of these eighteen, Vishwakarma and Maya were regarded as the leading masters. These two are referred respectively as the architects for the *devatās* (manifestations of divine powers) and for the *dānavas* (demonic giants). The magical buildings, cities and supernatural instruments devised by them are cited in the Vedic Literature and also in the later scriptures like Mahabharata and Ramayana. That these were not mere mythological depictions has been authentically investigated by the researchers of the modern times as well^{1,2}. It was certainly an easy task for such geniuses to construct the monumental pyramids. Archaeological and historical research up till now has shown that the Maya civilization in ancient Mexico was an offshoot of the Maya

civilization in ancient India. The 'Inca' civilization spread from Ecuador to Peru was also a branch of this civilization cultivated by Maya and his followers. All these evidences strengthen the findings of Prof. Dillehay and Dr. Bill Schultz et al and show that the Great Pyramids are also an illustration of the advanced architectural knowledge of the Vedic India and that the great Indian architects of that time had constructed these wonders of the world.

What the historical data mark as the time period when the Shulbsutra and Brahmsutra were written now appears to be a little before the time the pyramids were built. These two post-vedic Indian scriptures happen to be the fundamental source of knowledge (derived from the Vedas) on *vāstukalā* (architecture), which also encompasses the secrets of constructions for archaeo-astronomical and ethno-astrological studies and hidden specificities of *vāstu*-designs for spiritual impact, etc. This further leads to the conclusion that the ancient Indians had masterminded the magnificent design and amazing properties of The Great Pyramids.

Another puzzle associated with the pyramids is the purpose and mode of their use. The history of investigations on their mystery has also been very interesting. Many anecdotes were popular in the first few centuries A. D. about the tragic deaths of some explorers who tried to dig out the facts inside. The first authentic record in the history mentions of Khalifa Harun Al Rashid's adventurous son Abdullah Al Memmon's attempt in the year 820 A. D. Abdullah went inside the pyramids with a group of some intrepid young men carrying heavy hammers and chisels. Their efforts of

removing or breaking some stones were ruined in the void, as the stones and their joints were too stout for the tools. In another attempt, concentrated acid was used to make a big hole from where some of the investigators could enter inside the gigantic tombs. But, they could find nothing – not a single corpse or mummy, no royal belongings. It took them about a month to come out from that labyrinth.

The common belief of these being the graveyards for preservation of the mummies was shattered completely when a team of investigators of international repute declared after search operations for several months that there were no mummies, no coffins and no hidden treasures inside the pyramids or in their basements. It is quite probable that in some period of the Egyptian rule, these might have been used for this purpose, as the energy fields inside were found to be miraculous. Most likely, this hypothesis also might have been just imaginary or an offshoot of false notions created to enhance the glory of the Pharaohs. Whatever it be, the possibility of such majestic designs with astonishing scientific and astronomical features having been constructed for merely keeping dead bodies does not appear logical in any respect; it is also not supported by any of the authentic research studies.

The unique energy fields found here indicate that these pyramids were made and used for higher-level meditations, devotional practices and spiritual experiments. These appear to be serving as reservoirs of cosmic radiation for such experiments. Journalist and philosopher, Paul Brunton had spent a night in a pyramid of Giza. His observations were compiled in the book (published by Rider & Co., 1935) entitled "A Search in Secret

Egypt” where he mentions of experiencing the presence of divine consciousness-force inside these ‘celestial’ laboratories.

Several scientific experiments conducted inside the pyramids illustrate the presence of an exceptional energy field. Among these, the experiment of Austrian scientist Vern Cameron has been very popular. He had kept a watermelon inside a bathroom type wet chamber in the pyramid. Surprisingly, despite having water inside and around, the watermelon had shrunk into a tiny dry-fruit of the size of a chestnut with splendid taste. This amazing result inspired the scientist to study the aura of energy there. For this, he first worked with spectrographic recording of the energy domains (of light radiations, thermal and electromagnetic energy currents, etc) inside pyramid shaped designs in his lab. The aura of energy had an inverted pyramid shape and showed concentration of superimposed energy waves towards the base-center. The field remained dense at the particular spot for long time even after the model designs were taken away.

Another widely publicized experiment was conducted in the late twentieth century by some Russian scientists. A pot containing a six inches long fresh sapling of a plant having two or three leaves was kept inside a glass pyramid. The response and growth pattern of this tiny plant was recorded continuously by time-lapse video camera. The plant appeared to be dancing on a sonorous tune. It first inclined slightly towards the floor. Then took a round towards the east; from there it completed the round by moving towards the west. Having reached the west, it became straight and started oscillating in a slow rhythm. It

repeated this ‘dance’ for few minutes at an interval of two hours. Surprisingly, no such movements were seen in any of the saplings (of same age) of that plant in the pots kept outside the pyramid.

Another interesting observation was that only the sapling inside the pyramid showed its greed (like the humans!) for the precious metal by bending completely towards a piece of gold which was placed near it.

The *rishis* – the ancient Indian experts of geometry, architecture and other sciences and the deep science of cosmic energy – were well aware of the distinct features of pyramid shaped designs. They had also chosen the specific positions on the equator for the construction of the gigantic pyramids at Giza (Egypt), for maximum attraction and conservation of rare cosmic radiations there. They were the torchbearers of divine light, who might have used these pyramids as centres of sublime spiritual endeavors. The savants of today, sitting on the peaks of modern marvelous scientific advancement, may well begin to reinvestigate the noble use of the pyramids for similar experiments.

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* * *

A wise man will desire no more than what he may get justly, use soberly, distribute cheerfully and leave contentedly.

— **Benjamin Franklin**

Promising scope of Chromotherapy

The importance of the sun as the sole source of light and thermal energy and hence of life on the earth is well known. Because of its uncountable grace in many other forms (some of which are yet to be discovered by the modern scientists), the sun is referred to as an emanation of God in the Vedic scriptures. Decoding and understanding some of the subtle properties of the light spectrum described therein is a major accomplishment of the solar sciences. Chromopathy or chromotherapy has emerged as an application of this knowledge as an alternate system of healing.

In the opinion of renowned medical scientist, Dr. Edgar Meisy, the future medical technology will incorporate advanced uses of light spectrum, like ultrasonic waves, for comprehensive health care. In chromotherapy, the damaged or diseased organs or tissues are exposed to radiations of selected wavelengths with the help of specifically designed lamps and radio-ionic devices.

Apart from providing substantial natural energy for vital biochemical processes (e.g. in photosynthesis, metabolism, protein biosynthesis, etc), the sunrays offer many other boons to the mind-body system. Existence of the seven colors (namely, Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo and Violet) spectrum in the apparently white light of the sunrays can be seen in a rainbow or in an optics laboratory with the help of a prism. A harmonious absorption of

these colors by the body is believed to be necessary for the natural maintenance of vibrant health. This is why sunbath of the rising sun is given so much importance; the beaches of the cold countries are packed, in the summer, with people lying flat in the sun in their swimsuits. For therapeutic applications, the deficiencies or imbalances of specific color(s) are complemented by artificial light as well.

Dr. Alice Hubbard, a distinguished expert in homeopathy, radionics and color-therapy has found that different colors could be used for the noninvasive treatment of a wide range of diseases. Red color has the characteristic effect of stimulating the neurons, the adrenal (endocrine) glands and the sensory nerves; it also enhances the circulation and reactivity of the blood. This primary color thus induces subtle but intense effects in governing the functions of the brain and the nervous system and many of the biochemical and physiological processes. Because of its invigorating effects, mild doses of this color are advised along with appropriate doses of blue and green colors for therapeutic use in general.

Orange color is a combination of red and yellow. Its effects are more durable than those of the red color. This color offers positive effects like increase in body-resistance against infections. It is more prominently used in healing of stiffness and spasm. It also plays supportive role in augmenting the metabolism rate and

strengthening the lungs, spleen and pancreas. It increases the pulse rate but maintains normal blood pressure. It is also interesting to note that, on psychological fronts, this color is found to boost soothing emotions and induce enthusiasm.

Research on chromotherapy in medical laboratories indicates that yellow colored light radiations help the motor-mechanisms of the body. This color is also useful in fortifying the muscles and upkeep of the digestive functions. However, its prolonged use gives rise to acidity, colitis, or hemorrhoid. Excess absorption of yellow radiations may augment palpitation of the heart and cause diseases like delirium. Use of this color shows a general increase in intelligence and alacrity.

An expansion of the arteries is recorded when green colored light rays penetrate the body. But excessive absorption of this color has harmful effects on muscular tissues and the pituitary gland in general. From psychosomatic healing point of view, the green color has a favorable impact in inducing positive thinking. It is therefore prescribed in stress management by chromotherapists.

Blue color increases metabolic reaction rates and is also used in wound healing, especially of burnt skin. This color offers soothing effects on the mind and supports awakening of subtle intellect when used during meditation practices. Indigo color is advised for chromatographic purification of the RBCs. This color relaxes and slows down the neuro-muscular, cardiovascular and lymphatic systems. Violet color

can be used in maintaining potassium concentration gradients in the body. Specific high frequency radiations of this color inhibit tumor growth. Uncontrolled appetite is regulated by this color.

Chromotherapists have also found some combinations of colors useful. For example, Lemon (a blend of yellow and green) has laxative properties. More importantly, this color is found to activate energy-supply to the cerebrum. This color, due to its yellow factor has antacidic effects. Dark violet, as a mixture of red and blue, has analgesic properties. It also helps in curing Malaria. A combination of larger proportion of red and smaller one of blue results in formation of scarlet. This color stimulates the kidneys and the sex organs. Magenta, which is a combination of red and violet, is found useful in activating the heart and some endocrine glands. Purple color – a particular mix of blue and green – helps in preventing skin diseases. It is also used in the treatment of sinusitis. As it is commonly experienced, pink color (a blend of red and white) has pleasurable and soothing impact on emotions.

Optimal distribution and maintenance of various colors within the body is essential for its normal functioning. Multi-disciplinary research in chromopathy along with biophysics, medicine, psychology and astronomy would widen the scope of this important branch of alternate and complementary therapy and provide a noninvasive and cost-effective mode of psychosomatic health-care.

* * *

If I were a medical man, I would prescribe a holiday to any man who considered his work important.

-Bertrand Russell

Your health: Guidelines from *Ayurveda* – III

The comprehensive approach of *Ayurveda* pays attention to every aspect of life. It gives us practical guidance on the secrets of perfect health, which lie in its principle of ‘living in complete harmony with our natural system’. It is amazing to note that the recommendations made in the *Ayurvedic* scriptures ages ago remain valid and effective even today. The ancient experts of this Vedic science had compiled a volume entitled “*Swastha Vratra Sammucchaya*” to give specific guidelines on prevention of sickness and maintenance of health under changing conditions of weather, place, time, etc. The present series of articles on health-tips from *Ayurveda* gives the excerpts — most relevant in today’s context — from such scriptures for our ready-reference. If we could adopt even a fraction of these in our daily life, lot of our time and money would be saved from running around the clinics and dispensaries in our hectic and stress-inducing schedules.

The last two articles dealt with health-promoting activities of daily routine. Before we proceed further in the sequence, let us look at the noble purpose of the founders of *Ayurveda* to realize the majestic strength and grandeur of knowledge this science of healthy life holds in its roots.

A hymn in the *Shastra* says –
Dharmārtham Nārthakāmārthamāyurvedo
Maharṣibhiḥ |
Prakāśito Dharma Parairicchadbhiḥ
Sthānamakśaram ||

Meaning: The great *rishis* – the devoted seekers of God, the scientists of ultimate knowledge, the true followers of eternal religion – had developed *Ayurveda* for pure altruistic purpose (of human welfare) and not for any materialistic gain.

Today’s scenario is just the opposite. People at large are draining their vitality and vigor due to undisciplined life-style and sensual pleasures and medicine or healthcare has become a costly profession, a means for high earning. The need for a natural, inexpensive mode of preventive care and maintenance of health has become all the more crucial and urgent these days. The guidelines on daily routine as per the recommendations of *Ayurveda* provide practical and efficacious tips in this respect.

Along with physical exercise, the daily routine should also have place for some activities to maintain mental and spiritual fitness. *Sandhyā-upāsanā* and certain yoga *kriyās* with meditation are therefore described in the scriptures as integral parts of ideal daily routine. Doing *sandhyā-upāsanā* every day with the *japa* (rhythmic chanting) of *Gāyatrī Mantra* is said to bestow longevity, strength, intelligence, success, glory and spiritual light. *Upāsanā* provides sublime food for the soul. Nurturing the soul is more important than nourishing the body. The “Chanakya Niti” highlights this as –
Vipro Vṛakśastasya Mūlam Ca Sandhyā,
Vedāḥ Śākhā Dharmakarmāṇi Patram |

Tasyānmūlam Yatnato Rakṣaṇīyam, Chinne Mūle Naiva Śākhā Na Patram ||

—Chanakya Niti.|| 10-13

Meaning: *Sandhyā* (*upāsana*) is the root of the tree of (healthy, hearty and enlightened) life. The *Vedas* (i.e. source of righteous knowledge) constitute its branches and religious activities are its leaves. Blossoming growth of a tree is dependant on the life of its roots. Without the roots there will be no possibility of any branch or leaves.

