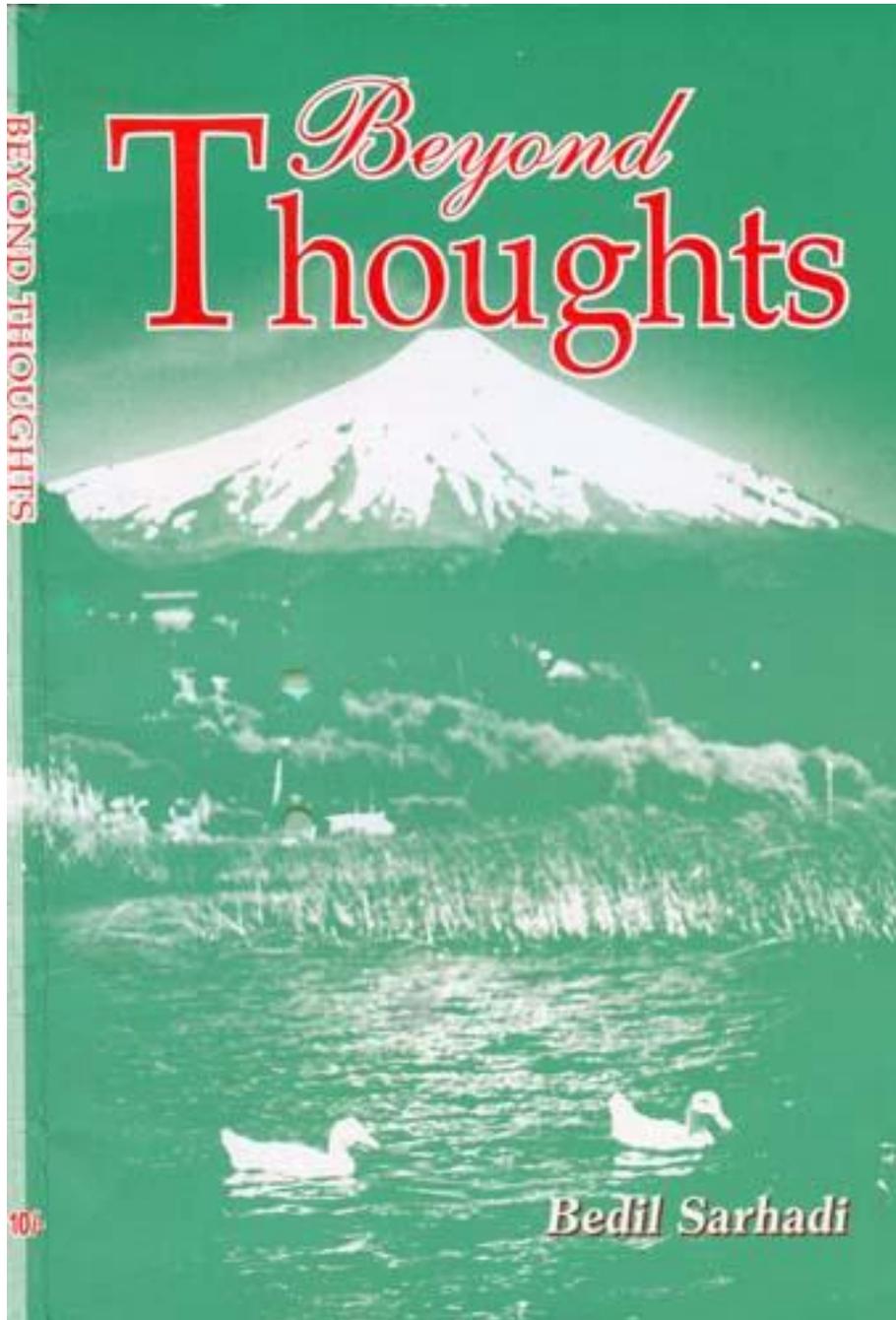


BEYOND THOUGHTS

Beyond Thoughts



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Bedil Sarhadi

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to the TRUE MASTER who
benign blessings and inspiration enabled
me to present these articles with clarity,
precision and balanced thinking.

-Bedil Sarhadi

PREFACE

The book 'Beyond Thoughts' in your benign hands is a collection of short essays written over a period of time by Rev. Manohar Lal Ahuja, popularly known as 'Bedil' Sarhadi. He distinguished himself first as an Urdu poet and then as editor of the spiritual Urdu magazine 'Sant Nirankari'. At the same time he emerged as a brilliant writer and scholar of prose not only in Urdu but Hindi and English also. He had equal command over all these languages.

Before 'Bedil' Sarhadi passed on the present manuscript to the undersigned, the Publications Department had already the privilege to have published five books from illustrious author. These include tow collections of his Urdu and Hindi poems published separately but under the same title 'Dhoop Khili Hai'; a collection of his articles in Urdu titles 'Khud-Shanasi Ki Tarf'; its translation in Hindi – 'Aatm Darshan' and another collection of articles in English titled 'Introjection'.

No doubt, all these poems and articles have been appearing in 'Sant Nirankari' Urdu from time to time, yet they have become a valuable treasure in the form of books. Besides 'Beyond Thoughts', the Department has also a collection of articles in Hindi which may be brought out shortly. It is unfortunate that the Department took some time and could

not bring out the two books during the lifetime of the author who expired on April 25, 2003.

While going through the book, you will find that 'Bedil' Sarhadi is positive through and through. Even if he has picked up an idea or feeling which we normally reject as negative and irritating, 'Bedil' Sarhadi has something positive to conclude. He finds very useful tips to offer to the reader even in otherwise awkward situations. For example, one of the articles deals with Importance of Failure and asserts that 'failure' levels the path for attaining success. Similarly, he writes that 'selfishness' may become an ornament and source of pride provided we construct our edifice of selfishness on foundation of our bonafides, sincerity and affection.

The Sant Nirankari Mission had a very deep influence on the thought, feeling and action of 'Bedil' Sarhadi. No doubt, he was basically honest, sincere and helpful, yet the message of love, truth, peace and tolerance preached by Nirankari Baba made him all the more pleasant, humble and loveable. You will find some of the articles here directly related to the Mission's ideology. It is hoped that our esteemed English knowing readers will find this book as a very useful addition to Nirankari Literature.

- Kirpa Sagar
Member Incharge
Publications Department

ANALYTICAL APPROACH

Our style of living suggests as if we are undergoing a sentence and carrying a load. Our heads and hearts are immune to the concept of relishing the beauties of Nature. The moon and the stars appear in the sky without charging anything from us. Flowers bloom day in and day out, without asking for anything in return and invite us for aesthetic feast. But we don't pay any attention to them.

In fact, social conventions, culture and concerns continue to enter our head and heart and mould our lives in outmoded patterns. The so called religious folk dub the world as a vale of woes and talk of getting rid of the cycle of births and deaths. They regard life as a sin or the fruit of sins or the fruit of sins of previous incarnations. Consequently we ponder over devising plans to flee far from life. We knock about in search of a supposed God and think about attaining salvation. Sometimes we try to seek love and discover an attracting world replete with calmness and contentment.

The analytical ventures of scientists make our life more complex. Their analysis of a lovely face does not travel beyond its flesh and bones. A fine flower, according to scientists, is nothing but a mixture of some colours and chemical objects. For instance, when we embrace a friend under emotional impact, we relish a peculiar ecstasy. A scientist may, however, dub our meeting as hot contact of our bones but he is incapable of describing the sentiment of pleasure. But we know that we don't feel the existence of bones at that time – then the body is virtually absent from our consciousness. Something else supervenes that has no concern with the body. Apparently two bodies stand close by, but there comes something else. Then as per analysis of scientists, words like love, beauty, God and salvation sound meaningless. We lose ourselves in the maze of analysis. That has become our conventional attitude.

Analysis means fragmentation. Even thereafter totality of objects continues to exist. No, object, however, is a combination of its pieces. We cannot say that rhyming of words make lyric. Nor can a mixture of colours be termed as a picture.

A lyric is something more than a re-arrangement of words, just as combination of colours does not amounts to a picture which is something much more. A fragmented lyric is reduced merely to words – poetry no more. A statue when broken yields only pieces of stones, without its beauty. Analysis does not figure in the ambit of love, beauty and emotions. Analysis of body cannot give a clue to the soul. In other words, analysis leads only to muck and ruins what is meaningful. Yet we continue to gloat over the sunshine of analytical approach. That is why life seems to us entirely meaningless and colourless, in misery and disappointment.

The desired goal can be achieved by acquiring capacity of viewing life in totality, as absolute. Unless we forsake analytical vision, we cannot identify the reality of life. For our life is moulded by our vision. Thus viewed we can make our lie soothing and comfortable.

* * *

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

‘O’ my ears, O’ my eyes, O’ my tongue, shun evil.”

Very simple and meaningful remarks indeed! But we pay them only lip-service; we hardly practice them. Generally we relish them eagerly, even though we are hardly concerned.

Currently man is anxious to know more and more as never before. From dawn to dusk we are anxious to know things from newspapers, television, even from Sadhus, ascetics and astrologers. This way we gather heaps of knowledge as generally but man goes on withering. The wise say that the drama of knowledge keeps the intellect fragrant. And the pearl of knowledge never fades. Thus our so-called knowledge proves only harmful rather than useful.

As we get up in the morning we feel anxious for the newspaper. We go through the same from beginning to end. It is generally full of account of accidents and statements of the big gun. After finishing the newspaper, we throw it away. But the inputs filled by newspapers in our brains keep haunting us. Even a petty word fixed in our mind spoils our life and rattles our entire personality. A simple word ‘stupid fellow’ keeps us tossing in our bed all night. But the word makes no difference if we do not know its meaning. We do hear all sorts of noises but are deaf to the breaking of heart.

We go on pursuing erratic activities mentioned as subject for the sake of money or personal ends and bow to insane hypocrites and others. We continue polluting our minds and pushing them downwards. Our world has become a wilderness riddled with weeds and grass. Yet we cherish pleasant dreams of a new world order.

So, like a gardener we have to select good seed and monitor it. But we deem it unnecessary to pay our attention to this aspect. Ascetics and saints inspire us to lead pleasant life and make the world a good orchard. Their points are relevant. They can make our life dignified but the price of hard work has to be paid. We should try to make life a pursuit of truth and assess every action of ours. Our every word,

thought and deed must inspire our psyche towards truth and ever soaring heights. We should associate with people who assist us in purifying our heads and hearts. In order to enjoy music, we should respond only to the tune that transports us into trance but does not excite our emotions. The scenes seen by us should refresh us. We should avoid too much brightness that blinds us. Darkness is better than such brightness.

We need bow only to the persons who enlighten us on fine and high values. Break rather than bend to impulses that roll us down.

In case we adopt such an attitude in daily life, our life can be joyous and become an orchard. Every breath and drop of blood can establish our kinship with spirituality. Everyone has a potential to become God's angel. This potential can be converted into reality. Possibility is a seed which can become manifest. One who fails in this venture and departs, loses a golden chance.

And along with the need, the possibility, the chance, for man to move from darkness into light has always been there. The divine door of wisdom has always been opened to the one who knocked at it. The Sant Nirankari Mission offers this opportunity today. The venture on our part is thus reduced only to making up our mind and bowing at the holy feet of the True Master here. The True Master transcends us from the falsehood of the world to the Ultimate Truth so that we have neither to break nor to bend to impulses that roll us down. This is indeed a golden opportunity.

* * *

A PERCEPTION

Currently our life has grown so busy and fast that we don't pay attention to certain important issues. We remain entangled into various problems. Present day circumstances have transformed social values. Our enthusiastic aspirations and spirit have waned. Mutual love, sympathy and tolerance – such sentiments are vanishing. Decent words of this type have apparently lost all meaning. Yet we say that man helps man. But our actual conduct is confined only to our personal welfare. Our initiative for betterment reaches only up to the circle of our dear and near ones. That is why even the wise folk remain contented with formalities of etiquette. They don't take any effective step for social reform or for the good of the people.

The present age requires that we should survey our routine activities seriously. We must give up narrow mindedness, must alter the style of our thinking and should become broad minded. We ought to take care of our neighbors besides our personal betterment. Thus we should go

on expanding our vision of betterment by degrees so as to embrace our street, village, town and our country, and then the whole world. We should continue to march on the path of truth and virtue regardless of the style of functioning of others.

