

Preface

The lifestyle of Brahmanishtha Param Pujya Swami Sri Lilashahji Maharaj was out and out so simple and straightforward that nobody could ever guess that there was a supremely accomplished great Saint behind that unsophisticated white garb, ever engaged in benevolent acts of public welfare. And it was under the benign tutelage of this very Saint tht Brahmanishtha Param Pujya Sant Sri Asaramji Bapu has grown up from a naïve seed into an imposing Banyan tree to look after and promote such endeavours of mass-welfare in an ever-increasing scale and value.

Today numerous aspirants of salvation are attaining Self-elevation under the pious guidance of this holy Saint. Sublime waves of devotional love and Self Bliss begin to ripple in the hearts of those devotees & aspirants who avail themselves of the holy darshan, ambrosial Satsang or enlightening literature of this benign personage.

We feel highly blessed to have been inspired by this great Saint to bring out this extremely substantial spark of Spiritual Knowledge.

**Shri Yoga Vedanta Seva Samiti
Amdavad Ashram**

Lessons to the Mind

“Manah ave manusyanam karanam bandhmokshayo”

The mind is the reason behind a person’s bondage or salvation. Pious and benevolent resolves and actions purify the mind, removal all its faults and such a pious and faultless mind leads one to final salvation. And the same mind, when it becomes impure by its impious resolves and sinful acts, promotes insentience and binds one to the bondage of this world. It has rightly been said in the Ramayana.

**“Nirmal man jan so mohi pava
mohi kapat chhal chhidra na bhava”**

‘Only the virtuous-minded ones attain Me. Anyone indulging in fraudulent acts and deception can never win my favour.’

Take Your Mind to Task Everyday:

Therefore, my dear Atman! If you desire to attain your supreme good then you must constantly counsel your mind and convince it, “O restless mind! Now be quiet and steady. Why do you disturb me by wandering all the time? Has anybody every attained true happiness in the external world? Whoever has experienced true happiness, has done so within his own Self. Even King Bharthrihari, who ruled over all of India and possessed an abundance of luxuries and riches, was unable to attain happiness in the external world. And you desire external pleasures? Why don’t you take recourse to discrimination like King Bharthrihari and Prince Uddalak and return to the Bliss-personified Self?”

Prince Uddalak’s discrimination had awakened in his early youth and he would often retreat to the mountain caves where he would counsel his mind, “O mind! Why do you make me wander? You are enamoured with perfumes, with taste and with some music at different times.

“O foolish mind! You have ruined me. You gave me transitory happiness and robbed me of my Self Bliss. You have made me hanker after sense pleasures and thus impaired my energy, intellect, luster, health, longevity and zeal.”

Prince Uddalak continued, “O mind! Time and again you run after sense pleasures and worldly relations, seeking company of the wife, children, friends etc., but why doesn’t the simple fact dawn on you that they are all short-lived? You have been forced to abandon them in all of your previous lives and will have to abandon them in this life as well. Then why do you still think about them? You are such a fool. Why don’t you immerse yourself in the meditation of your True Self, who is always with you, who is never distant from you, and who is Bliss Supreme? You have already wasted so much time and precious life. Be quiet at least now! Let me earn some spiritual wealth! Until now I did your bidding, and in your association made wretched resolves, fell into bad company and indulged in sinful acts. Now be kind enough to abandon your old habits and delve within.”

Like Uddalak, one should take the mind to task, not just once, but everyday. The mind is so deceptive. Never trust it. Keep a constant watch to see whether the mind is following your commands. Keep an attentive vigil on its activities at all times. The stick of insightful discrimination must always be ready in your hand to discipline the mind. Punish the mind for its every act of transgression against established principles and time tested social norms. Don’t give it food and make it

observe a fast. Only then will it realize that it is under the command of a tough administrator and any misstep will bring a severe punishment.

Never Allow a Free Time to the Mind:

The mind is an incredible treasure house of tremendous powers. It is such a fast horse as can easily and quickly gallop towards its goal if properly reined. And without a bridle, it is most likely to go berserk and throw you into a pile of thorny bushes. Always keep a tight vigil on the mind. Do not give it free time at all; otherwise it will fall into evil ways. As the saying goes, "An idle mind is the devil's workshop." Therefore always keep the mind engaged in some worthwhile pursuit, something that requires the application of the mind. Ruminates on the Self, study the scriptures, attend Satsang, engage yourself in kirtan or jap of the Lord's name, do an anusthana and meditate on the Supreme Lord. You may even go for a walk or do exercises in the open air. In a nutshell, always keep the mind busy in useful endeavours. Never allow it to run free. And when it strays, as it frequently will, prod it and rein it back. Just as a large animal like elephant can be controlled with a goad; the mind will also come under your complete control with constant prodding.

Constantly Remind the Mind of the Pains & Sorrows in Life:

Life is replete with pains and sorrows right from birth till death. First, there is the misery of being in the womb, then comes the pain of birth and thereafter there are troubles galore through childhood, diseases, old age and finally death. Guru Nanak has aptly remarked,

"Nanak! Dukhiya sab sansar"

O Nanak! The whole works is in misery."

Remind your mind of all these pains and sorrows everyday. Let it see patients in hospital-beds, funeral processions and burning pyres at cremation grounds.

