

BONDAGE
AND
FREEDOM

CHITRABHANU

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(Munishree Chandraprabhsagarji)

DIVINE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY
BOMBAY

© AUTHOR

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By the same Author

FOUNTAIN OF INSPIRATION
TO THE CITIZENS OF TO-MORROW
LOTUS BLOOM
THE BEACON
INSPIRING ANECDOTES

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The Immortal Song

- (1) *May the sacred stream of amity
flow forever in my heart.
May the universe prosper, such is
my cherished desire.*
- (2) *May my heart sing with ecstasy at the sight of the virtuous,
And may my life be an offering at their feet.*
- (3) *May my heart bleed at the sight of the wretched, the cruel,
the irreligious,
And may tears of compassion flow from my eyes,*
- (4) *May I always be there to show the path to the pathless
wanderers of life,
Yet if they should not hearken to me, may I bide in patience.*
- (5) *May the spirit of goodwill enter all our hearts, May we
all sing in chorus the immortal song of human concord.*

—Chitrabhanu

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I. BONDAGE AND FREEDOM

TODAY is a day of deep reflection for me, too, for I have come to a place which provokes serious thoughts. There are some places, some occasions, that lead men to deep and serious reflections on life.

Environment has a far-reaching influence on the mind. When one is present at a place of merriment and festivity, laughter and music, one feels gay. But when one passes through a hospital hearing the groans of suffering patients, their sighs of despair or their shrieks of agony, one wonders, "Is this life? Is it worth living?"

Even a man who is normally healthy, happy, full of the joy and vigour of life, feels depressed at the sight of physical and mental pain. He has an uneasy feeling that the body can be a source of strength and vitality only so far as it is in a healthy condition. As soon as it falls a prey to sickness and disease it becomes a source of pain and sorrow. The rich and the poor, the high and the low, the strong and the weak—all seem equally helpless before the devastating power of sickness and disease.

If an old man happens to pass by a house where a wedding is being celebrated, where guests are feasting and singing, the old man forgets for a while his age and feebleness. Perhaps he thinks of the time when he, too, was a young and happy bridegroom and inadvertently, he, too, joins in the merry din.

Each place has its own atmosphere—and a jail is no exception to it. A jail has its own peculiar atmosphere which is naturally very different from the atmosphere of a hospital or a wedding party.

The first thought that struck me as I entered the gates of this jail was—“Are we not all in some way prisoners, like the prisoners inside this jail?”

Some are prisoners behind prison bars, others are prisoners of their own passions. The prison of passions is much more formidable than the one made of stone walls and iron bars. For these will some day be liberated, sooner or later; but the others, those who are fettered by their own passions, who are slaves to their lust, find it extremely difficult to break the chains that bind them.

The chains are not formidable only for the common man who leads a normal life; they are equally strong for the saintly who subject themselves to an austere penance in order to renounce all worldly pleasures and comforts. Wise men have said that the greatest bondage in the world is not that of a prison-house but it is of one's own thoughts and cravings.

And who, after all, was it that sent you to this prison? It was your own uncontrolled passions.

When a man fails to exercise control over his desires and his emotions, they break the bonds of all restraint and overwhelm him. He finds himself helplessly tossed about by them; he indulges in many

harmful activities. But if society is to run smoothly, if there is to be safety and security for all, the activities that endanger its peace and orderliness must be brought under control. It is the duty of society and government to enforce a check on these and thus ensure safety and orderliness; else there will be chaos. When control from within a man fails to check him, control from without—by an outside agency—becomes a necessity. The control from within is called self-restraint; in its absence, the control from outside—a prison—becomes a necessity for the welfare of society.

A man who can control his desires through self-restraint cannot be deprived of his freedom. Such a man, even when put in fetters through some freak of circumstances continues to enjoy freedom. A poet has said:

“Stone walls do not a prison make
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage.”

In this very jail, where you are prisoners, not so long ago, Mahatma Gandhi was a prisoner, too. Though the world called him a prisoner, he was a free man. He had cultivated self-restraint and had thus gained a mastery over his desires. He used to say, ‘I am not in a prison; I am in a palace.’ This should make us reflect how much of our freedom depends upon our thinking. It is your own way of

thinking that makes you feel a free man or a prisoner. To my mind, everyone of us here is a prisoner, everyone of us is in fetters, everyone of us has lost his liberty; and it is with this assumption that I ask you to listen to my speech.

This speech is not meant for only those who are serving a sentence in this jail; it is for prisoners of all kinds. I consider myself, too, to be a prisoner.

But a prisoner in what sense?

It is in the sense in which saints have used the word 'prisoner.' These saints point out to us that the soul is imprisoned within the body, and in this state of captivity it undergoes a great deal of suffering. We are going to reflect today on some questions that have puzzled many. What is Man? How did he become a prisoner? What does his imprisonment signify? How is he going to regain liberty?

Man is constituted of three parts—Body, Mind and Soul. Each one of us has these three constituents. The nourishment, the nature and the intrinsic quality of each is peculiar to it. But we do not succeed in separating the three. We allow them to adulterate each other, with the result that this adulteration leads to physical, mental and spiritual sickness. If we can separate the needs of the soul from those of the mind and the body, we would realize which one of the three is in need of nourishment at a particular time, and feed it accordingly.

If we think deeply over this, we will realize that the body is inclined towards bestiality, the mind towards humanity and the soul towards godliness. When a man is inclined to satisfy his physical needs, it is his bestiality that dominates; when he is filled with humanity, his mind dominates; when he is filled with divinity, his soul dominates.

When a man is filled with longings to satisfy himself physically, his bestiality dominates him to such an extent that the soul takes a subordinate place and it caters for the physical needs of the man. The body, through its five senses does deeds unworthy of him. For example, a man sees something that does not belong to him and he is tempted to steal it. He does something unworthy of himself because his eyes prompted him to do so. His deeds may be harmful to society and he must be removed to some sort of custody from where he cannot carry on his harmful practices. Society, therefore, has to resort to the help of the custodians of law and order, who clap him in jail to make him realize that he cannot indulge his senses to the detriment of the social order.

In the final analysis, who was it that sent him to jail? It was his evil desire to take something that did not belong to him. He could not restrain himself. It was to satisfy the needs of the body, that the brute in him prompted him to do something wrong, and he was too weak to control his desire.

When a man allows any, or all of his five senses to

overrule his judgment, his sense of right and wrong, he becomes a slave to his desires and emotions. The humanity of his mind and the divinity of his soul are subordinated to the bestiality of his body.

The next constituent is the Mind. The chief characteristic of the mind is its humanity. Sometimes a man's mind is only half awake. It is then in a sort of finely balanced condition and can be pushed out of balance by the slightest force on either side. At such a time the brute in the man takes advantage of the half awake condition of the mind and makes it work as it likes. Thus, the mind which should rule the senses, becomes a slave to his senses and carries out the messages which his senses send, without using any discretion.

But those who read good books, or listen to the enlightening words of the wise, have a well trained mind. Good thoughts strengthen it against temptations so that it is always alert. When the senses try to mislead it, it will immediately put them under a stern control, for it is well aware of the consequences of yielding to the temptation of indulging them. What an untrained mind fails to do, a mind disciplined with good reading, good company and good thoughts succeeds in achieving, though it may have to put up a hard fight against its foe—sensuality. The mind triumphs over matter.

We must understand this clearly—sensual desires are bestial in origin. Whenever our senses try to

tempt us, we should ask them this question: "I may gratify your desires, but how do I benefit thereby?" This simple question may prevent us from taking the wrong path. Before we put our thoughts into practice, we must learn to analyse them—to remove all that is impure and keep only the pure. Only then can we be peaceful and happy. But if we do not carefully analyse our thoughts and act upon them rashly, we shall find ourselves in great difficulties and sufferings as a result of our rashness. Behind the bars of evil desires, our soul is a prisoner. They impair the godliness of the soul. They do not feed the soul; they poison it. The soul behind the prison bars of desires has no choice. It has to accept the food it gets through the senses. Since this is not the natural food for the soul, it is obvious the soul cannot thrive on it. It becomes unhealthy, diseased for the lack of right food. What then is the right food for the soul? It is friendliness, forgiveness, love, compassion, temperance. But the soul cannot get this food, unless it is set free from behind the bars of desires.

We should remember that life does not come to an end after death. Why then is man born? Why has he come into this world? Man is here on earth to develop the spark of love and godliness within him. He gets a chance to fan this divine spark into an eternal flame by his contact with humanity. What his surroundings are, is immaterial. A man determined to develop the godliness within him can do it anywhere—in a city teeming with millions or in the

seclusion of the cloister; in a prosperous town or in a poor village; enjoying the freedom of action outside a prison, or shut up behind prison bars. For wherever he is, he can feed his soul with the right food and liberate it from physical bonds.

Once, there was a sage who was giving a discourse to villagers on the body and the soul. The people listened to him attentively. There was a gentleman who attended his lectures regularly, and when he returned home he would talk about what he had heard at the lectures. Now this gentleman had a parrot who heard all that his master talked about at home and one day as his master was leaving for the sage's lectures, he said to him, "If *Maharaj* talks so much about liberation, why doesn't he ever say anything about liberating me? I, too, am a prisoner in a cage. Liberating the body from the soul is a farfetched philosophical topic, has he not anything to say about such a practical topic as how a parrot can be liberated from his bondage? Will you ask him on my behalf how I can gain my liberation?" The gentleman wondered how this question of liberation from bondage had occurred to a parrot while it had never occurred to him? He did not realise that only those who feel life as a bondage have the longing to liberate the soul from the body. But those who are used to this kind of life, do not feel the bondage at all and are quite content to go on living as they are. How, then, should they think of any liberation? Let me give you an instance.

Bhagwan Mahavira left his royal palace and his companions because he felt that the bondage of the body was getting intolerable for him and the entire significance of life lay in breaking this bondage. Only if he obtained his own deliverance from this bondage, would he be able to guide others how to achieve this freedom. With this idea he went into the wilderness where he embarked on the difficult task of breaking the chains of anger and spite, greed and selfishness.

The gentleman I was talking about had never felt this bondage. He went to the lecture. Many had gathered to listen to the wise words of the sage. After the discourse was over and all had departed, the gentleman approached the sage hesitantly and said, "*Maharaj*, may I ask you a question?" "Of course, you may," answered the reverend man. Thus encouraged, the gentleman asked him, "How does one liberate oneself from bondage?" "Whose question is this?" asked the saint. "It cannot be yours for you do not wish to be liberated. As far as I can see, you hug the very chains that bind you—the chains of a luxurious life of self-indulgence." The gentleman admitted that it was not what he wanted to know; it was a question which his parrot had requested him to ask the saint. This answer had an unexpected effect on *Maharaj*. To the great consternation of the gentleman, *Maharaj* fell into a swoon. He fanned him desperately and begged him to open his eyes. After a while, he noticed that *Maharaj* was coming round. He was frightened that he would be

held responsible for what had happened, so he took to his heels.

Are you surprised that he ran away? In this world all who have done something wrong want to run away from the consequences of what they have done. Some of these succeed in making good their escape, but some get caught and are put behind bars. The others, though they have escaped, know in their heart of hearts that they are guilty. And which of us can lay his hand on his heart and declare that he never has done anything wrong, or that he never has experienced a sense of guilt? And though all of us are not punished by the law because all of us are not found out, those who are honest in their judgment upon themselves would feel that they should administer some sort of punishment to themselves for having done something wrong. This would liberate them from their sense of guilt, and, in future, deter them from repeating their wrong deed.