Wisdom and discretion distinguish man from animal. With these traits, it would be easy to understand that the biggest building on infirm sands of materialism is bound to collapse one day. The remedy lies in widening the horizon of our spiritual outlook in order to render maximum service to mankind. Spiritual illumination will make us realize that loving others means loving ourselves, harming others means harming ourselves and insulting others means insulting ourselves. Only then we understand why loving others is the right and essential and harming others is wrong.

* * * * *

AWARENESS – WHY AND HOW

From ancient ages, saints and sages have been exhorting man to awaken from slumber and inspiring him for self-realization by balanced and serene life. Man did not, however, attend to this aspect. He never admitted himself to be slumbering in negligence – this can be one reason. Besides, man became so much embroiled in worldly affairs that he deemed it meaningless to heed this problem. Some guys remain restless all their life for amassing wealth. Others consider physical pleasure as the basis of a thrilling life and turn a victim of tension. Still others wear a false cloak for attaining fame or pretending themselves as creative scholars of high caliber and culture. Thus throughout life they do not know the true identity of their self or life.

We are all doing so. Consequently, plunder, dacoity, rape and violence are manifesting themselves all around. The ticklish point is that we are ignorant of the reason behind all this chaos. We fail to perceive that all this is the product of our slumbering mind. While engaged in daily routine, we should pause and ponder. We would mark a difference in the state of our psyche. It is just like a momentary breach of sleep and a jolt whereby the flow of our thoughts breaks. We would feel a momentary reflection that would illustrate that our heart is not there, where we may be. This is varily a symptom of sleep. We may pass by rivers, hills, water-falls as blind wayfarers. The surrounding beauty or ugliness does not touch us.

The mystics and sages have been advising us to wake up so as to live comfortably. Awareness commences from outer watchfulness. We generally stay insensitive to our bodies even. Absence of pain or hurt in any limb does not make us conscious of our body. But even external and physical consciousness does not amount to complete awareness.

Full physical awareness makes us conscious of some distance between us and our bodies. We then feel that we are not simply bodies. The body is just an outer frame-work adopted by us like clothes. This marks the beginning of mental awareness even towards ethereal objects.

A story heard some twenty five years before in a spiritual gathering is relevant. The son of a high-up, after growing mature, started putting bizarre questions on his father regarding why and wherefore of things and circumstances. The father was greatly perturbed by the questions of his son. One day, he took the son to the hermitage of an ascetic in a village far from the city, and requested him to elucidate the reality of life to his son. The ascetic said that he at first teaches swordsmanship and then reality of life. This was a surprise for the father, but he had no option. The son too accepted the old ascetic as his preceptor and agreed to stay with him. After the father's departure, the ascetic told the boy that he may any time attack the later with a wooden sword. Hence, he should be alert.

This was lunatic act for the son, but he was helpless. In the beginning he had to suffer many injuries, when he was caught unawares. But, after a few days, he sensed the impending steps of the Guru and became vigilant before the attack. After a couple of months, the son became extra aware, so that the Guru's attacks became infructious by his timely interception. But, the preceptor started attacks on the disciple even during sleep. After a month or so, wisdom flashed on the boy even during sleep. He was thus able to ward off the attacks even during sleeping hours. One day, it struck the young chap that he should attack the old Guru to check his awareness. The latter, however, prohibited the pupil loudly to refrain from such assault and said that being old he may die with the result the disciple would be deprived of getting the requisite answer regarding the reality of life.

The ascetic explained that with increasing awareness even things ethereal can be observed. This story may be fictitious, but its moral cannot be denied. The sages and mystics at first advise us to be aware of our environment and the body and then emphasize the dedicated practice of mental awareness. This explains the need of the five principles better known as five pledges in the Sant Nirankari Mission: Consider all your possessions - physical, mental and material as ultimately belonging to the Almighty; hate none on account of his caste, creed and colour; criticise none for his dress or diet habits; don't leave your hearth and home in search of God; and once realized, don't reveal the spiritual knowledge to others without a word from the True Master.

When mentally awake one does not raise questions as the disciple had done. Then, what he needs is a hint from the True Master. He becomes enlightened on the point. For him, all riches and luxuries purchased, physical comfort, fame or ill fame are reduced to a lower

level. At this stage, one is spiritually regenerated. He cognises his soul and his presence in God or Super-Soul itself. He then becomes capable of knowing the inner contents of all beings. For, God is the innerself of all, here and there. Thus he leads a smooth, even and balanced life. As a part and parcel of the entire creation, he feels to abide in God's own temple.

* * *

AWARENESS OF NON-ENTITY

In truth, we cannot imagine the vastness of the universe by our wisdom and intellect. Awareness of the infinitude of universe face to face makes us realise our non-entity in any corner whatever. Despite this, we regard ourselves as something. This illusion always persists, as we nurture it wittingly or un-wittingly.

The number of humans on this earth, in this infinite universe is estimated at 3.5 billions. This number is smaller and limited as compared to other creations, yet we claim ourselves as paragon of creation. In fact we are spirit eternal - 'Brahm' and Truth, entitled to emancipation. We, however, declare from our small shells that we are 'this' or 'that'. This we do, to satisfy our ego and that is why we accept it willingly. It is amusing that no other being is aware of our declaration of being paragon of creation.

Darwin declared man as an evolution of monkey - a popularly accepted view. If there were a Darwin from among monkeys, he would never accept the above view. On the contrary he would consider man as degenerated monkey. For monkeys jump on trees while men move beneath trees. Likewise, we thought Freud as talking nonsense when he declared that sex is the centre of human life, its alpha and omega - we thought by going inward, we would come face to face with Soul and the Super-Soul. But gradually, we acknowledged the importance of sex also.

About one hundred years of human life has no importance or value in the vastness of universe. From the view point of space and time, we are non-entities and with this view we know the real and higher identity of human life. Such a perception, however, generally dawns on us only during the last moments of life. In case we fully realise the non-entity of human life in our life time, we can find out a lovely route of being "everything" which is the high-way of life. The closed shutters of our life would be opened and thus we can know the Supreme Truth.

The key, of course, is held by the True Master:

"Avtar says, it is the True Master
who holds the key to the lock put by him only;
And rare fortunate is the one who
obtains the key and unlocks the
door to the Kingdom of God."

- Avtar Bani (19)

* * *

BE SELFISH BUT

The title of this piece seems to have been pasted to a parody. It has not been appreciated in scriptures. Elders too carry a bad opinion of 'selfishness'. Even society deprecates it as an evil without applying its mind. The reality is, however, the reverse. For right from birth, man is selfish. The child cries when a toy is taken away from his hands. Even on restoring the toy to him, the child persists in his displeasure despite our coddling him. Even otherwise, every action of ours is motivated by selfish spirit in some form or the other. No action of ours is immune from selfishness. For instance, we offer fruits to our child or a costly gift to our beloved, just to please ourselves - not out of any spirit of sacrifice.

Similarly, we relish the smile of an innocent child, his act of turning sides while lying and his first attempts to crawl or walk. When he grows a little older and learns to run about, we bring for him a small cycle. When the child first travels by Railway train, he does not mind the jolts felt by him. He just enjoys after ignoring all physical bounds. We participate in his pleasure. Thus the desire for delight is directly associated with our innate selfish spirit. Hence we conclude that our ultimate aim is to attain happiness for self.

It is a mistake to regard that happiness is always a blessing of God, for the seeker of happiness adopts the path of happiness. It is not human nature to survey its actions and sentiments. Hence we fail to adopt the path to true happiness. In order to fulfill our countless natural aptitudes and wants, we just while away our life. To live ideally is an art like other arts. Only a few are aware of this art. For example, it is the spiritual Guru, the True Master who teaches us this art "realise the Ultimate Truth i.e. Good, and be ever happy.

Nobody in the world is free from sense of "I-ness". This sense is present in subtle form in everyone of us. It besieges us in the orbit of

arrogance and egoism and perpetuates our tension. What is needed is to expand the subtle size of arrogance. In case we step out of parochial "I" to "We"; we can achieve our goal. Expansion of such a feeling to embrace the whole of mankind as our family is our destination. We would then transcend from inanimate to animate world. Riches and poverty would lose all meanings. Such a stance will dissolve all the distance between selfishness and delight. Let us reconstruct our edifice of selfishness on the foundation of our bonafides, sincerity and affection. Only then we would realise identity of our selfishness and make it an ornament and source of pride.

* * *

CAUSES OF FEAR

Fear, terror, panic are words of the same species. Basically they are not different, though the language experts may use them variously. Human endeavours to destroy 'fear' over centuries have proved futile. Fear or terror is a sort of energy or power. It is perpetual, never ending. Apparently it seems absurd to designate fear as an energy. But on deeper reflection, we have to admit that fear suddenly imparts to us a power. Under its impact, we can surprisingly run faster than a champion.

It is not possible to reduce force even slightly. We may change water into ice or steam, but water drop retains its existence somewhere. Likewise, we cannot wipe off even a grain of sand, though we may change its form. We cannot root out fear or defeat it. Our endeavour to conquer fear only suppresses it out of our psyche. But this does not mean conquest of fear. Then fear travels from our consciousness to the subconscious and continues to function there. Thus fear dominates us mysteriously and unwittingly. But this complicates the issue and it becomes more difficult for us to comprehend fear.

Actually we only serve the cause of fear even while considering it to be erroneous. We admit fear to be our enemy and try to find an escape route out of it. As a result, we do not come face to face with fear or assess it correctly. Unless we overcome this delusion, we fail to understand the essence of fear. Fear is a reality. To comprehend it, it is essential to face it and change its complexion. Ultimately our perception transforms fear. Objective analysis enables us to know the source, message and destination of fear.

As a matter of fact, fear is fostered by some desire of ours. If things do not happen this way - what then? - such feelings mark the beginning of fear. Our inner self is agitated. Then again we erroneously deem our friends as our personal property. We forget that a friend today can turn

our foe tomorrow. Without a desire for such proprietor-ship, our fear vanishes. Without a desire for becoming the richest person in the world or for a desire for heaven no body can hold out any terror for us.

To sum up, if we learn the art of living in the present without any anxiety for future, our fears would vanish. For, fear emanates from some yearning. Hence when we apprehend fear, we should survey the source of fear i.e. what desire is nurturing it. This way we can understand the worthlessness of fear, can liberate ourselves from the negative force of fear and lead a balanced life.

* * *

CONSCIOUSNESS OF TRUTH

Despite all pervasive look and lustre of human life, it is devoid of peace and full of frustration. Everyone hankers after truth. Humans vainly seek truth in study of scriptures or in shrines. While the one may mention the truth, the other is a mere place of worship remotely related to some personage who preached or practised the truth. But what one seeks is the realisation of truth.

We simply set up so many sects in the name of truth. This amounts to erection of walls, division and fragmentation of humanity. Absence of tension and load which is indispensable for realisation of truth and to reach its heights is just not there. We cannot thus be aware of the sense of truth, until we give up self-created divisions and dividing walls improvised by our own intellect and psyche. In other words, the basis of all our tangles and hurdles is ignorance of truth.

In search of Truth, we generally follow two paths, one is, as already mentioned elsewhere, the physical effort - penance, fasts, etc. This relates to body, refusing it one comfort or the other. One may call it slow suicide. The other is the route of spiritual practice. Our life becomes an exercise in futility in case we do not select one of the aforesaid paths. Consequently every moment of our life drives us to death and we are reduced to walking dead bodies.

By knowing life eternal, we can, however, feel pleasant sensation of life. This is in reality the search for truth. We can identify real life only when we realise the truth perched between life and death. Truth is not a person or object capable of being searched and found. It is a deep and fine feeling of ecstasy and eternity. We can achieve the goal if we inspire our psyche towards immortality by regular spiritual practice. Here comes the Sant Nirankari Mission's belief that one must approach the True Master to realize the truth. Only he can unite the seeker with the Ultimate Truth, i.e. God.

Thus we become conscious of higher values of life and achieve solace and sense of gratitude. In fact the sense of gratitude is the consciousness of truth which cannot generate divisions in any mind. Our life becomes meaningful and relishing by consciousness of truth which demolishes all walls, divisions and sects.

* * *

DESIRES

Desires grow like mushrooms. They know no end. Hardly when one of them is satisfied, another one rears its head. This process continues. Mirza Ghalib, the famous Urdu poet, did not lament in vain, when he said:

A thousand desires, each worth a life-time,
A lot many fulfilled, still many more chime.

