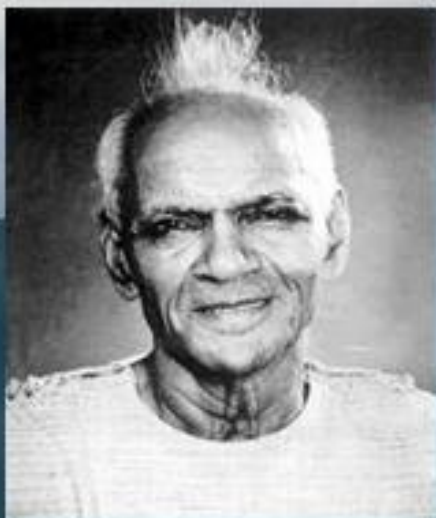


COLLEAGUES IN SOLITUDE



Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya

Colleagues in Solitude

(Translated from the Hindi: Sunsan Ke Sahechar)

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PREFACE

It was my good luck or perhaps it was just a chance that I had the privilege to be associated with an able and accomplished Master (*Guru*) and to work under his guidance and patronage throughout my life. The command of this guide was beneficial not only for the success in life of this humble being, but for the welfare of the mankind as well.

His kindness began to be showered upon me from the age of 15. From my end too, I tried with all my might to be worthy of the stature of this Great *Guru*. It was, in a way, total submission of the self to this great power. All my activities - physical as well as emotional - were placed at his feet and I decided to play as a mere puppet in his hands. Whatever I was entrusted with has been discharged with full dedication. This process is going on till this moment. It would be better to describe all my actions so far as the acts of a puppet.

His divine appearance in astral form took place as soon as I completed my 15th year of age and entered the 16th. It can be considered as the merger. In the beginning I was asked to kindle an *Akhand Deep* (Unextinguishing sacred lamp kept burning on Ghee) and sitting before it to chant 24 lakhs of Gayatri mantra every year and perform a *Yagya* there on. This process of *Purashcharan* was to be continued for 24 years, living only on bread of barley and cow's buttermilk. This was very well followed as ordered. Thereafter a series of constructive activities like writing, lecturing, organizing and publicity were carried on for ten years in order to arouse religious awakening. As a result, four thousand branches of Gayatri Pariwar came into being. The organization that came up during those years can be said to be the proper foundation for the structure of the New Era to rest upon. The energy gained from the *Purashcharan Sadhana* of 24 years was utilized in 10 years. Energy was required afresh for carrying out greater responsibilities. So I was commanded to undergo rigorous penance of special nature by staying in certain divine locations in Himalayas where vibrant spiritual energy still continues to flow. Like other commands, this too was reverently obeyed.

In 1958 I set out on one year's penance in the Himalayas. This *Sadhana* of one year was performed by staying at Gangotri where Bhagirath has performed penance and at Uttarkashi, the place of penance of Parshuram Bhagirath has undertaken penance in order to propitiate Ganga to descend on this earth. While Parashuram's purpose of penance was to obtain the divine axe with which to conquer the earth, my penance was intended to acquire energy for building up New-Era, the success of which can be termed as the success of the *Sadhana*.

While going to Gangotri for this penance of one year numerous thoughts occurred in the mind. Wherever I stayed, the thoughts were rising in my mind according to my nature arid feelings. Being in the habit of writing, I used to write down those experiences and feelings. Some of the experiences were such that others too could enjoy it. So those were sent for publication in *Akhand Jyoti* and were published too. However some of the experiences were such that their publication during my life time was deemed improper, hence were held back.

The articles that were published in *Akhand Jyoti* during those days under the titles of "Pages of the diary of a Sadhak", and 'Colleagues in Solitude' were appreciated and liked by the people. Though the incidents became old, people found it interesting to read them. So it was thought to publish them in book form, and hence this presentation of book. While the events narrated in this book have become old, the thoughts and emotions rose therein are eternal and passage of time has not dimmed their usefulness. It is hoped that those vibrant feelings that arose in my conscience will also be felt by the readers in the same manner and the book will thus prove its worth.

A special portion about the features and analysis of the heart of Himalayas has been incorporated in this compilation. The portion of about 400 miles between Badrinarayan and Gangotri has been the place where normally all the Riches (Saints) had performed penance (*tap*). What can be called the paradise on earth is this portion of land. If we co-relate the history of gods and events mentioned in the stories of the heaven with geography, it can be found that it substantiates the theory that those events and the rule of India (King of God said to be ruling in Heavens) have taken place on this earth and that the centre from where the culture is originated is said to be the above mentioned part of the Himalayas. This region of Uttarakhand which is the real Heart of the Himalayas is now subjected to snowfall and the cycle of climatic change has made it uninhabitable for the weak bodied human beings of the present day. The region referred to as Uttarakhand is shifting down and is limited from Hardwar to Badrinarayan-Gangotri-Gomukh.

In the Heart of the Himalayas where the ancient heavenly characteristics exist, powerful spiritual area charged with the energy of penance also exists. My Master draws tremendous incomparable energy by staying at this oldest place energized by the purity of the penance of Rishis. I too had the good fortune to stay here for some period and to see those divine places. I have described in *Akhand Jyoti* about as much as I could see there. This game is unique in its own way. By this, a place which can be said to be the axial pole of spiritual power can be found to exist on this earth. The unique powers of north and south poles of the earth are well known. I have come across the pole of spiritual power, in which highly important gains are inherent, from the point of view of both subtle power as well as that of accomplished personalities.

It is necessary to introduce it to the world so as to draw the attention of people towards this divine centre. So this information can be considered to be invaluable. This information is given in the second part of this book titled "Lap of Ganges, Shade of Himalayas". This is also the reason why *Brahmavarchas*, (The Research Institute of Shantikunj to co-ordinate scientific and spiritual research), Shantikunj and Gayatri Nagar (the holy hermitage) have been established at the entrance of *Uttarakhand*. The people who visit this place experience divine contentment. It is going to gain extra ordinary importance in future. The possibilities thereby are not expressed now. But in the days to come people will be surprised at the shape of things taking place here.

Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya

[My Unknown Stay and Purpose of Tap Sadhana](#)

The power of penance is immense. Tap means heat. So penance means heating up the self for purification. The greatest of all the powerful elements in this world have their roots in Tap or heat. Sun heats up itself. So it is the lord of this universe, providing life-energy to all the beings. The heating up of the atmosphere in the hot summer brings the benevolent rains that render relief, happiness and prosperity. When gold is heated it becomes pure and bright enhancing its value. All the metals coming out of the mines in the form of ore are impure mixture of dirt, dust and stones. But when melted by heat, the pure form emerges and becomes valuable. The unbaked pots, utensils and toys made of clay get broken when slightly hit. But when baked in kiln they become red and strong and earthen bricks baked in kilns become strong like stones. The soft lime stones become cement when processed by heat and the structures prepared with it last for long. The ordinary mica when heated hundred times in fire becomes Chandroday Ras, an invaluable Ayurvedic medicine. Only when purified on fire several times, the metals become valuable Rhasma, Rasayan etc. which can revive the patients of hopeless condition and render them life anew. Ordinary grains, pulses and vegetable in the raw form are tasteless, uneatable and indigestible. But when cooked on fire they become tasty and easily digestible. The soiled dirty clothes, when heated in the washerman's boiler, are washed clean and spotless. The foods we take in are digested by the fire in the stomach (in the form of pancreatic secretion) and help produce blood, bone and marrow that build our body. If the purification in fire or the process of heating is stopped, all the process of progress will come to halt.

All the functions of the creation are going on only because of heating up of nature. The latent potential in the creatures manifests in various forms like energy, valor, courage, enthusiasm, knowledge, science and so on. Mother nourishes the embryo in the uterus by her body heat and gives birth to the child. Whosoever endeavored to rise above the humdrum, lazy, indolent state had had to take up Tap. All of those brave men who have left their imprint on the pages of history have had to undergo Tap in their own way.

Those among the farmers, students, laborers, scientists, administrators, scholars, industrialists, and artisans who have done some great contribution could do so because of their resorting to hardwork, labor, devotion and 'Tap. Had they remained dull, lazy and inactive and indulged in ease, comfort, lavishness and merriment, they could never have reached those heights they attained by their toil and perseverance. Of all the powers, spiritual power is the greatest. It also implies that spiritual wealth is superior to all the worldly wealth. Even with ordinary power of wealth, wisdom and might,

people achieve progress and happiness, but the achievements of those who have gained spiritual power are many times greater. The difference between the worldly wealth and spiritual wealth is the same as between brass and gold or glass and gem. There are a lot of wealthy people who are rich virtuous lords, scholars and artists. But they cannot be equated to the great souls who not only elevated themselves but contributed immensely for the betterment of the world by their spiritual gains. In ancient times too those, who wanted their children to be virtuous hard working, perseverant, enduring and calm natured, used to send them to the Gurukul (place of learning under the guidance of Guru) so that they would be well trained to face the hardships and realities of life unfalteringly and become eligible to be great persons.

When any great thing got accomplished in this world, there was inevitably the power of penance behind it. Our country has been the land of gods and men of gems. The land of Bharat has been called the Paradise on Earth. It has also remained the crown of the world from the point of view of wealth, knowledge and valor. The credit for attaining this peak of progress is attributed to the unshakeable adherence to penance of the people here. The lazy, selfish, amorous, pompous and greedy people have always been looked down with contempt and were considered inferior. The greatness of the power of tap was realized by the people here who lived on this principle and always remained ready to acquire this power. It is due to this reason that this land achieved the position of the supreme master of the world and the lord of immense wealth.

If we go through the past history of Bharat i.e. India, it will become evident that the multifaceted progress of this land has been based on penance and its adoption. Lord Brahma, the creator of this universe performed Upasana of Gayatri for hundred years, sitting on the lotus emerging from the navel of lord Vishnu, before embarking on the job of creation. It was only then that he acquired the power and knowledge for creation of this vast universe. Manu, the ancient sage who framed the rules of humanity and human behavior, was able to accomplish the great job only after performing penance along with his wife Shaturoopa. Lord Shankar is himself embodiment of Tap. His nature is to remain engrossed in Tap. Shesh, symbolized as the Serpent, is carrying, the weight of this earth by the power of Tap.

Saptarishis, the seven eminent Rishis in ancient India performed Tapa on this very earth as the result of which they became immortal and are now shining in the sky as seven stars. Brahaspati, the guru of the gods and Shukracharya the guru of demons are able to guide and protect their pupils by the power of their tap.

The ability of Vishwamitra, who started a new creation and Vashishtha who had been giving guidance to several generations of the kings of

Raghuwansh lay in Tap Sadhana. Once king Viswamitra along with his troop of soldiers visited Vashishtha in his hermitage in the forest. The latter made all the necessary arrangements befitting to the guests, despite there having been no materials or facility. Seeing this, Vishwamitra was awestruck. Over some matter when a fighting took place between the mighty King Viswamitra with his vast fighting force and the unarmed Vashishtha, Viswamitra had to concede defeat. Declaring that a King's might is powerless before the power of Brahma tej he renounced the kingdom and took to the path of tap for which the rest of his; life was dedicated.

In order to rescue his forefathers condemned to hell and to quench the thirst of the parched land and thereby realize the welfare of the people, it became necessary for Bhagirath to bring Ganga from heaven to earth. This was not possible by worldly efforts. So, intense penance was the only way. His hard painstaking and untiring penance made Ganga agree to come down to earth for which word Shiva had also to be readied to provide help to make the influx of Ganga possible. Not worldly efforts, but Tap that has done it.