But to come back to our story. The gentleman, as I told you earlier, took to his heels fearing that he would be held responsible for the unaccountable fainting fit of *Maharaj*. But *Maharaj* had only been feigning unconsciousness. Soon he got up and went his way. On the other hand, as soon as the gentleman reached his house the parrot inquired if he had asked *Maharaj* his question—"How can one liberate oneself?" His master replied angrily, "There was something uncanny about your question, for as soon as

I put him this question, *Maharaj* fell down in a dead faint." The parrot realised the significance of what had happened. This then was his answer—'a dead faint.' When evening came, the parrot acted upon the answer that *Maharaj* had sent him. He would not take any food or drink, his chatter ceased and he shut his eyes and was seemingly dead. His master made many efforts to revive him, but it was all in vain. The parrot seemed to be dead. So finally his master took him out of the cage and threw him out of doors. As soon as the parrot found himself outside the cage, he fluttered his wings and prepared to fly away. His master was astonished, "What's all this farce?" he demanded. "I thought you were dead!" The parrot replied, "You brought me the reply to my question from your *Guru* and yet it seems you did not understand it. *Maharaj* showed me the way to liberate myself and I acted upon it instantly. He has also shown you the way to liberate yourself from the prison that your senses and desires have built up around your soul. You will liberate your soul only when you act upon his advice and learn to subdue them to your will. Only then will you be free like me." And so saying, the parrot winged its way to freedom.

Truly, the soul is a prisoner within the body, for it is governed by the senses. Each one of our senses prompts us to do something undesirable for its own gratification. So long as we do its bidding, the soul will not be released from its confinement. The

eye may wish to see objects or the ear may wish to hear tales that are not healthy for our morals; the tongue may want to gossip about people, the palate may crave for food and drink that glut you; in short the whole body may cry for comforts and pleasures. The gratification of these demands may become the sole purpose of your life, so that you have no time, energy or inclination left to follow higher and nobler pursuits, to think of others, to deny yourself something that your body craves, so that you may be able to spare something for others. You have become a slave to yourself, to your body. There is no outside control that can be exerted over your senses. It is upto you to train them. Every time your senses make an unreasonable demand on you, make an effort to deny it. It is only thus that you will succeed in training them, so that they will not succeed in making you do things that ultimately lead to your destruction. Remember, it is self-indulgence that paves the way to self-destruction. Cure yourself of this weakness of self-indulgence and you will be healthy and strong, physically and mentally.

In a way, a jail is like a clinic—a mental clinic. A man who eats and drinks immoderately, damages his digestion and has to be treated in a clinic for some time. In the same way a man who has indulged his senses and succumbed to his temptation to do wrong deeds, needs to be kept in a prison—a mental clinic—where he will perforce have to do what he is told to do, and where he can regain his mental health. When

he is freed from his confinement he may turn a new leaf. This is possible—but only if the man co-operates with those who wish to cure him of his evil propensities. Here, too, no outside force can cure him; he must heal himself.

Let me give you some instances. There are at times men who are good and kind and yet somehow they find themselves behind prison bars. They blame it on their luck—their destiny. But is it luck, is it destiny that has put them here? A man may be in most respects a good man, a law-abiding man; but he may have one weakness—say, greed. He wants more and more of money, more and more of the things that please his senses. He may not have the means to do it. Instead of training his senses to do without the things they crave for, he indulges in them. When he has not enough money to do so, he casts about for dishonest plans to acquire what does not rightly belong to him. He becomes unscrupulous and resorts to foul means. He may succeed for some time and this encourages him in his dishonest practices. But one day he is found out, tried and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. It was not luck, not destiny; it was his unrestrained greed that had put him behind prison bars.

Or there may be a man good in most respects, but with an ungovernable temper. If he is crossed in anything, he bursts into fits of rage and does cruel things that he would be ashamed of, later. He beats

his wife and children mercilessly, he quarrels violently with the neighbours over trifles. His ungovernable rage makes him do savage deeds and some day he may beat a man to death or knife him. He is found guilty of man-slaughter or murder and given a life sentence. Is it not his anger, unschooled, un-restrained, that is responsible for this? It separates him for ever from his dear ones, from all mankind because he is a menace to society.

The man with a disciplined mind can keep his anger under control. It is not as if he knew no anger or that he was never given the cause for being angry. But even when greatly provoked, he governs his mounting anger and finally masters it.

As dangerous as anger, are envy and revenge. When a man's heart is filled with envy because someone has marched ahead of him in life or when it is filled with revenge because someone has done him some real or imagined wrong, his passion knows no bounds and leads him into doing dastardly deeds, brutal deeds, and sends him to jail.

Greed, anger, envy, malice—it is these passions that undo a man. They make him forget his humanity; they cannot be seen, they are our invisible—and therefore, all the more dangerous—enemies. We must fight them down from the earliest stage. We must rid ourselves of them else they will get the better of us, and finally destroy us.

We all have desires—none of us is free from desires;

the weak man allows his desires to rule him, the strong man rules his desires. It is a question of mental strength or weakness. A great deal depends upon it, for the difference between a free soul and a captive soul depends upon it. The mind, if it is well trained, controls bodily desires and opens the way for the liberation of the soul. This is nothing mystic, it does not need rigorous penance or severe austerity that only a few can practise. It is something practical, it is within the reach of all of us. It needs an effort; a sincere effort, but not a superhuman effort, and every human being worth his name must be capable of making it. Whatever be your position or occupation in life, you will always be subject to temptations, your senses will tempt you in many ways. Restrain them with a firm hand; make up your mind that you will not succumb to them, but subdue them. You may not reach the heights that the noblest of men have reached, but you will have attempted and achieved something.

I would like to tell you the story of a great man who can serve you as an example of nobility at its best. As you listen to this story make a note of how much provocation this man had from some of the passions we have been talking about; from anger and hatred and revenge, and yet, how he subdued them. Such a man was Koshalraj. This is the story of Kashiraj and Koshalraj.

Kashiraj was a great and powerful king. Koshalraj ruled over a small kingdom. Though he was only a

petty king, Koshalraj was indeed great, for he cared more for the physical and moral welfare of his people than for power and glory. He believed in love, compassion, friendliness, forgiveness; he preached these virtues and practised them, so that his people had the highest admiration for him. A man of such virtues cannot but influence others around him. Not only his own people but those of the neighbouring kingdom praised him and expressed their devotion for him. Virtue is like an inner fragrance; not only he who has it, but all those who come in contact with him can breathe this fragrance. And so it was that people from far and near were uplifted by his moral influence.

Kashiraj, his neighbour, was soon filled with envy. He thought it was most unjust that his subjects should sing praises of Koshalraj who, after all, was a petty king. He was too dense to realize that people respected Koshalraj for the greatness of his soul. Blind with fury, Kashiraj determined to teach him a lesson, to humble him before all. He gathered a large army and marched upon his neighbour's kingdom.

Koshalraj guessed the reason of this uncalled for attack. It could not be that the mighty Kashiraj coveted his little kingdom. It was because he was jealous of the love and devotion that people showed him. He knew, too, that his people would soon be overpowered and slaughtered. It was his duty to avoid this unnecessary bloodshed. The friendliness and

forgiveness that he had always preached were being put to a severe test. He called his people together and told them that he would hand over his kingdom to Kashiraj and would himself retire to the solitude of the wilderness where he would pray for their welfare. Deeply moved by this renunciation the people stood with bowed heads. Many wept at the imminent parting. Many were filled with misgivings about the treatment they would receive at the hands of the conquering king. Koshalraj knew what was passing through their minds. "Remember what I have always taught you—Keep your soul free and none can enslave you. Love and compassion, friendliness and forgiveness will keep you free; they will conquer even the conqueror."

Kashiraj started his rule with the idea of stealing the hearts of the people from their erstwhile ruler. He tried to impress them with his power and glory. Magnificent processions and pageants were taken out. There was feasting and dancing and the conquered subjects were treated generously. But this was done with the sole idea of stealing their love and loyalty from Koshalraj, not with any genuine sympathy. Now and again his hirelings would point out to the people, "Did you ever witness the like of this under your former ruler? Did he ever distribute so many gifts? Did he ever give so much money in charity? Rejoice that you are fortunate enough to be the subject of the mighty Kashiraj!" And the people made a show of rejoicing. For after all they were

human, and were afraid to offend the new king. But in their heart of hearts, they thought of Koshalraj. He was like a father to them; now he was in exile and someone else had taken his place on the throne, but how could anyone take his place in their hearts?

Kashiraj was curious to know what the people thought of him. So one night he set out incognito to wander about the streets. He quietly joined a group of people. They were talking about him and their late king. They were all agreed that he was very strong and had not treated them badly, but they still fondly remembered Koshalraj and praised his virtues of forgiveness, love and compassion in glowing terms. Such a one would never come again.

Kashiraj was filled with anger and jealousy. All his display of power and generosity had come to nothing. In the darkness of the night he could read their hearts, he could hear their words of unstinted praise and love for Koshalraj—now an exile, a hermit in the woods, without any worldly possessions. A man like him could not understand how his rival had endeared himself to all. How could he win their love and loyalty? And he came to a decision worthy of his vanity and cruelty. He declared that he would reward any one who captured Koshalraj dead or alive, with a thousand pieces of gold. He was sure that if once Koshalraj was done away with, people would forget him by and by, and turn their affection to him.

In the meantime Koshalraj was leading a poor but contented life in the woods. He would chop wood and go out to sell it. With the few coins that he so earned, he would buy his frugal meal. But he and his wife were happy in their poverty and solitude. All around them nature was at its best; there were green trees, and babbling brooks and singing birds. The deer came to their humble hut to be fed with crumbs. What more could they want? They were happy because they were contented. But if you look about you, you will find that people who have plenty are unhappy. They want more, and still more. They crave the things that they do not possess and to acquire them they do not hesitate to cheat any one—be it their friends, their neighbours, their country or even their God! Their possessions may perhaps increase but does that really make them happier? I think not. Happiness is a state of the mind—it does not depend on your wealth. That is why the king and his queen were happy even though they had given up everything.

One day as the two of them sat talking about their subjects, wondering how they were being treated, a woodcutter, tired and hungry after his day's labour came to their door. They welcomed him and invited him to share their humble meal. Even in their poverty, they had not forgotten their courtesy and hospitality to a stranger.

As they sat chatting after the meal, the stranger told them about the proclamation of Kashiraj. There

would be a reward of one thousand gold pieces for anyone who brought Koshalraj dead or alive to him. Koshalraj smiled to himself that his head, even without the crown, was still worth so much. Perhaps some day there would be an occasion to sell it!

The life of one who lives with love and compassion forever in his heart is like a rain cloud. The cloud bursts bringing joy and life to the Creation. Those who are born to be immortal, know full well that the soul is more valuable than any of their worldly possessions, and to lift the soul to the highest level, no sacrifice is too great, not even the sacrifice of one's own life. Thus it was that Koshalraj was prepared to lay down his life if the need arose. Here we see that the soul dominates the mind and the body. Most of us would think of our own safety; it is because we have not risen to the same spiritual height, it is because the body—the brute in us, dominates the soul. Each one of us has godliness within him. We need not roam from temple to temple, from shrine to shrine, in search of God. God is within us—we must recognise His Presence within us and try to be worthy of this spiritual gift.