In the tangled woodland of desires, one is like a fly caught in the cobweb. There is no way to come out of their vicious circle. They hold us in vice-like grip.

Desires are of two types: inborn and borrowed ones. Inborn desires have a touch of Divinity. They tend to mould us as a perfect human being. They lead us to the purpose, for which a man is born i.e. seeking God, who created him. Such desires are noble, sublime, elevating and inspiring. They inspire us to lead a life of contentment, virtue and piety. We feel an inclination to move among men of knowledge and learning, to do good to the people and to wipe off the tears of the suffering.

The borrowed desires are propelled and motivated by our curiosity and inclination to imitate others. The lure of imitation lands us into many a mire of sorrow and suffering. If we see a smart man, we try to outsmart him. If someone wears fine and costly clothes, the fire of envy rages fiercely in us and we would not rest unless we procure a still finer dress: We would like to go in for one better than our neighbour or friend. Such desires tend to waste our time and resources in senseless and idle pursuits. They land us in troubled waters. For mere show, we burden ourselves with avoidable misery, headache and tension.

Competition is not bad. Similarly, to possess ambitions is not a crime. To progress and move forward in life is praise-worthy. Progressive outlook is indeed a virtue. But what we need is to maintain a proper balance between desires and means adopted for their fulfillment. If we bend all our energies in stealing a march over others in fields of dress, style and standard, we may be able to do so but at a heavy cost. In the bargain, we shall lose peace of mind and the joy of homely life. We

would be like the motor bike rider in dare-devil race who, in a bid to overtake others, is often toppled and does crash. Illogical cut-throat competition often ends in chaos and misery.

In order to lead a happy and balanced life, we must learn to distinguish between inborn or genuine desires and the borrowed ones. As the proverb goes: borrowed garments never fit well; they make one look odd. The inborn or genuine desires are something more than mere imagination; they are prophecies and predictions which can become realities. They lead us to the abode of Creator. On the contrary, the borrowed desires, with an eye upon worldly acclaim, cost us dearly. A crow with a peacock feather does not become a peacock. A fox with a lion's tail will remain a fox. Imitation is after all imitation. A crystal of sugar cannot become a diamond. A fly will betray its imitation.

Pursuit of genuine desires leads us to peace, bliss and happiness or a state of contentment. But if we weave a cobweb of borrowed desires, born out of jealousy and a sense of out-smarting others, we shall be doomed to frustration, misery and tears. A feeling of un-fulfillment shall continue to haunt us till we finally close our eyes in eternal sleep. For desires, the sky is the limit and man a mere pigmy.

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DISTINCTIVE APTITUDE

Currently wrong aptitudes engulf everybody more or less in dissatisfaction and frustration. In our life, we often have to deal with persons whose style of life can be dubbed inhuman. Since human aptitudes cannot be divided into compartments a few examples would suffice here.

Certain persons have their hearts steeped in the poison of antagonism. They are ready to invite discords for no reason and are hell bent to fight with and tear others.

Certain unprincipled people can betray us any moment and even commit devilish deeds. Just as animals may lie in the midst of roads or walk there or try to cross the roads, we cannot predict about the conduct of such guys.

Certain people do not exercise discretion. They do not bother about gain or loss. They act under the impulse of some whim or sensual desire. Such persons demand hush money for drinks, Paans and cigarettes and do not spare even their relations.

Certain people do not do anything gainful nor let others do. They cannot bear to see others doing a job which they are incapable of

doing themselves. They are just like a dog, who cannot eat fodder himself nor let a cow take it; he barks at the sight of a cow eating fodder. Such people poke their nose in every venture, this is their habit.

Certain persons are very ease-loving. They act only under some emotion or excitement. They burst out suddenly, shout at the slightest thing disagreeable to them and are ever ready to harm anybody. Even on trifles they cry and are beside themselves. They are generally disposed to lose their balance of mind.

Certain persons are not accustomed to sort out matters by negotiations and make a serious issue of everything. They bid good bye to peace and justice, do not discriminate between the right and wrong. They wish to settle every matter by the motto of "might is right" without realising the hardship of others.

Whenever we talk about a person of such errant aptitudes, we generally dub him as a fallen creature, an animal and a brute. We don't reckon him as a human at all.

We wish to be popular with all. But despite efforts, certain people are not satisfied with us though their dissatisfaction may not be due to our lapse. This can be ascribed to some wrong aptitude of that person. Sagacious persons tell us, it is very hard to satisfy sensitive, selfish and suspicious people nursing more than optimum expectations. In spite of all this, we must treat such a disgruntled guy so that he perceives his errant aptitudes and feels that we have not wronged him. Here in lies our grandeur.

Why do we describe saints as generous? Their spirit of generosity rests in their unselfish effort to awaken people from the slumber of ignorance and bestow them with divine light. They make others see the harm that their wrong aptitudes may cause to themselves as well as to others and unite them with the Ultimate Truth - the eternal source of virtues that produce bliss.

* * *

DIVINE LIGHT

We have to face difficulties and troubles because we load our psyche heavily with heaps of desires. We try to live away from tensions. Yet we strike against hardships and sorrows. Our life has become a chain of putting ourselves in tangles and then preparing an atmosphere of relaxation. For crossing every hurdle we have to take a decision after considering its nature and then suitable action for getting rid of it. We spend our entire life in this way, and complain that it was full of thorns

without peace and poise. Everything in the world goes on mechanically in this way.

Hence, saints and seers compare the world to a poisonous tree. Their verdict is that man tries to make his circumstances favourable without moulding them according to the law of nature. The world, however, is so vast that nobody can do so. Unless man meets his troubles face to face, he cannot know the style of living a wholesome life.

In other words, our ignorance results in all our troubles. Actually, we are small enough and hence can live peacefully under natural dispensation. But we become a victim of pride under the impact of becoming big and are thus distressed. The world is a fathomless ocean that can be crossed on the boat of divine light and we stay safe. In other words we can seek deliverance from the complications and captivity of life and death. As the wet wood cannot be ignited fully, an enlightened (with God knowledge) person cannot be gripped by worldly woes.

* * *

FACE TO FACE ENCOUNTER

It is not possible to say definitely when man divided time into past, present and future. Such a division makes it easy for us to understand others and make ourselves understood by others. There is, however, no rational basis for such division. For it is only the present that matters. It has no concern with past, or future, which do not actually exist. We relate our unfulfilled desires to past and our semi-satisfied desires to future. This past and future are not parts of time but of our minds because all desires are related to mind. Sans mind, past and future vanish. Only the present exists.

The three inevitable stages of life, childhood, youth and old age are tokens of time. A child always tends to look at so called future because he has no past to look back upon. A young man lives in the present and is dedicated in fulfilling some desires. An old man always reflects on what he calls the past and thinks of its dead desires and failures. He is thus immersed in what he considers as the past. He never tries to peep into future because future holds nothing but death for him. Hence children and the youth cannot appreciate old men and vice-versa. Their kind of perception is different.

Thus "we wrongly conclude that time flows. Time never flows. It is always the present. We take the march of our mind as the march of the time. Actually we continue marching. Time is like a bridge that connects our past, present and future desires and aspirations.

Our stoppage of march can be a boon for us. This way we meet time face to face and we adopt the path of virtue, adhere to a good style of life. Direct encounter with time is like an entry into the garden of delights.

And the best way to do so, as my True Master (Nirankari Baba) suggests, is to link our mind with the Almighty Nirankar. Since He was never born, He is above Time and the march associated with it. He is beyond the accidents of time, including birth and death. Once our mind is linked with God, it is bound to experience the present - always fresh, dewy and pleasant. We are liberated from the dead past and unborn future, the creations of our own mind. Even if we have a challenge, we encounter it as present.

* * *

FELLOW-FEELING

In the event of illness of a neighbour or of a friend caught in calamity or of dacoity in the home of an acquaintance and his people being wounded, we call on him as a moral obligation. We even offer many an advice to him, though none may prove useful to him.

Expression of sympathy in such cases is considered a social convention. There is actually a world of difference in expressing and feeling sympathy. The latter actually means participation with others in their pain. Such a realisation of pain is equally imperative both in the sympathiser and the sympathised. In this vision, we should not hesitate to admit that we merely express sympathy but don't have it in our heart. Even in expressing it, we feel a subtle pleasure. We then feel superior, as the other is helpless. We turn generous without sacrifice. Thus by mere display of fellow feeling we delude ourselves and our friend as well.

A deep consideration of this issue reveals that real sympathy should embrace also the joy in the other fellows' delight. But it is seldom done. We cannot put up with the other man's prosperity but are engulfed in jealousy and heart burning if the other man purchases a car or a big house. This happens even when we possess our own car and a big bungalow.

In brief, display of sympathy is a fraud. True sympathy means consciousness of other man's grief and joy. Yet the distance intervening between us and others persists, though real sympathy leaves no room for the perception of 'otherness'. In fact, it is unwise to regard the other man as other at all. Sympathy carries sanctity with it. Thus it is hardly necessary to mix it with any such terms as falsehood

or truth. It amounts to doing injustice with sympathy. Sympathy is just sympathy and nothing else.

Munshi Amir Meenai, an Urdu poet says that:

"We feel agonised, O 'Amir', even if a thorn pricks somebody else;

For we embody the anguish of the entire universe",

* * *

FERVOUR AND FURY

Fervour plays an important role in human life. Without it life loses all colour. Unless man achieves his cherished goal, he knows no peace. Fervour is the key to amazing achievements. All the current comforts of life are the outcome of intense fervour. But when intensity goes beyond limits it degenerates into crazy fury. This may endanger life. The obsession of conquering the whole Europe led Napoleon to the nemesis of Waterloo. Under similar crazy passion of dreaming Germany to become a crazy omnipotent power for thousand years, Hitler had to commit suicide, which ruined Germany as well. Crazy and ferocious passions are a sort of intoxication that engulfs one in a thorny axis and proves very damaging not only to the man concerned but to kinsmen as well.

Such spirited men of high confidence are few and far between. Uncommon talent and intellect falls to the lot of fortunate few. Such people, however, do carve out a niche in history. When such a craze touches the limits of insanity, its bad consequences disfigure history. The sages have rightly said that excess of anything is vicious. Intensity of emotion is not bad but its excess is. Actually such intensity is laudable if it goads one to a positive goal or direction. Success in that goal is an aid to human welfare and social betterment. Pioneers in the field who gave priority to their intellectual faculties graced and embellished mankind with new grand inventions are the pride of the history. Even today such personages, scientists and artists, etc. are remembered with reverence.

That is not to say that we do not assess our talent properly and do not utilize the intensity of emotions. Even an average person is capable of doing something great.

If a common poet gives up poetry due to his incapability to reach the stature of Ghalib and Iqbal, it will not be right. This amounts to confession of self-defeatism. Thus we can avoid inferiority complex and maintain our dignity, if we avoid fury and welcome the fervour.

* * *

FORMLESS LOVE

We live more or less on the physical plane. Existence of the body is accepted by us by its apparent image. In other words, we are aware of our identity because of others. Actually we view ourselves by the mirror of the vision of others or by means of a mirror. Possibly before the invention of a mirror, people knew their existence by their reflection in water. But suppose we are all alone and without a mirror or water, could we realise our physical appearance? In that event, we could not identify ourselves that in reality we are not bodies but a formless existence.

We all know that love originates at the physical level. When it blooms into youth, then the physical aspect disappears. When we love some one profoundly, the body (we love) goes out of our ken at some stage or the other. Then we lose consciousness of our own body. Wayfarers of love reach a stage when they develop unconcern for the body.

Love is concerned with one's inner self. Thus it perceives somebody else as does one's inner self. Love causes us to merge with each other as one and the same entity. This state of love carries us into an uncommon and strange abyss. At that stage, we feel as if we have plunged into a fathomless ocean. We become conscious of the depth and expanse of our heart or existence of the Formless. Then looks vanish. Though being a part, the lover attains a totality. This state of passionate love, however, only flees like a whiff of pleasant breeze, very hard to retain. We can face a body or a face but we don't have the grit of facing the intensity and height of love. Such a state of feeling is unconcerned with body - it is directly associated with the soul. This consciousness ultimately means surrender rather than acquisition. Stepping out of the narrow confines of owning the body, if we prepare our psyche to move in the open and fresh atmosphere of spiritual surrender, such an inclination would lead us to the high road of God realisation and ultimate reality, we would be able to perceive ourselves in the mirror of the soul. This means loving one's self and merging in our real self. In this way, we would consolidate our temporary and pleasant wave of love into perpetuity.