Then tell it, "O mind! Now you must accept that this body is destined to be buried under the ground or else burnt on the funeral pyre. And yet, O fool, you hanker after sense-pleasures! These pleasures can be enjoyed in other life forms as well. This human birth is not meant for such trivialities. This human birth is an invaluable opportunity. For, only a human can make endeavours to attain the Supreme Lord. If you waste this rare opportunity then you are not likely to get a human birth

again. Therefore, engage yourself in devotion to the Lord, meditation, Satsang and take refuge in the holy feet of Saints. The hunger for eternal happiness, that has been tantalizing you over millions of your births, would instantly be satiated. You will be freed from your old habit of hankering after trivial sense-pleasures. You will become immersed in the Ocean of bliss and ultimately realize your innate nature of Supreme Bliss.

O mind! You are effulgence incarnate. Realize your origin. You have this rare opportunity to be liberated from the cycle of birth and death; and instead you are bargaining it away for trifles!

“O dear! Now get up from your slumber! Realize the Reality, the Supreme Being, the Ocean on whose vast bosom you have been dancing vaingloriously like a wave. Then and there all your sorrows and pains will be eliminated forever.”

Thus admonished, the mind will surrender on its own accord. Then, like an obedient and intelligent child, it will readily follow the noble path dictated by you.

One, who conquers the mind, conquers the whole world. He becomes the King of kings; the Emperor of emperors.

The Saint & the Emperor:

Once a great Saint visited the court of a king and began to look around curiously. The Minister approached the Saint and said, “Holy One! This is the Royal Court. Don’t you see the king seated on his throne? Go and reverently bow your head before him.”

The Saint replied, “O Minister! Go and ask the king if he is a slave to his mind or the mind is a slave to him.”

The minister went and put the question to the King. The king was visibly embarrassed and said, “This question is not worth asking. Quite obviously, everyone is a slave to his mind. I do the mind’s bidding.”

The Minister conveyed the king’s answer to the Saint. The Saint burst into laughter and said, “See, your king is a slave to his mind! And the mind is a slave to me; therefore your king is a slave of my slave. Then why should I bow my head before him? Your King is not a true king; he is a slave, a dependent. Rather than the horseman controlling the horse if the horse controls the horseman, it will definitely throw him into such a deep chasm that will be difficult to come out of.”

The Saint's experiential statement was filled with pith. It had emerged from a pure heart for the Supreme welfare of the king. It wasn't at all tainted by conceit; rather, it was imbued with compassion and affection. The pious company of the Self-realized Saint, his benign glance and kind words had a divine impact on the king. He instantly got down from his throne and fell at the feet of that great Saint. The Saint then preached him the true value of human birth.

The Queer Way of the Mind:

The ways of the mind are really very strange, so never be off your guard. Neither should you ever trust it. Do not let the mind indulge in sense pleasures. **It is never short of rationalizations to deceive you into depravity.** An unrestrained and impure mind becomes entangled in bondage. A restrained and pure mind, on the other hand, leads one on the exalted path of salvation. It is only by a pure and tranquil mind that one is able to attain God, assimilate Knowledge of the True Self and realize the essential Truth.

**“Man ki aati atpati, zatpat lakhe na koy
Man ki khatpat jo mite, chatpat darshan hoy”**

“Strange are the ways of the mind, one cannot understand them easily. As the mind stops its baneful adventures, one realizes God immediately.”

Bring Your Mind Back to its Senses:

The Mind is like an intoxicated elephant. It has thrown many Munis into the pit of depravity. And if it is allowed to control you, it can throw you to the ground and crush you. Therefore maintain a constant vigili and never allow your mind to play tricks on you. Rather, destroy it altogether; annihilate it.

Flex your muscles, clench your fists and teeth, fill your lungs with prana then gird up your loins and force your way to set yourself free from the ignominious servitude of the mind; break asunder the chains of bondage, free yourself forever from its vicious clutches and become its unchallenged master.

He alone, who has conquered his mind, is truly intelligent and fortunate. He is a true man. One who doesn't have the courage to take the mind to task and doesn't even make any effort towards this end, is

not at all worthy of being called a human being. In fact he is a donkey of the stupidest kind.

Actually the mind doesn't have any sovereign power of its own; you yourself have created it. It is your own child who you have spoilt with excessive love and pampering. Insightful restraint is the key to keep a child from straying. So long as a tree is just a sapling, it must be protected by a barbed fence. Similarly, your constant vigil is required to protect the mind from falling into bad company.

Observe the Mind:

Keep a constant watch on the activities of the mind. Stab it with the dagger of Knowledge, whenever it tries to go astray. If the watchman is awake then the thief can do no mischief. Similarly, if you are alert the mind too will behave itself.

Stay Clear of the Mind's Trickery:

Never succumb to the crafty trickeries of the mind even if it means embracing death by throwing yourself down a mountain, drowning yourself in the ocean, being burnt by fire or trampled under the feet of an elephant. The mind will always find plausible reasons to convince you and drag you into the quagmire of sense-pleasures. It has been doing this for ages, over millions of births. Time and again it has dragged you out of your original abode, your blissful Self, and made you wander in the barren lands of sansara. O dear! Wake up now. Remove this depravity of the mind, awaken to your own True Self. Have courage. Strive and realize that you are the master, then be a dispassionate witness to the mind.

A predominance of *Satvaguna* is required to attain Self-realization and the state of Self Bliss. Inculcate *Satvaguna* in yourself. Weed out demonic elements from your nature. And all these pursuits are only possible when the mind is under complete control. How can one ever imagine of entering the garden of Self Bliss, if one continues to crawl in the marshlands of *Rajoguna* and *Tamoguna*?