In essence, the above *śloka* (likewise many guidelines in the *Shastric* Literature), conveys that *sandhyā* (*upāsana*) is the basis of human life in the truest sense. The rituals of *śaṭkarmas*² — namely, *pavitrikaraṇa*, *ācamana*, *śikhābandhana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *nyāsa* and *prathvī-pūjan* — are simple but effective practices for psychological boosting of the mind and energizing the body.

If possible, one should try to practice *sandhyā-vandan* thrice a day. In any case, one must do it twice – once in the morning and once in the evening – may be, for ten minutes only, if it is difficult to find more time. The best time-slots are (as the word ‘*sandhyā*’ implies) the junctions (*sandhi*) between successive phases of the day. These transitional time-periods are defined in the scriptures as –

“*Ahorātrasya Yā Sandhiḥ Sūryanakśatra Varjitā |*

Sātu Sandhyā Samākhyātā Munibhistatva Darśibhiḥ ||”

(Meaning: Around the times of sunrise and sunset when neither sun nor any of the stars are seen even in the clear sky.)

These time intervals (*sandhyā*-times) are described as extremely sensitive with respect to the effect on bodily, mental and

spiritual wellbeing. We should be very careful about what we do in this period. As per the *Ayurvedic* treatise “*Sahityika Subhashita Vaidyakam*” —

Catvārī Ghorarūpāṇi Sandhyākāle Parityajet | Āhāram, Maithunam, Nidrā, Swādhyāyam Ca Vivarjayet ||

Meaning: Eating, sexual intercourse, sleeping, reading/writing during the *sandhyā*-times are extremely harmful and are strictly prohibited during these time intervals.

On the contrary, doing *prāṇāyāma*, devotional meditation, and prayers in these time-phases of the day induce intensive positive (healthy) effects.

Reemphasizing this point, the *Garud Purana* says — “If God Vishnu is found asleep during the *sandhyā* times (around sunrise and sunset times), Lakshmi (His divine consort, the Goddess of prosperity and progress) would leave Him”.

These timings are of crucial significance in the practice of *Gāyatrī Mantra japa*, as the brilliance of rising sun happens to be the focus of meditation in this *upāsana*. The more intense the emotional engrossment of the devotee, the greater would be the spiritual and mental enlightenment. Awakening of discerning intellect is the immediate benefit of this practice. One may chant other prayers and mantras as per his faith, but the science of yoga and spirituality, as also the *Ayurveda*, affirm the pre-eminent impact of the *Gāyatrī Mantra japa* during *sandhyā-upāsana*.

About a century ago, Maharshi Dayanand had revived the Vedic tradition of *Gāyatrī - sandhyā* in day-to-day life with the foundation of *Arya Samaj*. Vedmurty

Taponishtha Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya had further spread it in a scientific way amongst the masses through Gayatri Pariwar. Along with *Gāyatrī Upāsanā*, the comprehensive compilation of easy and effective *yogāsanas* and *kriyās* taught by him under “*Prajña Yoga*” provide practical guidelines for harmonizing the mind-body functions by enhanced flow of vital energy together with inner purification. The sequence of physical exercises and postures in *Prajña Yoga* is coupled with specific deep breathing practices, which are found to give instant relaxation and rejuvenation.

Sūryanamskāra is a well-known *yoga* exercise, which is given great importance in therapeutic applications of *yoga* under *Ayurveda*. The scriptures also stress its importance. For instance, the Matsya Puran says –

*Ādityasya Namaskāram Ye Kurvanti
Dine-Dine |*

*Janmāntara Sahastreṣu Dāridrayam
Nopajāyate ||*

Meaning: Those who practice *Sūryanamskāra* every morning are relieved from all infirmities and sickness in this life and in the lives to follow.

Prajña Yoga is a modified version of *Sūryanamskāra* and is more suited for the modern life-style. It is taught as an integral part of the *sādhanā* courses and personality development training programmes at Shantikunj, Hardwar and in many of the centers (*Shakti Pithas*) of the Gayatri Pariwar³ in India and abroad.

Having discussed the different activities that should be the integral part of an ideal daily routine, let us now look at the most common and important routine of our

lives, viz., food. Whatever one eats or drinks, or rather, whatever goes inside the body via the food pipe (G.I. tract), falls in the category of food, which, upon being processed by the metabolic system, becomes a source of energy for the different organs and parts of the body. We all eat (or keep eating!) everyday and are generally aware of the importance of its purity, freshness, calorie-contents, etc as per the modern views on diet control. But, how many of us pay attention to its subtle properties?

Apart from recommending suitable food-choices for different seasons for persons of different age groups, the *Ayurvedic* scriptures also focus at the intrinsic properties of food, which affect the subtle (mental) body. The food, which is worth taking in terms of its physical and subtle qualities, if taken at right timings in correct mode of eating, is described here as nectar. On the contrary, the wrong eating habits or method of preparation could make the food unsuitable or even toxic to one’s health. It is therefore equally important to know not only what to eat but also when and how to eat it.

Brahadyogiyagyavalkya Smriti states –
*Amṛtaṁ Kalpayitwā Ca Yadannam
Samupāgatam |*

*Prāṇāgnihotravidhinā Vidhinā Bhojyam
Tadwadaghāpam ||*

Meaning: Having food should be treated like a *yajña* in which (holy) sacrifices are made in the sacred fire of *prāṇa* (vital, spiritual energy). Such a food becomes a source of elimination of all sickness and weakness of the body and mind.

The Gita says –
Āyuh Satva Balārogya Sukha Prītivivardhanā |

*Rasyāḥ Snigdhaḥ Sthirā Hryadyā Āhārāḥ
Sāttwikapriyā ||*

-Gita XVII-8

Meaning: A person of *Sāttwika* nature likes to eat foods that prolong life, purify one's inner being, give strength, health, happiness and satisfaction. Such foods are juicy, fatty, wholesome and pleasing to the heart.

The Gita further mentions about the foods liked by persons of *Rājasika* and *Tāmasika* natures:

*Katva-amla-lavaṇāti-uṣṇa-tīkṣṇa-rukṣa-
vidāhina _*

Āhārā rājasasyestā dukha-śokamaya-prada

-Gita XVII – 9

Meaning: Foods that are bitter, too sour, salty, hot, pungent, dry and burning are dear to a person of *Rājasik* nature. Such foods cause distress, misery and disease.

*Yātu yamaṁ gata-rasaṁ pūti paryusitaṁ ca
yat |*

*Ucchiṣtamapi cāmedhyaṁ bhojanam tāmas
priyam ||*

-Gita XVII -10

Meaning: Stale, tasteless, decomposed, putrid and leftover foods are dear to a person of *Tāmsik* nature.

Jatayu's conversation with Ravana as scripted in the Ramayana also has some reference to the quality of food. Talking of moral principles, Jatayu says – “Eatable food is that which is completely digested in a natural way, without producing any harmful effect inside the body”.

Some scriptures also comment on the best quantity of food intakes. For example, the Vishnu Purana suggests –

*Jaṭharaṁ Pūrayedardharmannairbhāgaṁ
Jalena Ca |*

Vāyoḥ Sancarṇārthāya Caturthamavaśaiṣayeta ||

Meaning: The portion of solid food should be about half the capacity of the stomach; one-fourth of the latter should be filled with liquid diet and water and the remaining one-fourth should be left empty for free movement of air and fluids inside the stomach.

According to *Ayurvedic* insights, most of the diseases have their roots in over-eating and improper cleansing of the digestive system. This is true in case of urbanized life-style of cities of today. Excessive eating or consumption of lavish, gravy foodstuffs or fast foods, processed and canned foods, non-vegetarian dishes, etc do not suit the biomechanics and natural process of metabolism of the human body. Unless assimilated and digested by exerting physical labor and some cleansing methods of *yoga*, these unnatural foods eventually result in constipation, acidity or other problems of indigestion. Defective metabolism leads to weakening of the body-system. The undigested heavy molecules and other kinds of un-excreted dirt inside the body cause varieties of untoward reactions. Germs and other infections also get extra support in such a host system.

If there isn't sufficient space for airflow within and out of the stomach, it may cause unnatural pressure on the heart, often leading to ‘angina’, which is a common heart-problem these days. The suggestion of keeping one-fourth of the stomach free for airflow as advised in the above *śloka* further reflects the remarkable insight of the *rishis* in deciphering the intricacies of the nature and functions of the mind-body system so minutely without using any instrument or external help.

Their instructions in the scriptures on “Why to eat? What to eat? When to eat?”

How much to eat? And, how to eat?” provide us the key to a happy, healthy and hearty life. We shall touch upon these points in continuation of our discussions on health- tips of Ayurveda pertaining to food. We close this article with a short quote that conveys an invaluable advice, which could be adopted forthwith:

Jirṇabhojinam Vyādhirnopasarpati |
– Chanakya Sutra

Meaning: He/she, who eats only when the food consumed earlier has been properly digested, remains free from all diseases.

Notes:

1. *Sandhyā-upāsana* or *sandhyā-vandan*:
Upāsana means devotional practice of sitting near God (i.e., with an emotional proximity

with divinity). This, if practiced at specific time intervals (*sandhyā*-times) with *japa* of *Gāyatrī Mantra* preceded by *prāṇāyāma* and certain purificatory rituals (see next point), is called *sandhyā-upāsana* or *sandhyā-vandan*.

2. Detailed information on each of these rituals is given in the booklet entitled “*Gāyatrī Sādhanā*: Why and How?” published by Shantikunj, Hardwar (Uttaranchal, India).

3. Practical training and informative booklets/audio-visual CDs on *Prajñā-Yoga* are available at Shantikunj, Hardwar (Uttaranchal, India).

(To be continued in the next issue)

It was in a small town of India before the British rule. There lived an eminent astrologer who used to forecast the fate of people and also used to advise on possible changes because of their karma (deeds) in the present phase of their life...

One day, two friends went to him to know their future. The astrologer prophesied that as per their destiny, one of them is to get the punishment of hanging till death and the second one has all chances of becoming a king within a month.

The fellow who had been foretold to have the rare fortune of being a king got entrapped in ego and started behaving arrogantly. The intoxication of his daydreaming of might and wealth soon perverted him towards sinful activities. By the end of the month, he found a bag full of silver coins on a lonely road. However, because of his evil addictions, he reached the debauching ditch of wine, women and insane sensual luxuries.

The other young man who had been doomed to death got detached from the worldly attractions; he spent all his time in selfless service of others and adopted a religious conduct. He devoted himself to altruistic and noble activities. On the last day of the month, he suffered a road injury and got treated in a few days.

Later on, both these fellows went back to see the astrologer and challenged his knowledge, as his forecast had proved to be false.

The experienced astrologer explained, our actions make our destiny and they can also change it.... The ill omen of being hanged till death became light and manifested in a weakened form of ‘minor injury’ because of the religious conduct and good actions in the case of first young man, whereas the sinful actions diminished the great fortune of becoming a king to that of getting a bag of money in the case of second. So nothing has gone wrong with the predicted fortunes, what each of you got towards the end of the month was exactly what was left in your account of destiny till that time.

Start living afresh with forgiveness

“I don’t know why my mind is so upset these days”. Many people respond thus when asked about their well-being. They get angry with minor issues. They feel wounded in their hearts. Though they do feign to laugh occasionally, but harbor burning volcanoes of anger and resentment within. Renowned psychologist Maurice Fredman observes that these symptoms are indications of some unhealed wounds of unforgiveness in the depths of their psyches. These hurts frequently manifest as pains, anxiety, tension and tears.

Dr. J. D. Frank, a noted psychologist has experimented extensively on this subject. He has published the conclusions of his experiments in the book titled ‘Hidden Mind – A Forgotten Chapter of Our Life’. He mentions that there is a sort of a knot (wound) in the mind due to someone’s bad behavior, which we cannot forget and forgive. Incidents of negligence, scorn or insults by others bring pain to our hearts. This sometimes bursts out as anger and at other times the person suffers by feelings of helplessness and resentment. This pain and suffering breaks the mind into pieces.

Japanese physician K. Kurokava explains that disturbances of mind gradually manifest as ailments of the body. His research shows that as the mental tensions increase and deepen they take the form of physical maladies. Recent findings of Kurokava and his associate Yoshiyuki Kago reveal that people who entertain and nourish negative

traits like deception, jealousy, hatred, revenge, etc are prone to high blood pressure, hypertension and the resultant diseases of the heart and kidneys. The negative feelings not only fill the mind with suffering and restlessness but the body also gets burnt out.

Research of Kurakova and Yoshiyuki show that those who readily forgive others are comparatively less prone to diseases related to blood pressure. This means that if we follow the maxim of ‘forgive and forget’ we can qualitatively change our lives for the better. If we could forgive the malicious behavior of others we can fill our lives with peace and happiness. Forgiveness is a sign of greatness and magnanimity.