* * *

GOOD OLD DAYS - A REMINISCENCE

During good old days, ladies would work at home and in fields all in fun and frolic, with the result that work for them was a refreshing game. Likewise the males would perform their strenuous jobs in fields, while singing sweet tunes. While ploughing his field the peasant would chat with his bullocks. Such an interaction between man and animals proved useful for both of them. Personal joy, socialisation and pleasant mutual association was deemed quite imperative. It was considered essential for the common man to maintain wholesome relations with fellowmen. Most of personal, social and even national issues used to be settled by mutual negotiations.

The current fast moving machine era has, however, made all work at home, office or in the fields a headache. It has snatched loving communion out of our lives. The modern progressive farmer cannot converse with his tractor. Present day technology has no doubt placed many amenities at our disposal but it has robbed us of many joys.

These days, no worker in office or factory has the leisure to maintain affectionate communion with one another, or they regard such communion as worthless. After tiresome daily chores, people cluster around T.V. sets. This unilateral communion does not grant them any relief or refreshment, but simply aggravates their fatigue and tension. That is why nearly everyone in this age is trapped in nervous tension.

Popular perception that the dialogue with educated citizens is more lively than with illiterate villagers is incorrect. The ground reality is reverse. Whenever we meet an acquaintance from the village, he would first enquire about our and our children's health and welfare. He would talk about things personal to us. But an urbanite friend would talk of his superiority. If he suffers from inferiority complex, he would harp on his weak spots and constraints. A highly educated gentleman would talk nothing but politics. Politics has no doubt become a part and parcel of our life. We cannot help talking of politics whatever the function, be it birthday, marriage or accidental death. But it is hardly proper to make it, an obsession and always harp on it in every social function.

In brief, the quality of human life has degenerated in the modern machine age, as also moral values. We may utilize the present day technology but should not mechanise our life. Speech is a natural act, while silence is unnatural. Using this God given gift, we should talk pleasantly. Sweet tongue is the foundation stone of fellowfeeling. We should learn to appreciate others' perceptions and views. For a soothing dialogue, we should adopt the principles of truth, humility, patience and a cheerful disposition. We should weave the fabric of sweet talk by positive sentiments, love, joy, hope, confidence and have the spirit of sacrifice with a view to impart solace to others by our smiles, affectionate glance and loving disposition. Failure to do so

would lead modern technology to convert our life into dead wood. Then we would helplessly say:

"We pine for hearing those sweet words

God knows where sweet speakers have vanished"

* * *

HAPPINESS

Happiness is a complex issue. It is, however, impossible to deny that we remain bewildered in search of happiness all our life, even though happiness falls apart from desire or demand. It is not a thing to be searched. It is created, it is fostered in our inner self. It is not imported from without. It is available from the boons like contentment, freedom of thought, mental serenity and fun, etc. Psychologists have hit upon proposals that can help us adopt the route of rapture. Aptitude for spirituality, awareness of our faculties, contentment at one's lot, expansion in the range of our intellect and perception, extension of love and assistance to others, wise utilisation of our intellect and wisdom are some of the values that prove helpful to us to attain happiness.

It is a different matter that human life lacks meaning and seems to be chaotic, not amenable to any specific discipline. Yet it is true that there are basically two types of people - happy and unhappy. There is a clash between the spectator and the spectacle that is directly concerned with our pattern of thought. Positive perception leads us to believe that a half empty tumbler is regarded as half full. With broad mindedness, we do not deem our current deprivations and distresses as a game of fun and frolic.

If life is regarded as a game, positive and joyful thinkers assume the role of players. Negative thinkers and gloomily people, however, become only spectators. Cheerful folk seem to be marching ahead, while the dejected lot stand on the side and simply behold the parade.

Anguished people hold an accusing finger against circumstances for their depression. Their life is replete with grievances, tensions and conflicts. They spend their whole life in panic at low level.

To sum up, happiness is a pleasant perception. We must, therefore, regard ourselves as we actually are. Physical necessity requires attention to hard work, food and rest. It is also soothing to accept responsibility for our actions and their re-actions. We must pursue efforts for physical and spiritual advancements, but should not enter the bounds of insanity for achieving excellence. By extending selfless

service to others we can lead a life of rapture. Current conditions of life should not be permitted to rule us. To win victory, we must maintain our mental balance and live merrily.

* * *

HARDWORK AND DEDICATION

Verdicts of sages tested on the touchstone of experience become proverbs and quotations. These are used during conversation to inspire others. Being so simple, the people do not practise them seriously. Hence they do not reap their fruit suitably.

For instance, hard work is the key to success. Apparently ordinary, the idiom is very meaningful. Here, hardwork does not mean exhausting the body physically to an extraordinary measure. The word invariably stands for dedication. Man possesses countless capabilities that manifest themselves by hardwork. Conversion of stones by sculpture into reverential images is the result of hardwork. It is a different matter that the requisite sweat symbolises sanctity. It glows the face when it is reflected.

Hardwork dissolves egoism and inclines the person to be righteous. All-round success is the fruit of hardwork and it shall continue to be so. Every laudable and soothing result is obtained by hardwork. To shirk hard work amounts to creating hurdles in one's success. Embellishing the mother earth is also our responsibility. It is our duty to make our environment pleasant and comfortable by hardwork.

Wind continues to blow and knows not a moment's rest. Water unceasingly flows in the ocean. The stars, the sun, the moon are engaged in their mission. They never think of enjoying leave. Even the smallest particle of nature is always dedicated to activity without a respite. In the face of these realities we must do our utmost to make nature a lovely garden by hardwork. This is the key to a successful life.

* * *

HOPE

A serious survey of our every day talk would reveal that we often use negative words that depress us. In case we utter such negative words

as bad, nonsense, no, impossible, fatigue, tears, our tone automatically grows faint. We get a different feeling, if we use positive words such as good, blooming, fine. The idea is that positive words have an electric impact to entertain hope. But we permit negative words to enter our minds and consequently such negative words become a part and parcel of our daily talk and ruin hope unwittingly.

Some examples :-

- (i) I believe that he would not trust me.
- (ii) This issue may perhaps find no solution.
- (iii) I have always been a victim of misfortune.
- (iv) I always forget names.

Apparently these depressing remarks not only make our talk sick but also nurture a gloomy disposition permanently in our perception. The sages have said that constant talk of pleasant incidents and observations and minimal expression of our deprivations are a symbol of our psychic health. True, it is by no means easy to give positive direction to our negative thoughts. A struggle has to be waged to cast out negative ideas. But this is not to say that we should shun struggle and attribute our disappointments to our destiny. In some measure we can foster hope in case we pay serious attention to our talk.

We must make it a habit to clothe negative remarks in positive dress, give up speaking in weak tones, utter all words clearly and last words a bit loudly. We should smilingly face every danger to make it a lovely occasion for success. We must keep our intellect flowing towards hope.

It is not possible to pass life without a cheerful heart. People love only persons of jubilant disposition.

Smiles are a valuable prescription. If the world treats us indifferently, we won't gain anything by putting on a long face. We need not talk with unpleasant people, but should speak only with praiseworthy folk. It should be our endeavour to imbibe thoughts of truth, honesty, holiness and charm. We must generate in us confidence of hope – a powerful emotion to lead us on the path of successful life. Hope enhances our joys and helps lead a long and healthy life. Would that we adopt the track of hope to ensure a pleasant future.

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HUSTLE AND HURRY

The spirit to achieve one's desire with the least exertion and time is a symbol of hustle and hurry. These traits invariably entail undesirable consequences for which one has to repent. When the state of hustle and hurry is at its heyday it lands one in such an abyss of assurance that he becomes unconcerned to distinguish between the possible and the impossible. The gamblers often observe only one aspect of acquiring money. They generally forget the reverse consequences. One cannot but agree with the psychologists that the disposition to hurry and hustle is a disease. The person concerned entirely overlooks the prevailing circumstances in his Zeal to achieve the whims cropping up in his mind. Such persons are not in a mood to purchase the right thing in lieu of a reasonable payment.

Such persons often take wrong steps under the impact of hurry. At times they are so much overwhelmed by the violence of vindictiveness that they can commit any crime. Likewise, some guys are so much overpowered by the scene of a graveyard that they turn ascetics, but are dismayed at their inability to detach themselves from the world.

Important worldly activities do require balance of mind for weighing the pros and cons of matters. Desires and projects continue to stir and flow in human mind. Their role in human progress cannot be denied. But under hustle and impatience in achieving one's desire is improper. One should, however, frequently ponder over his performance to ensure that his activities are not due to his mental distraction.

This is all the more imperative in relation to our religious faith. A symbol or practice adopted in hurry, without getting to know its significance @its origin, its use, its consequences, can only be an exercise in futility. In a way, it is not our decision at all as we never adopted these practices in our own conscientiousness; it was made by someone else and we only followed it. Such a faith earns us the title of 'ignorant' only.

One must carefully consider the hurdles and hardships that can arise in the way of his mission. Grit and capacity and perception are needed for tackling the issues facing us. Interaction with saints, who can help in accomplishing one's mission is also imperative. In this process one may blaze a constructive trail for emulation by society. An Englishman said that to have balance on all occasions is a key to happiness. How I wish we could make life pleasant by such mode of thinking!

* * *

IMPORTANCE OF IDEAS

It is natural to accept the influence of good and bad circumstances. But most of the human faces appear to be depressed. Joy is reflected but scarcely on them. One's health is spoilt by breathing in polluted air, by bad food and bad habits. Good and bad habits are adopted equally easily. Life looks like a tragic drama. Joy enters our life now and then like a joker. But then the plea of bad stars and unfavorable circumstances cannot rid us of the responsibility of adopting a good life style. The creator has made us competent to embrace such a good style. We have been bestowed the freedom of will and thought. Hence it is incumbent on us to live joyfully by using our discrimination.

Most of the jobs of our life are accomplished automatically. Our nervous system maintains our heartbeat well and spontaneous. But for our efficient heartbeat, our existence would be at stake. Our feelings are vitally related to our health. Anger and accidents quicken our heart beat. In panic the speed of breath quickens. Anxiety makes us sweat through and through. Our body unveils the working state of our mind.

The idea is that our pleasant thoughts and feelings make for efficient functioning of our body. Happiness is actually the foundation of even flow of our life.

The body and mind though related are different entities. The body is visible to us but the spirit is not. Yet we admit the existence of soul or spirit. To enjoy the zest of healthy living, it is necessary to assess our emotions. To ensure rapture we have to adjust ourselves to our environment or fight with them gracefully. It is easier to counsel anybody to remain cheerful. But it is hard to maintain oneself happy. We must, therefore, try to lift ourselves after deep deliberation to combat the stumbling blocks.

A wise man said that adoption of good habits from childhood and expand them makes life pleasant and mirthful.

Hence we can achieve our goal by giving a positive direction to our thoughts. We need not suppress the voice of our conscience out of fear of elders and wrong social trends but should call spade a spade. If we take a stand on truth we can live in relief and relaxation.

* * *

IMPORTANCE OF FAILURES

We relish the objects that soothe us but deprecate those which hamper the fulfilment of our wishes. This is so despite the fact that evil is latent in the things we fancy. Even success though dear to everyone can be harmful. The soothing impact of failures too cannot be denied.

Though painful, failure is helpful in evolution of morals. It draws our attention towards our flaws which prevented us from achieving our objective. In fact, failure levels the path for attaining success and creates an aspiration for mending our shortcomings. Generally the causes of failure include lack of vigilance, attention, love and tact for the occasion. But the common man blames others for his failure and exonerates himself. On the contrary an intelligent fellow holds himself responsible for his failure and discovers a path for reform. Generally one fails to enlist others' cooperation due to his own improper attitude and hence fails. Actually failure guides us to the right path for solving our tangles.

Actually the sense of "doership" and personal accomplishment lands us into problem. Such a style of thinking is egoism and arrogance. The arrogant tyrannise others and harm society in various ways to achieve their objects. History reveals what terrible deeds such as bloodshed of innocent masses were committed by Alexander, Taimurleng, Changez Khan, Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah Abdali to satisfy their ego. A proud person ignores the high values that lead one to success. Always, he takes the credit of doership and in this intoxicated state of pride does not look to his failings. Those who lack a broad vision bid goodbye to culture on getting a little position or status and ill-treat others. No respectable person can endure maltreatment. Only selfish folk, however, tolerate such ill-treatment till their object is achieved. Gradually a proud person loses all friends and makes all his enemies.