**“Yadi man maila ho priya! Sab hi maila hoy
Tan dhoje se man kabhi saf-svachchh na hoy”**

‘O dear! If the mind is dirty then everything else is vitiated; and the mind is not purified through cleansing of the body.’

Therefore, constantly discipline the mind by recounting the faults and sins it has committed. You, as such, are pure, but it is the mind that has dragged you down into the gutter of depravity. Just remind yourself of your pristine glory and sternly stare at the mind. It will then gradually understand, feel ashamed and finally stop its dirty tricks.

Have a Salubrious Diet:

There is a famous saying, 'Jaisa khaye ann vaisa bane man.' – 'The nature of your mind depends on the nature of your food.' The gross portion of the food nourishes the gross part of your body and its subtle part nurtures the subtle constituent of your being, i.e., the mind. Hence, you should always eat a *Satvic* diet. Refrain from *Rajasic* and *Tamasic* foods such as alcoholic drinks, meat, fish, tobacco, opium, hemp, tea, coffee, etc. These stuffs only corrupt the mind further, leading to greater restlessness. A *satvic* diet, on the other hand, promotes purity and tranquility in the mind.

Food or sex, had during Pradosha Kala, corrupts the mind and causes various physical and mental afflictions. Always deny the mind what it craves for. This will gradually subdue the mind.

The Rishis have made following recommendations regarding the manner of taking food, which are worth assimilating in one's daily life.

Wash your hands, feet and mouth well. Then sit down facing east and keep silent until you have finished your meal. Those with their parents alive, should avoid eating food facing south. Never touch your food with your left hand; nor should you touch your head, feet or the testes while eating. You may support the plat of food with your left hand only while making offerings to the five vitals winds (Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samana) of the body; thereafter remove the left hand from the plate.

Never move your hands beyond the knees while eating. If you hold a glass of water in your left hand and place it on your right wrist to drink water, then the glass is not considered jootha till you have finished your meal. This is a directive given by Manu Maharaj, the great lawgiver. If a Brahmin, while eating, inadvertently happens to touch another Brahmin, who is also taking his meal then both of them must stop eating. When the light or the lamp goes off at night you should stop eating. Place your right hand onto the food and continue mentaljap of the Gayatri mantra until the light is restored, when you can resume your meal.

Excessive eating has an extremely detrimental impact on your health and longevity.

Half of the stomach should be filled up with food, one-fourth with water and the remaining quarter should be left empty for easy passage of the vital winds.

Keep sitting for a while after your meal is over. Walk about a hundred steps and then lie down on your left side for a few minutes. This facilitates easy digestion of food. After taking your meal chew a few Tulsi leaves that have been offered to the Lord.

If one meticulously follows the above recommendations then one can have *Satvaguna* increased in one's life.

Do Mantra-jap:

The mind tends to degenerate and become depraved in company of the lowly and wretched people. Mantra-jap creates a special aura around the mind that guards it against the attacks of petty and filthy vibrations. It helps the mind steer clear of degenerating thoughts and actions. Instead, the mind remains continuously engaged in elevating thoughts and endeavours. Therefore one must regularly do mantra-jap and have a predominance of *Satvaguna* in one's-character. One should continue the jap of Guru-mantra while engaged in daily chores.

At times do the following experiment. Lie down flat on a blanket. Leave the body loose and relaxed. Make yourself completely calm. Forget the whole world. **When you think with a tranquil mind, you will see that all events of happiness and sorrow are the results of your own past deeds; and friends or foes are only instrumental in bringing your due to you.** When you are awake, the world exists; and it ceases to exist when you are fast asleep. Thus this whole world is unreal like a dream. This is the Truth; this is the ultimate reality.

As the mind comes to realize the Truth, it will become calm and silent. A silent and serene mind is always pure.

Engage Yourself in Selfless Service

Even carrying out altruistic efforts selflessly would lead to purification of the mind. This is an unfailing law of Nature. Therefore be ever prepared to help and serve others selflessly.

Attain Equanimity:

Never lose equanimity of the mind on petty and trifling matters. Even if someone insults or harms you, do not become angry. Anger feeds upon your own vital energy. Therefore remain calm and composed, and then patiently work out an appropriate solution to the problem at hand.

This Too Will Pass Off:

Do not become bloated in favourable circumstances, nor lose heart in adverse conditions. Both happiness and sorrow will invariably pass off. Irrespective of the nature of the present situation, you must always reiterate to your mind that this too will be over. Keep telling your mind, 'Even this will pass off.' This will quieten the mind and gradually eliminate your sense of attachment and hatred.

Have a Propitious Perspective:

See good everywhere. There is no evil except in the eyes of one who is determined to find it. You will not find peace of mind until you are determined to see the positive side of every situation. The world is always favourably disposed towards you. Happiness and sorrow are both designed to bring out the best in you. They are both auspicious and pious. Nothing in this world is evil for you. If you see good all around then you will emerge a winner in the game of the life.

“Drasti Brahmayi Krutva Pasymevmidam jagat”

'Make your vision divine and see the world as an expression of Divinity.'