Rishi Chya-wan (an eminent scholar of Ayurved in ancient India) had been engrossed in Tap for such a long time that white ants made home over his body-and made it appear like an ant hill. While passing by it, princess Sukanya saw two glittering objects through the holes of the ant hill which she pierced with thorns (and they began bleeding). The shining object was nothing else but the eyes of rishi Chyawan. He had to undertake this intense tap to prove his eligibility for the share of boundless energy of the Supreme soul (God), by invoking the latent energy centers in the inner body.

Right from birth, Shukdeo (a great saint and scholar in Mahabarat period) was meditative. It was his conviction that the best use of this rare gift of human body is to develop spirituality. He kept himself away from the temptation of desires and longings and got engrossed in acquiring Brahma jnan and Brahma Tatwa (knowledge of the supreme God) instead.

Dhruva a prince who took to Tap in childhood and is recognized as legendary star in the galaxy did not prove a loser. Had he lived a life of pleasure and merriment like ordinary princes, he would not have been able to become the pivot of the whole universe and thus attaining immortality. The vast fame and kingdom he got during life time also could not have been given to him even by the most lenient. Rishi Kanad who lived on broken grains scattered here and there on the ground and Valmiki, who lived on the white juice of Banyan tree were deprived of worldly pleasures. But what they got in exchange of it has been greater than the greatest of mundane gains.

During their time Buddha and Mahavir the founders of Buddhism and Jainism also took recourse to Tap as the unfailing weapon to help the people get rid of the sorrow and sufferings. They transformed the atmosphere of evil and violence into peace and compassion. It is thought easy and proper to suppress evil with weapons and arms. But they are not found as effective as the might of Tap.

The axe of Parshuram (which he got by Tap) proved to be effective as never before. He wiped out all the unjust kings and lords by making 21 rounds of the earth. The anger of Rishi Agastya could not be borne by the poor ocean. In three gulps Agastya consumed the entire water of the ocean. When the gods were constantly getting defeated at the hands of demons, Rishi Dadhichi sacrificed himself and offered his powerful bones with which the weapon of Vajra was made and thus helped Indra defeat the demons and restore peace and happiness to the gods.

In ancient times, only those who were endowed with patience and endurance were considered eligible for education. Only such people could do justice to knowledge by its application for the welfare of mankind apart from meeting one's own needs. But today education is monopolised by the greedy and the luxurious. As a result they misuse it a lot. It is seen that it is the educated class which is farther from humanity, and not the uneducated, and they have become a curse for the peace and well-being of the world by creating problems of all sorts. In the olden days the parents used to send their children to Gurukul (hermitage where students have to stay and work while undergoing real education) in order to cultivate saintly nature in them. In the Gurukul the Master (Guru) used to put them to various tests of endurance for quite some time and only after a student passed this primary test was he considered eligible for receiving education. The readers might be acquainted with the stories of Rishi Dadhichi, Uddalak, Aruni and innumerable others who had to pass through the hard tests of endurance.

Brahmacharya (celibacy) has been considered an important part of self-restraint. The might of Hanuman and the valor of Bheeshma who remained celibate throughout their life, are known to all. Shankaracharya, Dayanand and many great men had been able to do great service to mankind on the power of celibacy. In the olden days there were many married men who observed celibacy along with their wives.

On acquiring inner power, the hermits used it not only for the benefit of the self, but, endowed a part of it to his disciples to make them also great. Rama and Krishna by undergoing studentship at the hermitage of Rishi Vishwamitra and Rishi Sandipani respectively got their personality so developed that they came to be called God. An ordinary Maratha boy, by getting trained by the able Guru Ramdas, became Emperor Shivaji. Having been bestowed upon with a little divine power by Ramkrishna Paramhans an atheist boy Narendra became Vivekananda, the greatest religious messenger in the world of all times. Indra, the king of gods, who was wandering in search of shelter from the attacking demons was enabled to defeat the demons by Dadhichi, the great rishi, who gave his own bones to make the powerful weapon Vajra. A dacoit became saint Valmiki on receiving a piece of advice from Narad Muni.

Those who wished to have worthy children born to them have also been benefitted by the blessings of hermits. Dasharatha who did not have a child even after three marriages, was blessed with four sons as a result of Yagya of Putrakameshti

performed by Rishi Shringi. Having had no child for a long time king Dilip along with his wife tended the cows of Rishi Vashishtha who blessed them resulting in the child to be born and thus saving the dynasty from extinction. When Pandu in Mahaaharat period became impotent. five glorious sons were born to him by the blessing of Rishi. Vyas. About Jawaharlal Nehru it is said that Motilal Nehru who was worried about having no child for a long time, was blessed by a Rishi of the Himalayas who abandoned his body for fulfilling Motilal's wish. Many sons of rishis used to be born with the attributes of their parents' power of Tap and in the childhood itself used to perform such jobs which were difficult even for the elders. Shringi, the son of Rishi Lomash, on seeing a dead serpent thrown on his father's body, cursed that who ever did the heinous act would die of serpent bite within seven days. The curse of the Rishi's son did materialise and king Parikshit who had done the crime, did die of serpent bite on the 7th day, despite elaborate security arrangements.

The pages of ancient history are replete with the instances of curses and blessings and their results. As the punishment for killing Shrivankumar by his arrow, King Dasharath was cursed by the father of the boy that he too would die of the pain of parting of his son. The hermit's words could not turn false and Dasharath could not bear the pain of parting of Rama and had to die out of the sorrow. Even gods were powerless to nullify the wrath of curse of Rishis. Indra the king of gods, and god Moon too had to suffer from the curse of Rishi Gautam. The ten thousand sons of King Sagar had to die in fire for incurring the wrath of Muni Kapil. On being pleased the Rishis too, like gods, used to shower their blessings and innumerable people got rid of their sufferings and got peace and happiness.