Success shields egotistical evil, but proves damaging by a little negligence and accident. A single success leads one to give great importance to one's ability and courage to achieve anything under a misunderstanding. Self-confidence is a good trait for any achievement, but arrogance proves a stumbling block and keeps one away from reality. These self-confidence and egoism are different entities. The former leads to success because of high values and such a person marches ahead. By objective and analysis, the process of challenging the obstacles is a token of self-confidence. A noble person is cautious of egoism and does not give undue importance to his luck. He feels grateful to those who help and guide him. He also introspects as to how big or small he is? He is conscious that though paragon of creation, how small he is in the eye of God. He knows that success in any venture depends on time, place and circumstances and that one success does not guarantee another. With this style of thinking, even the distress of failure becomes a Success and fruitful struggle for him -

may even a boon. The art of successful living comes with such pattern of thinking.

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IMPORTANCE OF PLEASANT HOBBIES

Admittedly the seed of art is present in the characteristics of every individual. One can know one's inclination by personal assessment. Any hobby like drawing, painting, poetry, music or gardening can be adopted. Such pleasant pursuits make life so soothing.

By nature, lifeless machines and living beings cannot work beyond their capacity. If worked by force, the result would be infirmity and eccentricity. The machines if worked beyond their capacity become heated up and produce uncommon sounds. Thus they go out of order. Hence technical experts advise not to work machines for too long but afford them rest after short intervals. This is also true of living beings. Too much work manifests symptoms of fatigue in their system and capacity.

Experts in psychology, after a lot of research, concluded that besides one's means of living, one should adopt some hobby, which should give solace and refreshment to our mind. That hobby should not excite our passions, but should give a positive direction to our life and should keep our body busy in activity without any pressure. The hobby should engage us in mental flights as well.

In this context, some research scientists of Hopister University have commended a new chain of experiments on "Impact of Artistic Propensities on Human Psyche and its States". Experiments on children have led to the conclusion that artistic pursuits gradually enhance intellectual capacity. Encouraging results have been attained by artistic pursuits on children. Those, who could not learn their lessons and suffered from forgetfulness showed decrease in numbers. Their concentration also improved as also their mental poise and personality.

Another experiment proved that capability of children, who were given facility of artistic training and practice showed an upward swing than that of other children, who were deprived of this facility.

These facts go to prove that only physical and intellectual work creates a sort of boredom that robs life of all charm and ecstasy. This adversely affects one's mental balance, which in turn reacts on one's family and social life and disrupts it. Hence, if one gets interested in some favourite hobby, it would obviate boredom and its bad reactions. It would also improve concentration and memory and maintain our

intellectual balance. Continuous practice in this field elevates one's brain to uncommon heights and streamlines one's life.

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INTENSE ASPIRATION - DEEP CRAVING

Love is a vast sentiment that cannot possibly be described in the orbit of words. It is born when one erases one's entity. It is that state when he feels that he is 'not', but existence is all in all.

No seed can grow without suitable soil, water and rays of sun. It cannot develop into flower. Its buds wither. Depression is writ large on its leaves. That seed pines for becoming something which it could, but it did not.

Likewise, the sentiment of love is innate in every person, but it stays as only a seed for want of proper nutrition. This leaves wistfulness in him. Want of manifestation of seed of love basically causes him tension. Thus it is natural for man to be downcast. If one's potential does not become a reality, he stays bewildered.

But the birth of love in our life and personality and resultant blossoming can impart peace and harmony in the world. This state can create a pleasant and wholesome life, which is our goal. It would generate bliss and intoxication in us.

The sight of waving of fully blossomed flowers transports us with joy - for instance of Rose and Jasmine. Deep reflection would lead to the conclusion that our intense desire and deep craving is to diffuse love and receive love. Our personality should flow into waves of love towards others and ourselves. Then we can relate ourselves to a state when the muse of love would enrapture us every moment. The true identity of our craving can refresh our wilted personality all over, within and around.

* * *

KNOW FIRST AND THEN BELIEVE

The endeavours of some religious classes to introduce religious education in schools for quite long, has not yielded any tangible and practical fruits yet. Nor can such a hope be entertained. The reason is that unlike history, geography and mathematics, religion is not a

subject, which can be studied and passed in examinations. Actually religion is not something to be taught as education.

Regardless of the family religion wherein we have taken birth, the beliefs, customs and traditions of that family commence permeating our innocent heads and hearts. We quietly accept what our parents teach us. This is true of whatever is taught us in schools and colleges as also of the styles current in our society. In other words, the seeds of our convictions are sown in our heads and hearts right since our birth. Such a spirit of conviction and credibility is the greatest stumbling block in grasping the real import of religion.

As a matter of fact, parents cannot teach us religion nor any teaching institution. This does not indicate any fault in the upbringing by parents nor that education of schools and colleges carries no importance and that customs of our society are defective. Education and conventions cannot make us true Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs or Christians or even good humans. Humanism is real religion.

Without knowing, we accept subtle concepts like religion, love, soul and God just as a blind person believes in light. That is why we remain strangers to reality. It is obviously meaningless and futile to accept anything without knowing it. We can benefit from a thing only if we know it and adopt it. But unless intense longing in quest of truth springs up in our heart, we cannot move a step towards truth. We cannot adopt a just and detached vision unless we venture to brush aside school and college education as also social cloaks in the matter of religion.

It is true that followers of different religions remember God by countless names and attributes. But nobody disputes His oneness. All religions agree that the power that existed before the manifestation of creation and will endure even after doomsday, which is eternal and permeates every particle is verily God, Allah and Waheguru. Can believers imprison Him in temples, mosques and any other shrine? How can they then diffuse hatred and divisions in the name of religion or shed blood in His name? Actually, mere belief in God does not yield anything. One gains only by identifying Him. Let us ponder on this issue seriously and make our life genial by adopting the principle "know first and then believe". This way we would lead a smooth and comfortable life ourselves and provide relief to others as well.

"O Bedil if mankind could realise the significance of worship;
The need of so many places of worship would be dispensed with. "

* * *

LOVE - A MISNOMER FOR RELATIONSHIP

During the current age, a universal definition of 'Love' is very difficult. The reason is that there are countless tangles and differences on the subject of love. Any number of relationships have been labelled as 'love'. The tendencies to seek support from others too are identified as love. No word other than 'love' has perhaps been used for so many meanings. Most of such meanings do not sincerely reflect love because generally this word is used as a mark of cover for the real contours of particular relationship.

Very often, victims of solitude foster such relationship which is meant to save one another from the agony of solitude. Love between man and woman is a mixture of different emotions. This is tantamount to meeting the necessity of self-fulfilment. Attachment between two solitary persons or between parents and children falls in this category of relationships. There is only a nominal element of love in them.

A great hurdle in love is our commercial perception. We expect love from our children because we had reared them and looked after them. Such expectation goads them to manifest love towards us just to please us. Price paid for service cannot be treated as love. The love received by us from children is not in accordance with our expectations, needs and sacrifices but corresponds to our capacity (ability) to love our children.

In the present age, our society suffers from tension, loneliness and hollowness. All these factors stand in the way of consciousness of love. It is quite easy to say that love solves all problems. And no doubt in our restless society, love, fellow feelings, affection for neighbour and attitudes of owning others can prove helpful in solving, our social and political problems. But the advice tendered to simpletons to love is of no avail. This only reinforces the attitude of hypocrisy and insincerity. The so called 'mantra' of love can end all hatred and conflict is an imitation to hypocrisy.

The poetic fancy and ecstasy of love is not merely a flight of imaginations, but is a hard reality. This is a joint emotion of self surrender and self discovery. Such a spirit of rapture is a point of ascension of human relationship and interdependence. For basically love means 'giving' and surrendering. The capacity to do so makes it inevitable to lose oneself and expect nothing in return. This does not mean licking the dust and to annihilate oneself. Only a person enriched with innate and personal power is able to give. The first requirement of love is to identify one's fellowship. This means acceptance of deep sympathy and potential of others. The second condition of love is free will. Real love is one imparted without any fetters and accepted as such. Love is a choice as a free agent. The ability to accept love is recognition of a mature and stable personality.

If we own the proposition that to love is not an easy job, love can be nurtured in a better style. Then we are able to take off false cloaks of love by which we try to conceal the real facets of various human relations.

To sum up, it is not appropriate to relate every emotion with love. Every human emotion should be named correctly. Love, however, is generally a rare entity though it is heard and talked about everywhere.

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MENTAL POISE

Human life is riddled with pairs. All of us have to wage struggles and face tensions in life. All humans big or small are worried on some point or other. The high road of human life is full of thorns, not roses.

Actually we look for physical comforts in pursuit of mental poise. We hanker after temporary relief and joys which do not confer mental solace.

Presently the common man can enjoy all amenities which were available to kings and emperors.

By our intelligence we are creating means for physical comforts. Resultantly with increase in desires, our mental poise is diminishing and getting afar from us. Unless we distinguish between physical comforts and mental poise, we cannot get rid of anxieties. Our inner self i.e. its vacuum cannot be filled. Mental poise comes from renunciation of objects and circumstances with firm balance in our inner self. Under grip of desires we run after worldly comforts thus getting aside from the spirit as the focus of our life.

On the contrary, proximity to the centre of our life imparts us mental poise. Such poise is an index of even and wholesome life. Thus life becomes an abode of serenity.

Actually life is like an ocean. At its surface, storms arise. Its depth, however, remains undisturbed. Hence we must remove the cloak of physical facilities to achieve bliss. In case we enlarge the vista of our psyche and make it a habit and get at the deepest level of ocean of life, we can attain mental poise.

To sum up if we become slaves of our desires, we would make a hell of our life. But if we, subdue desires, heaven will be ours. This is the only way of attaining mental poise. It can, however, be available by the grace and guidance of the True Master.

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MODERN TECHNOLOGY

Technique can make things attractive but not soothing. Techniques are progressing speedily. Its disappointing rather, surprising aspect is that man is becoming slave of things made by himself. Human skill now depends on computers.

Currently the children suffer so much from the disease of Television that they do not confine to DD Channel. They feel bored if their Television is not connected to cable, even if it is not helpful for home studies. Time was when we felt delighted by reading good books and writing letters to dear and near ones. We used to embellish -our letter with lovely aspiration for a few days. We also felt thrilled by anxiously awaiting for a response to our letters. On getting reply to our letters, we used to open the envelope affectionately and study it many times, for enhancing our joy. On holidays, all the members of the family used to sit in corridor and rejoice ourselves with humour. We used to relish going on a cycle with our papa. Even then earning a living by the people was connected with different machines. But the people used to work serenely without any tension.

Last 15 years have engulfed the atmosphere of families in uncommon transformation. Now a days houses have been reduced to skeletons of bricks. The relation between the members of a family have crossed limits of culture and morality. Elders and youngsters are treated alike. Acquisition of machines has become the ambition of life. Human relations have been replaced by technology. The difference in generations has developed into difference of technology.

Currently we prefer talk on telephone to writing letters. Even such a talk is limited to exchange of a few words to avoid a bigger telephone bill. Even a four or five years old child can talk on telephone. Instead of adding and subtracting on slates, copy and pencil, the child uses calculators to learn sums of addition and subtraction. The response of the child to father's question as to the best book is that the cheque book is the best book. Today the children regard their parents as silly as they find beauty in a lotus flower than a computer package. Thus the computer is exercising a negative influence on the intellectual package of man.

The famous international designer Dona Kiren has furnished her New York house with modern machines for exercise. Yet she preferred walking to mechanical exercises. She used to send her car with requisite articles to office through the driver and herself would go on foot to office. An eminent writer and high ranking journalist preferred typing on ordinary typewriter rather than electronic one. He did not associate wisdom with technology. According to him, use of machinery is proper provided it does not enslave man.

The foregoing facts enlighten us that modern technology is slowly terminating loving human sentiments. Mute emotions are more appealing and comforting than verbiage. Hence simple living is more meaningful and soothing than worldly amenities. Genuine bliss does not consist in a life of sensuous pleasures, but in an exalted and fruitful life.