Days passed. Koshalraj, living in the woods, cut off from his dear ones, deprived of his kingdom, wondered when the occasion would arrive for him to realize the price of his head.

At last, one day as he was carrying his bundle of fagots, a poor man approached him and asked him

his way to Koshaldesh, the kingdom of Koshalraj. Naturally the latter asked him the purpose of his journey. The poor man told him that he came from a distant kingdom and that he had to make a request to Koshalraj. Evidently he was not aware of the misfortune that had befallen the good king. "And what could you be asking of the King?" he asked. "I am a very poor man," said the other. "I am in debt. I am badly in need of money to get my daughter married. I have heard from travellers that Koshalraj is so kind and generous that he readily helps those who deserve his help. I need a hundred pieces of gold. I am confident that he will help me."

When Koshalraj heard this, he felt very sorry for the man. How heart-breaking it would be for him to be told after his long and toilsome journey that his labour was in vain, for Koshalraj was no longer in a position to help him in his distress!

Suddenly a thought flashed through his mind. He could still save this poor man, his guest would not go unrewarded. He could get the price on his head from Kashiraj. He volunteered to take the man to Kashiraj and promised to get him a thousand pieces of gold. The poor man's joy knew no bounds. He thanked his saviour and prayed to God to bless him.

Koshalraj went to his wife and told her of his decision. She was overwhelmed with emotion; grief

at parting from her husband mingled with admiration for his extreme love of mankind, his nobility and generosity. He consoled her tenderly, and they parted with tears in their eyes.

Koshalraj proceeded to the court of Kashiraj along with the man. He was taken before the king, who failed to recognise him in his tattered clothes. Bowing low to the king he said, "I am Koshalraj, for whose head you have offered a reward of a thousand pieces of gold. Cut off my head and give the promised reward to this man. He needs the money badly."

Kashiraj could hardly believe his ears. "Do you mean," he asked, "that you wish to give your head, your life, of your own free will, just so that this man can have the reward?"

"That's exactly why I have come here, bringing *the man with me.*"

The whole court was dumb-founded. Kashiraj could do nothing but stare in utter amazement. The poor man, who had just discovered who his unknown guide was, fell on his knees and sobbed that he did not want the reward at this terrible cost.

Koshalraj spoke in a gentle but clear voice, "I will die sooner or later like the rest of mankind. If by my death I can benefit someone, I do not mind dying a few years earlier."

His simplicity, his magnanimity could have moved a heart of stone. The whole court rose to its feet and burst into a thunderous applause of "Long live Koshalraj! God bless our King and Father!"

Kashiraj got down from his throne of gold and stood humbly before Koshalraj in his tattered clothes. "Forgive me," he said, "Forgive me for all my meanness, for all my cruelty to you. I was blind with jealousy, but the scales have fallen from my eyes and now I can see you for what you are. You are God's messenger to mankind. You have been sent to enlighten us, to show us the path of virtue. I can now understand why your people are so devoted to you and why I can never take your place in their hearts. It is because of your boundless love for them. Love begets love, and they love you with all their hearts. Love conquers all—even hatred and jealousy and enmity. I stand repentant before you and beg you to take back your kingdom, and let me go back to mine."

But Koshalraj would not accept this offer. He had renounced the world. He had no desire for wealth or power. However, he offered to stay, and work for the welfare of the people. To feed the hungry, to tend the sick, to console the bereaved, that would be his work till the end of his life. Kashiraj had to content himself with this. He knelt before Koshalraj and called him his *guru* and prayed to him for his blessings and guidance. A king may be great because of his

temporal power, but a *guru* is greater because he wields spiritual power. This was recognised in the Age of Bhagwan Mahavira.

Now we are drawing to the end of our discourse. I hope you have understood and enjoyed what I have been telling you. I do not wish to give a lecture on a high philosophical topic. All that I want you to realise is that the mind can rule the body and the soul can be free even in a dungeon—if—if you conquer your desires and passions. I would like you to remember this when you are freed from the jail. Perhaps you have been looking forward to that day with various emotions. It is natural that you should long to regain your liberty, to reunite with your family and friends, to turn over a new leaf. But some of you may be filled with unworthy emotions—feelings of hatred and revenge; to get out and pay back those who have been instrumental in sending you here. Do you remember what I told you earlier? It was your own unrestrained emotions, your undisciplined senses that have brought you here. Do not try to shift the blame on others. Because you were a danger to society, you were sent here, to cure yourself. There are no old scores to settle. If Koshalraj could forgive one who had done him so much harm, what right have you to harbour ill feelings towards those who had to take recourse to law to secure their safety? Or, may be, some of you feel that you are the victims of evil-doers; that, but for them, you would not be here. I tell you, leave them to their fate. They will not escape

punishment. Do not let the poison of revenge vitiate the rest of your life. Life is like a long bridge. At one end is the body with all its senses and desires and temptations. At the other end of the bridge is the beckoning light of the soul. Every man must consider himself a pilgrim, moving towards that Divine Light—the Soul. Life is but a journey from one end to the other.

Or let me put it before you in another way. If you have a very precious possession, where do you keep it? Surely, not on your doorstep! It is too precious to be kept so carelessly. You would put it in a safe place in the inner room. So, too, is your soul. It is very precious. You cannot see it. It is hidden within your inmost recesses. You cannot see your soul. But it is definitely there. Life must be spent in an attempt to catch a glimpse of this soul within you. Only those who have caught a glimpse of it are truly happy, truly blessed. They need not go from shrine to shrine, from temple to temple in search of a vision of the Lord. The Lord is right within them—only they have to search for Him.

But perhaps you will say, you have to make a living, support a family; where have you the time to look for the soul—the Lord—within you? By all means you must work, but even as you do your daily work, do it in such a way that you are always drawing nearer to your soul. How? Work with honesty, do not covet what does not belong to you,

do not be selfish or greedy. Be ready to share what you have with those who have less than you and do not be jealous of those who have more than you. Remember once again; love and compassion, friendliness and goodwill for all, will lead you along the right path in quest of the soul.

Perhaps you do not know that I have come a long way to talk to you. And, I have come on foot and will go back on foot too; an eight mile journey! But it has been a pleasure to meet you, to speak to you. I shall consider myself fully rewarded for this, if I have succeeded in making you realise that we are all prisoners, some inside the jail, some outside the jail; prisoners of our senses and desires; and that each one of us must strive hard to free himself from this bondage. May you have the strength and light to do this is my prayer for you all.

2. TRAINING THE MIND

A MAN never shows what thoughts and conflicts go on in his mind, nor does he tell them to anyone. But because he does not reveal them to others, it does not mean that thoughts or conflicts are not raging in his mind. Even a small child is full of thoughts and that is why it asks so many questions.

Many thoughts disturb our minds but we keep them hidden and think, "What if someone reads my mind? And if people read my thoughts, they will find out how much I know, or rather how little I know!" For that reason we try and hide, or cover up the thoughts that go on disturbing our minds owing to the turmoil raging within us. But a student of life, or in other words a person who is curious about the meaning of life, knows that we cannot go on hiding our thoughts for ever. They cannot remain hidden for long. In the end they burst out like a volcano and destroy everything around them. Like a volcano in eruption, our suppressed thoughts, when they gush out from the inmost recesses of our mind, practically destroy the man who stores them.

A man's downfall comes about in this way. Somehow the thoughts he is trying to suppress, come out and are revealed in all their violence, destroying the man who has hidden them so long.

So wise men who know the secrets of life, immediately remove bad thoughts that come into their

minds. If one discovers that one has appendicitis, one immediately gets this part of the intestine removed by an operation and then one is at peace. In the same way, if you get a bad thought, an impure thought, an unhappy thought or an unjust thought in your mind, there is only one remedy—CAST IT OUT! If it is not removed immediately, remember, you will suffer, none else but you.

If we are upset or ill, we find out which organ is not working and consult a specialist for that. If that specialist happens to be in Bombay or Calcutta, or even in a far away country, we try to go there and find a cure for the disease. If a remedy is necessary for the body, is it not just as necessary for the mind?

Does the body alone get ill and not the mind? Do you ever think of the sickness of the mind? Do you know that the mind can make the body ill?

But we do not search for the roots. We look for the cause outside instead of searching within us, and thus we neglect our roots and feed the leaves, branches and fruit with water, while the roots die without water. How long will this last?

Wise men have said that just as the roots of a tree require water, in the same way the roots of the mind require knowledge to grow up and thrive. Alas! we do not think of that. We sometimes forget completely that we have a mind. Only those who

have meditated deeply, those who have the understanding of life and are in search of truth, realise that we cannot do without a doctor for the mind, just as we cannot do without a doctor for the body.

We must go to those who would give us the remedy for our ailing minds, and with that medicine try and purify our minds of impurities and make them well and healthy again. But the remedy must be found from an expert.

And if the remedy is taken from such an expert, then the mind will become pure. Once the mind is pure and clean, it is like a flower in the morning, beautiful, pure and fresh. No pain or worry can touch it or can have any effect on that mind.

Sometimes it might happen that such a man is separated from his dear ones; or sometimes he is deprived of something he values highly; sometimes even insulted; or worse still, sometimes overwhelmed with unforeseen misfortunes. But even in such calamities he remains calm and cheerful; because his mind is well-balanced, and healthy.

Whether he is rich or poor, whether he has power and authority or not, he will never lose courage and fortitude when grief and trouble come to him. With the power of a disciplined and healthy mind, he will overcome everything and remain mentally healthy and calm even in adverse conditions.

But if a man's mind is not clean and pure, no matter how much he has by way of worldly possessions, he will remain worried and not try to help himself. His mind is not happy.

A worldly man looks after his physical well-being; but a wise man looks after his mind's welfare too, and pays full attention to his mind. The great Patanjali has written three types of works. For purifying speech, he created grammar; for keeping the body clean and healthy, he wrote a book on medicine. Patanjali then thought he had made speech clean grammatically and made the body strong and healthy, but side by side, if the mind was not pure, it would not help the body and speech—no matter how pure they both were. Without a healthy mind man cannot remain happy for long; so he produced his third big work on abstract devotion—the book on *Yoga*.

The first thing that the great Acharya Hemachandra mentioned in his *Yogashastra* was how to keep the mind still; how to keep it from wandering in various directions.

A person whose mind is healthy and pure, even if his body is weak or sickly, will not be mentally affected; he will think it is natural for the constitution to be a little sick sometimes but he is happy that his mind is still pure and healthy.

Look out for those who have developed a fine, muscular, healthy body; who have worldly posses-

sions and still, their minds are a prey to worry. Just as vultures hover over a dead body, so does worry hover over the mind. No matter where such a man goes, worry goes with him; he can never shake it off. Then his existence becomes pitiable.

The reason for this state of life is that he is devoid of mental vigour, freshness and cheerfulness. His life lacks a sort of firm control over the mind; he is unable to enjoy the music and harmony of the spheres. He becomes restless and is full of worries.

To pull a train, an engine is needed, and the pulling power of the engine is its steam. The steam is a thin vapour which disappears in the air if let loose. But properly stored and used, it has the power to pull thousands of tons of weight easily.

What steam is to the engine, the mind is to the body. Just as we do not let steam escape unnecessarily, or put it to a wrong use, so must we control the mind and not allow it to wander. When the mind goes wandering, ask it, "Where have you been?"