Not only men, but ladies too of ancient India were in the forefront in the field of Tap. The profound enduring Tap of Parvati compelled Shiva, (whose fire of anger burnt to ashes Madan, the god of love, for disturbing his peace of trance, a state in which he always liked to remain), to marry her. Anusooya, on the strength of her power of Tap, transformed Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, into small kids. Sukanya restored youth for her old husband. Savitri brought back the life of her husband Satyavan from Yama, the king of death. Kunti gave birth to a son as glorious as the Sun himself by worshipping the god sun, when she was a virgin. Enraged Gandhari cursed Krishna that his tribe would also become extinct in the same manner as her own by mutual infight. Her words proved true. The entire yadava dynasty fought among themselves to death. The hunter was burnt to death by the fire of anger emanated from Damayanti's eyes. Ida helped her father in completing his Yagya and getting his desire fulfilled. All these wonderful results are the manifestations of the power of Tap.

Like gods and Rishis, the demons too knew well that the essence of power is centered in Tap. They also performed profound penance and acquired such blessings that could not be achieved even by the hermits among the gods. Ravana in the course of his profound Sadhana, bartered his own head several times. Concentrating his Sadhana of Lord Shankar he acquired immense invincible power. Kumbhakarna also had got his special wish for

sleeping and awaking for six months alternately fulfilled due to penance. Meghnad, Ahiravan and Mareechi had gained the magic powers due to Tap. Bhasmasur had gained by his Tap the gift of killing anyone by the touch on the victim's head. The valor of demons like Hiranyakashyap, Hiranyakasha, Sahashrabahu, Baali etc. was also based on Tapa. Many demon ladies like Tadaka who was a headache to Vishwamitra and Lord Rama, Pootna, who attempted to kill Krishna, Sursa who tried to swallow down Hanuman Trijada who entertained Sita by her numerous tricks to lessen her sorrow were also renowned in the field of spirituality.

Leafing through the pages of the history of India one comes across not tens or thousands but lakhs of such instances where ordinary human beings have astounded the world by their amazing deeds of benevolence to the humanity, besides self-upliftment by their power of Tap. Even in the present era, the work done by enlightened souls like Mahatma Gandhi, Saint Vinoba, Rishi Dayanand, Meera, Kabir, Dadu, Tulsidas, Soordas, Raidas, Aravinda, Maharshi Raman, Ramkrishna Paramhans, Ramtirth etc. could not have been accomplished by people of mundane capability. From the very beginning, I too have adopted this path of Tap. I have utilized the power gained from the hard Tap of Mahapurashcharana for the welfare of the world. As a result, innumerable persons made material and spiritual progress of high order with my help. Many are the people who got rid of their pains, sufferings, sorrow and worries. Simultaneously, commendable works were also accomplished towards moral revival. The pledge to prepare 24 lakhs of Gayatri devotees and to perform Yagyas of 24 thousand Kund was so enormous that it was riot possible to complete it by hundreds of people working together for many generations. Yet all this was done very well within a matter of days. The construction of Gayatri Tapobhoomi at Mathura, the organising of Gayatri pariwar and the translation and publication of the Vedas and their commentaries can be seen as the manifestation of the power of Tap.

I have decided to pursue intense Tap in future too. So no one need be surprised if I devote my entire future for Tap-sadhana. I have realised fully well that the importance of Tap is greater than the greatest worldly achievements. A Jeweller does not take glass pieces in place of gems. My decision to pursue the power of Tap in preference to mundane pleasures may displease the members of my family and relatives stupefied by worldly charms; but it will be found that my decision is fraught with wisdom and foresight.

The work which the politicians and scientists are engaged in at present is only fanning the fire and leading to destruction. Weapons capable of destroying the enemy country so as to pride over the victory are being prepared by all. But no one is able to prepare such weapons as are capable of extinguishing the fire of violence or making the perpetrators of violence feel ashamed of their evil deeds, or generating the pure blissful joy of peace and happiness in the minds and hearts that are filled with the fire of devilish concepts. Such weapons cannot be manufactured in the offices of political power or in the laboratory of scientists. Even in ancient times, when such need arose, the arms of peace were prepared in the laboratory of

hermitages by resorting to Tap-Sadhana. In the present time too, many great souls are engaged in this work.

Many efforts are being made to make human life as well as the world nice and happy. Many industries, business, factories roads, rail, dams, schools, hospitals etc., are brought into being. It is expected that these efforts will help solve the problem of poverty, diseases and illiteracy to a good extent. But unless the stream of love, brotherhood, compassion, generosity, faith in god, restraint, and service is made to flow into the human consciousness, no effort in the direction of universal peace will succeed. So long as highly noble souls like Gandhi, Dayanad, Shankaracharya, Buddha, Mahavir, Narad and Vyas do not appear on the scene to inspire and provide guidance, it is impossible to elevate public mind to higher plane. Until the public thinking is elevated and until, pure and idealistic feelings are generated, the feeling of hatred, enmity, loot, grabbing, adultery, laxity, and sinful deeds can not be flushed out from public behavior. Then there will be no respite from the suffering of pain, quarrel, disease and poverty.

It is necessary to charge the atmosphere with subtle spiritual current so that moral forces can develop and sublime human character, can be elevated. This can be achieved only through Tapa-Sadhana of special nature performed by highly elevated souls. This is the greatest service to humanity, religion and culture. Today its need is urgently felt, for with the passing of time evil forces will be overtaking and the delay may spell disaster.

This call of the time has compelled me to take the present step have been doing Gayatri Upasana regularly for six hours daily from the day of Yagyopaveet Sanskar. But it is not enough for achieving great goals. It calls for tremendous energy of Tap. So it has become necessary to perform intense, concentrated Tap for one year by staying in that area in the Himalayas where Rishis perform their Tapa. This Sadhana is not intended for personal benefits have never tinged for heaven or salvation and will never do so either. I have pledged umpteen times to work for the upliftment of human dignity. So then, how come the question of escapism? Universal welfare is my welfare. It is with this aim that I have taken this step to melt myself in the intense heat of Tap.

ENTRANCE TO THE HIMALAYAS:

The Fatal Narrow Path.