Seek the Company of Holy Saints

The simplest and the best way to be free from the vicious clutches of the mind is to seek the tutelage of a competent *Sadguru*. Make all our efforts to propitiate Him through your selfless and diligent service. It is difficult to please worldly people, for there is no end to their desires and wants. But it is very easy to please the *Sadguru* who has no desires. Remain at the holy feet of such a *Sadguru*, listen to His precepts, ruminate and reflect on them. Study the scriptures and imbibe the mystery of Brahmaidya under His tutelage and finally assimilate the same into your life. Realize who you really are. Seek answers to

questions like, 'What is this world? What is God? What is the Truth? What is illusion?'

When these mysteries are revealed in your heart, you will realize that the world actually is non-existent; it is you yourself who is present everywhere as Brahman, the Supreme Being. Of your own accord you pluralize your faculties and assuming different forms play with one another. The only way to be liberated from all miseries of life is to attain Self-knowledge.

Self-knowledge can be attained only under the tutelage of a completely competent Sadguru. Self-knowledge makes the mind pure, immaculate and guileless, finally leading to a state wherein it becomes practically non-existent. Then you will see nothing but the Supreme Brahman everywhere. The whole world will appear like a veritable mirage to you.

**“Pehle bhi tha brahma hi bad me rahega brahma
Nikal dalo bich ka jag ka jutha brahm”**

'It was Brahman ever before. It will be Brahman ever after. Just remove the intervening illusion of this world.'

When the world does not exist then how can the mind exist? You along will remain manifested in your True Self. Whereupon all your resolves will automatically fructify. You will be free from the vices of lust, anger, delusion, conceit and jealousy. One who has conquered the mind has conquered the entire world. And he has realized God as well.

**“Man ka darpan svachchh kiya jisne apne tai
Anubhav uska dekhi usme atmadev ki sai
Bhitar bahar dikhe akela na kahi dura kai
Karya siddh huve uske to 'Sami' kahe sun sai”**

'One who has purified his mind has perceived the Atman; he sees nothing, but his own Self everywhere; Sami (poet's name) says all his supreme task is accomplished thereby.'

PRAYER

O Lord! Please endow
everyone with a pious
intellect... strength... good
health... and bless us
all so that we may carry

out our duties diligently
and be happy...

TRUE DISCRIMINATION

-Param Pujya Sant Sri Asaramji Bapu

Let discrimination prevail in your life. A life without discrimination in no life at all. One devoid of discrimination will face troubles and misery at every step. Of course people say, "I have attained success in life by virtue of discrimination; ...I have become an Engineer... Doctor... I have become the proud owner of so many factories... I have taken such and such great responsibility on my shoulders... I have attained such a great position and power... So many people admire and respect me, etc..."

No! This is not discrimination. Success in business, amassing wealth, getting one's physical form admired, building palatial houses, etc. are the products of one's ordinary discrimination. What is so great about becoming an engineer and constructing a building? A bird too makes its nest and resides therein. To learn medical science and remove diseases of the physical body, etc. all spring from ordinary discrimination.

What is Discrimination

Here is the true meaning of discrimination: - To develop a comprehensive understanding of – What is Truth, What is illusion. What is Eternal and What is transient – and then assimilating the same into one's life is true discrimination. God is the sole reality. And the rest – whether it is the son, his family, house, shop, those a person considers his own and those he is not concerned with, friends, relatives, etc. –are all transient. They will all have to be abandoned one day. All relationships, all praise and insult, prosperity and poverty, sickness and health will be incinerated along with the body in the end. When death knocks at the door, no friends, husband, wife, son, business-connections, flattery, etc. can save you. Therefore, to dedicate one's life entirely towards pleasing and taking care of them is not true discrimination.

The revered Guru of Lord Rama, Maharshi Vasishtha, says "O Rama! One must not abandon the ambrosial Satsang that kindles the discrimination to differentiate between the Eternal and the transient, even if it means having to subsist on alms obtained from the house of a chandal."

How supremely profound this statement of Sri Vasishthaji is! In fact, only this kind of Satsang leads us towards our Eternal True Self. Worldly pursuits, on the other hand, no matter how momentous and consequential they may appear, will finally lead us into the jaws of death.

What Makes You Unhappy?

With a calm and composed mind try to find out as to what really makes you unhappy? Is it a lack of –wealth, intellectual prowess, resourcefulness and tact, good health, physical strength or wisdom is worldly affairs? But then there are millions in this world who possess wealth, intellectual prowess, resourcefulness, physical strength, and a good deal of worldly knowledge and yet they are unhappy. People are not unhappy because they lack these worldly possessions or knowledge; the true reason for their sorrow is that despite knowing everything about this world, they are ignorant about their own True Self. Once a man realizes his True Self, he transcends all sorrows along with the cycle of birth and death. But if a person does not realize his True Self, all his knowledge and riches will come to naught, for all he has garnered throughout his life must be left behind at the time of death.

Is it Sadhana or Drudgery?

True discrimination is to perceive the Truth that is shrouded in the illusion of sansara, to perceive the eternal underlying the transient, to realize one's True Self and lead one's life remaining immersed therein. Everything else is but useless drudgery, tantamount to making a fool of oneself. If you equip yourself with this insightful discrimination and march forward on the exalted path of spirituality, then everything will be proper and propitious. You will attain ultimate fulfillment in life. Whereas, political or financial clout may give you a luxurious lifestyle, even earn you a great deal of praise and respect, but finally you will go but empty-handed in real terms.

“Dhak ke ve hi teen pat. Chotha lage na pachve ki as”

The Dhaak (*Butea frondosa*) has trifoliate leaves, i.e., has only three leaves, in the compound one, it never sprouts the fourth;
Then how can one expect the fifth?