Do we ever talk to our minds like that? We talk to our friends; we talk to strangers and different types of people, but do we ever hear of people talking to their minds? No. And the reason is that since the mind is an abstract thing, we have not thought of its strength. We take care of the body for we can see it with our eyes. We control and refine our speech; but we disregard our minds completely.

As soon as we get up in the morning, we clean our teeth and eyes, and wash our bodies with soap and water. We clean ourselves scrupulously. To keep the body fit, we eat food and take exercise. Thus we take care of the body in all possible ways because it is necessary to keep it healthy and strong.

Tell me, who works behind the eyes, the ears, the mouth, the nose and the entire body? It is the mind only. If your mind is busy, and does not want to see, your eyes will not see even when they are open. Suppose you are walking on the road, and you pass by your friend—though your eyes are in the direction of your friend, yet your mind is thinking of something else; you will not be able to see your friend. Next time, when he meets you he will tell you, “Dear friend, you passed by me that day; you saw me and yet you did not speak to me.”

And you will say, “Sorry, my mind was elsewhere.”

How is this possible? Your eyes were in his direction, were they not? But there was no connection between the mind and the eyes. The eyes saw but did not convey the sight to the brain. The message that the eyes had seen the friend did not reach the mind; and when the mind does not respond, the mere act of seeing with the eyes has no meaning.

Many a time the mind goes a-wandering into a dream world all its own. Suppose you are sitting in

company, and your mind is wandering. Someone next to you says, "Heard that?" and you will say, "Sorry, my mind was not with you—it was just wandering, What did you say?" I ask again why it is so. Our ears are open, they are not covered and yet the message that should reach the mind, was not received and hearing it was of no use at all.

If your nose is free from congestion yet your mind is elsewhere, no matter how many flowers or perfumes are held before you, you will never get or enjoy their fragrance.

Similarly, suppose you have sat down to your meal at a time when your mind is preoccupied with some important law suit going on at the time, in a court of law. You go on eating the best of foods, very delicious and tasty—different tempting dishes—you are eating only mechanically; your mind is not on what you are eating, since you are only thinking of the proceedings in the law court. At that time, if somebody asks you, "Isn't there too much salt in the vegetables?" You will reply, "I do not know!" But if you were eating at some other time the same food, you would at once notice what was wanting in a particular dish.

When your mind is occupied with some other matters and, at that time even if you are eating a delicious cake or any special delicacy, you are not aware of what you are eating.

You are eating because you have to eat, but you want to run to the court to listen to its hearing. Your mind has no connection with the food, so you do not know what you have been eating.

The five senses have a connection with the mind as their central point. We keep the five senses clean, but the mind which is its most important centre is neglected. It is full of cobwebs and is dirty and stinking and rusty and yet we do not try to keep the mind clean and oil it regularly.

The result is that the five senses do not work according to their schedule. If the centre is faulty, everything goes wrong.

The mind is like a main railway junction. All trains leave from the main station—it is the junction at which all lines and inter-lines meet and depart. When such a main station is not functioning properly and needs overhauling then how do you expect the various lines and inter-lines to function well?

Wise men also ask the same thing. We bring an eye-bath for washing our eyes; we bring special tubes to clean our ears; we buy tooth paste for cleaning our teeth; we use the best of soaps for washing our bodies; but what do we use for cleaning our minds? Have we any means to cleanse the mind? We have only one way of cleaning the mind; by listening to the sermons of the wise.

And the wise must be such as would help us in expanding our knowledge, in purifying and enlightening our minds; such as would diagnose all that is bad in our minds and suggest operating upon them and removing them ruthlessly from our minds, as a surgeon would remove a dreadful cancer.

You might say, "Do not cut off this or that part of my body, it is a part of me." But he will reply, "It does not matter; it might be a part of your body, but it is damaging the whole of your system. So it must be operated upon and removed." The appendix is a part of the intestines, but when you get appendicitis, that portion of your intestines is removed by an operation. In the same way, whether corruption has entered your mind from the outside or by some harmful habit, or by contact with someone, or has set in somehow, it must be cast out ruthlessly.

That is the reason why great men have said that in order to keep the mind, the centre, clean and pure, we must associate with those who are pure in thought, word and deed.

Once a sage said to a very worldly-minded man, "You spend twenty-four hours in eating, drinking, sleeping and amusing yourself, but at least spare an hour to spend in the company of saintly persons." The man then said; "I have no time to spare. I have to attend to business meetings, conferences. I have to go here, there and everywhere and have no time

at all to spare." The sage, taking compassion on the man, thought that with such a busy life he could spare perhaps only half an hour, so he said, "All right, half an hour; should that be quite convenient?" But the man said, "No *Maharaj*, not even that much." This man seemed to ask for concessions in everything; even where religion was concerned!

The great man said, "Very well, we will reduce it to a quarter. That should suit you." But a man who is not convinced that by association with the saintly he can cleanse himself mentally, is not prepared to spare even a brief quarter of an hour from his work and his pleasure.

A great poet who believed in the cleansing power of association with the saintly, says in his verses, "Go to the saintly; only such can help you to cleanse you of your sins by purging your mind of evil thoughts."

Wherever you go, you will be offered a cup of tea or coffee; or you might be offered a cigarette. If your host is more up-to-date, you might be offered even wine. But alas, there is no one to offer you words of wisdom or spiritual knowledge!

Remember, your so-called friends or clients or merchants with whom you have dealings, are only flatterers who would be happy to see your downfall.

Who would dare to criticise you frankly? No one from the circle of flatterers will have the courage to tell you, "Sir, you are good in many ways but you are wrong in this particular matter." Because if he tells the truth, he stands to lose his livelihood. He will think, "What do I care what he does? Even if he wants to fall into a well, who cares? I am only concerned with how I earn my bread in his service or reap some benefit from my dealings with him."

Only courageous people will dare to tell you whatever disease your mind is suffering from; whether you need any operation to remove the corruption, and to warn you that if it is not operated upon in time, the disease, the corruption, will spread all through your system.

So we have to have the remedy—we have to take the medicine. Today we have so many dispensaries for bodily ailments and we spend such a great deal of money on medicines! We have so many hospitals. People give thousands and lacs of rupees to build such hospitals, but what about those who are suffering from corrupt and diseased minds?

We require clinics for the mind. There are many patients who require mental treatment rather than bodily treatment. In every house and in every institution there are mental patients—men whose minds need treatment because they are full of thoughts that undermine the strength and purity of the mind.

Some doctors are aware of this condition of the mind. They say that through the mind, the body becomes ill. Usually a headache or fever is caused by constipation, but many ailments often arise from the worried condition of the mind. Hence the importance of looking after the mind.

On this subject a pupil asks his master four questions.

The pupil has opened out his heart for he feels that there is no other way to get rid of the disease of the mind except by laying bare his mind and heart to his master. This should be the right attitude, but unfortunately it is not usually adopted. On the contrary, when we go to our *guru* or master, we are on our best behaviour. Even if we are vain or proud, we make him believe that we are very humble. If we are greedy or miserly, we make a show of generosity. Even if we are subject to uncontrollable rage and mean spitefulness, we pretend to be gentle and forgiving.

That is why we go to the saintly—who are the doctors of the mind; but instead of admitting our weaknesses, we hide them and try to show a clean exterior. But it is quite the opposite when we go to a physician—we do not hide anything; on the contrary we go to a great length to describe our ailments in detail. The result is that our speech becomes a covering for our bad thoughts, and bad habits.

When a pupil goes to his *guru*, he must frankly tell him of his thoughts, hiding nothing, otherwise the medicine that the *guru* will prescribe will not affect the pupil's mind. So the pupil bent on enlightenment asks his *guru*, "Who are the slaves in this world?" The *guru* replies, "Those who are slaves of their desires."

Who has tied you down? Your desires. Give up your desires and you are free. Love of comforts ties down a man.

A man believes that comforts are at his beck and call—he has all the means to enjoy comforts. But he forgets that these very comforts have tied him down and he cannot do without the comforts he is used to. Life seems to become impossible for him without them.

When he wants to get up in the morning and go out at six o'clock he cannot leave his bed without his cup of tea. Not even the idea of praying will draw him out of bed at an early hour. Nor can he ever get ready without his morning cup of tea. Is this not a type of slavery?

There are so many who cannot go out of their houses because their cars are not available at a particular time. It is below their dignity to sit in a railway compartment or to use a public bus. No matter how important the work might be, they

would rather sit at home if their car was out of order than go by bus or train, so strong is the car-habit with them. Of course, walking is out of the question for such people!

That which is a thing of comfort to a man is also a habit and he cannot do without it. There is not just one type of desire or habit, there are different desires and different habits. The things which you believe you cannot do without on this earth, are the very things that make you their slaves.

First a man forms a habit, then the habit forms him. Habits enslave him, though they appear to be harmless.

Has it not been said, "It is easy to free oneself from iron chains but not from the attachments of the heart." A man can break iron chains, and obtain freedom, but he is helpless before the very fine threads of his desires.

To obtain freedom from the bondage of desires should be the main aim in life for men. You might think that this aim should only apply to saints. No. It is for everyone living in society—so start now!

Try and do without many things and try and live with very few means; and find out the things you can do without and think, "Why cannot I do without this thing or that thing?" Start thinking like that and be a master instead of a slave.

Be careful, do not become a slave to your habits and desires; make them your slaves. When you get such a control, your mind has become healthy and strong and can stand on its own.

A child requires a push-cart for learning to walk; but as soon as it grows up and learns to walk on its own, it does not require the push-cart.

The same thing is true of the mind. The mind, when it becomes healthy and strong, can control itself and needs no longer the treatment of a mental doctor.

Bhagwan Mahavira taught the saints from his book of religion, *Sooyagdaang*, "Remember, do not ever become slaves to your habits or desires. The world will offer you comforts and means to acquire them, but you are on your own path of sacrifice. Desires will come your way; if you stop to gratify these desires, you are lost—there will be no slave worse than you; because the others are slaves of their own selves, but you will have to depend on others. They can afford comforts of their own, but you will have to beg comforts from them and keep them pleased, with abject servility. You will reach this stage if you become slaves to your desires."

Once you become slaves to your desires, you have become the slaves of the world. So Bhagwan Mahavira told the saints, "Even if you are offered things, you

must refuse them." That is why the saints, of their own free will, accept the hardest rules and regulations of life.

Such rules, accepted of one's own free will, give real pleasure. It makes one feel that one is beyond worldly things.

To take a cold bath on a winter morning is a joy in itself. To live without comforts and means, and to do without them one by one, also gives untold pleasure.

Can you talk with the things that give you comforts and means? Tell them, "You have made many your slaves, but you have not succeeded with me." This type of thinking will only come when one has made one's mind pure and healthy.

Owing to the good deeds done during the previous birth, we enjoy this life. But what we have received in this world is not all for enjoyment. We must learn to do without things. Be prepared to give up comforts. More effort is required in giving up than in acquiring. Great men have sung praises of those who have sacrificed everything. Here I recall an interesting story:

A king was passing by on horseback while two women were walking along the road collecting firewood. One of the women was very joyial and the other was simple and quiet.

The king who was on horseback thought to himself that he was not comfortable. So he stopped the horse and ordered his men to bring an elephant. When the elephant was brought to him, his servant said, "Your Majesty, the elephant is ready for you." So the king dismounted and sat on the elephant. After a little while the king got tired of the elephant ride and said, "I am not comfortable on the elephant, bring me a palanquin." A palanquin was brought for the king and he sat in it. Having arrived at the camp the king went straight into the tent and lay stretched on the soft carpet; and at once someone came to knead his legs, someone to massage his body.