Today I had to walk along a very cumbersome path for a long distance. There was Ganga flowing below and the mountain standing high above. By the foot of the hill, there was very narrow foot path. It was hardly 3ft. wide. We had to go along this path. If the leg faltered a bit, it would not take long to get buried in the roaring Ganga below. If you thought of avoiding it and walk away safely, there stood the mountain erect vertically for hundreds of feet high and refusing to budge an inch. On this narrow and difficult path, every step had to be kept with utmost care; else the difference between life and death was hardly a foot and a half.

For the first time in life I experienced the fear of death. I had heard this story from the epic. As described in ancient scriptures once when saint Shukdeo visited King Janak, he asked the latter as to how he remained unperturbed like a Yogi throughout his activities. To explain the point king Janak handed to him a bowl filled with oil and asked to make a round of the town and come back without spilling a drop of oil, the punishment for failure being severing of head. Out of the fear of death Shukdeo, made the round as ordered, concentrating all his attention for not to spill the oil, but could not see anything in the town. Then King Janak explained to him that in the same manner as he concentrated only on the oil and nothing else, due to the fear of losing the life, he too always kept remembering death and this helped him keep at bay the indolence from getting into his performance of duties and check the mind from wandering.

The essence of this story was personally experienced today while passing along that narrow path. We were many travelers together. All the way we were talking and laughing, but no sooner did we reach this narrow foot path, than all the conversations ceased and everybody became silent. All topics of talks disappeared. No body thought of one's home nor the thought of any outside subject entered in mind. Mind and soul were fully concentrated on only one thing-keep the next step at the proper place. With one hand we were clutching at the mountain, though there was hardly anything to clutch at. The only solace in doing so was that it may help maintain the body's balance in case it tended to lift towards Ganga. This distance of about 1.5 miles was passed with great difficulty. The heart was beating, heavily throughout. We learnt a great practical lesson today. How careful we have to be in order to protect the life.

This cumbersome patch of journey was over; but its memory brings forth a lot of thoughts. If we always keep seeing death in close vicinity, we

may not indulge in illusory pleasures. The journey to the destination of life is like our journey of today, which called for the need of keeping every step cautiously and correctly. If a single step is taken wrongly or carelessly, it may mean the fall from the aim of life to abysmal depth. If life is dear to us, in order to make it worthwhile, it is necessary that we put forward each step like we did to pass the narrow path, where-after the peaceful journey begins. Life is full of responsibilities like that of the travelers walking along the narrow path alongside Ganga. Only after discharging it properly, can one have respite and hope to get at the cherished goal. The path of duty is narrow like the footpath described above. Carelessness will make you slip and fall to abyss, depriving of the chance to achieve the aim of life. Clutching to the wall of religion will help maintain the balance and help minimize the fear of leaning towards danger. In difficult times this wall is our solace and support. Faith in religion will help a lot in getting along the track and reach the goal.

THE MOUNTAIN OF SILVER

Today I was put up in a room on the top floor of Sukki camp. Right in front was seen the top of the snow-clad mountain. The snow was melting slowly and was flowing down like a small stream. Some pieces of snow were half-melt and were flowing down. The sight was very beautiful and pleasing to the eyes.

In the room which was third from mine, some other travelers were staying. Among them there were two children - a girl and a boy, both about the age of 11 or 12. Their parents were on a pilgrimage. The children were brought on a device called 'Kandri' carried by porters. The children were pleasant natured. Both were debating on what the shining mountain was made up of. They had heard that the mines of minerals were situated in mountains. The boy logically concluded that the mountain in front of us was that of silver. But the girl took exception, reasoning that had it been silver lying so open and unguarded, people would have looted it long back. She, however, could not say what metal the mountain was made of. But she did not agree with the boy and walked off stubbornly.

The debate interested me. The children were also very lovely. I called them both to my side and explained that the mountain was made of stone, but being of high altitude, it is covered with snow. During summer it melts and in winter snow covers it again. It is the snow that shines rendering a silvery appearance. The children got their doubt cleared on this count, but went on asking a lot more questions related to it. I too provided them a lot of information about mountains in order to enhance their knowledge.

This made me think as to how much undeveloped is man's intellect in childhood that an ordinary thing like snow is taken for valuable silver. But when grown up, man thinks more deeply and gets down to the reality. If the human intellect was developed right from childhood, children too would

get to know the reality easily.

But my thinking this way is also wrong, for how far are the elder people free from follies and misconceptions? In the same manner as these children misconceived snow to be silver, the grown ups too consider many worthless or cheap things like pieces of silver or copper, sexual excitements, worthless ego and this mortal body to be of utmost value and stay attracted to there so much so that they do not care to know the aim and purpose of life and wander in darkness.

We are engrossed in transitory and meaningless pleasures and attractions more than the small children do in playing with toys and paper boats. The grown-ups admonish the children for their lack of foresight and spending the valuable time in kite flying, instead of attending to studies. But who will admonish the grown-ups who, like puppets, dance to the pull of strings of sensual pleasures, instead of upliftment of the self? The children were convinced of snow not being silver. But who will convince us that our aim is not sensual pleasure or fancies or desires?

YELLOW FLIES (WASPS)

Today while we were silently passing through dense forest we were suddenly attacked by a flock of yellow flies that were buzzing over some trees. They clung to us so violently that it was hard to pull them off. We drove them by hands, clothes and we even ran to get rid of them. But they did not leave us for a long distance. After over half a mile's running, during which we stumbled and fell down too, the flies left us. Wherever they stung, it swelled up due to poisonous stings. It was paining too.

I began to ponder over the matter. Why did the flies attack us? Did they get anything by doing so? What did they intend to gain by hurting us? Perhaps the flies might have been thinking that the forest territory was theirs: it was their dwelling place; and it had to remain safe for them; no one should trespass that territory. When they saw us passing through, they might have taken it as an act of arrogance, endangering their security and posing challenge to their authority. So they might have deemed it necessary to teach us a lesson for our imprudence and interference.