Saint poet Rahim says -

Kśamā Baḍana Ko Cāhiye, Chotana Ko Utpāta |

Kā Rahīman Hari Ko Ghatyo, Jo Bhrigu Mārī Lāta ||

Great are those who forgive. Those who create disturbances and exhibit bad behavior are small and will remain small. Greatness and Divinity of Lord Vishnu has not become less due to being kicked by Maharshi Bhrigu. Scientific research shows that forgiveness not only reveals our greatness but also positively affects our health. Research findings mention that if by chance a forgiving person gets hypertension related diseases these can be easily controlled and that forgiving or not forgiving is directly related to high blood pressure. This means that if you have a

forgiving nature you will be rarely prone to high blood pressure.

How to forgive? This is a difficult and unanswered question. If any rational person wants to forgive anybody's bad behavior the memories of hurt feelings make it well nigh impossible to do so. Modern psychologists are familiar with this mental state and they have devised techniques, which may be helpful in coming out of such mental grooves. First step in this sequence is 'Be honest towards oneself'. Do not denigrate the person you are not able to forgive. May be he is not as guilty as you make him out to be. No need to avoid him. Be neutral, be free from prejudices and think objectively. In this process of objective observation whatever feelings come in your consciousness let them come out naturally. Slowly your mind will get unburdened of these feelings of hurt.

Second step in this self-cleansing process is strange but effective. Take a piece of paper and write down all conflicting feelings about the concerned person. Do it not once but many times. Psychologists call it 'mental cleansing'. Mind will slowly get lighter. There is another method of writing on paper. According to this, write on the paper that you have forgiven a particular person. Write it not once but many times. Thus the anger will subside and after some time you will feel better.

Third step is 'Positive Analysis'. Do not just think about your own self. Put yourself in another person's position and then analyze. Try to understand other person's point of view. Possibly your own reaction could be wrong. Understanding other person's point of view makes self-analysis

easier. The aim is to understand that others are not wrong to the extent you believe them to be; may be you are over-reacting. Then they can be easily forgiven and the mind be easily calmed.

To conclude, we give below what G. G. Jampolsky, an eminent Psychotherapist, in his article titled '**Peace**' has said about the art of forgiveness:

" In order to experience peace instead of conflict it is necessary to shift our perception. Instead of seeing others as attacking us, we can see them as fearful. We are always expressing either love, or fear. Fear is really a call for help and, therefore, a request for love. It is apparent, then, that to experience peace we must recognize that we do have a choice in determining what we perceive.

Our misperception can only be undone NOW, and this is possible only through the process of letting go whatever we think other people may have done to us, or whatever we may think we did to them. Through this process of selective forgetting we are free to embrace a present without the encumbrances of re-enacting our past misperceptions.

As inner peace is recognized as our single goal, forgiveness becomes our single function. When we accept both our function and goal, we also find that listening to our inner intuitive voice as the source for direction becomes our only guide to fulfillment. We are released as we release others from the prison of our distorted and illusory perception, and join with them in the unity of love."

* * *

To make another hold his tongue, be you first silent. —Seneca

Scientific validation of *Yoga- Āsanas*

Yoga is a comprehensive and precisely fine-tuned process of uniting the individual consciousness with the omnipresent cosmic consciousness. Understanding the spiritual nature and philosophy of *yoga* is certainly more important than its gross applications pertaining to the physical exercises, postures and breathing patterns. With their perfection in *yoga*, the *yogis* control the agile activities of the body and the mind by relaxing the body completely and engrossing the mind in a soothing state of peace. It eliminates all physical and mental fatigue and helps focusing the consciousness-force in the deeper cores of the inner self. This eventually leads to a state of trance that enables spiritual elevation and transformation of life as a whole. The attainment of ultimate knowledge (*Brahm Vidyā*) becomes possible only through spiritual enlightenment and sublime thoughts emanating from the awakened self. As described in the *Upanishads*, the principles of *yoga* deal with this awakening of the inner realms of soul.

Yoga is a total science of strengthening and improving the physical, mental and spiritual states of being. The disciplines of *yoga* pertaining to the physical aspects of life focus at improving the health and augmenting the strength of the body. The first phase of *yoga-sādhanā* deals with the practice of *āsanas*, *prāṇāyāma* and several *yoga-kriyās* of refinement.

The physical exercises and specific postures of the body practiced through different *āsanas*, *bandhas*, and *mudrās* harmonize the intra-body and brain functions and help activation of otherwise dormant vital energy centers, as one makes progress in *yoga*. The exercises (*kriyās*) like *neti*, *dheti*, *vasti*, *nyauli*, *vajroli*, *kapālbhāti*, etc, taught under “*Hāthayoga*” for internal purification of the body-system also fall under this category. The disciplines of fasting, austerity, penance, etc help in cleansing the body and the mental domains and enhancing self-control.

Scientific studies on the effects of *yoga* on physical and mental health have been rapidly expanding and *yoga* has been an active area of research for the past few decades. Today, several reputed research centers in India and abroad are dedicated to scientific research and training on these aspects of *yoga* and quite a few international journals are published exclusively on *yoga*-research and *yoga*-therapy. Electronic magazines and information sites on related topics are also available on the Internet.

Here we highlight some of the findings of the pioneering research works that had helped validation and recognition of this ancient science in the modern world where laboratory experimentation, demonstration and/or verification as per the current trends largely happen to be the criteria for acceptance of validity of truth of a concept or a theory.

Professor M. Sorkisov Serageini, a noted physiotherapist of Russia had written a book entitled “Man Must be Healthy” some time in the 1960s. In this book, he had specifically recommended *yogic* breathing (*prāṇāyāma*) for good health and cited authentic examples and explanations in its support.

Surgeon Dr. Anatoly Medvedstki of the Pediatrician Department of the Central Clinical Hospital at Moscow often used to treat his patients by making them practice suitable *āsanas* along with necessary medication. He also used to teach simple *yogic* exercises to children who visited his clinic with chronic problems.

Cardiologist Dr. Consteniton Butiko, also of Russia, has achieved remarkable success in curing hundreds of patients of different cardiovascular and chest related problems with the help of *yogic āsanās* and *kriyās* alone. His success in healing the patients of asthma by making them practise specific *prāṇāyāmas* rather than using any medication has given new hopes and direction to the treatment of this otherwise incurable disease/disorder. *Prāṇāyāma* is basically an exercise of enhancing and harmonizing the flow of *prāṇa* (vital energy) within the body through controlled breathing and concentration. Cleansing the bronchial tube, increasing the lung-capacity and balancing the inflow of oxygen and outflow of carbon-dioxide are natural offshoots of its practice as per the pace and pattern (of breathing) suitable to the patient. Dr. Butiko also treated several cases of hypertension, epilepsy and heart ailments through this yoga-therapy.

Diabetes happens to be a widespread disease of the modern times. Despite formidable advancement of medical sciences

there is no definite cure of this dreaded disease of pancreatic malfunction and blood-glucose disorder. The rising rate of the disease has induced enhanced interest in research on alternate systems of medicine with special focus on *yoga* and herbal medicines. It is surprising to note that much before the birth of modern science, over 400 years B. C., Sushrut – the pioneer of surgery in the ancient Indian science of medicine – had described this disease “*madhumeha*” with symptoms of presence of sugar in patient’s urine. W. Wiley had demonstrated the presence of sugar in the urine samples of some diabetic patients way back in the late 17th century A. D.

Dr. Dharmvir N. Varandani and Swami Anand were among the first few researchers of the modern times who had reported the findings of systematic research on the effects of *yoga* in treatment of diabetes mellitus. They had presented the results of their initial experiments in a national scientific congress organized by the Central Council for Research in Indigenous Medicine and Homeopathy.

A large sample clinical study was carried out at the “*Yogic Treatment cum Research Centre*”, Jaipur for a three-month period on 283 diabetic patients from different age groups. The patients were given balanced diet consisting of 98 gm fats, 400 gm carbohydrates, 100 gm proteins, with a total intake of around 2900 calories. Their weight, urine, blood sugar, glucose, ECG etc were tested sequentially during the period of study. The patients were practicing *Sarvāṅgāsana*, *Halāsana*, *Mayurāsana*, *Pādahastrāsana*, *Uttāna Pādāsana*, *Śīrsāsana*, *Jānuśīrāsana*, *Pavanamuktāsana*, *Śavāsana*, etc, along with some necessary *kriyās* every morning and

evening under proper guidance. There also was a slot for regular prayers, devotional practices and some *meditational sādhanās* in their routine.

The results showed significant improvement after three months in over 52% of the patients; most of whom had been completely cured. The remaining sample mostly consisted of those having the disease in acute state or suffering from it since more than half of their age. Many of these also showed some positive response.

Dr. Lakshmikanthan's article on "Yoga and The Heart" was published in "Yoga Life" annual issue in year 1977. He was a Professor of the prestigious Govt. Medical College, Madras at that time. In this article he had reported the findings of his studies on two groups of patients of hypertension in the Govt. Hospital on whom the allopathic medicines were largely ineffective. The patients in the first group also had weak hearts or some cardiac problems along with high blood pressure. Those in the second group had healthy hearts. The patients in the first group were made to practise *śavāsana* while keeping soft pillows below their legs. Those in the second group were given extra exercises of *Sarvāṅgāsana*, *Halāsana*, and *Viparītkaraṇī Mudrā*.

The immediate benefit noted in both the groups was that the patients felt generally relaxed and started getting sound sleep. The healing effects of normalizing the B. P. were quite significant in the second group. Many in the first group began to respond positively to medicines.

Excellent effects of *śavāsana* on cardiac ailments were also reported by Dr. K. K. Date in similar studies. Dr. Shrinivasan of Patna (India) and Dr. Benson of U.S.A.

had recorded positive effects of *yogic* meditation on patients suffering from different kinds of heart diseases.

Āsanas are scientifically devised modes of physical exercises that work on the mind-body system in a natural way. For example, the stretching and compression of the muscles under these practices regulate the blood flow in a balanced manner, inducing energetic freshness in the body-components; it also increases the flexibility of the muscles. The other fitness exercises, e.g. *daṇḍa-baiṭhaka* and some of the aerobics might give rapid results but these usually harden the muscles and there is a risk of damaging them due to excessive pressure. Another advantage of *yoga-āsanas* is that if one *āsana* corresponds to forward bending, there is also another in the same set of *āsanas*, which requires backward bending and thus the two make a perfect sequence in terms of biomechanics as well.

Śīrsāsana is regarded as the best in terms of collective benefits of physical and mental health. However, it should be practiced only after sufficient training and having experience of other *āsanas*. The first scientific study on this higher-level *āsana* was reported sometime before 1980 by Dr. Alexandro W. Julian, director of the Thord Clinic of Meditation, Poland. He had measured the effects of *śīrsāsana* on the different organs and physiological body functions on a healthy subject with the help of X-ray, ECG, EMG etc.

The person under study had good mental concentration and experience of practicing this *āsana*. He was made to do this exercise with empty stomach for 20-30 minutes followed by *śavāsana*. The important parameters were observed before,

in-between and after the *āsanas* practice. Instant balancing of serum level in the blood, regulation of blood flow, increase in WBC count, etc were the immediate positive results recorded. These were indicative of prevention of coronary blockage and heart attacks and augmenting of body's resistance against diseases. The X-ray showed broadening of lung-volume without any pressure on the heart; the pulmonary tests showed 33% increase in the amount of oxygen consumption during inspiration and 10% decrease in its chances of expiration with carbon dioxide. The respiration rate had decreased. These further confirmed relaxation of the heart and improvement of vital capacity.

The results of controlled clinical study on the effects of *Bhujangāsana* were presented in 1978 during the "First Conference on the "Application of Yoga in Rehabilitation Therapy". This *āsana* was

found to reduce stress and normalize the blood pressure.

The early studies of Kaivalyadham, Lonavala (India), had reported *sarvangāsana* and *mayurāsana* as most suitable for maintenance of normal health and fitness. These *āsanas* were also found easier to practice and more effective as compared to the other *āsanas* on anemic or physically weak patients.

The foundation laid by the studies of yesteryears had not only approved the scientific validity of *yogāsanas*, but also paved the way for advanced research across the globe on yoga-therapy for treatment of psychosomatic disorders. This also expanded the scope of application of *yoga* for well-being of the masses. Incorporating these apparently simple exercises in daily life indeed bestows amazing benefits upon physical and mental health.

* * *

One fine morning the rose plant was a bit gloomy. Its depression was in contrast to the smiling beauty it would normally have in that season, with bunches of red roses blossoming on it. The young mango tree standing nearby asked the reason for this sadness. The rose plant sighed saying that today it is flowering at its peak but soon there would come time when all its flowers and leaves would dry and fall down; only its thorny skeleton would be left, which no one would like to touch or even look at... This concern was worrying it.

The growing mango tree then pointed out – "My dear friend! Why don't you also think of the next phase of the cycle of Nature? After the fall again there will be monsoon and spring; you will again blossom with beauty and fragrance.... Look at me. It will take me another few years to fructify; but just the optimistic outlook and thought of that good time keeps me so happy....".

Union of individual *Prāṇa* with Cosmic *Prāṇa* through *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga*

There is one cosmic *prāṇa* (consciousness life force) manifesting in numberless names and forms in the universe. It is the origin of all. In an individual life, due to ignorance, the *prāṇa* gets caged in, confined to and constricted by the shell of ego and gets cut off from its universal source. All spiritual *sādhanās* are aimed at liberation of soul from the clutches of illusory name, form and identity and its reunion with its source- the universal consciousness life-force. *Aṣṭāṅga* (eight-fold) *yoga* is one of the most authentic paths of *sādhanā* to achieve this end.