The two women walking past the camp saw everything. They thought, "What is all this? First the king sat on a horse, then on an elephant and then in a palanquin and now he has stretched himself on the carpet—where did the tiredness come from? Why is he being massaged and kneaded?" So one of the women asked her companion the reason for all this fuss.

The other replied: "In the last incarnation this king must have slept on the road and perhaps even meditated and must have travelled all the time on his own two feet. So he is taking it out in this life and getting his legs and body massaged and kneaded."

What we have received in this life is not solely due to our skill, intelligence, ability or wisdom; but because of our past good deeds and charity.

There might be many young men who are cleverer and academically better qualified than you; and yet they might have to come to you and humbly request financial aid or your influence in order to get a scholarship to go abroad for further studies. If getting a scholarship depended only on intelligence and skill, they might have enough of both and would not need your help; but unfortunately, that is not sufficient. The acquiring of a scholarship requires not only skill and intelligence, but also, to a great extent, luck or destiny.

Do you know whither this destiny is driving you? Suppose, on the same day, at the same time and at the same second, two boys are born. One is born in a rich man's house—a millionaire's palace. The other boy is born to a very poor man sunk in heavy debt. The boy born to the poor man grows up, he works hard and is finally free from debt, clears his father's name, gathers more riches and makes a name for himself and is liked and respected by everyone in society. He has made a success of his life.

On the other hand, the boy born with a silver spoon in his mouth—the millionaire's son, grows up and spends the millions and in the end becomes a debtor, and is disliked in society. Now, how do you account for that? Look at the difference! Both boys are born at the same time, even at the very same second. How will their horoscopes be read? Do we really know how many are born at the same time in one

second? Even when the seconds are the same the paths are so different! Born at the same second, one rises from strength to strength, while the other loses everything step by step. What is the reason?

It is destiny—Destiny shaped by deeds done during the previous birth or even deeds done during this life. We enjoy the fruits of those good deeds now, during our present life. But we should be careful not to fritter away or misuse these fruits—rather we should think of moulding our destiny for the next incarnation, ever progressing in our spiritual evolution. It is easy to waste these fruits; so much more difficult to utilise them in shaping our future destiny.

A man becomes great through his improved destiny, through his life's vision; through his spirit and through his business dealings. If the mind is trained and controlled, we can live and advance towards the right path.

This training of the mind is very essential in life. The more you train your mind the more you will be able to create your destiny—but if the mind is not trained, your destiny will be ruined.

Once a king asked Kaliyug, "Where will you now go and stay?" To which he replied, "Now I will stay where wealth and riches are." When Kaliyug was asked further, "What shape will you be in?" The king was told, "I will appear in the form of Gambler."

ing, Slaughtering, Drinking and Adultery—You will see me in these four forms.”

From this story we realise that a man can be wealthy and yet not be spoilt by wealth only if he has, side by side, luck, virtue, charity, the grace of his *guru* and if he has someone to guide him along the right path. Only then is a rich man saved from these four forms which Kaliyug takes to tempt his victims; otherwise he is foredoomed.

Great strength and power are required to overcome these temptations. That is why every minute it must be hammered into our minds. And to bring this story before our minds' eye continuously, is a thorough training of the mind.

The second question was asked, “Who is free?”

The answer was, “He who is not touched by desires.”

Suppose you receive some mangoes and the very smell tempts you to eat them and you say to yourself, “No, I will not eat a single mango today.” You give them away to your servant and tell him to eat them. People watching you will be surprised at your action, and you explain to them, “Looking at the mangoes I was desirous of eating them. But I do not want to eat them today, so I gave them away.”

This giving up is called “Renunciation.” This is the way to train the mind. When you renounce a

thing and then quietly sit and think over it, you will feel a sort of satisfaction, and you will say to yourself, "At last I had the strength to give it up!"

As a man goes on renouncing worldly things, one by one, he experiences a sort of joy, a rapture. When saints are offered worldly things, they will not even look at such things and will say, "Please remove them from our sight—They are bonds and we do not want to be bondsmen."

The one who offered these worldly things to the saints will naturally ask, "Why? What is wrong? Where is the harm?"

Then the real saints will say, "The very spirit of renunciation will be defeated if we receive and make use of such things. Remove them from us!"

So the path of renunciation of desires is through giving up. The only thing that will free you from desires is renunciation, and making yourself immune to these desires.

Now the third question is asked, "Which is the gloomiest hell?"

Comes the answer, "One's self."

The world says that hell is very bad. But where is this hell? The talk of hell is heard everywhere, so the

question was raised and the *Guru* replied, "The first hell is here on this earth and the other is underneath this earth."

The first hell, that is on this earth, is in one's own body. When the worms of malice and spite are in one's body, then it is hell. But remember, hell is not there continuously. Really speaking, the body is like a heavenly chariot. To the ignorant alone this body is a source of endless pain. To the wise, it is a means of enjoying endless happiness—an instrument for attaining infinite freedom and bliss.

When spite and malice burn the body, when the fire of anger gets fiercer, when pride rises up like a mountain to obstruct the view, when attachment like a forest ever growing thicker, makes it dark all around, and when greed goes on collecting more and more, never satisfied,—then and then only the body becomes a hell!

Can greed be ever satisfied? When will the valley of greed be filled? When will the mountain of pride crumble down? When will the forest of attachment be thinned? When will the fire of anger be extinguished?

This valley of greed is so vast, so deep, that even if the whole world's wealth were thrown in to fill it up, it would never be full and there would be space for still more.

When we allow these evil passions to run riot within us, we are tempted to do base and ignoble deeds. We stoop to slandering innocent people, or plan to do harm to someone out of sheer jealousy or spite, or harbour thoughts of revenge. When these unworthy thoughts sway our mind it is a veritable image of hell.

Some of you may have had your photos taken. You pose specially for the photograph and keep your face smiling to show your friends later—but try and get the photograph of your mind!

Truly speaking you should get yourself photographed when you are full of anger and your eyes are red, your lips trembling and the inside enemy coming out in all its fierceness and ugliness—then you should have your photo taken and it will surely look like the image of a fierce demon! Whenever you see that photo, you will beware of getting into a passion—that photo would keep you in check.

Ravana was such a man. His multiheadedness signifies ungovernable passions and desires that could have easily filled ten human heads. A person who cannot govern his passions, but allows himself to be governed by them, is like a demon—like Ravana. The undisciplined mind has a demoniac mentality, the disciplined mind has a godly mentality.

Remember this, Ravana is not dead. He is sitting in our minds; nor are the Kauravas gone—they are

still alive. They demonstrate their passions through those who cannot control their passions. For such as these, hell abides in their bodies.

When you think ill of someone, wish to harm someone, or get a desire for something evil, then an evil idea is created and the body that is meant to be a chariot to heaven, turns itself into a hell.

The pupil then asked the fourth question, "Where is heaven?"

And the *Guru* answered, "Freedom from desires is heaven."

If desires are killed, heaven is near. Is it not heaven when the thirst for desires dies?

We are in heaven now, if our desires are killed. We do not have to go in search of a heaven—enjoy heaven here. Do not fear any one, do not grieve for anything, nor think bad or harmful thoughts of anyone, and you are in heaven! What else is there in heaven? Do these things, and happiness and peace are yours.

In the other heaven, the gods often fight among themselves and are even jealous of the sages of this earth. If a sage meditates too long and deep, Indra must send an Urvashi or a Menaka to interrupt his meditation and bring about his downfall. No, even the gods do not enjoy sublime bliss. We must pity

these gods for even they are not free from these unworthy passions and are jealous of each other's powers.

We do not have to search for such a heaven. Our great *gurus* teach us that heaven is on this earth, and in this life we can attain heaven and enjoy its bliss and serenity. But when? Only when the thirst for desires dies—then, and only then can we gain our heaven.

Slowly but surely the man who breaks this chain of desires comes in full possession of his senses, and this will ultimately lead to happiness. If he wishes to sleep, he has only to close his eyes and he is immediately asleep. If he wishes to wake up at a certain hour, he can manage to do that without any help. If he wishes to see his deity, he has his vision. Such a person has no desires; his heart and mind are filled with the deity. For a person, whose heart and mind are full of desires, where is the place for God? God is near us, but to feel his nearness we must break the screen of desires that hides Him from our view. Remove the screen and you can behold the Almighty in all His Glory.

So these four things are most important in life.

We must know them for what they are. Although we may know many things, if we do not understand these four things, our knowledge is worthless.

Wise men point out to us that in most matters several people may benefit by what is undertaken, but the benefit we get by training our minds will be for us and us alone. If you do not possess the security and bliss of mind, then no matter how much you possess in your house by way of beautiful and expensive articles, no matter how beautiful your youth might be, no matter what delicious things you eat, or how soft and silky your bed, in spite of all these comforts and luxuries, you will not be happy and you will not be at peace. You will be restless in your waking hours, you will be restless in your sleep.

It is, therefore, of the utmost importance to train your mind. If your mind is trained, then you will sleep peacefully even on a wooden plank or on a pavement.

Train your mind! The four questions that the pupil asked are worth remembering. Putting into practice the answers that were given by the *Guru* will enable you to acquire balance, tranquillity and supreme bliss.

A Blissful Life is the goal attained by training the mind. We all live, but is it a Blessed Living? Is it necessary to qualify the word living by adding the word blessed to it? Sages have spoken of a blissful life and sages are enlightened men who choose and weigh their words with care and precision. That is why their words are so precious. Their words can

be safely relied upon, as they are the expression of deep thinking. One word from an enlightened sage is better than a hundred discourses of fools. It is because of this great pondering over words that sometimes, a word becomes a *Mantra*—a magic formula.

When does a word become a *Mantra*? Only when the word carries the strength of thought, when it has the element of meditation in it, when it has the entire struggle of life behind it, when a deep faith lies behind it. Words like these have brought about a tremendous change in the life of an individual, a society or an entire nation. Neither money nor authority has succeeded in bringing about this revolutionary change as the inspired words of an enlightened sage. Outward force, or authority may have the result of producing only a show of change; in reality it will only breed hypocrisy and cowardice.

On the other hand, words coming straight from the heart of a sage, charged with the energy of wisdom and strength, may change the entire outlook of a man on life and may even lead to the salvation of his soul.

So, too, is the expression full of significance. When a friend sets out on some important work, we wish him success in his undertaking with all sincerity, that the fruit of his attempt may bring him happiness.

But great men ask why just some particular undertaking should be successful, why not your entire

life: A person whose life is full of happiness and success need not worry about little things. All his undertakings are bound to be successful and lead to happiness, since they are all a part of his successful life.

You will get the opportunity to make your life happy and successful only so long as you are alive. "The time to be happy is now, the place to be happy is here, the way to be happy is to make other people happy."

Men alone have this wonderful opportunity to be happy, not even the gods have this opportunity for they are sunk in self-indulgence; nor the animals, far below, for they are ignorant of happiness. Only men have this opportunity and they must make the most of it. A worldly man can never be completely happy. Unless he shakes off his worldly enjoyments he cannot march towards happiness.

Only human beings have this opportunity to strive for a happy living. But if man becomes thoughtless and proud and forgets the importance of living, then there is no existence worse than his. Man has the means either to rise to a highly spiritual level or to fall lower than a brute.