If this be so, it is sheer folly of the flies. The forest is made by God; not by them. They must stay atop the trees and make their living. Their greed to occupy and keep for themselves the entire territory is unreasonable; for, they have no use of the whole territory. They should also understand that this world is a co-operative proposition. and it is only proper that its use is shared by all. They should have had the forbearance to let us past through it enjoying the beauty, the green cool shade of the trees and fragrance of the flowers. Instead of showing magnanimity, they stung us, lost their stings, some of them were even mauled to death and others badly injured. Had they not exhibited their anger and ego in this

way, they could have spared themselves of the unnecessary losses and our ill-will and bad impression about their being foolish and selfish creatures. From all angles their attack and greed of power did not exhibit any wisdom. They proved true to their name, "Yellow flies" implying mean creatures.

But why blame the poor flies alone? Why should they alone be called foolish? We, the human beings, are also treading the same path as of today's flies. The vast resources created by the Almighty to be shared and used by all, are being grabbed by us to the extent possible for ourselves alone. We never pause to think that the needs of the body and even our family are limited and that our amassing the nature's resources beyond our needs would deprive others for meeting their bare needs. The excess amassment can only help feed the ego of being the owner of vast resources. But the fact remains that the ownership also cannot be kept with oneself for long.

Man too, like the yellow flies, gets blinded by greed and selfishness. He does not acknowledge the rule of sharing the resources and enjoyment. He threatens, shows his might and pounces upon those who impede his vested interest, like the yellow flies did to us. He does not care two hoots for the suffering caused to others by his unethical behavior.

The yellow flies went back after stinging and chasing us for half a mile. But when I think of the terrific attacks perpetrated by man intoxicated by the craze for power, vested interest and ego, my tongue feels shy of blaming the bees.

HOT FOUNTAINS OF THE COLD MOUNTAIN

Since so many days, we have been taking bath in the freezing cold water. Mustering great courage we used to have a dip or two, but due to the biting cold, we could not afford to rub and wash the body clean as required. When we reached Jagnani camp we came to know of three hot water ponds at the top of the hill. We could not resist the temptation to avail this chance of having a pleasant bath of rubbing and washing the body clean. We crossed Ganga by the bridge and panting and tired and resting many a times, we got over the top of hill where the hot springs were situated. There were three ponds side by side. One of them was so hot that you could not even touch it with your hands, leave alone taking bath in it. It was told that rice and pulses bundled in a piece of clothes when dipped in it, would be cooked in no time. We could not experiment it ourselves, but in the second pond which was tolerably hot we bathed to our satisfaction and fulfilled the desire of the preceding weeks. The clothes were also washed well and became clean too.

I wonder why some hot springs exist here and there in the mountains which are subjected to and covered by snow fall, and from whose breast cold streams flow down. It appears that there may be deposits of sulphur inside and might be imparting tremendous heat to the water currents passing beside it. It can be compared to a gentleman endowed with many

virtues and behaving coolly like the cold springs, but also letting out a trace of evil lying hidden inside.

The mountains that wish to keep their cool everlasting should throw out the poison like sulphur from within. Or it may be that the mountains are exposing their defects within through the medium of these hot springs rather than concealing their weakness, so that they shall not be termed insincere or hypocrites. It is bad to have defects, but to conceal them is worse. This mountain knows this principle. How nice would it have been if man too realized it!

The mountain might also have deemed it better to pour out whatever heat is left within so that the passers-by like us, distressed due to coldness, might be benefited. Having become cold from outside, a little heat might be left within. So the mountain might have thought, " why to save the little heat left in when the whole thing has become cold, why not give it to the needy, since I may have no use of it **If only there were people following the ideals of this self-sacrificing mountain that presents the example of surviving in extreme wants and yet serving others with whatever they are left with like these hot springs. However hard we may try, we can never forget these hot fountains of the cold region. Thousands of travelers like me will sing its praise, for it is manifestation of unique sacrifice. Providing heat to others while suffering in cold oneself is like providing food for others while remaining empty bellied one self. I wonder why the intelligent man should remain selfish while the inert, unintelligent mountain does so much?

FEAR OUT OF CONFUSED COMMUNICATION

Today a group of pilgrims to Gangotri also joined us. There were seven members in the group - five men and two women. We were carrying our luggage ourselves, but their luggage was carried by a porter of the hilly area. The porter was a villager and his language was also difficult to understand. He was rude and quarrelsome by nature. While we were going along the top of the hill leading to Jhala camp he pointed to some thing, making a queer and frightening face and muttered something in his colloquial language. What he told was not fully understood but a member of the group thought that he heard the porter uttering Bhalu, Bhalu (Bear) and started looking in the direction indicated by him. The fog was heavy at the time, making clear vision impossible, but some black animals could be seen moving in the area indicated by the porter.

The companion, who heard "Bhalu, Bhalu" from the porter and saw the black animals in the indicated direction, was very much frightened. He was now fully convinced that bears were moving down there. He was some distance behind us, but now he moved as fast as he could and joined us. His lips were dry and trembling with fear. He stopped us and, showing the black animals moving below, told that they were bears and that we were in danger.

Fear gripped all of us, but none could suggest any remedy. The forest was dense and fearsome too. So it was not unnatural for the existence of bears. And it was only two days back that we had heard from the pilgrims who had been to Manasarovar two years back, about the terror of wild bears. Our fear began growing. The black bears were advancing towards us. Due to the thick fog the shape of the animals could not be seen clearly. The black color and their size matching to that of the bears in addition to the utterance "Bhalu. Bhalu" by the porter left us in no doubt about the animals being bears. We then thought it proper to ask the porter himself as to what could be done. When looked for, he was not found to be with us. We concluded that he, sensing the danger, might have hidden himself somewhere or climbed on some tree for safety. We were left helpless against our fate.