Ignorant persons think of *yoga* as a means of accessing supernatural magical powers. But actually *yoga* is a superbly systematized method of utilization of *prāṇic* energy for self-purification, self-refinement, and self-transcendence.

When a person is engaged in worldly affairs, the haphazard flow of *prāṇa* present in his physical, vital and mental levels remains scattered in his lower nature. But when this flow of *prāṇa* is focused with one pointed concentration in a single direction for any worthwhile purpose, it can work wonders.

All the powers of mind like imagination, observation, decision-making, control, memory, and wisdom are activated by the *prāṇic* energy. Vivacity of senses is also possible by *prāṇic* energy only. All the intricate autonomous functions of the body and its organs are carried on without any

conscious control of our own- by this mysterious life force- the *prāṇic* energy.

To control and consciously utilize this life force for self-upliftment, purity and tranquility of mind and emotions are essential. To achieve this end, *yam* and *niyam* are two essential initial disciplines prescribed by the *Aṣṭāṅga yoga* of Maharishi Patanjali. Non-violence, truth, non-stealing, celibacy and renunciation are called *yamas* and cleanliness, contentment, austerity, study of scriptures (spiritual texts), unwavering surrender to the will of God are called *niyams*. By following these disciplines the body becomes charged with energy, mind becomes cleansed and quiet and the *sādhak* is bestowed with will, zeal and faith to rapidly progress in his *sādhanā* of self-awareness and self-realization. Along with *yamas* and *niyams*, the practice of *Āsanās* (*yogic* postures) is third essential step so that one is able to sit in one posture for long hours without any uneasiness of body and mind. The fourth step in this eight-step ladder of *yoga* is *Prāṇāyām* (control of breath). Normally the *prāṇic* energy in our ignorant state wildly dances to the tunes of passions and unbridled animal urges. Practice of *Prāṇāyām* helps in calming down and controlling these wayward and wild movements of the mind.

Purity of mind and purity of life force are interdependent. Mind and life are as father and son. Vrahdaranyak Upanishad states:

Mana eva pitā, vāṅg mātā prāṇah prajā |
Vrahda. Upanishad (1/5/7)

That is, mind is the father, speech is the mother and the life is their progeny.

Prāṇāyāṁ is the practice of consciously controlling the flow of *prāṇa* by engaging mind and thoughts in a single ennobling and uplifting direction.

Prāṇa sādhanā involves controlling all the five flows of airs (*apān, prāṇa, udān, vyān,* and *samān*) and their sub-airs existing in the body by thoroughly understanding their functions. All these airs and sub-airs are classifications of one *prāṇa*. Basically *prāṇic* energy is one cosmic *prāṇic* energy manifesting through different entities and individualities. Even a partial command over cosmic *prāṇa* endows a person with supernatural powers. By controlled energy of the *prāṇa* the inner subconscious mind can be activated and its supernormal capacities like clairvoyance, clairaudience, mind reading, premonition etc. can be accessed. One can even instantly travel astronomical distances to planets, stars, and galaxies. With mastery of *prāṇa* one can also have free access to subtle and higher realms of consciousness and their beings- the heavenly worlds. But advanced *prāṇa sādhanā* must be undertaken under an adept guide and master (the *Guru*).

Higher practices of *prāṇāyāṁ* are dangerous with an impure and disorganized mind and can even lead to acute mental disorders hence advanced stages of *prāṇāyāṁ* should always be practiced with simultaneous practice of fifth, sixth and seventh steps of *aṣṭāṅg yoga sādhanā* i.e. *pratyāhār* (withdrawal of senses), *dhāraṇā* (concentration) and *dhyāna* (meditation). Without purification and control of the mind

the *prāṇa sādhanā* remains a mere breathing exercise. It is beneficial to bodily health but it is not *prāṇic yoga*.

For fruitful practice of *prāṇāyāṁ* one has to keep a constant watch over the movements and control of the muscles. For this purpose there are different *vedhas, mudrās* and *bandhas*. With unwavering determination cosmic *prāṇic* energy is drawn from the cosmic space. Then one has to learn the process of consciously focusing this energy for achieving the desired result. However the ultimate aim of the *prāṇa sādhanā* is the liberation of the enslaved individual being (*prāṇa*) from the prison of the false ego identity and its merger-union with the cosmic *prāṇic* being of eternal life, light and love- *samādhi*- the eighth and the final step of *Patanjal yoga sādhanā*. Persons endowed with abundance of this *prāṇic* energy are reckoned as truly great. Before ending let us quote how beautifully has the world renowned mystic-healer, Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen, expressed her own experience of *prāṇic* energy- life force, as she calls it:

“ *Coherent, elegant, mysterious, aesthetic. When I first earned my degree in medicine I would not have described the life in this way. But I was not on intimate terms with life then. I had not seen the power of the life force in everyone, met the will to live in all its varied and subtle forms, and recognized the irrepressible love of life buried in the heart of every living thing. I had not been used by life to fulfill itself or been caught unaware by its strength in its most profound weakness. I had no sense of awe. I had thought that life was broken and that I, armed with the powerful tools of modern science, would fix it. I had thought*

then that I was broken also. But life has shown me otherwise.

Many of the people who come to my office now as counseling clients have come because modern medicine has failed them in some way, or they have used up its power to help them, they do not know what else to do. They hope to find a way to heal, to cooperate with or even strengthen the life in them. After listening to hundreds and **hundreds of their stories over the last twenty years I think I would have to say that most people do not recognize the strength of the life force in them or the many ways it shows itself to**

them. Yet every one of us has felt its power. We who doubt are covered with the scars of many healings.

So when people first come, this is the place where we usually start- talking about life itself, our attitude towards it, our experience of it, our trust or distrust of it. Developing an eye to see it, in others and in ourselves. In the beginning is the life force. After more than fifty years of living, I have learnt it can be trusted.”

* * *

The great Armageddon of Mahabharat was over. Dhrratashtra was suffering from an unbearable agony of grief for the death of all his sons. He called Vidur to spend some time in his inspiring company, discussing the teachings of the scriptures to get some peace of mind. During these discussions one day he asked Vidur – “Each of our great warriors was so capable that he could kill the Pandavas single-handed during his turn as the *Senāpati* (General in Command). Each one of them sacrificed his life while fighting in the battlefield as the *Senāpati* one after the other. Instead of this, if they all had fought together on the front line, wouldn't they have won the war? “.

Vidur replied – “You are right Your Majesty. If the Kauravas had realized their duty and followed it with wisdom, they would have been victorious. But, because of their ego and passion of proving themselves most superior and gaining all the credit individually, none of them could think of their duty in the battlefield and never got the zeal to fight it collectively”.

In fact, Your Majesty, he continued – “What is more true is that, had your sons understood and paid attention to their duties, there would have been no War. As per their duty, had they given the due share to their first cousins in the empire, it would have strengthened their own power. Who had stopped them from doing so? Indeed Lord Krishna himself had come to remind them of their moral and social duties. But they had become blind and deaf because of ego and avarice; they refused to give even five small villages to the five Pandavas. They even disobeyed their Great Grand Uncle Bhishma Pitamah. So, why repent now? The evil tendencies, which irrevocably pushed them to initiate the war, had led to their committing grave blunders on the battlefield as well and eventually led their devastating defeat and destruction”.

The social values indwelling our Cellular Self

The automatic and intelligent regulation of enormous amount of complex interactive biochemical and physiological processes in the living system involves, even at the cellular and molecular levels, some basic principles which, through their manifestations, reflect the subtle role of consciousness-force existing in the smallest unit of life.

Look at the process of our body's growth. Why a unicellular embryo grows into a specific multi-cellular organism? While the living foetus is cozily protected inside its mother's womb, why should it come out? The answers to "how" of the above questions are well deciphered by the biomedical sciences. But, the "why" (i.e., "for what purpose") of these and related events in the process of the birth and development of the living system still remains a mystery. These cannot be explained by the existing theories and experimental findings of the modern sciences. However, we may fathom the nature and purpose of each facet of the molecular, cellular and grosser manifestations of the psyche in the light of the Vedic Philosophy, which affirms the eternal existence and continuous evolution – towards the ultimate, boundless perfection – of the consciousness-force in every expression of life.

Every living cell is a conscious system that contains a subtle world in itself. The individual and collective behaviors of the cellular systems are reflected in various

biochemical and physiological processes. It appears to be most intelligent and refined in the human organism that enjoys the status of being the most evolved and privileged of all the species ever born on Earth.

In terms of social values, the principles involved in the 'perfect behavior' of the molecular and cellular systems demonstrate cooperation, service, struggle, endurance, adjustment, valor, discipline and unity.

Human body is made up of trillions of cells and has almost equal number of neurons (nerve cells) in the information-processing network of the brain. It is the mutual cooperation of the individual cells that leads to the formation and efficient functioning of the different tissues, organs, and the body-system as a whole. In-vitro experiments on cell culturing show that a single cell is itself capable of surviving independently in a proper medium. Sacrificing their 'freedom', the cells in our living system choose to share their earnings (inputs) and belongings with the other cells via inter-cellular interactions and live in healthy cooperation and organized unity; thereby setting a shining example for the human society. All the constituents at molecular level, including the enzymes and proteins also follow this ideal principle of mutual association and make the large number of complex in-vivo reactions possible. At the macro multi-cellular levels, the internal organs obey this social discipline

of mutual adjustment and collective efforts and consistently teach us the values of amity and cooperation.

Altruistic service is superbly adopted at every stage of organization and functioning of a living system. The non-stop intracellular and intercellular activities, continuous pumping of the heart, the distributive flow of blood, the burden-bearing arrangements of the bones, etc stand as best illustrations of this vital principle of social harmony and progress.

Defense against the harmful invasions or disorders of any kind is another fundamental property of a living system and its components. At the cellular level, the cell membrane regulates the inflow and outflow of desired molecules and prevents the invalid entries. Lysosomes also aid in the protection of the cells. Excess of water in the blood is instantly thrown out (via the kidneys) by the activation of diuretic hormones. Vomiting, shivering, allergy, etc are outcomes of the acts of struggle of specific subsystems against any imbalance or untoward reactions. The prompt vigil and valor of the Lymphocytes and the antibodies in fighting against toxins, germs and infections (micro-organisms and foreign antigens) enable the healthy survival of the body. Any deficiency or fault in this immune mechanism results in vicious cycle of diseases, some of which could even be lethal.

The role of consciousness-force pervading in the bio-molecular and cellular units is vital though invisible in the duty-bound intelligence and efficacy of the uncountable, complex biochemical interactions and physiological processes taking place in an adaptive manner from

millisecond to millisecond and even in tinier fractions of time.

In a volume on 'Principles of Immunology', Drs. Rose, Milgram, and Vanoze observe that in spite of a physical contact, there is no material transfer or communicative interaction between the

A music teacher took his students to the celebrity Pianist Paderewski. They asked him about the secret of his success? Paderewski replied – “I practice for four hours daily without fail and search for my mistakes and modes of improvements, as I used to do as an apprentice”.

He further explained to the young students – “Faith and respect in your work and continuous efforts for its best performance are indeed the keys to success”.

immuno-competent and the invader cells even if they happen to be chemically compatible with each other. This indicates that the functioning of the immune cells is also governed by some inherent intelligent and crucial process, which is regulating the known (and also yet unknown) laws of (biochemical) reactions in a living system. Similar kinds of views are further supported by the recent findings of some biomedical research laboratories, which demonstrate rise in the defensive strength, and efficiency of the immune system with the vital energy and willpower of the patients. Complete cure of severe stages of dreaded diseases like cancer

by patient's self-will have been reported in some cases, despite the failure of advanced medical treatment. Experiments on modern therapies along with psychological training by auto-suggestive and biofeedback control have paved the way for systematic investigations for wider applications in this direction.

The complementary or supportive organs in case of emergency further evince the remarkable endurance, sense of responsibility and unity in the cellular and organ level components driven by the infinite capacity of the consciousness force. Functioning of a single kidney or lung in case of damage or removal of its partner, regulation of the RBC/WBC concentration in the blood through bone marrow within a short span of blood-loss in an accident or after blood donation, etc are well known examples in this regard.

Existence of germs like flora, which are allowed by the skin tissues to eat the rubbish of dead cells, the presence of 'friendly' germs in the intestines for

production of vitamin B₁₂, etc mark the tolerance, compromise and prudent adjustment of the associated molecular and cellular units for the good of our overall health. At organ levels, the flexibility of the respiratory tubes, expansion and contraction of the pleural cavity and lungs to effectuate periodic purification of the blood through inspiration and expiration, flexibility of the muscles and joints as per the requirements of the body's actions, etc are familiar experiences of the marvelous dynamic adjustments in every unit of our physical existence. The ability to embrace the coexistence of other creatures and adaptability to positive changes and compromise for maintaining its healthy growth in a randomly changing environment illustrate the farsighted vision of the biological (macro and micro) systems.