You will attain practically nothing. Your life will pass by and in the end you will be left with nothing but remorse. Death will cruelly snatch away all your hard-earned money, power and respect, along with your

well attended body. You will be left lamenting caught in the never-ending cycle of birth and death with nothing worthwhile in hand. It is therefore that the Rishi of Kenopanishada says,

“Ih chedvedidath satymasti. Na chedihavedin mahati vinasti”

One has accomplished the true purpose of human life if one realizes the Almighty Lord, otherwise it is a great loss.’

-(Kenopanishada: 2.5)

... so such discrimination is kindled through Satsang and the holy company of Enlightened Saints. Even modern science has proved how tremendously elevating the company of holy Saints and their Satsang happen to be.

The Influence of Satsang on Blood

An experiment has time and again been conducted in the Delabar laboratory of Oxford University. It records how your thoughts and idea affect your blood, and how the good and bad thoughts of others regarding you affect your blood and also the consequent changes that take place in your body. At the end of a ten year long study, scientists drew this conclusion:

“When you come in the vicinity of a great well-wisher of yours, one who truly intends to elevate you, there occurs a steep rise of about 1500 White Blood Corpuscles (WBC) in every cubic mm blood of your body. On the other hand, when you are in the company of a wicked person or someone inimical to you, your blood suffers an instant loss of about 1600 WBC in every cubic mm.” These reports are based on studies carried out on the blood samples of people immediately after they had contact with both types of persons. According to biological science, WBC protects us against diseases and helps us remain healthy. The scientists were tremendously surprised to note the great influence that a pious-minded, benevolent and altruistic Saint, the supreme benefactor of mankind, has on the blood of an individual. These facts are known to the science of Yoga from time immemorial but now even the modern science approves of it.

When a person’s blood can undergo so much change, then how many other different changes must be occurring on such occasions, are not discernible to science.

Manki Brahmin and Maharshi Vasistha

When a Brahmin called Manki having deserted the solitude of the forest, proceeded to live in the company of ignorant villages, Maharshi Vasishtha accosted him and said, "O Manki! Where are you going? It is far better to be a snake in a dark hole, a worm living inside a stone or even a deer in a waterless desert than to stay in the company of ignorant people."

Maharshi Vasishtha further instructed, "O Manki! The people, whom you are so eager to meet, are themselves burning in the fire of ignorance. How can they ever give you peace or happiness?"

This story of Manki Brahmin is related in the Sri Yogavasishtha Maharamayana.

The Brahmin experience an extraordinary peace in the soothing company of Maharshi Vasishtha and hence asked, "O Lord! Who are you? Your pious words have filled me with peace. I have realized the intrinsic hollowness of this world and developed complete dispassion towards it. I have been through countless births, but am yet to attain the Supreme Peace, which keeps me wandering like this. But now, having met you I feel assured of attaining my supreme good under your benign tutelage. You appear to be goodness-personified to me."

The more an aspirant or disciple is filled with the sense of surrender, the more he will submit to the Enlightened Guru; and the greater his submission, the more he will gain in terms of spiritual wealth. The Guru is automatically inclined to bless the disciple once the latter shows his complete surrender towards Him. Now even science acknowledges the subtle mysteries that are instrumental behind such yogic phenomena.

The spiritual powers of great Saints are emitted primarily through the pointed parts of their body. Similarly, these powers are received more easily through the round parts of the sadhaka's body. This is why the Guru places His hand on the head of a disciple, so that His spiritual power can be transferred through His fingers to the disciple. On the other hand, when the disciple places his head at the holy feet of the Guru, the spiritual power emanating from the toes of his Guru, especially through the big toes is easily received by the disciple through his head, thereby benefiting immensely. Similarly there is a secret behind doing Sashtanga Pranama to the Guru.

What is Sashtanga Pranama?

Eminent scientists and intellectuals of foreign countries were initially unable to comprehend the rationale behind the Indian tradition of the disciple doing Sashtanga Pranama before his Guru. Now after carrying out thorough investigations and experiments they have come to realize that there is logic in this system. It is only through such reverential pranama etc. that a disciple is able to attain some real benefit from his Guru; otherwise he will fail to make any worthwhile gains towards spiritual elevation.

Dr. Lozanov of Bulgaria has founded an organization called 'The Institute of Suggestology,' which can be termed as a 'College of Mantras.' Mr. Lorenzo and other practicing scientists at this institute claim that they make students complete a two year course in just twenty days. When Dr. Lozanov was asked about the source of this supremely useful technique in an International Conference attended by a host of eminent scientists, he replied, "The technique of Shavasana in Indian Yoga inspired me to develop this unique system."

Dr. Lozanov says, "We lie down flat while sleeping at night and thereby gain in terms of rest and strength. This posture helps relieve all sorts of physical and mental tensions, and gives us the ability to acquire fresh energy and vigour. But when we stand up, the indwelling ego wakes up as well with pain and tension besetting the body again.

Shavasana brings a similar refreshment to the body as gained in the state of sleep. The body assumes an equally stressfree, relaxed and surrendering state while doing Sashtanga Pranama.