We all stood together close, two each facing the four directions, holding our lathis with the sharp pointed nailed end out as if they were guns. The idea was to push the nailed end into the bear's mouth while the others dealt lathi blows on it, in decided that all will stay together and none will run away, come what may. With this scheme, we began to move slowly. The bears that were earlier found coming towards us were now moving downwards. We increased our speed - more than double. To get out of the danger zone as quickly as possible was in every one's mind. All were chanting God's name. Fear had gripped us violently. In this way we covered the distance of nearly a mile and a half.

Fog began to fade. It was about 8 '0' clock. Direct sunlight started spreading. Dense part of the forest was also left behind. People grazing the sheep and goats were seen ahead. We heaved the sigh of relief. With the feeling of having come out of the danger, we sat down to take rest. By now the porter also arrived. Seeing us all frightened he enquired of the reason. The companion said, "God saved us from the bears you have shown us. But you have simply deceived us. Instead of telling us what to do you have hidden yourself in safety."

The porter stood bewildered. He sensed that there was some misunderstanding. When told about the Bhalu (Bear) he had indicated, he got the point which caused the confusion. He explained. "The Aloo (potato) grown in the village 'Jhala' are famous for its big size. Such crop is not grown in any of the villages here. This is what I have told you by sign of fingers. When I told of 'Aloo of Jhala' you heard it as Bhaloo (bear). The black animals you saw are the black cows that graze here all the day. Due to the fog, they appeared to you like bears. There are no bears in this region. They are found on the higher mountains. I stayed behind for easing beside the stream. Else I would have been with you and there would have been no confusion."

We laughed at our folly and were ashamed as well. We blamed and ridiculed the comrade who heard the porter wrong. Fear was transformed into humor. We were talking about it the whole day. Recalling what every one said or did in the state of fear, there went on mutual teasing throughout the day.

Everyone was delighted to prove that others were more frightened. The journey passed joyfully. The subject became a good entertainer.

The incident about the bear which was a reality and the question of life and death an hour before, eventually turned out to be a mere confusion. It made me think that there are many confusions and misconceptions rooted in our life due to which we remain constantly under imaginary fear. But ultimately they all prove to be mental weakness. Under the false notion that we will be looked upon as poor and ordinary fellows, if there happens any shortfall in our pomp and show, many of us indulge in heavy expenditure which is difficult to meet out. It is proper to be conscious of public opinion when the question of losing moral and character arises, but if such notion is nurtured with regard to decrease in show and pomp, it would be considered as vanity causing worthless expenditure. It is weakness of mind that makes us think that simplicity is the sign of poverty; and that no one will respect us. Take for example our incident of today where fear was caused by a silly confusion.

These days, on seeing all kinds of worries, troubles, dilemma, provocations, desires and ill will arising before us, the world appears to be evil and frightening. Every thing here appears frightful like the bear. But when the light of the knowledge of self dawns, when the fog of ignorance fades out, when mental weakness diminishes, we realize the mistake in having assumed the cows to be bears. When the light of true knowledge dawns, we realize that those, whom we thought to be enemies are in fact our own images and are a part of God. If God is dear to us, his creations too must be auspicious and benevolent. When we picture them grotesquely, they appear dreadful. This wrong picturisation is the making of our weak mind like our misconception of Aloo (Potato) to be Bhaloo (bear).

THE WEeping MOUNTAIN

On our way today we saw the weeping mountain. Its stone was soft. Some spring water was blocked above and had no meansto pass through. The soft stone began to absorb it, but where will the absorbed water go? It was wetting the mountain downwards. This wetness, when accumulated, began tofall down in drops. People with imagination called them the drops of tears. At the places where wetness accumulated, soil particles carried y wind got stuck and soft green moss began to grow there. Moss is called keechad in the hilly language here. When the mountain weeps, its eyes must be aching as the result of which keechad is exerted by the eyes. This is a simple imagination. We saw this weeping mountain today and wiped the tears too. We felt the moss with our fingers. We could only do this much. Who would ask the mountain as to why it was weeping? And if asked, could it have replied?

But imagination is very adamant. Mind began to talk to the mountain. “Oh! Mountain King, you are blessed with so much of wild beauty and grandeur. You need not have to wander here and there. By simply sitting at a place you are enjoying your days. Then what is it that worries you? Why do you weep?”

The rocky mountain stood silently. But the mountain in the imagination began to talk. “How can you understand the pain I feel in my heart? I am very high and decorated with nature’s beauty and am living without any care and worries. Apparently I have everything, but can this inert, indolent, inactive life be called a life at all? The life devoid of movement, action, struggle, hope, enthusiasm, effort etc. is akin to a dead one. The joy lies in action. To remain at ease and idling is different from enjoying rest. It is the calmness of the graveyard. No sensible person will call it rest or happiness. Those who play on the play ground of nature, feel more and more fresh and energized as they play on. Every one in the nature marches ahead like valiant warriors, vanquishing front after front. On the contrary, here I am the one who is sitting pretty, stomaching the wealth and exhibiting splendor. Dear child of imagination, you may call me rich, wealthy and lucky but I am simply inactive. Others leave their indelible imprint on the pages of history, by serving others with their capacities, earn eternal fame and feel proud on seeing others getting benefited by their deeds. But I have conserved all the resources to myself. If I emit the mossy exertion through my eyes due to weeping out of self pity, there is nothing to be wondered at.”

My little imagination conversed with the Mountain Kind and was satisfied with the reason expressed by it. But at the same time it was sad too. The imagination wished how nice would it have been had it (mountain) made pieces of itself and offered to be used for making roads, bridges, buildings etc. in that case it might not have looked high and huge or it would have even lost its identity as a mountain, but its life would have been fruitful and accomplished. Being deprived of this chance to be so it is only natural that the Mountain King is weeping over its misfortune.