May the human society learn something from the tiny world of its biological counterpart to adopt the social values naturally embedded there for peaceful co-existence and harmonious progress?

* * *

Nasiruddin was Sultan of Delhi, but his personal income was only what he used to get by making handwritten copies of the holy Koran and stitching caps. As a principle, he met all his personal and family expenses from his self-earned wages. His wife used to do the entire household work, including cooking.

One day her hand got severely burnt while cooking. Suffering the pain of this injury, she started cursing her fate that despite being the *Begam* (wife) of a *Badshah* (king), she can't even have a maidservant or a helper. Later in the evening she asked her husband to arrange for a cook in their house.

"Yes, Begam! We can afford to have a servant in our house, but only when we compromise with our moral principles" – was the King's reply. He continued – "Don't you know that the estate, royal treasure, power and prosperity the head of a state has, is only a trust-property of the public. Being the *Badshah*, I am only its guardian. If we use people's money for our selfish ends, it will be dishonesty and cheating...". The queen was admirably dumb-founded by this reply of her noble-souled husband – a rare example of human integrity, honesty and humility. She felt proud and fortunate to be his lifemate.

Reincarnation- A certainty

“The soul reincarnates after death”. The increasing mass of facts and evidences available now leave little scope for doubt in this regard. Apart from the views of atheists, Christian and Islamic beliefs too, have been acting as an obstacle in wide and ready acceptance of the theory of reincarnation. These two religions do not accept that the soul is reborn in a new body after the dissolution of the present body. They believe that first there will come the great deluge, then a new creation (*sr̥ṣṭi*) will be manifested and only after that the soul would be able to get a new birth. The long gestation period in this scheme leaves the idea of rebirth peripheral, unattractive and as good as non-existent. According to this belief *jīva* (unredeemed soul) is not born again soon to reap the fruits of his past good or bad deeds. This lack of immediacy tends to generate pessimism about the plight of the soul lying in a long and lonely hibernation.

The theory of rebirth reinforces the faith in the continuum of embodied life and in progressive advancement of human evolutionary efforts with only temporary lulls in between. Instances and evidences increasingly support the view that life continues even after death of the body. If this belief gets strengthened in the mass of humanity, it will have a very beneficial impact.

Pessimistic thoughts of old age and death would not dampen people’s spirit. It would be possible for them to continue doing

their duties with enthusiasm without being perturbed that their efforts would be rendered futile with the cessation of current life in this body. The theory of reincarnation also proclaims, ‘as you sow in this life, so shall you reap in the next’. A firm conviction in this law would deter man from indulging in evil deeds and suffering their consequences later on. Belief in reincarnation is thus absolutely essential for maintaining righteousness in human conduct and keeping alive a hope for the future.

Time was when reincarnation was considered as belonging to the domain of religion and philosophy. Both these fields are faith-based. Faith needs no logic; it goes beyond the latter. In philosophical expositions rebirth is established by logical deduction. But such a reason-based proof would satisfy only the religiously inclined. For other hard-nosed inquisitive minds nothing short of concrete evidence would do. The concept of rebirth, which is the bedrock of Indian spiritual and philosophical edifice, has now been accepted as a subject matter of modern scientific investigation. Enquiry into reported incidences and direct evidences available so far are gradually clearing up the mist of skepticism on this count and replacing it with a more definite belief. In the face of verifiable proofs the atheistic cynicism is forced to tone down its preconceived notions and biases.

An eminent psychiatrist Dr. Ivan Stevenson has led the team of researchers enquiring into the phenomenon of rebirth. He

has written a book on this subject that is titled “Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation”. One of the cases related to a Red-Indian native of the northwestern coast of America. He had made a correct prediction about his next birth. The incident is as follows:

In the year 1949, William George Sr. was the leader of the fishing community of his area. One day he told his son and daughter-in-law that if reincarnation were indeed a truth, he would take rebirth as their son. He also advised them to take care of their son (George Senior’s) body marks on the body of the newborn. If the marks matched, it would be proof of his reincarnation as their offspring. After some time George Sr. was drowned on a fishing expedition. Later his daughter-in-law gave birth to a son who was named William George Junior. As the boy grew up his parents became increasingly convinced that Junior exactly resembled his grandfather not only in his physical appearance but also in nature and behavior. There were many other surprising analogies.

William George Sr. had once been hurt in a basketball game and walked with a limp. George Jr. too walked with a limp without any apparent cause. He, too, displayed same flashes of anger as his grandfather did while warning people of some danger. At a very young age, he began to display the same fishing skills as his grandfather possessed. His level of information about family-friends, relatives and acquaintances was quite high.

George Sr. had once presented a watch to his son. One day Junior George happened to see the watch among his

mother’s jewellery. The moment his eyes fell on the watch he exclaimed, “ This is my watch. Give it to me.” His fondness for that watch remained until he was 19 yrs of age. It was only after he had entered his youth, that George Junior’s attachment with the memories of the previous life gradually faded away.

On the basis of extensive case studies of more than sixteen hundred cases, Dr. Ivan Stevenson has drawn some remarkable conclusions. Some of these are:(i) the main period of interregnum between death and rebirth varies from place to place; it averages nine months in Turkey, twenty one months in Sri Lanka, forty five months in India, and forty eight months in Alaska. (ii) Those who die a violent death or in stressful conditions return sooner than others and are inclined to take revenge. Such revenge-oriented rebirths constitute forty percent of the total in Sri Lanka and India, and eighty percent in Lebanon and Syria. (iii) Some cases involving change of sex have been observed, too. Generally in such rebirths, gender characteristics of the previous life appear between two and four years of age and subside by eight years.

Dr. Stevenson has presented before the scientific world some concrete formulations regarding the phenomenon of rebirth. The occurrences of child prodigies cannot be satisfactorily explained on the basis of any socio-scientific formulation except the reincarnation theory. The linchpin of this theory is that *sancit karmas* (accumulated imprint of past life); transmigrate to the next birth of the soul in the form of attached *sanskārs*.

Professor C. J. Ducas of Brown university has published a research paper titled: ‘The Doctrine of Reincarnation in the

History of Thought'. This paper enumerates many examples of rebirth from the earliest times to the present. It includes the celebrated case of Edgar Casey whose claims led to wide dissemination of the theory of rebirth in America. Casey had claimed that he would compile all the cases of reincarnation right from the time of the Bible down to the present era.

The available evidences have so far not been able to conclusively prove the rebirth theory on the touchstone of modern scientific parameters. But the growing number of supportive cases is definitely buttressing the belief in its validity. Presently two factors are considered responsible for a person's personality make-up: One is heredity or genetic factor; the other is environmental influence. A third factor is now strongly indicated – the law of *Karma phala*.

The famous psychologist Carl G. Jung was once traveling in Africa. This was his first visit to the country. He saw an aborigine standing on a hillock. Instantly he had an uncanny feeling that the place was his motherland in some earlier life on earth and that the person was standing there for thousands of years and waiting for him. This sensation grew stronger upon his entering the village. He felt that he was very well familiar with its every nook and corner. Psychologists call this phenomenon 'Déjà vu'. Jung himself explains it as 'Reincarnation of the immemory zone'.

A study done by Bangalore's National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences has found concrete proofs in forty-five claims of rebirth. It examined two hundred cases reported mostly from Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Punjab. About half of them claimed that they

had died an unnatural death in their previous lives. All the narrators were below ten with girls constituting one-third of the total.

In which *yoni* (life form) or in which surroundings the deceased will be reborn depends largely on the sum total of his acquired *sanskārs*. A person's aptitude, likes-dislikes, habits etc. collectively orient the soul in a particular direction and the soul picks up corresponding surroundings for its rebirth. To take an example, a bee sits on flowers while in the same garden the dung beetle searches out the dung heap. This value orientation is *sanskār*. Besides this factor, good or bad results of *sancit karmas*, too, pull the soul in their directions. The *jīva*, bound by these control-strings, is able to find out the appropriate place for his next rebirth. The scriptures have the following to say in this regard-

*Mānsedaṁ śarīraṁ hi vāsnārtha prakalpitaṁ |
Kṛmi kośa prakāreṇ svātmakośa ivasvayam ||*

-*Yoga Vasiṣṭha*, 4/11/19 *Karoti*

dehaṁ sankalpāt kumbha kāri ghaṭaṁ yathā |

-*Yoga Vasiṣṭha*, 4/15/7

[The silk worm makes its cocoon with its own body secretion likewise the soul has created its body with its resolve in the same way as the potter makes a pot.]

Bhavitākār vāntaṁ vasinā kaliko dayāt ||

Yoga Vasiṣṭha, 6/1/50/39

[*Jīva* acquires form to satiate carnal desires and for this purpose keeps on changing bodies.]

There is a moving and instructive story in *Shreemad Bhagavad* about a *Jīva*'s worldly attachment and Devarishi Narada's repeated but futile attempts to wean him away from it. Once Narada saw the beloved ones of a person weeping around the latter's dead body. Narada urged the *jīvātmā* to free

himself from worldly attachments and accompany the former to enjoy the freedom from the cycle of birth and death. But the *Jiva* was still in emotional bondage of the lamenting relatives. He paid no heed to Narada's counsel and his subtle body kept hovering around the place. In due course, he entered animal form (*yoni*) and began to serve his farmer son as an ox.

After some time Narada revisited the *Jiva* who was now encaged inside an ox's body. He again made the same entreaty. The ox replied- 'Bhagwan (O lord!) my son's financial position is bad. How can I leave him just now?' Narada went away disappointed. The *Jiva* suffered beatings at the hands of his son but his attachment for the latter continued and remained undiminished even at the time of his death. So he was reborn as a dog and continued guarding his son's property. Even severe scolding and beatings did not make him leave his son's door.

Devarishi Narada came again. The dog again advanced a similar plea. 'Bhagwan (O lord!) don't you see? Thieves and robbers have an eye on my son's property? How can I leave him?' Narada said- 'Son! You look upon this gross body as a source of happiness. But it repeatedly fails you. Why do you still keep chasing this mirage?' But how was a mere dog to comprehend? Even humans are unable to realize this stark truth.

The *Jiva* ultimately got angry at his sons behavior and in order to take revenge became a rat. Only the nature of his attachment had changed. Earlier it was affection now anger and revenge. Attachment *per se* remained and consequently the birth-death cycle continued. Even at this stage Narada tried, but to no avail. Enlightenment did not dawn on the *Jiva*. Meanwhile, fed up

with the rat, the farmer son used poison and killed it. This made the *Jiva* still more vengeful. It now got snake's body. But the moment snake ventured out of his hole to settle scores, inmates of the house killed it with *lathis* and stones. Now Naradaji stopped visiting the *Jiva*. He had realized that in its mania for revenge the *Jiva* would continue on its reincarnation spree becoming in the process a fly, an ant, a mosquito and what not.

A book titled 'After Death' was published in 1897. Since then twenty editions of this book in many languages have come out. It contains a touching account of Julia. She was a beautiful, romantic girl, and had many friends. She would often tell her friends that even after her death she would keep meeting them. On December 12, 1891, Julia died. True to her word, her disembodied soul kept wandering about to meet the friends. This phenomenon was confirmed by her friends and acquaintances. They reported that she visits them, sees them but remains irritated and unhappy for being deprived of the pleasure of touching them or seeing them. Life does not end with the end of the body. The *Jiva* reappears in a new garb and in a new environment as determined by his past deeds. Reason proves this doctrine, evidences support it and now even science is grudgingly acquiescing in. Scientists are engaged in making deeper probes and the day is not far off when the concept of reincarnation and its intrinsic core of *Karma phal* would be fully accepted everywhere. That day, mankind would be able to get the benefit of clear moral code for living life accordingly. It will greatly help man in determining and regulating his actions so as to make the optimum use of his life, a divine gift.

* * *

D R E A M S

Linkage between the visible and the invisible worlds

As most of us might have experienced, dreams appear to be arbitrary reflections of memory and abrupt creations of the agility of mind. We can hardly find any truth and logical basis or purpose in the broken sequence of what we usually dream in sleep. Interestingly though, when we are watching a dream, every scene appears real! We experience every bit of it as if we are living in it.

Many a time dreams appear to be quite amusing and entertaining. Quite often they are frightening 'nightmares' too. The imaginary world of dreams may sometimes be supernatural and soothing fairylike "dream land". Some dreams are scary and they stress our mind with unprecedented fear and worries... Usually, these diversified experiences occur because of the influence of the semi-conscious state of mind. Desires, apprehensions and inquisitions of the conscious (external) mind, and the perceptions and conditioning of the sense organs induce corresponding influences in the subconscious state of sleep. For example, concupiscence at the time of sleep would generally result in vulgar scenes of sexual indulgence in the dreams. Active dreams of this kind might even stimulate the genitals and cause night-discharge. The heaviness of stomach, indigestion, headache, anger, mental stress tension etc, also bear associated negative effects on dreams. Bites of mosquitoes, bedbugs, lice, etc may be depicted in the dreams as the incidents involving experiences of injuries, pains, irritation, etc. Unfulfilled desires, suppressed emotions and psychosomatic complexes, are also reflected in the variegated experiences of dreams, which would normally be beyond the imaginations of the conscious mind.