* * *

ONENESS

We generally function under the impacts of our heart, and resort to one venture or the other. The heart induces us to some second support besides our own. Thus we get entangled in its illusion and alienate ourselves from oneness. 'Oneness' means a state of being all alone without any other. The perception of 'oneness' leaves no room for entry of any other feeling. The urge for participation then is simply nonexistent. We can go without participation very well, but our heart cannot. It needs an anchor. The heart lives on participation. That is why, it longs for some other support and cannot do without it. It devises many devices to safeguard itself. In any pursuit adopted by us e.g. chanting a film song or invoking God or adopting the role of a lover or beloved, the sense of duality or 'otherness' persists. Only words change. This is immaterial for our heart. It gets reconciled.

The heart is all powerful. It affords us any type of support úwe like. In case we go without meals during the day, the heart serves choicest dishes in dream at night. During the day, the heart gives us flights of fancy. At night it gives us dreams, so that we don't awaken out of the slumber of negligence. But for dreams, sleep would be hard to come by. All the incidents of the day would make us tense. We continue sleeping even while dreaming. There are two types of sleep. One is nightly sleep. The other sleep is the one we enjoy since birth. At any rate, the heart beguiles us with dreams at night and fancies during the day and thus it remains in safe zone. In other words the heart specialises in discovering pleasant plans.

To sum up we should own oneness in order to lead a calm and peaceful life. We should shed impulse of participation and refuse to be tempted by heart. We must get rid of the spirit of 'otherness'. The heart would soon die for want of another entity. Let us dissolve the heart and convince ourselves that we are all alone, without any other. Neither friend nor foe, neither lover nor beloved, not even God. We are lonely figure altogether. In case we do so, the heart would feel agonised. This is an indication of the fear of death by the heart. By the muteness of the heart, we, however, become aware of the sense of 'Oneness'. With the exit of the heart, the sense of participation too vanishes. Nothing remains - there is only a vacuum. We are transported to such an Ideal

state. (Call it salvation, emancipation, Nirvan, Brahm, God, Allaha or any name.) In this state of ecstasy, all words become synonymous and make for a soothing life.

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ONENESS: SINGLE MINDED DEDICATION

Any job accomplished with single dedication refreshes. A function performed in a lukewarm state, however, leads us to depression and exhaustion. The reason is that a lukewarm mood divides us into two parts. One part of our mind votes in favour of a particular work while the other part vetoes it. Any job done with dedication delights us, and enhances our energy. Conversely clashing moods reduce our energy and tire us.

Every writer by and large struggles a lot to streamline his picture. However he does not feel fatigued because he is fully dedicated to the job. But, if he gets an appointment for writing articles, he feels tired because he is not fully integrated with the job. Similarly, an artist works hard to picture his fancy in high order but he does not feel tired. But, if he is employed in some organization to paint pictures, he feels exhausted minded because he is not fully identified with the picture.

A survey of the style of our life reveals that we do not devote exclusive attention or heart to routine jobs like bathing, eating and sleeping. While taking a bath, we are in a hurry to take breakfast. We feel like stepping out on the road while eating our breakfast. Our heart, may then travel to shop or office. While lying on the bed at night we brood about the jobs done during the day and what is to be done the next day. Obsessed by various ideas and dreams, we change sides throughout the night. In other words, we lead, half or incomplete life, while doing two different jobs. By such dual activities we erode ourselves, fight with ourselves and waste our energy.

To sum up we must handle all our jobs with exclusive dedication. The rule should be "one single job at a time" - be it bathing, eating or sleeping. By adopting such a style we would feel a sort of divine bliss and boon in bathing, eating and sleeping.

This process would illumine the light of oneness in our inner selves, as also the glow of love. We would visualize oneness all around. Thus the flower of love would bloom and make our life so soothing.

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OUR EMOTIONAL ENERGY

We are taught during our breeding that crying, screaming and shouting are not good acts. Further that it is bad to be angry, depression is symptom of sickness and to entertain fear is cowardice. With such breeding, there is no option for us but to restrain our emotions, mindless of the power we have to utilise to control them. Because of our immaturity, we attribute it to lack of intelligence.

A serious survey of our life would reveal that we expend emotional energy so lavishly. We waste this energy in hearing the hardships of our neighbours, by reading tragic news in the papers or by learning the news of prolonged illness of an acquaintance, though we cannot relieve the sufferings of such persons.

We cannot deny the innate impulse of making ourselves attractive with cosmetics. That is why we keep in view our dress, hair style, our talk and gait. We do not like any inherent defect in our physical constitution. Most of our energy is spent in making up such deficiency. Rather we should, gladly accept such deficiency. It is not right to feel displeasure over deficiency, which cannot be normalised by us.

It is also human nature to envision dream of a hopeful future. Very few of us succeed in actualizing our dreams. However, we blame our luck for not doing so.

We try to pose innocence. Any amounts of ifs, buts and alibis do not give us any meaningful fruit but erode our emotional energy, by degrees. Despite differences of our desires, deeds and circumstances, we have to face unfavourable circumstances, for which we have to use our thoughts-power and emotional energy. By a discreet use of emotional energy, we can sort out our problems easily which is impossible otherwise. We can use our emotional energy positively as also negatively but cannot prevent its consumption. A futile venture falls in the category of negative use. A satisfying work has a positive role. The latter requires broad mind and detached thinking which is possible only by the grace of God-knowledge, bestowed by the True Master. That is the way to be in line with contentment and relief and lead our life joyously and creatively.

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PORTRAITS OR PICTURES

A portrait or a picture is closer to man than language. To understand a language, we have to practice learning it. Thus requires hard work and time. But even a stupid person can comprehend pictures easily. In

other words it is easy to understand ideas through pictures. Expression of ideas by means of language and their comprehension is, however, a hard job. It is said that man first invented the skill of drawing pictures and learnt the art of writing later. As man stepped beyond creation and learnt to rear families, he would draw a picture whenever he wanted to send a message to his near and dear ones.

Even otherwise, manifestation of circumstances through pictures sounds so simple. Even children pass through a similar stage. This means that, children understand a word through a picture.

Pictures are so pleasant to look at and impress humans. Whatever we learn through pictures has a direct impact on our brain and heart. Thus human mind resembles the camera plate, the lens of which reflects whatever passes before it.

Every picture not only reveals the contours and colours but also embodies the emotions and thoughts at their back. A picture has a language through which it gets on tune with our intellect. That is why a sight of a picture generates certain reactions in our minds and concepts too.

A look at the picture of a martyr stirs the spirit of dying for our country and society. A visit to a religious shrine stirs and sets afloat on the surface of our psyche high and noble values.

It is possible that in the present age books may not be seen in any house but pictures are a must. Besides decoration, pictures refine the atmosphere in every home, but most of the people overlook this aspect. Generally they bring good or bad pictures of their taste and hang them in their homes. The pictures often available in the market deprave morals. Under the grime of art the market is flooded with uncultured and nasty pictures of films. The painters are engaged in amassing money under cover of art and regard the sale as an index of their success and prestige. Such pictures simply serve to impart relief to the sensual emotions of people. Such pictures are so popular that even the titles of books and journals are cast in this mould.

The crux of matter is the impact such pictures make. In a relaxed state or when one is not working, a particular picture emerges in psyche even though that picture may not be before us and stirs similar sentiments. Even in a dream we see scenes that occurred long ago. Thus whatever we observe, gradually penetrates into our disposition and style of activity. Thus selection of good pictures fosters in us virtues and vice-versa. Hence the importance of installing good pictures in our homes' rather than look at bad ones and the ugly scenes.

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REGARDING NECESSITY OF RICHES

Food, shelter and clothing are our basic necessities. Besides these, if one can procure amenities like education of children, one can lead a gentleman's life smoothly. It is, however, very hard to assess how much money one needs to pass one's life. No line can be drawn to reckon an individual's need for money.

It is a different matter that salaries are fixed in view of the ability, culture, heritage and standards of living of public servants. And the salaries are increased with increased cost of living. At times just objections are raised regarding pay structures that are settled by negotiations.

Most of people deem riches to be all in all the focus of their lives. Currently everyone is obsessed with making quick money overnight without work. In this progressive age one purchases unnecessary articles and amenities just to exhibit senselessly a high standard of living. Only a few persons give primacy to limitation of riches.

Currently truth, honesty and moral values have been pushed to the back ground. It has become a fashion to amass money by unfair means. They do not exercise discrimination and make their homes an exhibition of comforts.

The inclination to gather money pollutes social fabric and is aggravating selfishness, bad morality, dishonesty and injustice. Right use of riches is directly related to high values. Riches confer temporary happiness and relief but cannot ensure perennial bliss or spiritual ecstasy and mental poise.

Only that much money is proper that is necessary to maintain life and improve it. Happiness does not hinge on luxuries but on good will of the members of the family and good equation and relations with others. Hence money earned by hard work and its appreciation coupled with discreet spending can make for pleasant life.

* * *

RENUNCIATION

We carry on various activities for our living. Deep deliberation would unfold that the idea underlying our bread earning activities is associated ultimately with the pursuit of attaining relief, serenity and contentment. The aforesaid relief may be temporary and casual but keeps us seriously engaged in our job, since it holds out hope and

satisfaction for us. When our hopes are completely shattered, we lose no time in giving up that pursuit.

We break off even from dear friends when they rankle in our smooth life and become a burden. We struggle a lot for acquiring certain things and feel joyful by casual feeling of satisfaction. Gradually our attraction for these things, however, wanes and they are discarded as worthless by us. We then feel delighted by making them over to those who need them. At times, we give up these things even if we relish them. Possibly some people may praise us for such act, but such renunciation does not prove because our craving persists. The wise men, therefore, discard the spirit of exhibition under the garb of humanism, which makes our life unsavoury without any charm. This way our psyche is divided into two shelves and loses uniformity. As a result, tension and conflict creep up.

Any venture to dissolve the difference between riches and poverty leads to clash. When the supporters of the poor grow powerful, they revolt against the rich. In case the rich become more powerful, they try to suppress the poor all the more.

Actually renunciation manifests our mental state and guides us to a noble track. The spirit of renunciation teaches us to serve mankind and directs flow of our ideas towards service of man. We do have certain articles whose ownership makes us feel happy. We use these articles in good style. But one day we lose interest even in their ownership, thus rendering them useless for us and our minds. But such articles are very useful for the poor and destitute people. In case we hand them over to those poor folk gracefully, we feel delighted. To sum up, the renunciation can prove a desirable step for making human life soothing and contented.

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RIGHT CHOICE

In certain fields, man falls behind and backward than animals. He cannot fly like birds in the open space. Unlike monkeys, man is not capable of lopping from one tree to another. He is unable to run as fast as a leopard. Physically he is less massive than a number of animals. Nor is an expert in strategic moves like brutal beasts. Despite these hard realities, man is admitted as the crown of creation. This is so because of the grace of intellect bestowed on man by God.

The irony, however, is that with all his rich intellect, man does not adopt the righteous path. He is apparently, engaged in constructive pursuits, but these are actually damaging. An intelligent man must uphold human dignity, nurture humanism and maintain discipline. He must be

careful enough about reaction of his deeds. He must also be beware of what is right and wrong, harmful and beneficial. Wisdom that does not come upto such a touchstone is better termed as stupidity. Most of the people adopt the reverse path taking good as bad and vice versa - Children may well try to grasp even dangerous animals. But, where to place intelligent folk, who discard high values of life but float at lower levels under their peculiar disposition. They do not hesitate to adopt even criminal activities. They become the target of hatred of their acquaintances and the pangs of their own conscience. Thus they lose their mental balance.

Man stumbles throughout life and suffers from delusions. For instance the choice of quality and quantity of food to be taken by man is imperative for man. Erroneous diet is indigestible and causes many diseases. Under a delusion man may mistake a rope for a snake and lose his life out of panic. Many instances can be cited, where man makes his intellect victim of many illusions and thus faces serious hardships and stumbling blocks.

Man generally accepts the impacts of social environment and apes other folk. He is engrossed in procuring physical amenities. Indifferent to the call of spirit, he identifies himself with his body and thus goes down hill. He has no leisure to listen to matters of individual soul and its Lord, the almighty God.

The gravity of earth is known to pull down things from above. Thus much more power is needed to lift up. But man spends all his power and skill in collecting wealth. This drives him to play to the gallery of luxurious living and outward glamour. Thus he gets mired in the slime of vices. He feels the worthlessness of body when it cannot function. Body is really like a bubble of water, purely transitory. It is not true that after the exit of the soul from the body, the latter is nothing but fodder for animals unless taken care of by man's companions.