Another scientist, Robert Pavalita, carried out similar experiments in Czech University. He made a tired man lie down flat under a healthy cow and instructed him to relax himself, be free from tensions and visualize that charged vibes of energy were being showered on him by the healthy cow. Only a few minutes of doing this technique made the machine (that measured tiredness and strength) show the person felt relaxed and fresher than before. People asked Mr. Pavalita, "What if we don't lie down and sit under the cow?" Pavalita's response was that the relief attained while lying down under the cow only for a few moments was impossible to attain by sitting under the cow even four hours together.

Eminent psychologist too have realized from their personal experience that a patient benefits more when he lies down in a relaxed and tensionless state compared to when he sits in front of them. A person, while lying down, tends to reveal deep secrets about his life or confesses to offences he has committed, that he would not have revealed

or confessed to while sitting. The posture of lying down flat brings about a feeling of surrender in the concerned person.

Eminent educationists today complain that the sense of respect that students should have towards their teachers has diminished greatly, giving rise to a lack of discipline in the country. One of the main reasons for this lack of discipline is that the tradition of Sashtanga Pranama ordained by the Rishis has been completely forgotten in the blind pursuit of western culture.

When the holy darshan of Maharshi Vasishtha overwhelmed Manki Brahmin, the benign grace of the Maharshi spontaneously began to shower on him.

Maharshi Vasishtha said, “O Rama! When I told Manki Brahmin, “I am Vasishtha. Do not harbour any suspicion in your mind. I will bless you with eternal peace before leaving,’ he fell at my feet with tears of joy in his eyes; he attained Supreme Bliss.”

Doubts can be raised as to how all this could have happened. But the scientific reason behind this phenomenon has now come to light. This is absolutely possible.

A scientist named Semyon Kirlian invented a technique to take highly sensitive photographs of the colour and aura that surrounds the head of a person. This aura (a kind of electrodynamic field) not only surrounds humans, beasts, birds, etc. but also trees. The more lustrous a man is, the richer is his aura and the greater is his influence on others. This aura begins to diminish when a man breathes his last; and it takes about three days’ time to completely disappear.

Kirlian’s photography has proved today what the Yogis of Ancient India had discovered long ago. The round halo that is generally placed behind the heads of Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, Mahatma Buddha, Chaitanya and other great personages in their pictures, represents this very aura. Even today, when the minds of the aspirants attain a subtler state, they can perceive this aura all around their tutelary deity or Sadgurudev.

Undoubtedly the aura of Maharshi Vasishtha must have been extremely powerful since it instantaneously relieved the sorrow of Manki Brahmin, who then blurted out in prayer.

“O Lord! I have indulged in various sense-pleasures during my countless previous births, but invariably ended up with nothing but

sorrow. I have attained the supreme fulfillment of my life today by having your pious darshan. O Lord! So long as the jiva doesn't avail itself of the ambrosial Satsang of holy Saints, it continues to live in the dark night (of ignorance). The pious darshan of Saints and studying holy books based on their precepts is like the effulgent night of the full moon day."

The darshan and precepts of Maharshi Vasishtha relieved Manki Brahmin of his sorrows. As a matter of fact when a sadhaka or disciple is able to assimilate the mantra or spiritual mysteries imparted by the Sadguru (Maharshi Vasishtha in this case), he acquires the best of both the worlds – material as well as spiritual. But the aspirant or disciple who doesn't treasure the invaluable spiritual wealth bestowed by the Sadguru and instead wastes his time and energy in the ruinous company of ignorant fools catering to dictates of his unrestrained mind, eventually dissipates all his spiritual merits.

Many disciples like the holy company of the Sadguru only so long as He showers love and affection on them. But, with spiritual progress of the disciples in mind and in order to rid them of their false identification with the physical body when the Sadguru admonishes and reprimands them and subjects them to various forms of severe tests the disciple says, "I do want to be in the holy company of the Guru but not under His control. I will definitely continue my sadhana, but independently."

Such disciples are simply deluded by their mind. It is not independence as such; actually what they look for is total freedom bordering on recklessness. True independence is attained only through Self-realization; and it is only with the intention to propel the disciple on the exalted path that the Guru dents the disciple's ego, just as gold is melted to purify it. But, if the aspirant is devoid of insightful discrimination, his mind would drive him into such a dark pit of depravity that would be difficult to emerge from even after many years or countless births.

Now think with a calm mind. You had accepted the tutelage of the Guru with the sole purpose of bringing the ever so stubborn and vacillating mind of yours under control, a task that you yourself could not do. And now that the Guru is ready to work on you and weed out all the misconceptions from your mind, then why do you back out at this crucial stage? Let destiny take its own course. You are neither a child nor a patient who needs to be administered anaesthesia or ether before the operation. Admonish your mind, "O mind! You want to deceive me and push me away from my Guru's tutelage? You want to entrap me again in your same crafty snare? Go away, I am not going to listen to

you any more. I have already undergone a lot of wandering. No longer am I prepared to follow your dictates which will only make me wander in the vicious cycle of birth and death. Even if I listen to you and leave this place, I will have to be under the control of somebody or the other; of the wife or husband, of the master or leader, remaining a pitiable subject to the dualities of life like respect and insult etc. For, until I realize the bliss of my inner Self, I will but depend on some external means or person for happiness. Then what's so wrong in remaining under the Guru's pious tutelage? Saint Kabirji has said,

**“Durjan ki karuna buri, bhalo sai ko tras
Suraj jab garmi kare, tab barsan ki as”**

‘Harmful is the compassion of a wicked one; propitious is the wrath of the Guru. It is only with the increasing heat of the Sun that one can hope for a good rainfall.’