We have to endeavour not to fall back, but to attain higher and still higher levels.

He who is determined to go one step forward every day, is able to make his life happy. On the other hand, he who falls back one step, stands to lose

his life. To lose money is not a misfortune, it is not important. But once you lose the element of happiness from life, you will find it very difficult to regain it. Perhaps you may lose it forever in this life. Without it, life will lose its savour. And for that reason it is necessary that you must utilise your speech, your thoughts, all your senses to create happiness. It is our duty to channel all our resources to creating happiness all around us. It would be sinful, even criminal, to put them to a wrong use, as some have done. Take for instance Hitler. Hitler had power; he was not an ordinary man, he had knowledge, intelligence, and all the resources at his command. But he misused his power; he used his power to destroy humanity and to conquer other nations. Hitler had developed great power but to what use did he put it? What was the result? Destruction! His power destroyed other human beings and in the end it destroyed him, too!

We have to be careful that we do not use our power to harm anyone or to lead ourselves towards destruction.

Only he who has refined himself through high thinking, only he who can analyse the minutest of thought that has a bearing on his life, can be called a truly enlightened man. We must endeavour to attain this enlightenment which will open the door to Blissful Living; to living successfully, in the true sense of the word.

We do think minutely and in detail, but only to acquire more money, and how to pay less to the government by way of taxes, and how to deceive others and make a fortune; that is the way we direct our thinking.

We use our knowledge and power for acquiring worthless things. We misuse them, even abuse them. We have lost sight of the goal; we are like men who have floundered into a mire; the harder they struggle, the deeper they sink into it.

A student appeared for his matriculation examination and during the vacation went to his village in the country and stayed with his father. Now his father was in the habit of visiting a saintly man regularly. So one day he accompanied his father to see the saint. After the discourse, the son was introduced to the saint. "This is my son, he has appeared for his matriculation examination and wishes to study further."

The sage called the boy near him and asked, "How did you fare? How were the papers?" The boy answered, "*Maharaj*, I have done very well, I will surely get a first class!" The sage asked further, "What will you do next?" The boy replied, "I might go in for science. If I obtain good marks in my Intermediate Examination I will go in for M.B.B.S. or for Engineering."

"Well, after you become a doctor or an engineer what will you do?"

“Then I will go abroad for further studies and after acquiring degrees I will return home,” said the boy.

“What will you do next?” asked the Sage.

This question, “What next?” is of the utmost importance to all of us. We must make it a rule to keep on asking ourselves every now and then, “What next?” It will prevent us from floundering; it will enable us to keep our eyes fixed on the ultimate goal. But except for a very few, people do not pause to ask themselves, “What next?” They just go on existing. They get up in the morning, rush through the day and at nightfall go to sleep. They seldom know the meaning of life. If by chance someone asks them, “What next?” they will not have the patience to hear the question. If they are asked, “Why do you live?” they will get annoyed and retort, “What a foolish question!” This type of people seldom think of “what next,” and when they are asked this question, they have no time to answer it because they have not thought of the question at all. Most of them will try and evade the question.

The sage repeated the question to that student, “What will you do after you come back from overseas with degrees to your credit?” And the boy answered, “Then I will start earning.”

When students are studying for their doctorate, they have high ideals of saving humanity and of

lessening suffering. But once they have become qualified doctors and start practising, their ideals change.

If the students are learning law, at the time of learning they have ideals of doing away with corruption, but once they have graduated, their minds change; they are in search of wealthy clients.

The reason behind acquiring degrees is money. How can we reconcile the greed for acquiring more and more wealth with the high ideals of service to humanity?

No one is willing to present himself as he really is, to society. The presentation is different from reality. We hide our ambitions, our emotions. Here lies the friction between the outer self and the inner self—an unequal path of life.

The student, too, gave a typical reply to the sage's question, "After acquiring degrees I will start earning like others."

The sage said, "All right, you will earn money, but have you set any limit to your earnings? What will be the maximum amount you will be satisfied with?"

This is another important question. What is the maximum amount for a man to earn to be satisfied with? A person who goes to a big city from his village to earn his living, has, in the beginning, a set

idea to save, say about twenty thousand or fifty thousand rupees, or even a lac of rupees. But he is not satisfied when he reaches this figure and stays on to earn and save still more. And after a crore, he starts looking down upon even the richer class of people in his own country and aspires to class himself with the Fords and the Rockefellers of the world.

The ambition to amass a fortune has taken hold of many minds. What can one get in charity from such people? Charity is practised only by a man who is contented with his life's earnings, but a person who is always hankering after money, can never bring himself to part with his money for the sake of others. If such a person does give some money in charity, he does it with the ulterior motive of receiving more, or getting publicity.

The thirst for money has become such an obsession that you will hardly see a man who comes to a city like Bombay for earning about two to five lacs of rupees, having earned that amount returning to his village contented, to lead a peaceful life.

In cities men get into all sorts of trouble; they die of accidents, suffer from different types of diseases, get seriously involved in difficulties and become unhappy; but they never think of leaving the cities. They may, of course, complain of their peace being disturbed by the ringing of telephones even at night. I feel like telling them, "Who is keeping you in this

bondage? Leave the city and you are a free man.” But they refuse to be free of the cities; they merely complain, but will not take any steps towards becoming free.

Our lives have become riddles. Most people have no thought of contemplation of life. As long as we do not think deeply on life, we will never know the meaning of life. Education has advanced considerably and our knowledge has gained expansion, but not depth. There is a vast difference between expansion and depth. Expansion is on the surface, whereas depth goes right into the heart of the matter.

Because of this condition, we have come to such a stage that we do not think of a question deeply, seriously or calmly, and never try to solve that question as it should be solved.

Sometimes the least educated have solved the most puzzling of questions with their simple faith in the law of *Karma*. In this connection I would like to tell you the story of an old man of seventy who is barely literate. His son who is a matriculate feels proud of his education and feels himself superior to his father. This man has a son who is a graduate and feels himself still superior. In this way, each generation feels itself superior to the previous one, because of the higher education it has received. This overemphasis on academic education has led us to discount men of real wisdom, of sterling virtues; men who have

acquired mental balance and strength of character through plain living and high thinking, though they have not had the benefits of a so-called education. But to come back to our story; it so happened that owing to heavy rains, the house and cattle of this family were washed away, and they were left destitute. The young man with his B.A. degree was indignant at this injustice of God; his matriculate father was puzzled and helpless, but in this moment of distress and calamity, the old man, the man who had the least education said simply, "Perhaps I might have deprived someone of his belongings in my previous life, so in this life I am deprived of mine. Let us submit to this misfortune without complaining and start all over again. Perhaps now that I have paid for the misdeeds of my past life, our efforts will succeed and we will be spared further distress." What faith and hope and courage! Only these can lead to a Blissful Living.

A Blissful Living is the aim of life for all of us—only we seek to attain this goal in different ways according to our nature, upbringing or education. I have endeavoured to point out to you the correct way of attaining this goal. It is by Training Your Mind. Train your mind by controlling your senses and emotions, by controlling your thoughts and words and deeds, and you will be setting out in the right direction for your goal. May your quest for a Blissful Living be rewarded according to the earnestness of your efforts is my sincere blessing to you all.

3. ON VEGETARIANISM

WE are all familiar with the purpose of this conference. Vegetarianism is not a new idea, certainly not to us in this country; but it will be most enlightening and stimulating for us to hear about it, in particular from our friends from abroad. The purpose of this conference will be fulfilled if at the end of it even a handful of men and women decide to become vegetarians.

“Why should I become a vegetarian?”—that is a question I have often been asked, and I’m sure some of you might have been asked that, too. Well, let us try and answer that question.

Food is for the sustenance of life. Our diet should be such that the body remains clean, the senses retain their ability to perceive what is aesthetic, the mind is at peace and the soul is not hindered in its pursuit of the sublime. Hence he who wishes to attain spiritual sublimity must take food which is pure and untainted with blood. It is the food we take that sustains the body and it is the body that houses the mind and the mind which gives birth to our thoughts. If the body is sustained by meat and other food which are the product of violence and bloodshed, how can you expect your mind to generate thoughts which are pure and noble? Besides, a vegetarian diet keeps the body clean, for it is easy to digest and is at the same time nutritive. Is it surprising then, that doctors

recommend their patients to eat fruit rather than meat? It is a false notion that a vegetarian diet is not as strengthening as a nonvegetarian one. After all, a child grows up on milk; and witness the elephant, the strongest of animals who is a strict vegetarian.

Economically, too, a vegetarian diet is cheaper. This is of particular relevance to poor countries like our own. A man with a limited income—and we all know how many such there are in India—would find it much easier to support himself and his family on a vegetarian diet.

Talking of our country,—is it fitting, I ask you, that a country like ours which sends out its messengers of peace all over the world, should also export such things as frogs' legs, deer and monkeys and other animals, either for food or for experiments? Is it not a glaring incongruity? I would appeal to our youth and to our leaders to think over this.

There are some champions of nonvegetarianism who claim that if all human beings were to become vegetarians, there would be an acute shortage of food supply. But do they really believe that the change will take place overnight? It will be slow and gradual, spread over several decades, and meanwhile would it not be possible to bring under the plough the millions of acres of land which are untilled all over the world? Today, countries like the United States throw away thousands of tons of wheat because they do not have

facilities to store it! Surely this surplus could be utilised.

From these economic and practical considerations, let us turn again to ourselves and our spiritual and aesthetic needs. Our senses too, show a natural inclination towards fruit and vegetables. Put, on the one hand, a bowl of apples, oranges, grapes and other fruit; and on the other, lumps of raw meat; and what do we find? Our sense of sight, sense of touch, sense of smell, will show a marked preference for the first, which shows how much more satisfying it is aesthetically.

A man's character, his behaviour, his emotions, are all moulded by his diet. A man who lives on a nonvegetarian diet imbibes fierceness and a rather hot temper. He will not enjoy that calm and peace of mind which he would, if he were to live on a vegetarian diet. His sensitivity becomes dull and blunted, he gradually becomes more unfeeling and heartless. An even temperament, a tender and compassionate heart and a pure and guiltless mind—without these how can one attain one's spiritual salvation? And how can these qualities be acquired by one who indulges in cruelty and violence in the very food he eats? Indeed, he who has the purity of his soul at heart, must abjure such a diet at the very outset!

Of course, this does not mean that all those who eat a nonvegetarian diet are cruel and all those who

live on a vegetarian diet are kind and compassionate; but sociology and other sciences show that those races which are non-vegetarian in their diet have been more war-like and more inclined towards violence.

Man is Nature's eldest son. Is it not the duty of the eldest child to protect his younger brothers? Man is forever civilising himself and improving upon Nature, and so, even if he finds animals killing each other in Nature, it is his duty to prevent it as far as possible, or at least, not add to it.

I would like to relate to you an incident in the life of that fascinating philosopher, Bernard Shaw. Some friends and admirers gave a banquet in his honour, but Shaw refused to eat and when he was questioned he pointed to all the meat dishes and said, "I am a human being, and not a graveyard for dead animals."