In case man is determined to follow the path of truth according to his head and heart and adopts the perceptions of noble persons, he is deemed an angel in human form. Mindless of public censure if he remains stead-fast on the righteous path, it looks the morale of virtuous wayfarers. By virtue of his free will, man chose a life free from tension and fear. Such a life is the supreme touchstone of wisdom. How to utilise the splendid wealth that human life is, is a symbol of true wisdom and intellect.

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SELF AND INDIVIDUALISM

"Elevate your self (consciousness) to such a high pitch that God Himself would like to know from man, his aspiration."

- Iqbal

The common man quotes this proverbial couplet of Dr. Iqbal in the context of luck and pluck. In order to make their discourse effective, religious leaders too cite this verse. But this write-up is not meant to discuss the popularity or elucidation of the couplet. Here the idea is to reach a solid result and significance of the word "Self". The dictionary defines "self" as "egoism" or self centredness - a colourless or dry concept indeed. But Dr. Iqbal imparted beauty and altercation to this word. This couplet clothed the word (self) with dignity and also made it a universal positive concept.

At any rate the point worth pondering is whether man can uplift the concept of self in his psyche to an extent where mindless of feelings of pain and pleasure can transport himself into a state of intoxication. Yes, this is feasible, provided man lives his own pattern of life instead of others. This sounds bizarre and fantastic. If we eliminate from our life the breeding given by parents as also shed college education and the social impacts, we are left with nothing which can be called our own. We study newspapers, comment on the news all day, but we don't realise that all this is not ours. Likewise we read and elucidate Bhagwat Gita and Holy Quran without realising that they don't have anything of our own. Our tears too are not genuine. When we pay respects and good wishes to someone, do we have any such reverential feelings? We often express our gratitude to God when any friend enquires from us 'how are you'. Do we then have actually grateful feelings in our heart towards God?

Every action of ours is stereo-typed like that of others i.e. our etiquette, style of working, thinking, weeping and laughing. In other words, no action of ours bears the stamp of our individuality. Yet we suffer from the illusion that we have our own style of life. The ground reality, however, is quite the reverse.

Actually man is development of a complex individual intellect. But he is generally unconscious of his individuality all his life. In the entire creation we cannot find even one pebble exactly identical with another nor a leaf identical with another. Likewise it is absolutely impossible to come across an identical person. Thus the peculiar individuality of every person is undeniable. But one can be conscious of one's individuality. Some mystics have felt that melody is manifested in their lives and they have touched the real chords of human life. They have lit the lamps of God knowledge. We consider it sufficient to emulate their lives and feel satisfied by being designated as their 'disciples'.

That is not to say that we should not seek refuge with such personages and not try to imbibe their true self. Possibly the buds of our hearts may bloom at the sight of such blossoming flowers. The melody of their life may stir the strings of our life. But the buds of our life as also our melody would not be like those of spiritual stalwarts.

They would be our own. This is true in fact of every great mystic. The consciousness and observations of Guru Nanak and Kabir would be individualistic, as also of Mahatma Budha and other saints. It is their individual personality. All great saints have uplifted their 'self' to that level of consciousness where pain and pleasure, light and darkness can not disturb their ecstasy. In such a state 'self' can not be set apart from individuality.

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SENSE OF GRATITUDE

We are indifferent towards our life, nay even towards birth of our body. We had no hand in our birth. We do not even know whether we are breathing. Our small body on earth is a miracle. Our stomach digests the small food we take, from which blood is formed. Thousands of scientists cannot make blood out of bread even with all their efforts. Without our knowledge our body is doing strange jobs - performing miracles without our participation. We do not realise that air keeps us alive. Our body contains 70 per cent water. It is surprising that the ratio of water and salt in our body is the same as that in sea. In other words even our body is a part of sea. A little variation in the ratio of salt and water upsets our system and makes us ill. We do not feel grateful despite this pleasant negligence of ours towards our body. We can feel pleasure from the sense of gratitude.

We can start loving our body and feel grateful to our body, which is made up of a few elements. An un-grateful guy cannot be noble. Gratitude towards our own body would lead us to be grateful to other bodies. In case we continuously expand our sense of gratitude as a regular practice, our sphere of gratitude would not be confined to our bodies but would embrace the earth, sky, air, water - nay the whole universe. This would impart solace to us. Distress and death would wither away in the vast expanse of gratitude. Our life would turn a new leaf. Then even death would delight us besides life.

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SOME REFLECTIONS AND REACTIONS

The Nirankari Mission claims to be no new religion. It has been vigorously trying to wipe off the dark stains of sectarianism during the last fifty years. Deep insight reveals that the Creator divided mankind into two classes for perpetuating human race i.e. man and woman. Today, however, we have countless castes, religions and sects.

The facade of religion is an expression of our own choice. Religion, however, founded on Jove, reverence and compassion. The whole creation is the family of God. Stepping out of the religion and machine, we are now breathing in the realm of scientific miracles. Faith is the basis of religion. Science, however, is based on reason and intellect. This/ means verification of everything by tangible ~xperience. In such an administrative edifice, the relation of cause and effect is inevitable. Fire must burn our hands, if placed in it. This operation of fire cannot be checked by any magic or "mantra". Science can probe into a petty "atom" created by God, but cannot create it. Possibly million times more powerful atoms are awaiting in the womb of earth and oceans to manifest themselves on a signal from God.

By nature, man moves collectively. Concentrating on virtue, man may become so noble to compel even angels to acknowledge his glory. If inclined towards evil, man may even eclipse devil. During communal riots, a peace-loving and kind human murders his fellow man mercilessly or burns him alive. The fire of communalism is generally ignited by man himself. It does not rage automatically.

Words however lovely, impressive or dreadful cannot have an impact on society. Simply words cannot revolutionise the psyche of masses. If steeped into actions, our words, however, prove effective. Tongue falls flat unless backed by dedicated action.

Oral enterprises and reason without action, invocation bereft of sincerity and morality fails to impress humanity.

Why don't we admit ourselves as Indians, when the citizens of Japan and Persia are known as the Japanese and the Persians. National unity and cooperation give a clarion call for consolidating national unity by priding ourselves as Indians.

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STYLE OF LIFE

In this fast moving world man is frantically pursuing mundane amenities. Every man seems to be obsessed to score over others but this has seldom happened. This race is without any destination.

Worldly amenities are comparable to a circle where it is possible for some to go ahead and others to lag behind. But it is impossible for anyone to surpass all others and leave them behind. Such a race has been going on from generation to generation but nobody has been able to declare that he has topped the race.

Probably this race dates back to centuries stimulated by the spirit of leading a luxurious and happy life. But happiness has nothing to do with this race, it is associated with mental state of man. A balanced mind makes us peaceful while a turbulent mind causes us tension. Even happiness is not enduring - it is ephemeral and vanishing. In fact happenings can be likened to a reflection from a door which opens for a short while and is then closed. The objects seen from the open door attracts us. As it is closed our longing turns into deprivation. The deeper the longing the greater our deprivation. We cannot win happiness by force or compulsion.

Our psyche has two-fold state - one to be content with God's will and the other to feel deprivation. The former regards what falls to his lot as a boon and accept it in the spirit of gratitude. On the contrary the victim of deprivation wants to possess and grab moments of joy by force. He fails in this venture. Moments of rapture and contentment automatically creep in like the rays of the sun as the door opens and sun rises. One has not to tie and drag happiness inside our house.

Hence we must stay content with what is given to us as a boon and be grateful to God. We need not to worry for what is not given to us. That way we can make life pleasant equable. As such a style of life sticks deeps, our life would become peaceful and comfortable. Impatience, dissatisfaction and the sins of deprivation would go on diminishing and would vanish automatically. Then we would enjoy relief and rapture.

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SUN OF SORROWS AND SHADES OF PLEASURES

Sages state that the world is sustained by hope. But hope is simply an illusion of enjoying happiness tomorrow. Hence, man endures today's sufferings for the pleasure of tomorrow. But, actually the latter is never available to him. If we contemplate about the past in search of happiness, we have to conclude that the past was entirely a wasteland or a desert, where no flower ever bloomed. When the past was future, we fancied that happiness would be ours. But then, the future turned into past. And we pinned our hopes in future. When did we attain happiness. We still hope for a joyous tomorrow. And are tolerating (tormenting) today, for a bright tomorrow.

To live for a single moment would be a problem, if life is a long story of suffering without any possibility of hope of happiness. During illness, one tolerates taking bitter medicines, hoping for a cure. One also undergoes the agony of operation to get rid of an ulcer on one's body. A mother retains the child for nine months and faces the possibility of a fatal delivery. She also nurtures the child for long in the hope of future happiness., Mother's heart converts all sufferings into pleasure. Sorrow can be transformed into solace and vice versa. For instance, chance of meeting a friend on the roadside rejoices us and we embrace him. But the embrace, if prolonged beyond fifteen or twenty minutes becomes an agony. In other words, the happiness of five-minutes before is converted into an affliction. In fact, all feelings of pain are mingled, with happiness and vice versa. In the absence of happiness, we put up with suffering. And when we attain happiness, it is changed into unhappiness after a few minutes. This cycle goes on and on. Since we cannot stay in pain for long, we plan to forget it in the fresh hope of happiness. To sum up, we live and linger in pain, but our vision awaits arrival of bliss. Actually, we do not want to look at suffering and go on hoping for the dawn of 'happiness. A convalescing man does not want to meet illness just as a hungry man does not perceive hunger while dreaming of meals.

Thus we must concede that basically, there is hardly any difference between pain and pleasure. The difference is merely of our vision. In case we take circumstances in this angle, we can make our life pleasant and be rid of the tangle of pain and pleasure. We can make our life cheerful and can learn to live in "today" in the light of past observations and experiences.

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SWEET TONE

Life without interaction is a problem. The interaction-may be of money, things and physical assistance. Without interaction we cannot accomplish such jobs. At times we speak with passers by for relaxation. Sometimes we resort to talking to remove the anguish of silence.

By their eloquence speakers impress people by glamorous talk and make ample money. This is also true of salesman, insurance agents and property dealers, as also lecturers and lawyers. Clever guys prove themselves to be benefactors of others by their oily words and cheat simpletons. The idea is that conversation plays an important role in our life.

Our words, bitter or sweet , emerge from our mouths, are heard by ears and make an impact on our psyche. But at the back there is

another power that reveals the moral, disposition and status of the speaker.

Bitter words pinch others. No body can put up with insulting behaviour. In case it is not possible to retaliate forthwith, it is human nature to suppress the bruise and make it quit at opportune time. Arrogance makes one humiliate others and often invites tension.

Sweet words sound so pleasant as the speaker's personality is free from camouflage and we feel happy for dealings and association with such a person. Such folk suffer from no personal motive or ego. Even simple words of such persons impress us deeply. Even lovely remarks based on selfishness strike us as meaningless and colourless.

Thus sweet conversation occupies a special importance and soothes one's life. But sweet words should come out of one's innerself and be integrated with heart. The practice of assessing one's conduct puts us on the high road of cheerful talk and makes our life smooth.

* * *

TAKING IT EASY

We are all more or less aggregates of habits. Some habits do not permit unfolding of our personality completely.

Psychologists have investigated that the impulse of taking things easy, is gaining ground quickly. We are not prepared to do anything to make our life pleasant. We coin excuses to prove the absence of hobbies in our life. For instance a pet excuse is that I am tired these days and hence cannot undertake any new venture. Or we console ourselves by the plea that old dogs cannot be taught new feats. Thus instead of facing hard facts, we simply suppress them. This sort of laziness results in blunting our talents.

According to an English thinker 'an ounce of practice is better than a ton of thoughts'. But we remain engaged in building castles in the air. Unwittingly, we become accustomed to getting bored. We develop the habit of harping this tune. But the people at large start yawning at listening to our stereotyped music. We lose importance in others' eyes. Like old shoes we miss their attention. If we act discreetly to some extent, we can make our personality attractive and discover our talent faculties.

Sometimes our well-wishers advise us to remove our ordinary flaws. We even promise to do so and say that they would find a new personality in us. But we do not take a serious stride in this direction. At

times we are so impressed by a high personality that a desire to emulate him dawns in us that goads us to go ahead. On such an occasion, we should pen down our new style of life minus our failings. In this way, every next year, by doing a meritorious job we can reach our cherished destination and make ourselves luminous.