Most of the above kinds of the active (subconscious) dreams are hazy, haphazard, and difficult to be remembered. Often the dreams of this category do not bear any meaning or purpose. Such dreams cannot be analyzed or interpreted scientifically and these hardly have any connection with the hidden messages of the unconscious mind. However, frequent occurrence of the dreams of similar kinds may have roots in some psychosomatic disorder or disease. Analysis of whatever is remembered from repeated experiences of same sort of dream during sleep might be useful in diagnosis and cure in such cases.

Correlation of mental tendencies and response of active dreams sometimes becomes apparent from the specific reactions of the semi-conscious (subconscious) mind during active sleep. For instance, look at the following experiments conducted in the Dream Research division of the California University.

As part of the studies of the effects of surrounding environment on dreams, a candle was lit and kept for some time in front of the closed eyes of a sleeping person, who happened to be a sportsman. The latter felt in his dream at that moment that a white bat and a golden shining ball are kept in front of him which he is about to pick up for a play. When the same experiment was repeated with a coward clerk, he dreamt as if some unknown 'enemy' is coming towards him with a thick stick and a lamp to beat him in the darkness of night.

Napoleon Klettman and Eugene Aserensky of the Chicago University had attempted to investigate and identify the part or state of the body or brain responsible for experience of dreams. Despite long-term

dedicated research they could not find any clue to proceed further. Their unperturbed motivation however brought fruits one day when they saw rapid movement of the eyeballs and variation in the face expressions of a sleeping child. This observation gave rise to rather focused hypothesis that the rapid movement of the eyeballs makes watching a dream possible. This had set the direction of modern research on dreams, which has come a long way since then.

Dreams appear to be the mode of transmitting subtle messages of the mind through a rhetorically 'coded' language. Whatever one sees in the dreams is a reflection of the subconscious or unconscious mind. The active dreams of the kind illustrated above are expressions of the thoughts, sentimental currents and bodily functions in general. The implicit nature of these reflections mingled with multiple flashes of memory makes it almost impossible to decode the meanings of dreams in general. Most often there may not be anything substantial in a dream. The extrovert ambitions and agile mind of people frequently present them with abrupt dreams that are no better than a child's play or conjugation of delusions and arbitrary imaginations.

Stationary dreams and dreams with intuitive messages are rare and are experienced by people whose mind is pure, serene, and stable. Dreams of spiritually enlightened minds carry premonition, afflatus, or messages of great importance. Some people are born with spiritually charged mind because of their dedicated spiritual endeavors in the past lives. Some develop these by disciplined control and purification of their mind and character. The dreams 'seen' by such people in *yoga-nidrā*, trance or deep sleeps are of significant importance.

Spiritual dreams are expressions of afflatus and the subliminal voice of the inner self. Ample examples are available in the annals of history where great discoveries, divine illumination of the intellect, emergence of intuitive ideas, resolution of mysteries, realization of latent powers, etc amazingly became possible because of dreams. Sometimes, the divine inspirations educed by such dreams lead to sublime transformation of ordinary mortal beings into saints, *mahatmas* or great personalities of supernatural talents.

Young prince Siddharth once dreamt that a divine soul had taken him to a graveyard. Pointing to a dead body the latter warned — "Look this is your body. Realize the perishable nature of the body and the transient nature of life and hence make the best use of the moments of life available to you now" Siddharth was truly awakened after this dream. He renounced all luxuries and attachments and attained ultimate knowledge thereafter through ascetic disciplines and *sadhanā* of the highest order. Thus, a dream sparked the transmutation of Siddharth into The Buddha.

Joan of Arc — the crowning glory of the French Revolution was born in an ordinary farmer's family. In her dream one night, an angel reminded her to — remember the great purpose of life, listen to the call of the times and kindle the torch of liberation". This message became the source of light and courage in her life and triggered her immortal participation in the French freedom movement with superhuman bravery.

Some of the dreams of Tipu Sultan, the intrepid king of Mysore also have significant place in history. He often used to be amazed by the intimations of future events given by his dreams. It became his habit to note down his experiences in a diary.

The modern trends of psychology were largely inspired by the theory of Freud.

Sigmund Freud neglected the role of dreams as possible linkages between the subliminal and the gross domains of consciousness. He rather affirmed dreams as reactions of suppressed and unfulfilled desires. In his view unsatisfied concupiscence or sexual instincts are predominant in stimulating disturbance of mind and generating psychological tides, which are expressed via dreams. Despite receiving significant support for a long time, Freud's hypothesis was criticized and proven to be incomplete by the eminent thinkers and psychologists like Carl Gustav Jung.

Jung opined that, although the aspirations, emotions and the reactions of the ups and downs of daily life bear substantial impact on dreams, the latter couldn't be confined to such reflections alone. He defines dreams as expressions of the "communications" of the individual consciousness with one or more of the infinitely many impulses of the cosmic consciousness. In his view, decipheration of dreams may give us some, though indirect, idea of the linkage of the individual consciousness with the omnipresent para-consciousness.

It should be noted here that the nature of dreams of an individual would depend upon his intrinsic character and tendencies. Dreams cannot generally depict those activities or aspects which are altogether different from his inclinations or which do not intersect with the domains of his interactions or are contrary to his habitual tendencies. For example, it would be rare that a blacksmith dreams something associated with painting unless fine arts or painting happens to be of relevance or interest to him in some respect. However, this may be true only for the dreams seen by most people in general. The dreams of divine or spiritual category do not depend upon the worldly activities or occupation of a person. The piety of one's character, serenity of his mind and

spiritual elevation of inner self happen to be the principal factors in experiences of such dreams.

Carl Jung has elucidated the power of the subconscious (and unconscious) mind in his highly recognized book "Memories, Dreams and Reflections". He writes that the resources of knowledge available to the subconscious mind are enormous and stronger as compared to those of the conscious (external) mind. The latter relies on perceptions by the sense organs or acquisition of information and knowledge. But the subconscious mind, being a component of the unconscious or subtle (inner) mind, may acquire infinite ways of continuous enlightenment through the linkage of the latter with the eternal cosmic consciousness. The unconscious mind can receive subliminal impulses of ever-new experiences via the cosmic signals of omnipresent consciousness.

Some of the Modern psychologists like Dr. Haffner M. Roberts describe dreams as nothing more than the shadows and responses of the worldly horizons of life. Several other contemporary scholars of psychology have, however, contradicted such views. Prof. Fitz attributes dreams to be — "the means of transmission of the inner expressions of mind in an esoteric language" which can also indicate the internal condition of the body and mind of the dreamer. Dr. Strumpel deciphers subtler roles of the dreams and states that — dreams depict the subliminal domains of life beyond the barriers of the conscious or the visible world. Prof. Berdek warns that the study of dreams should not be neglected by treating them as mere reflections or shadows of the day-to-day activities and hidden ambitions. Many a times dreams prove to be rich sources of immense information of unique importance.

Dreams are like layers of water on the surface of an ocean that might bring valuable substances along with the deeper currents and convey what lies beneath in the core. The pearls

of inner power and knowledge can be fetched with the help of these clues.

Sometimes dreams help resolve a mystery or difficult problems, which were intractable by the logical thinking, reasoning and trenchancy of the conscious mind. This becomes possible because the conscious mind is overtaken by the unconscious mind during the moments of deep sleep. The extrasensory potentials of the latter thus get a chance to transmit transcendental knowledge.

Gaston Ugdiani of Florence (Italy) had seen a distinct dream when he was seven years old. He saw himself as a priest in a temple in India. The dream was so clear and impressive that the image of the temple building remained alive in his memory for many years. It also educated an attraction in his mind. He visited India as a young man and was stunned to find, after a long search, that one of the temples in Mahabalipuram was exactly what he had seen in that dream! He analyzed the dream and attributed this to be a reflection of the memory of a past life.

Supernatural experiences of clairvoyance, vision of the invisible, premonition and intuition are also associated with the dreams of divine (or spiritual) category. Deciphering the realities and mechanisms of such dreams elucidates the possibility that individual consciousness can be connected to the vibrations of the subtle world via the 'medium' of dreams. The dormant state of the conscious mind and the active intellect during deep sleep coupled with the charged state of the subconscious and unconscious layers of mind may be likened with the state of mind during deep meditation (*dhyāna – dhāṛṇā*), *yoga nidrā* and trance. It is in this state that the inspirations of the inner self can be received by our mind without any obstruction and fluctuation. The spiritual realizations experienced by the yogis in the higher states of

trance may be described the most real and vivid kinds of dreams.

Mr. Tom Feature of Sidney had aroused his inner powers and trained his mind for understanding the implications of the rarely occurring transcendental dreams. He had also undergone spiritual practices (*sādhana*s) to elevate his intuition and willpower to find clues via dreams to meet the needs of the time. He had successfully used this supernormal ability to solve many intractable problems and mysteries posed before him.

Sir Oliver Lodge accepts such possibilities in his book "Survival of Man" (pg. 112). He affirms the existence of a subtle linkage, which offers the glimpse of transcendental knowledge to the human mind. He also cites (on pp. 106-7 of this book) an interesting incident in this regard — "Priest E. K. Eliot was on a voyage across the Atlantic. On the night of 14th January 1887, he received his uncle's letter in dream informing the sad demise of his younger brother. The priest had narrated this dream in his diary the next day, stating that he can't believe this dream because his brother had no problem except mild fever when he had left home (in Switzerland). No one could imagine that he would die. But he got confirmed news of his brother's death when he reached England. What else the above dream would be designated other than premonition or an experience of clairvoyance?"

Roman emperor Caesar was once requested by his wife Cornelia not to visit the senate because she had seen a horrifying dream the previous night. She had seen herself with untied hair, holding the bloodstained body of her husband in this dream. However, the king saw no reason to believe her dream or suspect any possibility of a scandal that time: what an ill fate! His friend Brutus assassinated him the same day in a narrow passage of the senate hall moments after he reached there.

Charles Fillmore of America was an ordinary citizen, living a dutiful, austere married life. He often used to see sacred scenes in his dreams. One night he dreamt that a stranger had taken him to a strange city. He read the name of the city as Kansas. Following the stranger, he arrived at a new place, which also was new to him because he had not visited this city before. There he was given a newspaper to read, He could hardly read the first letter “U” in it when many newspapers began to fall in his hands. Suddenly he was awake. The dream was broken. Somehow it had left a deep mark in his memory. Charles was a deeply religious man and he used to teach people the need for and benefits of prayer, meditation and ascetic disciplines. Because of his simplicity and piety of conduct, even the nonbelievers respected his words. He also inspired many rich and socially active people. Some of them requested him one day to form an organization to spread the noble message of righteous faith and human values. In 1890 the “Society of Silent Unity” was formed. Surprisingly, the members proposed the city of Kansas as the headquarters of the society. The place selected for housing the society’s office was indeed what Charles had seen in his dream. The society also launched a magazine from this office, which was named “Unity”. Now Charles Fillmore knew the ‘secret’ of the letter “U” read by him in that divine dream. Later, along with his wife Myrtle Fillmore he founded world-renowned Unity School of Christianity. At present Unity school has an unequalled global outreach through its prayer ministry (Silent Unity), its books, magazines, audio and video material, conveying the message of human unity, love, peace and understanding. And all this started with a dream!

The Red Rock gold mines are second largest in the world. Mr. Winfield S. Stratton, the founder and owner of this estate has described in his memoirs — how a miraculous

dream made his fortunes. It happened when Stratton was facing bankruptcy in his business and used to rove around in search of solace and hope.... During this phase of misery, he slept under the sky on an open ground in Colorado on 4th July 1811. An angel appeared in his dream and showed him the path to climb the mountains of Betil. The angel marked a particular spot there and uttered — “here lies a great source of gold, which will enrich your fortunes for ages”. Stratton was awake the next moment with a feeling of hope and surprise. As he did not have money to invest in the new venture, Stratton narrated his dream to some friends with a request for help. They laughed and ridiculed his dream as mere delusion of his desperate mind. Their conclusions were logical because the geological survey of that region of Colorado, conducted about eighteen years back, had shown no possibility of any valuable mineral ore there. All doors were closed for poor Stratton but his hopes and enthusiasm remained alive.

A few days passed. Finally he climbed the hills as per the directions shown in the dream and also identified the right spot. He dug out some portion and found a stone of gold at a depth of few feet. Then he borrowed some money against the surety of his remaining property and purchased that ‘golden land’ of Colorado. Soon he became a billionaire.

Stratton considered the dream as a blessing of the Almighty as a reward for his pious deeds in a past life. As a mark of his inexplicable gratitude, he established a Church on the grounds where he saw the divine dream. He also founded a charitable trust for free education of poor and helpless children.

The above examples show that if we maintain sincerity, piety and natural peace of mind, and thus, minimize the hindrances in the expression of its unconscious impulses, we too may sometime be bestowed with the miraculous

knowledge and experience in dreams that we could have never imagined to attain in our wildest dreams!

The source of all knowledge, all activities and manifestations of the visible world — as we experience it, lie in the subtle, unseen world, which is beyond the reach of our perception. The gross body of a tree is seen but its roots lie beneath the surface of earth. The strength, greenery and fructification of the tree depend upon how strong and deep are its roots. The same may be true of the trees of our lives, too.