And actually Guru never expects anything from you. He only gives you in terms of love and affection but even while admonishing and reprimanding you his sole intention is to bestow you with some supreme treasure of spiritual wealth. You may be unable to grasp this subtle truth today, but it is the truth nonetheless. The surgeon operates upon your body, only to remove the anomaly there from so that you may get relief.

Once Mafatlal's stomach-ache became very severe and the doctors stated that surgery was the only recourse. After a lot of cajoling Mafatlal finally agreed to undergo the operation. When the preparations were well underway in the operation theatre, Mafatlal said, “Wait a minute!”

Everyone was astounded; for it was only after a great deal of persuasion that Mafatlal had finally consented for the operation; they were apprehensive lest he should change his mind again. But to everyone's amazement, he simply took out a few coins from his pocket and said, “Please note down the amount of money I possess because I have serious doubts that you may misappropriate my money after anaesthetizing me!”

Just imagine! Such a serious operation was going to be undertaken and Mafatlal felt worried about his small change!

This Mafatlal is not difficult to find. Most probably he abides in just anyone of us. We are more concerned about holding on to the paltry coins of our personal beliefs rather than getting relief from the severe stomach-ache.

Mafatlal was simply suffering from an abdominal disease but here we are concerned with eradicating the colossal disease of birth and death.

Vasishthaji says, "It is better to be a deer in a barren desert than to be in company of ignorant people." ...And I say that one must submit to the Guru's abusive admonitions that are designed to work like a knife to operate on our misconceptions and relieve us from the cycle of birth and death. One should always be prepared for the scalpels of hardship, hunger, thirst, etc. and the anesthesia of reproach and scolding but one should never flinch from one's supreme resolve nor deter from the path of sadhana.

Never leave the ashram of the Guru, the One who you have deliberately accepted as your Guru after so much thought, just for the sake of ephemeral worldly enjoyments or praise; for only the Guru can relieve you from the vicious cycle of birth and death. So, you should never become enamoured with transient worldly pleasures and desert your Guru and the Lord. Once you are rejected from the doorstep of the Guru or the Lord, you will be rejected everywhere else.

Narsinh Mehta has rightly said,

**"Bhoomi sulau bhukha maru tis par maru mar
Iske bad bhi jo hari bhaje to kar du nihal"**

"I will make you sleep on the ground, keep you hungry and even beat you. In spite of all this, if you still aspire for God, I shall liberate you right away."

When the Guru begins to mould you by pounding your ego and pride, do not be perturbed. Have patient. When he prepares to completely dissolve your ego do not resist, for all that you possess are but destined to be destroyed one day. Before death brings an end to your life, if you let you ego be demolished by the Guru; he will reveal your Absolute Self that is lying dormant in you. Thereafter no bondage of nature can ensnare you. You will become completely free from all worldly bondages and perceive the divine fragrance of absolute freedom from within. Then you will no more have to wander about in the external world seeking for freedom or happiness.

This is insightful discrimination. And this is the kind of life led by the wise men. Once you are able to adopt yourself to this mode of life then even gods will long for your pious company. This makes for

supreme success and true fulfillment of life. Strive to accomplish this kind of life that leaves nothing undone.

Therefore have courage, be brave and strive forward! Discover your own True Self!

O Supreme Emperor of the Universe! O Lord of gods! Awaken to your true grandeur. This is not a difficult task. It is neither distant from you nor is it impossible to attain.

Be a dispassionate witness to all circumstances. Consider this world to be a passing dream and just once awaken to your own True Self. Never again will your mind deceive you thereafter.

Om Shantih! Om Shantih! Om Shantih!

Even if you have to lose all your possessions for the sake of maintaining the purity of mind, it is still a good bargain. Your wealth, property and power will not accompany you on your final journey. It is only your intrinsic nature that will accompany you after your death. Therefore, always strive to elevate your nature; let it touch the loftiest heights of Sublimity.

Bravo O courageous one...! Bravo! Be brave... Let bygones be bygones. Let not even a thousand failures deter you from your forward march. Om... Om... Om...

The Sadguru brings about complete annihilation of your ego. Do not resist His efforts or else your path to the Supreme accomplishment will become longer. Rather co-operate with Him. Surrender your ego at His holy feet and become the Master. Give your head and be crowned. Abandon your vanity and become a Guru. Give your pettiness and get all He has in return. Discard your ephemeral existence and listen from Him the divine melody of Eternity. Abandon your petty jivatva and repose in Shivatva, the Supreme consciousness of Lord Shiva.

As much as possible, avail yourself of the holy company of your Sadguru in His lifetime. He will root out your ego and reveal your True Self. The best time to benefit from the Sadguru is His holy presence. For after He leaves His earthly existence, of course temples will be built and business may thrive in the name of religion, but no more will there be spiritual shaping of the disciple. Then nobody will awaken you to your True Self. At present the Sadguru strikes at your painful misconceptions of identifying yourself with the body and considering others to be nothing more than bodies. Who will free you from such misconceptions once the

Sadguru departs from this world? Then you may labour under the mistaken belief that you are engaged in sadhana, but in actuality it will be your mind calling the shots. And the mind, as it has been doing for centuries, will only be miring you further in the world.