One visit to the slaughter-house, where these innocent souls are massacred, would be enough to give an idea of the cruelty inflicted upon them. Their looks of fear and the dumb appeal in their eyes as they are dragged away from their dear ones, are enough to melt a heart of stone. And who says animals do not have feelings towards one another? I am reminded of a certain incident related to me by my friend, Mr. Brown, an American writer. One day, he saw two mice walking along in a strange fashion. They were holding a straw at each end in their mouths and walking side by side, but with one of them a

few inches ahead of the other. Unthinkingly and mechanically, Mr. Brown picked up a stone and threw it at them. The voice of "civilisation," our so-called civilisation, told him that this was the right thing to do—if you see a mouse or a snake or any other creature which may be going its own way without doing any harm, you hit it with a stick or a stone! Well, the stone hit one of the mice, the one which was in front and it killed him. But, strange to say, the other mouse did not run away; it began running around in circles, confused, bewildered. Intrigued by its behaviour, Mr. Brown picked it up and found to his amazement that it was blind! And then, with a gasp he realised the meaning of the piece of straw which each of them had held. The mouse he had killed had been on a mission of mercy; it had been leading its blind brother. This incident proved to be a turning point in Mr. Brown's life. It led him to reflect on the laws of Nature and his cruel deed by which he had violated these laws, and he decided there and then to become a vegetarian.

Even in the world of material things there is a law which lays down that if you take money from somebody, sooner or later you must return it to him. Then if we fill our stomachs at the cost of the lives of other creatures, will we not have to pay? Indeed, a man would have to be reborn several times to wipe off such a heinous crime.

Every morning when you open your newspaper your eyes are greeted with news of some bloody

revolution or outburst of violence or a threat of war. As long as there is this streak of cruelty and violence in man, so long will the world be troubled by wars and revolutions. And how can man stop being violent towards his fellow-men if he does not first learn to be kind and compassionate towards his dumb fellow-creatures?

The path which leads from barbarism and savagery to civilisation and culture, is the path of nonviolence, of tenderness, of compassion.

Human beings ask for mercy of their Creator; but the man who has lived mercilessly on the flesh of animals all through his life, with what face can such a man ask for mercy from God? May I suggest that we all keep in our minds these famous lines of the immortal Coleridge:

“He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.”

And now I shall bless this convention with a prayer of Bhagwan Mahavira, a prayer which speaks with the voice of nonviolence:

Let there be happiness for all,
Let all be spiritually prosperous;
Let all perceive only that which is good,
Let there be no pain and suffering in life.

4. ESSENCE AND SPIRIT OF JAINISM

It is customary with us to commence our day and work with a brief prayer and I will do so now.

मैत्रीप्रमोदकारुण्यमाध्यस्थ्यानि ।

सत्त्वगुणाधिकक्लियमानाविनयेषु ॥

The prayer just recited is a prayer offered by the Jains. I have prayed that our conduct in life be guided by four principles—*Maitri*, i.e. Amity, *Pramoda*, i.e. Appreciation, *Karunya*, i.e. Compassion and *Madhyasthya*, i.e. Equanimity. Amity, Appreciation, Compassion and Equanimity.

I shall endeavour to explain these at a later stage in my discourse.

Today, man lives in a world which is full of strife and frustration. Commercial values keep gaining prominence. Men seem to be full of greed, envy and pride. Not only do we try to keep up with the Joneses but we try to reach out for their throats. There is a sense of isolation within human beings and hate-inspiring ideologies keep gaining more ground. Our different faiths have a common aim—to make us realise the essential brotherhood of man. In practice they make us more aware of the divisions among us.

Why have we all met here today from the four corners of the earth? Not to argue dogmatically over differences but to break the barriers of racialism and sectarianism—to learn something from one another, to see the same object from one another's point of view so that we can understand one another the better and help one another the better in solving our problems. The goal for each of us is the same, though the approach may be different. Argument will not take us any nearer the goal. I am here reminded of an incident which will bear out my point.

At an eye clinic where many patients were waiting for treatment, there were four who were blind. One of them inadvertently touched a window pane and importantly announced to the others, "This is a window pane—it is red, my son told me so."

Another cut him short, with the assertion that it was 'green' and cited with equal emphasis the authority of a brother. The other two contradicted them, each with a different colour and different authority, but with the same querulousness and the same conviction. The storm in the tea cup was quelled by another patient who explained to them that the panes were multi-coloured, much to the amusement of everybody.

A trivial quarrel, no doubt, and perhaps a trivial incident to be related here. But I ask you, have not men of different religions argued with the same

triviality, the same intolerance and the same vehemence, over the centuries? Each has the conviction that what he was told by someone who could see clearly must be true. One cannot blame him for his absolute faith in his mentor, but surely there was room for others to be true? And what is the result of this dogmatism? Chaos and conflict, discord and disillusion. You will all share my feelings when I say with the poet:

*And much it grieves my heart to think
What man has made of man.*

Jainism is not a sect or just one more conflicting ideology—it is a way of thinking and living.

The greatness of Jain philosophy lies in the fact that its teachings assure “the greatest happiness of the greatest number,” not only of men, but of all living beings, under all circumstances.

Its philosophy is not essentially founded on any particular writing or external revelation, but on the unfoldment of spiritual consciousness, which is the birthright of every soul. Mere words cannot give full expression to the truths of Jainism which must be felt and realised within.

The Jains are the advocates of the development theory, hence their ideal is the development of man in all aspects—physical, mental and spiritual. Through knowledge and endeavour the individual develops and unfolds the potential within him.

The word Jain is derived from the generic term "Jina." A person who conquers his lower nature, i.e. passion, hatred and the like and brings into prominence the highest, and achieves the state of the supreme being is called a Jina. There have been several Jinās and there can be many more in the future. A Jina who is a guiding force to his followers, reviews principles of religion and regenerates the community, is called a "Tirthankara".

Adinath who dates back to the beginning of the world was the first Tirthankara and founder of Jain religion according to Jain philosophy. Today in the twentieth century we live in the era of Bhagwan Mahavira, the twenty-fourth and the last Tirthankara. Bhagwan Mahavira was born in 598 B.C. in modern Bihar, lived upto the age of seventy-two years and attained *Moksha*, i.e. salvation, in 526 B.C. He revived the Jain philosophy about 2500 years ago. Since that time Bhagwan Mahavira has been the spiritual guide of the Jains.

Even now about four million Jains of India practise the preachings of Bhagwan Mahavira and it is the duty of their mentors to guide them in practising it in its spirit in this rapidly changing world. "What then, is the essence, the spirit of Jainism?"—you may ask.

Jainism, viewed as a whole, rests on the four pillars which are *Ahimsa*, i.e. Nonviolence,

Anekantwad, i.e. Theory of Relativity, *Aparigraha*, i.e. Nonacquisition and *Karma*, i.e. Deeds or Action.

Nonviolence, Theory of Relativity, Nonacquisition and Deeds or Action.

Ahimsa

Bhagwan Mahavira has said

सर्वे जीवा वि इच्छन्ति जीविउं न मरिज्जिउं

The instinct of self-preservation is universal. Every animate being clings to life and fears death.

The universe is not for man alone, it is a field of evolution for all living beings. Live and let live is the motto of Jainism. Life is sacred, not only irrespective of caste, colour, creed or nationality, but it is sacred to all living beings—at all levels—right down to the tiny ant or the humble worm.

There is not an inch of space in the Universe where there are not innumerable, minute living beings. The entire Universe is full of living beings.

A man cannot even sit quietly and breathe without killing and harming life around him.

Then the question will arise—How can a man live in this world without taking life and thereby committing violence? Life at this rate will become impossible.

An answer is given in the *Dasavaikalika Sutra* as follows:

जयं चरे जयं चिदृष्टे

“Carry out all your activities but with great care.” It demands constant vigilance. Where an action is performed with due care not to hurt anyone, no violence is committed. The emphasis has been laid on the word “Care.”

As long as man lives as a member of society, besides what he owes to himself for his spiritual betterment, he also owes a great deal to the society in which he has to live.

Man, in his desire to continue his life, so that he may do the highest good while living here, is obliged to destroy life; but the fewer and the lower forms of life he destroys, the less harmful *karmas* or deeds he generates. This leads to strict vegetarianism.

The doctrine of *Ahimsa* is not merely a matter of profession, but of constant, scrupulous practice to every Jain.

The practice of *Ahimsa* is both an individual and a collective virtue. The principle of *Ahimsa* has great potential significance, because it is basic in concept and universal in its moral principles.

Ahimsa, though a negative term, is full of positive

meaning, from an act of simple kindness to a comprehensive outlook of universal fraternity.

A great Jain scholar of the 10th century, Acharya Hemachandra, said in the *Yogashastra*:

आत्मवत् सर्वभूतेषु सुखदुःखे प्रियाप्रिये ।
चित्तयन्त्रात्मनोऽनिष्टां हिंसामन्यस्य नाचरेत् ॥

“In happiness or suffering, in joy or grief, we should regard all creatures as we regard our own self. We should, therefore, refrain from inflicting upon others such injury as would appear undesirable to us, if inflicted upon ourselves.”

Ahimsa, i.e. Nonviolence in Jainism is not only physical nonviolence but it is nonviolence also of speech and thought.

One can harm others by harsh speech or even by uncharitable thoughts and therefore this is also violence and has to be abjured.

The practice of nonviolence does not merely stop at the devotee's himself following the principles of nonviolence but it goes further in as much as, no violence shall be commissioned or consented to, by an honest devotee of nonviolence.

Having explained the principle of nonviolence we now turn to *Anekantwad*, i.e. Theory of Relativity.

Gunratna Suri, the commentator of a Jain work on "Comparative Philosophy" says:

"Although the various schools of philosophy, through sectarian bigotry, differ from and contradict one another, still there are certain aspects of truth in them which would harmonize if they were joined into an organic whole."

The age-old saying of a coin having two sides is well known to this congregation. Jainism, however, makes this as one of its basic principles. It requires that any object, situation or controversy should be looked at from all aspects.

If an individual, a community or a nation, allows its vision to be narrowed by turning a deaf ear to the opinions of others, it is definitely heading for self-destruction.

Jainism promises to reconcile all the conflicting schools, not by inducing any of them necessarily to abandon their favourite standpoints but by proving to them that the standpoints of all others are tenable. They may be representative of some aspect of truth which can, with some modification, be represented. The Integrity of Truth consists in this very variety of all its aspects.

This philosophy makes the Jain, catholic in his outlook and ever ready to understand the nature of other systems of theology.

This brings us to the third pillar of Jainism—*Aparigraha*—Nonacquisition.

Has it not been said, “It is easy to free oneself from iron chains but not from the attachments of the heart?”

What are these “attachments of the heart?” Things that you desire so much that you spend all your energy in acquiring them and when you have acquired them, you get so attached to them that their loss would render your life most unhappy. The principle of nonacquisition teaches us not to give too much importance to acquiring worldly things—a house, a car, all kinds of comfort, and not to value them so much that their loss would mean the end of the world for us. Every man needs things to make life comfortable. Jainism does not enjoin a layman to renounce everything—that is only for the *Sadhu*, the ascetic. But Jainism does enjoin that even a layman should set a certain limit to his desires—his wants—so that he does not keep on acquiring and accumulating and in the process denying others of their needs.

The ideal is to cut his requirements to the bare minimum.

This nonacquisition or nonpossession should extend even to attachments to human beings—to our dear ones. It would be unnatural for a parent not to

love the child, but there should be no possessiveness about this love. It is this possessiveness that is called attachment, and one should try not to be bound by it.