Usually our mind remains engrossed within the peripheries of selfish interests and passions. It therefore experiences only the dreams driven by the *tamoguna*. That is why our dreams are most often vague and abrupt or haphazard expressions of suppressed desires. When the condition of our body and mind is dominated by the *rajoguna*, one would experience active dreams and the things and persons encountered in the awakened state would appear in the dreams with slightly rhetoric transformations. The subconscious reflections of the bodily conditions – including those caused by internal disorders (disease) – are also experienced in such dreams.

The divine or supernatural dreams reflecting the transcendental realities are experienced in the *turīyāvasthā*, when the aroused influence of *satoguna* overcomes the *raja* and *tama*. In this state the human mind gets an opportunity of direct linkage with the soul-spirit. Precognitive dreams, the dreams offering extrasensory knowledge and clairvoyance fall in this category of higher-level dreams. A distinct class of such dreams is the *tejas swapna* (enlightened dreams), which, as described in the Paramhansa Parivrajak Upanishad, are perfect reflections of truth. These are exactly materialized in the future. The gross or the visible world we live in acquires its energy and life from the subliminal world. Understanding this fact helps towards orientation of our mental and bodily activities in harmony with Nature and the Omnipresent Consciousness. This helps arousing the deeper potentials of our mind and heralds the possibility of attaining vibrant health and supernatural talents. The refinement and spiritual enlightenment of the inner self with the help of sincere endeavors of *yoga sādhanās* can establish a harmonious linkage between the subliminal and the gross worlds of life. Gnostic dreams serve this purpose, to some extent, from time to time.

* * *

Xiang was a rich shepherd of a village in China. Once he hired two boys to take care of the sheep. He divided the herd of sheep in two groups and assigned one boy to each. After few days he observed that some of the sheep had died and others had lost weight in both the groups. The owner found the two boys guilty.

Both of them used to take the sheep along with them every morning but used to let them just rove around here and there and spent time in the 'hobbies' they were addicted to. One of them was used to gambling. He would just sit with a gang of other boys betting for money and gambling. The sheep used to just move around in the surrounding area whether there was sufficient stuff for grazing or not. Similar was the case with the other group; the boy in-charge of this had the 'addiction' of spending time in worship and religious rituals.

Xiang lodged a complaint against both of them. Both were presented in the court of Confucius. Although there was a great qualitative difference in their addictions, both were given the same penalty being found guilty of neglect of assigned duty.

The judicial verdict conveyed was – whatever is done by neglecting the assigned duties is wrong; whether it is the bad habit of gambling or the good practice of worship; both are addictions in this case. Both are equally punishable because the immediate duty was fully ignored in each.

Wholehearted execution of the prescribed principles

(Autobiography of Poojya Gurudev Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya - continued)

In his first meeting *Gurudev* had prescribed for me three disciplines. Twenty-four *Gāyatrī Mahāpuruścaraṇas* had to be performed for twenty-four years strictly in accordance with the prescribed rules in front of a *ghrit* lamp to be kept lighted uninterruptedly. The second important discipline to be undergone was of writing books for promoting the enlightened good of the masses. This was important for my own self-growth and self-education. This needed intense and extensive study and concentration. Side by side, public contacts had to be established to develop my organizing skills. The third important responsibility was to play the role of a voluntary freedom fighter in India's struggle for independence. As a matter of fact, these programs were not complementary to each other, but none of these became an obstacle in the progress of my *sāadhanā* and study; although in between, I had to visit Himalayas twice. The credit for this goes to my Divine Guide who had taken full control of the reins of my life and had assured constant protection.

I was enjoined by *Gurudev* to have the outlook of a *ṛiṣi*. I was also told that although I was related to my family, I should remain quite detached from it. I should listen to everybody but should do what I considered appropriate; as it would be well nigh impossible for me to reach the goal if attention is paid to their advice. Spiritual path (*śreya*) and material path (*preya*) are diametrically opposite to each other and only

one of them can be followed. If the world was pleased with someone his inmost self will not be happy with him. If the inner soul is satisfied, the displeasure of the worldly people will have to be suffered. This has happened in the life of all the true seekers of truth. It is very rare that the relatives have approved the pursuit of higher ideals. More often than not, human soul had to surrender before the worldly people, high ideals had to be given up and the old soul-suffocating routine had to be carried on.

I faced this difficulty the very first day. With the starting of the series of *puruścaraṇas* I started taking the prescribed food and leading the life of an ascetic (*tapasvī*). This created havoc. People started discussing me in their own way in sweet and sour words. The gist of their advice was that no steps should be taken to disturb the ordinary routinised way by which people earned their livelihood. Although our ancestral property was so large that three generations could have been easily fed and maintained sitting idle, it was stressed that it should all be kept intact for the future and the family should be maintained on the fresh earnings through the ancestral profession of priesthood. How could the arguments of these people be rebutted? Ultimately, I made one of the three *gurus* of Gandhiji as my *guru*, i.e. I kept silent and felt relieved. I simply said that what I was doing was in response to divine inspiration and restored a semblance of peace. I started acting upon my solemnly taken pledge in such a manner as

if I had not to take advice from and answer to anybody. On a back look now I see that if such firmness had not been shown, my life boat would have been rocked by violent jerks and capsized and I would have missed that opportunity by which, with the help of *sādhanā*, I have been able to do good to myself as well as to the masses. Relationship with God could not have been established with anything less than complete purity of heart and clarity and brilliance of head.

I was subjected to a second test in childhood when the non-cooperation movement of the Indian National Congress started. Gandhiji launched the *satyāgraha* movement, called upon the true patriots to come out from the smugness of their homes, face the bullets and go to jail.

I heard the inner voice that it was a historical moment that must not be missed. I got my name enrolled in the corps of *satyāgrahis* of that region. I had to leave my house and go to the front to offer salt *satyāgraha*. The officials of the government and their propagandists had spread rumors that there would be firing and the people would be sentenced to long imprisonments, including transportation for life, with a view to dissuading them from taking part in this movement. All my friends, neighbors, family members, relatives came to impress upon me that what I was contemplating to do was a suicidal act. The matter got further aggravated and some relatives threatened to go on fast and commit suicide. My mother, who was my guardian, was tutored to get my name struck off as a co-inheritor (along with my brothers) of valuable ancestral property and get the names of other brothers entered in my place. My brothers said that none of them would have any relation with me and I

would not be allowed entry in the house. I was threatened to be kidnapped and to be compelled to live in a camp of dacoits.

I listened to all these threats calmly. The question before me was: what should be given precedence, pressure of the family or the need of the times? I made my soul and God as witnesses and decided to act according to the 'still small voice' from within.

In this context the persecution of Prahlada appeared before my eyes. I also recalled the story of Dhruva, the determination of Parvati and the life stories of innumerable great men, warriors, saints, reformists and martyrs. None of the family members and relatives of these great personages had supported them. They remained firmly committed to the call of the duty on the strength of their own spiritual discernment. I, therefore, became indifferent to what worldly friends, neighbors or relatives said or did. If higher ideals are to be pursued one has to resolutely struggle against greed and cravings.

Despite stiff opposition, I stealthily reached the place that was indicated, launched *satyāgraha* and courted arrest.

There was another event of my childhood that further emboldened my spirit of courage. There was an old sweepress who was suffering from diarrhea and had festering wounds. She used to cry bitterly but, being an untouchable, nobody entered her house. I consulted a physician about her treatment, arranged for the medicines and started attending on her and nursing her regularly. I also arranged for her food. Sixty-five years ago it was considered to be an unpardonable offence on the part of a high caste person to enter the house of an untouchable, treat her and wash her dirty clothes. I was ostracized.

Family members too, did not allow me to enter the house. I used to lie on the platform and eat whatever was given to me but did not give up serving the sick woman. This went on for fifteen days and she became well. She always addressed me as a *Bhagvān* (God) so long as she was alive. In those days, at the age of thirteen, I was all alone; The whole village, including members of my own family, was against me. I kept up my courage of conviction and did not give in.

Courting arrest several times during the freedom struggle, taking the vow of performing twenty-four *mahāpuruṣcaranas*, treating and serving the sweepress were all tough tests to which I was subjected in my very childhood. I simultaneously fought on two fronts; against internal weaknesses and against pressures from relatives. This gave me an opportunity to awaken and strengthen my potential spiritual strength. I was greatly benefited from these tests and trials and all my programmes continued progressing towards fulfillment.

The series of *mahāpuruṣcaranas* went on regularly. A lighted *ghrit* lamp was installed the very first day on which the *sādhanā* was started. The responsibility of keeping it lit uninterruptedly was taken up by my wife, whom I called *Mātāji*. It required to be looked after constantly lest it got extinguished. This lamp has been burning uninterruptedly since then. When I meditate sitting in front of the flame of this lamp, the mind gets flooded with divine light and warmth. When there is a knotty riddle that cannot be solved by ordinary wisdom, the bright rays of this constantly lighted lamp resolve it instantly for me.

Jap (repeating the *mantra* quietly by the way of adoration) of sixty six *mālās* (rosary), symbolic worship of the picture of

Gāyatrī Mātā by water, flowers, rice, incense, lighted lamp and *naivedya* (offering of sweets), meditation of rising Sun (*Savitā*) at the time of *jap* and offering of the libation to the Sun (*Sūryārghya-dān*) at the end; this was the daily routine which was adopted by me. No *bīj-mantra* or *samput* etc. of *tāntrik* system was added. With the picture of *Gāyatrī Mātā* installed in front of me, my heart used to get filled with intense faith and devotion and it appeared as if Mother was sitting in front of me in person. Sometimes I felt inclined to shed tears of intense love and joy by hiding my face in Mother's *āncal*. During this period of daily worship and meditation, there was never an occasion when my mind did not get intensely absorbed in inner concentration and identification with the Deity of my devotion. Had it not been for the ring of alarm watch, I could not have felt inclined to come out of that state of trance. Never was there an interruption in this routine of *sādhanā*.

This also applied to study for which no separate time was set apart. Often, I was required to walk and cover long distances in connection with the work of Indian National Congress. I used to stop reading only when there was any meeting or programme. I used to read while walking. My speed of reading books has been forty printed pages per hour. I used to get at least two hours daily for reading. Thus at the rate of eighty pages a day, I could read about 2400 pages in a month, 28,000 pages in an year and seventeen and a half lakh pages over the last sixty years. Besides, reading has been as easy for me as taking food or bath and I could cursorily skip through about three thousand pages daily. This routine has been going for last sixty years during which innumerable pages of

books, on subjects of my interest, have been read. After the completion of *mahāpuruṣcaranas* I found more time that I devoted to studying several books and manuscripts in different libraries. This became an invaluable treasure for me.

I did not read a single page for recreation. All that I read was mastered with a view to acquiring proficiency in the particular subject. While writing any article or discussing any matter I could at once recall subjects that I had already read. In my absence, people used to say that I was a mobile encyclopedia. Readers of *Akhand Jyoti* (monthly spiritual magazine) are amazed when they find references to so many books, journals and magazines. The same thing applies to *Yug Nirman Yojana* and *Yug Shakti Patrika* magazines. The secret is that I have read with utmost concentration whatever has been useful to me to gain mastery of the subjects of my interest. So all relevant references suddenly appear in my mind at the appropriate time. This, in fact, is the miracle of concentrated *Sādhanā*.

There was a primary school in the village of my birth place. From the point of view of formal education, I studied only in that school. Sanskrit is part and parcel of our family traditions. My father and brothers were eminent scholars of *Sanskrit*. Giving discourses on ancient scriptures and priesthood were our ancestral profession. I thus acquired adequate knowledge of *Sanskrit* at home. I have taught *Sanskrit* to students up to the standard of *Ācārya* though I do not possess any degree.

The story of studying other languages is interesting. I started writing English words in jail on a shallow iron pan (*taslā*) by using pebbles as pencil. I could lay my hand on an

English newspaper 'Leader' in jail and started reading English. I used to consult my colleagues and in about a year's time, when I was released from jail, I had acquired fairly good knowledge of English. Every time during my journey to the jail my vocabulary of English increased due to mutual discussions and gradually I learnt grammar also. In return, I taught my jailmates *Sanskrit* and idiomatic *Hindustānī*. Magazines, journals, dictionaries etc. of other languages have always remained my basic sources of learning other languages. *Gāyatrī* has been called Goddess of Wisdom. I cannot say anything about others but I myself have been miraculously benefited by Her worship. Even professors of Hindi have received considerable guidance from my articles in *Akhand Jyoti*, in which *Sanskrit* words have been used predominantly,. I have a feeling of inner upliftment and people are amazed to find that despite my remaining extremely busy in *sādhanā* etc. so much knowledge could be acquired. The credit for all this goes to *Mahāpragyā*. (the Supreme Divine Intelligence)

Although I participated in *satyāgraha*, launched by the Congress, in compliance with the directions from *Gurudev*, in the beginning I did not understand its significance. When I was given one *sankalp* of doing *sādhanā* for twenty-four years, why was this period split up into two portions of five and nineteen years? When thousands of persons were engaged in *satyāgraha movement*, participation or non-participation by one more person should not have mattered much? *Gurudev* had guessed my dilemma at the time of my meeting with him and his divine voice had given the guideline. "*Yug dharma* has its own importance. It should be

considered as the need of times and one should rush to fulfil it leaving aside all other work, just as water has to be rushed to the site of fire. In days to come you have to undertake several works of public contact and you will not get better opportunity than this to establish contacts with different strata of society. You will also get an opportunity for rehearsal of the experience gained in previous births and of the lessons learnt in your early age. They are not important from the point of view of personal gain but they answer a need of the times.