We are living in an age of specialisation. With a study of selected themes from some books and magazines, we can also march towards specialisation. This would surely prove beneficial for us. In the domain of studies, we are generally careless. Studious habit can make us aware of new lovely themes, new hobbies and enlarge our limited information. Thus we can gain a lot.

Generally those who possess some new ideas are desirable persons. We may pretend paucity of time as the reason for our indolence. But this factor does not require much time or exertion. No one expects us to be a walking dictionary. We only need to get ahead of the world only in a couple of phases to achieve the desired goal. Then we won't be denied the requisite attention like a pair of old shoes. People would listen to our lively talk and enjoy it, to be sure.

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TRUTH & FALSEHOOD

Truth and falsehood co-exist. Without knowledge of falsehood, truth cannot be discerned. Truth is always bitter. So says an ancient proverb that is often used everyday. Bitter things like 'KARELA' and 'NEEM' etc. cleanse our blood. A bitter medicine administered by a doctor cures the patient. Falsehood is always sweet. All sweet things are relished by us. Excess of sweet objects causes many diseases. We find it hard to admit truth because it is bitter. The lure of sweetness carried by falsehood keeps us away from truth and inclines us towards falsehood. We have to face adverse effects of such an experience. According to my humble perception, truth and falsehood differ from each other like soul and body.

Truth can be veiled. Body can be embellished. That does not belittle the importance of soul. In our courts falsehood may celebrate its victory on the basis of false arguments and proofs. Falsehood, however, does not cut any ice in spiritual court. Truth remains truth, however faintly it is spoken. Conversely falsehood cannot be converted into truth however loudly it is spoken. We all know the story of the race of hare and tortoise as also who was the winner. Thus we must reckon the tortoise as true to his mission and the hare as false. Truth moves at a slow speed. Still it wins.

Actually falsehood stands safe till it co-exists with truth, though falsehood is safeguarded by truth. Falsehood is reduced to ashes when it parts company with truth. The body is dubious (dulled) as corpse after the exist of soul. A corpse is designated by us as dust. How can a vehicle move without a driver? Thus the body cannot function without the soul. It becomes worthless. Truth survives as it is not burnt. In case truth is burnt, it is a problem to unfold. But truth is eternal. Just as we cannot see or touch the truth, we know it by its attributes, this is precisely true of soul. If somebody says that the moon would not rise today as it has gone on casual leave, we cannot believe in such stupid statement. Similarly we cannot believe that soul is not immortal and untrue.

Soul being true, the Lord of souls i.e. God, is also true whose existence cannot be doubted. We remember God by various values it possesses. We do feel the existence of Truth. But falsehood is too attractive to adopt the track of truth. This focuses in us the hardships and complications of life. The followers of the truth may go astray but the track of truth can never be untrue. Consciousness of truth is not bad as truth imparts illumination and is lovely. Let us reflect on this point and resolve to pursue positive enterprise.

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UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

A man's morality is known by his style and conduct towards others, correct assessment of others and one's skill to drive home one's angle to others that falls in the orbit of morals. Wisdom or discretion can be related to morals to some extent.

Man marches ahead by exchange of ideas, even upto his latest present day progress. Problems like animal breeding, agriculture, education, art, industry are not the monopoly of particular sect or cross section. The achievements of any circle are wafted to others. In every direction man has developed through brotherhood as also his culture and civilisation wittingly or unwittingly like one wave pushing ahead another.

Now no breed can claim purity of blood completely. Thus the basic contours of different dynasties have amazing changes. The blood of Indians is mainly a blend of the Aryans and Dravidians. This has resulted in the emergence of a third common dynasty and culture. The present day Indian culture is not two or three thousand years old. Likewise customs, culture and faith have got intermixed. This has to be conceded, hesitatingly though.

Such an adulteration is a desirable imperative. It is impossible to choke human wisdom and psyche in the wasteland of narrow vision for long. Pleasant and soothing interaction flows on silently. Even our ancestors have acknowledged their heritage gratefully. They have used their wit and skill with advantage. Every parent aspires his children to scale greater heights in education, efficiency, wealth and fame vis a vis himself. In the realm of civilisation and morality, ascent is a refreshing step and link. One relishes one's lineage, good looks, language and customs to some extent. Yet intelligent folk do not hesitate to accept interaction in cultures and their refreshing styles. But the orthodox adopt rigid and extremist stance. They feel that truth is only their inheritance while others are wrong. Such individual differential view points have generated hatred, violence and terrible wars. This resulted in relentless destruction of high human and moral values.

Followers of one civilisation have been adopting arbitrary attitudes to bring others into their fold. In brief the custodians of civilisation and righteousness are the worst prisoners of narrow vision. This process sows widespread poisonous seeds of disunity driving mankind into the abyss of disaster. Inflammatory emotions of the Christians in Europe and of the Muslims in Asia have not made any positive contribution to the prestige of these religions. The only impact was that menfolk accepted the new faith out of awe or greed. But such an acceptance was thrust from without. It could not permeate the depths of their heart.

Cultures are generally divided into nationalism, regionalism, faith and other conditions. They are cheerily divided on certain points and appears entirely divergent. But words of culture in substance are not different. Man can come closer to man if fine values are regarded as humanism. The key to solution of human problems lies only in comic brotherhood. It is not possible to expect stable global peace by disowning other religion or country beyond one's own. The alternative is that mankind would go to pieces. Positive psyche must be grown to relieve rigour of nationalism and rouse positive values. The rear foot has to be moved first to enable the other foot to take next step. It is not wise to keep the rear foot rigid. The craving to be a world conqueror is nothing but a sort of madness. Narrow vision makes one more of a loser rather than achiever.

All of us are creatures of the same creator, living on the same earth and under the same sky, receive light and heat from the same sun, comfort from the same clouds. Why then do we come in the grip of temporary dissension and disunion, by turning our attention from universal truth? By interacting and exchange we can enjoy the grace of clean air and light. By circumscribing our faculties, we deny ourselves open air and sun.

In fact culture is nothing but commitment to loveliness. It is development of vast vision and sentiments, perception of common objects like gardens, clouds, hills waterfalls, ponds, stars. May the

entire creation by lovers of beauty make our spirit ecstatic. Cultivation of faith can unveil God himself even in stones. Every particle of creation makes one conscious of the presence of God and our beloved as holy as God's own temple. By imbibing a pious style of life and thought we can lead a pleasant life and be a source of peace and bliss.

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WE KNOW, YET

We make our life onerous by not acting upon certain well known precepts. For instance we know very well that certain persons are leading a life worse than we. They cannot get hold of basic necessities and amenities of life. Yet we always look up to those who are leading a better life. Hence we cannot enjoy even the available facilities. Nor do we adopt a pattern of life for making good our deprivations speedily.

The sages say that will-power is the seed (foundation) of life. This means that the lovely or ugly edifice of life can be built on the foundation of will-power. But lured by the enchanting pattern of the bulk of humans we mar our life instead of constructing a lovely building on the basis of noble will-power.

We know very well that time once gone cannot be recalled in any way. Every human - a minister or a pauper has at his disposal only twenty four hours. Lapse of one day amounts to passage of twenty four valuable hours. Nevertheless, we make our life futile by wasting our time irrationally, overlooking the value of time.

We are also aware that sensual pursuits lead us to ignoble acts and that temporary thrill pollutes our conduct. Our conscience heads towards downfall, thus throwing our life in bewilderment.

Wealth, prestige, pomp, panoply and fame for a particular person lack stability. Ebb and flow, ups and downs are a part and parcel of life. Still a little hardship in life upsets and unbalances us. We feel anguished as we recall our lapses.

Often we are perturbed by things not directly concerning us. Problems such as what an individual is upto, how he can act, how to refine the atmosphere of the world and when the doomsday will dawn - such stuff seems to be so delicious but is useless.

In brief, the style of our thinking - dubious intensions, disregard of the value of time, sensual desires and pricking memories of the mistakes committed by us, make our merry life heavy, unpleasant burden, stale and uneasy. If, however, after a serious thinking, we accomplish the

duties of our life, we can embellish our talents and make our career a banquet of nice and noble values.

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WHO IS TO BLAME?

It is human nature to be dissatisfied with the present and to dream of the future. True to say that all the problems of human life are associated with one's heart. Our heart is the fountain head of desires which gives birth to one desire or the other. And we go on struggling frantically to fulfil our desires, fall foul of circumstances and remain agitated. To this end, we do not refrain to cheat and defraud others. Our hearts feel hurt when someone deceives us. We feel tense but our tension cannot prevent anybody from cheating us. For this amounts to a victory for the fraudulent and it is hard for anyone to give up victory.

If we reflect seriously, the tension is not because of fraud or treachery of anyone but because of our aspiration not to be cheated by anyone. Our agony is the result of this aspiration. But it is impossible that the whole world should act according to our wishes. It is beyond us to design a world free from frauds and crookedness. To sum up, we ourselves are responsible for our tangles but feel relieved to pass on the buck to others. We are habituated to think on these lines that we are not to blame.

Hence we must in these circumstances hold ourselves responsible for our hardships and transform ourselves so as to accept the frauds of others. What we should think is that the person concerned would have to face the fruit of his shabby deeds, not we. Our heart should be immune to the impact of the treachery of others. It should not be disturbed. In case we prepare our psyche to adopt this style of life, we will lead a smooth and comfortable life and can also inspire others to change themselves.

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WORDS

When we hear a person talk on any subject, we circumscribe ourselves only to the words uttered by him. Our psyche does not reach upto the depth of his talk. Hundreds of persons surveyed the poetry of Mr. Assadulah Khan Ghalib and were awarded Ph.D degree. Every researcher interpreted the meaning of this poetry differently. No poet clothes his verse with different meaning. He only dresses one of his ideas in poetic form.

Similarly the lecture of any political leader is heard by thousands and lacs of people but most of the listeners hold different views on the implication of his speech. This can be partly due to the studied complicated style of the leaders' talk. But generally our perception stops short at his words.

Leaving aside the speech of political leaders, the discourse of any holy person may not carry the same meaning for all other listeners as we do or our perception may truly reflect the intention of the holy person. Our intellect reaches but to his words only and not their soul.

Various gentlemen read different meanings to some of the couplets of Lord Krishna's 'Gita'. But the Lord must have said everything with the same underlying meaning. Actually we get entangled in the cobwebs of words. Words are only a vehicle of thoughts and pointers. Words are only signals. If we wish to show a flying aeroplane to the child by pointing out our finger, the child would go on looking at our finger but would not notice the aeroplane. The same is true of bird perching on a tree; the bird may possibly fly from one tree to another.

Spiritual personages during their tenure gave us countless hints (pointers) to tread the path of truth and lead a balanced life. They had the same aim viz to identify God who has so many names Ishwar, Allah, Ram, Rahim and Waheguru. Words are doubtless different but are meant solely for one entity i.e God. The in-thing is one as truth is one. We, however, catch hold of words and take the pointers as destination and this creates complications for us. Unless we broaden our vision and keep the doors and windows of our heads and hearts open in order to penetrate into the depth of words and reach the essence of words, we would not achieve the goal.

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WORSHIP (PRAYER) &. DEDICATION

Hindi version of worship is known as Bhakti, devotion. Dedication is practice and penance. Despite a little difference in meaning, prayer and dedication have the same destination. But currently we have forgotten the real import of the holy concept of dedication. We regard physical tortures as dedication, though the two are unrelated directly. We acknowledge fasting and not eating as dedication though the two operations are different. The fasting person is anxious to contact soul of close quarters. The hungry person is alluded to physical domain and may die of the hunger for many days. But the spiritual person may live without eating; he loses the sense of body. Spiritual depth generates a possibility of delicate power, which is beyond the common man. Fulfillment of physical needs realises a new need which may be related

to soul. Hence fasting is hardly a source of, pride like poverty. It is foolish to regard poverty as close to spirituality. It is a delusion to consider poverty as boon and admire contentment.

Certain persons become ready to undergo physical tortures as a populent measure in society that brings them hollow solace and satisfies their ego.

Man has a two fold impulse of death and life. Without the impulse of death, there would be no suicides. Instant suicide is admitted as suicide. But those, who commit suicide slowly, seem to us dedicated souls. Dedication is not suicide and is unrelated to death. It is life immortal, eternal, perfect.

In fact prayer or dedication is a science. It enables us to appreciate that 'I am not a body but a soul'. To sum up, we can regard worship and dedication as a technique or perception or bridge or a route for realising that we are not bodies but a spirit.

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