How strange is the mind of man! It does not appreciate what it has and hankers after what it has not. Neglecting the light of the soul that burns within it, how long will it grope in the darkness of the world without chasing shadows that ever elude him?

Let me cite here how a *Muni* was given a practical lesson in this matter of what pangs possession leads to, by a number of stray dogs. The *Muni*, engrossed in his philosophical thoughts of acquisition and renunciation, was passing through a street. He was suddenly disturbed by the savage barking of dogs.

He saw that a dozen dogs were chasing one dog who was running away with a bone in his mouth. Soon they caught up with him and mauled him. Bleeding from the wounds, the dog dropped the bone and was left in peace. No sooner had he dropped the bone than another picked it up, and he, too, met with the same fate; and so the chase for the bone and the consequent punishment went on.

Contemplating on this ugly incident, the *Muni* realised the truth. So long as the dog clung to the bone, he had to bleed for it; the moment he gave it up he was left in peace.

“Did not man bleed mentally and spiritually to gratify his lust for acquisition and would he not attain serenity if he renounced it?” thought the *Muni*.

It is only human to desire, but the noblest desire for man should be to attain a state of “Desirelessness” —when he can accept things as they come to him, and can look on indifferently when they leave him.

This ancient principle of limited possession is extremely significant and valuable in the context of the economic conditions prevailing in the world today. The object is to secure equitable distribution and economic stability for society. A social order based upon this principle of limited possession will certainly prevent unnecessary accumulation of wealth and its inseparable counterpart, poverty and wretchedness. It will lay the foundation of a welfare society —a modern term.

The principle of *Aparigraha* can guide every individual, society or nation in its positive efforts to enhance the happiness of mankind in general.

After having dealt with Nonviolence, Theory of Relativity, Nonacquisition, we now come to the last pillar on which Jainism rests.

“The Law of Karma” i.e. Deeds or Action

DESTINY is shaped by deeds done during the previous birth as well as deeds done during this life. We

enjoy the fruits of those good deeds now, during our present life. But we should be careful not to fritter away or misuse these fruits—rather we should think of moulding our destiny for the next incarnation, ever progressing in our spiritual evolution. It is easy to waste these fruits; so much more difficult to utilise them in shaping our future destiny.

Jainism explains joy and sorrow, prosperity and adversity, and differentiation in physical, mental and spiritual abilities through the theory of *karma*. It explains the problem of inequality and apparent injustice of the world.

Karma denotes that substance which we continually absorb as the result of our bodily and mental activity. We produce *karma* through all our daily activities. Different kinds of activity produce different kinds of *karma* which may ripen either immediately or after some time, or even in one or another of our subsequent existences.

And yet, Jain philosophy does not view the soul as hopelessly condemned to act and react upon the consequences of its earlier deeds, as if it were like an automatic machine, and to be beyond all responsibility for its moral attitude and action. On the contrary, it clearly states that the individual is gifted with a certain amount of freedom of will. It emphatically declares that the soul is invested with the freedom to exercise its own resolution.

Acting under its own free will, it can break the heaviest fetters of this *Karma*. It implies, that to a considerable extent, by positive application of one's own free will, the soul is indeed the lord of its own fate.

Good deeds that spring from love, compassion, charity, hospitality and selfless service secure the basis of happiness, whereas bad or undesirable deeds will sow the seeds of future sorrow.

Life existed before this birth and will continue to do so after death. It is here, on this shore, and will be there, on the opposite shore, too. In between is the flow of birth and death. Because of *karma* and attachments the soul has to revolve in the cycle of birth and death.

Bhagwan Mahavira while explaining the true nature of the soul said:

“The nature of the soul is like that of a hollow gourd, i.e. it keeps afloat. But when this hollow gourd is given several coats of clay, then, even though its inherent capacity is to keep afloat, it will sink.

Similarly, a soul coated with violence, falsehood, dishonesty, intemperance, anger, pride, hypocrisy and greed becomes heavy; despite its original virtue to keep afloat, it sinks to the bottom.

But when the layers on the gourd peel off one after another, it will gradually recover its natural tendency to keep afloat. So, too the soul. Were it to get rid of the eight vices by acquiring eight corresponding virtues—nonviolence, truth, honesty, temperance, forgiveness, modesty, sincerity and generosity, it could unburden itself and regain its natural virtues of lightness and volatility.”

Having explained the four pillars of Jain philosophy I shall now get back to the prayer in which I have asked our conduct to be guided by Amity, Appreciation, Compassion and Equanimity.

By Amity we mean attainment of a mentality which would want to be friendly with and bear goodwill towards one and all.

Just as the dry bed of a lake is criss-crossed with a myriad cracks because it is devoid of fresh water, similarly a religion that is not sweetened with the milk of human kindness is soon weakened by the cracks of internal dissensions.

Mere austerity may shrivel up a man's nature. Even as he does penance and practises renunciation, his heart must be full of love.

What supports this wide world? Surely not the much-trumpeted deeds of the blustering heroes but the silent sacrifice of the humble servers of humanity

—little deeds of amity as the one you will hear about presently.

A young Brahmin trudging along the way was startled by a scream of terror. A Harijan girl—an outcaste—was bitten by a cobra. Failing to get anything to check the venom from spreading through the blood stream, he snapped the holy thread with his penknife, tied it tightly round the foot and saved her life.

A cry of sacrilege was raised by the orthodox. Could anything be more sacrilegious than the holy thread being tied around the foot of an untouchable?

The answer given by the youth was very brief, but to the point. What could be more humane than the saving of a human life with a holy thread?

A humanitarian approach to life is holier than the mere wearing of a holy thread. Religion has to be practical and not theoretical. It should pulsate with life.

The aim of religion is to establish peace and harmony both at home and in society. Love and tolerance alone can promote concord at home and elsewhere.

The spirit of Amity, if understood well, can bridge the gulf between one religion and another as between one nation and another.

Appreciation and Compassion are in a way two other aspects of Amity.

Appreciation: In this world we come across those who are better than we are in many different ways. Too often do we see the sad spectacle of men filled with envy for those who are more fortunate than themselves. Our prayer teaches us that we should learn to appreciate those who are better, admire them if they are worthier than we are, whether they are of the same religion, race or country or not. If this is practised, much of the envy and jealousy we find in this world would be removed.

Compassion: Compassion should govern our attitude towards those who are less fortunate than we are. It should extend to the erring and even to the criminal.

After all, when Jainism believes that living beings often suffer because of their past misdeeds, does it not behove a true Jain to extend compassion rather than criticism to one who pays for his misdeeds of the past?

Equanimity is more of an introspective virtue. It governs our attitude towards ourselves, irrespective of the world around us. We achieve a certain balance of mind that remains unruffled in spite of the vicissitudes of life. Whether the world treats us well or ill, whether we reap a reward for our good deeds or not, whether the pathless wanderers pay heed or

not to the path we try to show them, we should maintain a serenity of the mind that is bound to bring contentment in its wake.

When a tiny pebble is dropped into the still waters of a pool, soon it is filled with ripples. It is in the very nature of water to break into ripples. But when the pool is frozen, even if you drop a handful of pebbles in it, there is hardly any disturbance in its smooth, hard surface.

The mind reacts to circumstances by breaking into ripples of disturbance—one would say it is but natural. Perhaps; but is it inevitable? When the mind is trained to resist stoically all outward disturbances, it will acquire a calm that nothing can ruffle.

I hope I have succeeded in making it clear that these four principles, put in action, guarantee the highest degree of happiness and peace, within the whole brotherhood of all living beings. I wish they would be universally adopted and followed for the benefit of all living beings.

This, then, is the basis of Jain philosophy in a nutshell.

It is a philosophy which can be practised by a follower of any religion.

It is indeed very difficult to distil the elusive essence of religion so as to use it in your daily life,

but he alone is truly religious who carries out the precepts of his religion in all his dealings with the world.

We have spoken at some length trying to explain to each other, the fundamental principles of our religions and how the essential elements in all are very similar.

Coming to the problems that face us, they, too, are essentially the same—the menace of destructive weapons of war—the malaise of racialism—the problem of economic imbalance—the unrest among our youth.

After having discussed *Ahimsa*—nonviolence—what is left for me to add about missiles or bombs? If the killing of a worm is an act of cruelty to a Jain, it would be superfluous to talk about the atrocity of wiping out the human race! So, too, we have already covered the ground for the malaise of racialism. If we recognise the fact that the soul is the same, whatever outward form it may be given, where, then is the reason for racial prejudices? In *Aparigraha*—Nonacquisition—lies the solution for the unequal distribution of wealth. There need not be any 'ism' about it. Jainism is not like any of the modern 'isms.' Bhagwan Mahavira gave us the antidote to unequal distribution of wealth in His Doctrine of *Aparigraha*—Nonacquisition, 2500 years ago.

The last problem—Youth Unrest—calls for a more detailed analysis. I will endeavour to show how we may deal with it.

What is the Relevance of Religion to Modern Youth?

Is not modern youth justified in demanding why so many crimes have been committed in the name of Religion? He has read in his history books, lurid accounts of persecution and atrocities by religious fanatics in all parts of the world. He is fully conscious that it is might, and not right, that rules the world. He sees the truthful and the just belaboured by the selfish and the unscrupulous and no gods rush down to their rescue in their heavenly chariots as one is told in legends. How can he then believe that "God is in His heaven—all's right with the world?" He sees for himself that all's wrong with the world and he doubts whether there is a God in heaven or anywhere, and if He exists, whether He is as Omnipotent as they make Him out to be.

Jain philosophy, with its theory of *karma* can explain to him that sufferings—of an individual or a nation or a race—are the result of misdeeds of the past, that there is a casual relationship between the woes of this life and the evil done during an earlier incarnation, and so he cannot maintain that there is no justice in the world. As for religious persecutions that fill him with revulsion, the tolerance and broad-

mindedness that Jain philosophy emphasises, might persuade him to modify his outlook on religion. Amity and Appreciation would not be incomprehensible to him, for youth is not wicked. He has turned a sceptic, a cynic, even an atheist, but he is not wicked. If approached with sympathy and understanding, he will respond to the treatment we give him. Think of the stress and strain of modern life. The speed, the noise, the hectic bustle of today has robbed the young man of the opportunity to move in life with measured strides. The machine has taken the place of hands. The bubbling, creative energy of youth was formerly channelised into constructive crafts, be it spinning, weaving, pottery, metal-work, wood-work, carving—today, that energy is turned into destructive channels.

In what way can religion help to divert this flow of energy once again into constructive channels? The simplifying of religion may do it. Stripped of rituals, prejudices, superstitions, even separated from the noble but complicated philosophy that is the bed-rock of religion—the simple essence of religion—Friendliness, Sympathy, Tolerance, Justice—these youth will understand, and will not reject summarily as “humbug” or “hocus-pocus,” or “beyond my little head.”

If homes and teaching institutions would sow the seeds of religion as suggested here, emphasising particularly the oneness of all religions, we may be

reasonably optimistic that this early initiation to religion will bear fruit in good time.

The aim of all religions and philosophies is to seek the freedom of man from the bonds of ignorance and blind faith, from the meshes of prejudices and superstitions and rituals. Religion means freedom. Only when man rids himself of his mundane bonds he frees himself from the bonds of *karma*. Just as gold attains its pristine purity only when the dross is separated from it, so, too, the soul, only after it has shed all Desires and *karma*, will attain a state of blissful tranquillity and immortality.