Gurudev continued, “In practical life you are to be taught four lessons of (1) wisdom (2) honesty (3) responsibility and (4) courage. These help in the inner growth of the soul and develop brilliance of intellect. With a view to developing the talents required for execution of your future plans of action and also to hone up

the instruments needed for the purpose, your participation in India’s freedom struggle is essential.”

It is not pertinent to discuss here as to what I did for the country, how much I suffered and how I discharged the duties and responsibilities which were entrusted to me. Anybody interested to know about it may read the book ‘Freedom Fighters of Agra Division’ published by the Information Department of the Uttar Pradesh Government. In those days I was known by the name of *Śrīrām Matta*. The important thing that needs to be understood is the purpose underlying this particular direction of *Gurudev*.

(To be continued in the next issue)

Alexander the Great had heard about the great seers and sages of India. When he came here, he was in search of one such *yogi* whom he could take along to Greece. He was told of a great *siddha* living in a forest near the place of his army’s sojourn. He reached near the cave of the sage and was stunned to see the immense glow of brilliance and joy on the latter’s face. The sage had nothing in his cave; he did not even have clothes on his body; still he was looking so satisfied and powerful!

Alexander invited the hermit *yogi* to Greece and offered him the opportunity to enjoy all the wealth and royal comforts there. The *yogi* smiled and told – “I have realized the perishable nature of all such things long ago and have renounced them willingly and prudently. Why should I leave the limitless expanse of Nature and let myself imprisoned in the palaces for such petty things?”

The conqueror of the world felt insulted and showed his might this time. He took out his sword and shouted “If you don’t obey me, I will sever your head from the body in no time”.

The sage now laughed loudly and replied – “You are not mightier than the Supreme Lord of time, you can’t change His eternal rule of Life and Death. If I am destined by Him to be killed by your sword, why would I be scared; I would indeed be so happy and welcome death sent by Him to liberate me”.

Alexander had now got the taste of the unlimited power of the awakened soul of the *siddha* who had attained ultimate knowledge. He gave up the idea of forcing any *yogi* or sage to come with him. He paid his regard and returned back empty-handed.

The Practical Aspect of *Dhyāna Yoga* - II

(Translation of the original discourse in Hindi given during a *Sādhanā* camp in 1976: continued from previous issue)

The second part of this *dhyāna yoga* involves meditating upon the light spot (of rising sun) in the center of your brain. The infusion of this light in your brain, in your mind, should inspire you to become a *jñāna yogi*. The first sign of this progress is that – there should be nothing negative or illusive in your mind; your thoughts should be positive and constructive. In general, the human mind is flooded by strong currents of pell-mell thoughts and imaginations; the bedlam of passions and impulses keeps hovering around it like the fleas and mosquitoes around a drain. Sometimes your mind is boiling in anger; sometimes erotic thoughts perturb it; some moments you are thinking of a movie, soon you may begin to plan for the purchase of a lottery-ticket and dream about what you will do with the wealth gained thereby and what not! This way you keep recklessly wasting your mental energy in useless, purposeless and haphazard imaginations and thoughts.

If you were alert and had focused your mind on constructive or analytical thinking and given a focused direction to your thoughts, you would have delved deeper in your selected field of knowledge; some of you would have become a Voltaire by now! If you had dived deeper in your psyche and given creative, enlightened direction to your imaginations, you might have been another Ravindranath Tagore. People regard me as an eminent thinker. If it is true, it is only because of one thing: I have always focused

my thinking faculty in specific directions, towards search for true knowledge. I have controlled my thoughts and imaginations; they never fly randomly. They always move in the self-chosen, sagacious directions. They generate and expand around noble ideals and motives. My mind knits a vast network of thoughts but never leaves the firm base of reality and reasoning. I have blocked the entry of unnecessary, delusive or irrational thoughts. Casual thinking or uncontrolled imaginations do not have any place in my mind.

Friends! In the practice of *jñāna yoga*, we must inculcate the insight and courage to eliminate and prevent the base elements that keep intruding in our minds. Instead, if we adopt the kind of thinking that is positive, sane and noble and nurture it firmly in our mental field, our mind could become a grand reservoir of knowledge. Precious pearls of deep knowledge, ideas and inspirations would then be discovered in its inner recesses. Like the Ganga emerging from the head of Lord Shiva, a spring of pure knowledge could gush out of our minds by the practice of *jñāna-yoga*. Calmness and stability would then remain firm in our mind like the holy moon on the forehead of Lord Shiva. Our sixth sense – the extrasensory center of divine prudence – would be activated like the opening of the Third Eye of Lord Shiva. This is the *sādhanā* of *jñāna-yoga*.

The light of the rising sun you meditate upon should illuminate your inner

mind. It should refine your knowledge and focus your thoughts in constructive directions. If this spark of *jñāna* kindles in your mind, I will assume that you have comprehended and assimilated the training of meditation, for which I have guided you in this golden jubilee year of my *anuṣṭhāna sādhanā*. If you do not understand and adopt these teachings in practice, your *dhyāna* will only remain a pleasant imagination and you will gain nothing worthwhile out of such shallow practices. Spirituality is not imagination; it is not a dreamy experience. It is real and experiential. It deals with every aspect of our life; it should be lived in our life today, every day. There is no place for dreams or myths in spirituality. God is not a creation of our dreams or imaginations. His presence should be reflected in all our daily activities.

Bhakti Yoga Included in Dhyāna Yoga:

Friends! The third kind of light, which I have asked you to focus upon during this *dhyāna yoga* is that of the inner self. It is the radiance of our intrinsic faith, our devotion, our sincerity, and our compassion, which sparkles all around in the form of pure love. Awakening of this love is the *bhakti-yoga*. We strengthen our body by practicing physical exercises and make use of the vigor thus gained in our routine chores and in the hard work required for transaction of our duties on multiple fronts. Similarly, when we begin with the devotion and love for God, the inner force of emotions we acquire through this *bhakti* (devotion) should also be utilized and expanded. We should love our gross body; if we love it, we must take good care of it; keep it neat and tidy; discipline it and maintain its health and harmony. This is a reflection of our love, our devotion for

God's creation. The same way our devotion should also extend towards our mind; we should look after it cautiously. We should not allow it to be disturbed or vitiated. It should be kept calm and serene. Thoughts stored in it should be bright and pristine like the glow of the sun.

We should also love our inner self, our soul. We have always neglected our soul. We have never experienced its presence. Ages have passed, but we have never heard its voice, or bothered about its aspirations. An old woman, entirely dependent upon you, keeps asking you to take her to the Himalayas for pilgrimage. You, engrossed in your selfish motives, won't pay any attention. You might even reply rudely that – at this last phase of her life, why to worry about going here and there; she should just lie quietly wherever she is! It sounds strange, but this is how we have been treating our soul.

Our soul is a helpless captive in the smog of our ignorance. If we had loved it and taken proper care of it, it would have become so strong and active that its divine power would have transmuted us into angelic beings. But, this divine spark within us has practically been extinguished in our lives because of our misdeeds. If we can't love our soul; then whom would we love? (Ask this question to yourself – whom do you love truly?). Do you love your wife? No, not really. You only long for the sensual pleasure and comforts she offers you. A leech sticks to the body and sucks the blood; most of us do the same with the lives of our wives. The youth of a wife is often ruined in satisfying the lust of her husband and in producing and taking care of the children. She gets prematurely aged and becomes a victim of varieties of ailments. Still he does not

understand her problems, doesn't care for her sickness. All her potentials, all her resources, have been sacrificed in the thankless service of the husband and his family. If you had truly loved your wife, you should have lovingly taken care of her health; should have helped uplifting her educational and mental levels; should have encouraged development of her talents. On the contrary, you have practically killed her future.

Do you have the noble sentiments of love and devotion? No! If these had a place in your heart, you would have looked after your old parents and other dependents with greater affection, you would have happily offered your altruistic services to the needy. You usually think that you have great love for your children. But, that also is a delusion. You mostly have attachment to them. You consider providing them with worldly comforts and worldly means as the best expression of love for them. You relentlessly endeavor to amass wealth and possessions that you could bequeath to your children as tokens of your love! But have you ever thought that wealth without virtues is a source of depravation? Thus by piling up comforts and pelf for your child, you simply make him a lustful, depraved and selfish person, who will spoil his own life and may become a burden for the society. How can you say that you truly love your child?

Friends! Do you know what is love? It is the sentiment of causeless joy derived from selflessly working for the welfare of beloved ones. It means giving; it means generosity, compassion, and selflessness. *Bhakti-yoga* aims at awakening of this divine sentiment; it means cultivation and expansion of compassion, kindness, altruism and love for sentient beings. This is what is true

service and true devotion of God. Many of you think that worshipping a deity, bending the head at its feet, beseeching and crying before it, ringing the bells in a shrine, distributing some alms, etc is what serves the purpose of devotion. Is this what you call "*navadhā bhakti*" (highest yoga of devotion)? No my child! This is only hypocrisy, mimicry and a caricature of devotion; it is far removed from real *bhakti-yoga*. It is self-deception. Well! Then, how will you practice *bhakti-yoga*? For this, you will have to understand its true meaning and adopt it with the help of the meditation on divine light. The feeling of "*Tamaso Mā Jyotirgamaya*" should emerge from the depths of your emotions while concentrating on the glow of rising sun in your heart. It implies emancipation of the soul, the inner self – from the darkness of ignorance into the eternal light of pure knowledge and divine love.

Deep and focused mental concentration is a major prerequisite for meditation. As small quantity of explosive material, condensed in a bullet and targeted through a gun, hits the focussed aim. If we focus our potentials and efforts in a constructive direction, we would achieve the goal of our life. You must have heard about the glorious intrepidity and self-mastery of Arjuna in Mahabharat. He had perfected the art of focusing all his attention at the desired objective. This is why he was the only one who succeeded in piercing through the left eye of the rotating fish by his arrow just by looking at its image in the water below during the *Swayamvara* of Princess Draupadi. Hundreds of princes and kings had come to participate in this difficult contest of qualifying to marry Draupadi. Guru Dronacharya asked one common question

from all his disciples during their training. When they stretched their bows and looked at the image of their target, he asked them – “What do you see?”; someone replied “The entire fish”, some said “Its head”, etc. As predicted by Dronacharya, none of them could hit any part of the fish. Arjuna was the only one who saw nothing except the left eye of the fish. The Guru applauded his perfect mental concentration. Arjuna indeed hit the target and won Princess Draupadi’s hand. This is the secret of success in all walks of life. We do not accomplish anything significant, as our attention and interests are scattered in many directions.

I ask you to control the agitation of your mind and focus it (as per the instructions) in the practice of *dhyāna yoga*. Because of its wayward diversions, you are neither able to concentrate upon your studies nor to work for vigorous health; you are not able to do anything significant; there is always an instability in and scattering of your efforts. This haphazard state of your mind should be controlled with the help of meditation along with the devotional practices of *japa*. Your mind should be well organized and trained to imbibe the habit of “work while you work and play while you play”. Be that a worldly task or spiritual practices, whatever you do should be done with full attentiveness. Deep mental concentration is a spiritual quality. Any effort carried out with one-pointed absorption of your mind leads to grand success.

Friends! We should try cultivating keen interest and focused approach, as the scientists have towards their fields of research. In terms of basic education or training, there may not be any difference between a scientist and someone who has

merely passed a B.Sc. (first degree in science education). Who is a scientist? The one who is fully engrossed in his research and dives deeper and deeper, like a submarine in the ocean, to discover/invent the pearls of knowledge. Scientific achievements are the wonderful outcomes of rigorous mental concentration. This quality is essential for success in every walk of life. You need to apply it not only in your devotional practices but also in all the works you undertake.

People often tell me “Guruji, I can’t engage my mind in devotional practices. It keeps jumping towards the worldly thoughts”. I ask them in reply “Does your mind ever get occupied in something with interest and attention?” Obviously, the answer comes out to be “No; Not really”. This is because you have not bothered to train your mind to focus. You do not recognize the potentials of a focused mind. You should train your mind to be alert and attentive and cultivate the tendency to enjoy the work at hand. In devotional or spiritual practices, you should have the deep mental absorption that emanates through the heart, like that of a *yogi*. If you sincerely practice the *dhyāna yoga* I have taught you, and learn to meditate upon light with deep fervor, I assure you that your mental concentration will improve significantly. This depth of mental concentration together with your noble sentiments employed in this *dhyāna yoga* will bless you with all that a great devotee of spirituality deserves. I wish you all success.

|| *Om śānti* ||

Thinking before doing is wisdom. Thinking while doing is awareness and thinking after doing is foolishness.