The Glory of a Person Equipped With Insightful Discrimination

(Sri Yogavasishtha Maharamayana)

Sri Vasishthaji said, “O pride of the Raghu dynasty, Sri Rama! When a person develops a firm detachment towards the sansara, attains the holy company of Saints, becomes devoid of desire for sense pleasures, with the five sense-objects no more attracting him, when *Tatvamasi* and other such Supreme Truths of the scriptures are duly assimilated by him, when he gets the direct experience of his Bliss personified True Self and the heart is filled with the blessed feeling of Self-realization, then that insightful person remains ever engrossed in Self Bliss and develops complete detachments from the sense objects and riches of the this world, considering them to be useless trash. Such people do not remain in one place for very long, as by virtue of their awakened discrimination and consequent dispassion for external objects and affairs they are never impressed by anything – be it a place of complete solitude a thriving city teeming with people, a pond, jungle, garden, place of pilgrimage or their own homes; the frolics of their friends, festivals or parties, or even scholastic debates on scriptures. In case they remain at some place for a longer period, they would spend their time investigating into the esoteric knowledge of the Supreme Truth. Established in the Self, they always remain calm observing self-restraining and Mauna. They speak sparingly and that too only about Brahman, the Supreme Being. By virtue of their sustained practice and dispassion, they are able to repose in the Supreme Bliss of the Almighty Lord. They attain a state in which the mind is completely dissolved. Just as heartless stones can never relish the taste of milk, these elevated personages find absolutely no charm in sense-objects.

Just as a lamp dispels darkness; charged with a supremely insightful discrimination, that he is, an enlightened personage eradicates the darkness of ignorance from his heart and shuts out the vagaries of the world, such as attachment, hatred, sorrow, fear etc. These Saints who have transcended all the three qualities of Nature viz. Tamoguna, Rajoguna and Satvaguna are like the resplendent Sun in the sky – they are verily the true embodiments of the Almighty Lord. All jives, alongside the movable and immovable constituents of this creation, are incessantly engaged in worshipping the Supreme Atman, the fountainhead of

Supreme Bliss, with gifts of their individual choices. After having been propitiated for an unspecified number of births the Atman is pleased and according to the aspiration of the devotee inspires His sacred emissary to visit the concerned devotee for enlightening him.”

Sri Rama asked, “O pious Brahmin! Which emissary does the Almighty Atman inspire and how does the former enlighten a devotee?”

Sri Vasishthaji said, “O noble soul Rama! Discrimination is the emissary that is sent to His devotee by the Atman. It keeps the devotee ever blissful. Actually it becomes established in the heart of the deserving devotee, much like the moon shining in a clear sky. It is discrimination that enlightens the desire-ridden ignorant jiva and gradually delivers him from the ocean of sansara.

This knowledge-personified indwelling Atman is itself the Supreme Lord, the Supreme Deity. The Pranava – Om is upheld by the exalted Vedas as the pious representative name of the Supreme Lord. Man, snakes, gods and demons are all engaged in propitiating that Supreme Being through the observance of jap, fire sacrifices, penance, charity, recitation from scriptures, yajnas and different religious rituals. On account of being the Consciousness Supreme, He is omnipresent, ever vigilant, watching everything everywhere. He is all pervading. It is He who sends His emissary discrimination, to slay the demon –chitta and enable the jiva to realize its original divine Self, which is beyond description.

Therefore, one should brush aside all his resolves and counter-resolves, mental and physical vices and even financial troubles to engross oneself whole-heartedly in the pursuit of propitiating the Atman, the Consciousness Supreme. Once the effulgent Sun of knowledge rises on the horizon of your life, the demon mind that roams in the darkness – personified night of sansara will be destroyed right away. The six sooty afflictions of lust, anger, etc. will dissipate and disappear. The path of your life will become fully illumined and filled with bliss. Your human birth will thus find its true fulfillment.

Om Bliss...

GLOSSARY

Om – pronounced as Aum, it is the monosyllabic personification of the ‘Indestructible Supreme Being.’

Anusthana – Jap of the Mantra for a fixed number on a daily basis with a fixed purpose and a fixed duration.

Apana – One of the five vital winds which goes downwards and is responsible for excretion of faeces, flatus, urine, menstrual blood, etc.

Jiva – the embodied soul

Jivatva – the state of being the Embodied Soul.

Jootha – Food, etc. touched by one's mouth or hands while eating is considered to be defiled and unfit for consumption or being used by others.

Mauna – Silence

Pradosha Kala – Different hours of the day in which certain acts are forbidden.

Prana – First of the five vital winds and is responsible for respiratory functions.

Rajasix – Affected by rajoguna

Rajoguna – One of the three qualities of nature characterized by action, energy and passion that leads to pleasure and pain.

Sadgur – The enlightened one who leads us from the darkness of ignorance, the basic cause of all sorrows, to the joy of awareness and enlightenment.

Samana – The vital wind which aids digestion of food, separation of waste products, regulation & composition of body fluids, body temperature and the movement of Pitta and Kapha.

Sashtanga Pranam – Prostrate obeisance.

Sattvaguna – One of the three qualities of nature characterized by purity, luminosity, lightness, harmony, etc. which promote happiness.

Sattvic – Imbued with sattvaguna.

Shavasana – The posture resembling a flat lying corpse.

Tamasic – Affected by tamoguna.

Tamoguna – One of the three qualities of nature characterized by darkness, inertia, ignorance and lethargy.

Tattvamasi – ‘Thou Art That’

Udana – The vital wind controlling the intake of food and air.

Vyana – The vital wind that regulates the circulation of blood, the nervous system, muscular functions and the skeletal system in the body.