THE LOAD CARRYING SHEEP

Sheep which is a small animal is indispensably benevolent Kamdhenu (the heavenly cow which fulfils all desires) for this mountainous region. It gives milk, wool and lambs. It also carries loads. On the way today, a flock of sheep numbering about 100 to 125, having long wool, were seen laded with goods. They were carrying goods like jaggery, rice, flour etc. to Gangotri. Depending on the height and capacity, each sheep was carrying load weighing about 10 to 15

pounds. Apart from mules, sheep is the only means for transporting goods in this hilly region. Other animals or vehicles are of no use on these hilly paths.

I began to think – It is not necessary to stress on large means to solve the problems of life unlike what is commonly thought. A man can live happily and peacefully with ordinary means. Limited industrialization is acceptable. But big industries would grab the livelihood of these sheep as well as the people who depend on them and all the wealth would be concentrated in the hands of a few industrialists. The root cause of all the war clouds hovering over the world today is the greed for monopolizing the market for industries.

On seeing the line of sheep, I began to wonder why it is not possible to live peacefully by adopting simple innocent folks who tend the sheep and live on the limited earning. In olden days, India followed the ideal of decentralization. Rishis and Munis (Saints and Sages) lived in hermitages forming a unit. Villages were larger units. Everybody fulfilled their requirements from their own area, from their own society and lived happily in co-operation. There was scope neither for corruption nor for ill doing. In today's mad race of industrialization, villages are uprooted; cities are flourishing; the poor are trampled upon and the rich are growing richer. The terrible machines roaring like demons, are destroying the health, relations and morality. That which are being built on the foundation of this mechanism, industrialism and capitalism are called developments but they will eventually be proved as destruction.

Thoughts are getting incoherent. Small thing is assuming large shape in the mind. So let me stop these lines here, but the sheep cannot be forgotten, even if tried to. They remind the ancient social system prevailed in India. In the present culture, who will consider the utility and helpfulness of the poor sheep? These poor creatures will only be ridiculed as a symbol of old era. Yet truth will remain truth. If and when humanity will attain peace and contentment, power and resources will have been decentralized and in that system everyone will be living happily and contented by one's own labor, just like the sheep-tending folks along with their bleating sheep are living here.

NATURE'S RUDRABHISHEKA (NATURE'S WORSHIP OF LORD SHIVA)

Today we reached Bhojwasa camp. Tomorrow morning we have to set out for Gomukh. Here there is no traffic. Travelers are met with between Gangotri and Uttar Kashi. In camps also crowd is common there, but not so here. Today we are only six of us in all. Everybody has brought with him his own tiffin. Though it is called Bhojwasa (catering establishment) and also has an inn no such facilities as available at the lower camps were to be had here.

On looking at the mountain in front, it was felt as if Himagiri (a mountain peak) was performing worship of lord Shankar by pouring water over it by its own hands. The scene was celestial. From a great height, a thin stream was falling down. Down below, there was a nature made Shivinga. The water was falling over it. While falling, the water was getting scattered into tiny water drops and the sunrays falling on them rendered the beauty of rainbow. It made the feeling that Shiva was present in reality and the gods were showering on him flowers of all colors from the Milky Way. The scene was so enchanting and engrossing, that the mind would not get off from looking at it continuously. I kept on looking at it until darkness pulled the curtain over it.

Beauty is the thirst of Soul. But how can it be found in the mud of artificiality? People decorate their homes with pictures of these forests and mountains and enjoy their beauty. But none cares to look at the immense beauty spread all over in nature's lap. Throughout the journey here all along the way, beauty is seen overflowing. The Himalayas are called the ocean of beauty. The bath in it renders a pleasant vibration in the soul in the inner body, and the mind longs to get lost in this boundless beauty.

Today's scene was really nature's wonder, but in the imagination I was getting a glimpse of the celestial pleasure as if seeing God Shiva, right before me in reality. I was inwardly feeling immense joy. If only I were able to describe even a part of this joy for the benefit of those who are not here, and let them get the feel of this celestial joy by reading it.

THE MILESTONE

The same difficulty as was faced during the journey from Uttar- Kashi in the beginning was faced again today. The widening and repairing work of the road up to Bhatwadi camp was going on. So the milestones were not there during those days. The road was steep and hence the journey along it on foot was very tiresome. The way was all along laden with the beauty of the forest. Yet the delight and excitement it generated in the beginning was diminishing due to

constantly seeing it all day, all along and all the twenty-four hours. The lonesome journey through the barren and unpeopled place was also very unpleasant. Anyone who is used to the life of hustle and bustle in the midst of people feels it difficult to bear the solitude. When this loneliness and hard physical strain tries the mind and body, the lone desire is to know how much distance has been covered and how much yet to remains to be covered.

After walking some distance, it was usually enquired from the travelers coming from the other direction as to how far away the next camp was. The distance to be walked was thus estimated on the basis of that information. Some travelers happened to be egoistic and would disregard the question and would not answer. Some did not know the distance, some would tell the approximate distance; but their approximation differed by many miles. So there was no certainty about the correctness of the information given. So it was a hopeless situation for a lone traveler. When traveling in group of five or six people, joyfully walking, talking and laughing, the journey passes off without feeling any strain but the difficult journey all alone is very exacting. Under this situation how helpful is the milestone was badly felt during the journey from Bhatwadi to Gangotri. In the absence of the milestone the walls of the mountain was whitewashed at places, and thereon the distances were indicated in red figures like 25/6 and so on. It meant that the spot was 25 miles and 6 furlongs away from Dharasu. From the mileages of camps mentioned on the maps, the distance to the next camp could be assessed. In this loneliness this information on the walls was very helpful. The entire journey was completed in this manner. After reaching every furlong, there was the satisfaction of having covered so much distance and the solace that only this much distance remained to be covered.

Again this time on the way from Gangotri to Gomukh, there are no milestones or furlong stones and the difficulty experienced on the way from Uttar-Kashi is repeated. This journey of 18 miles from Gomukh to Gangotri was performed with great difficulty. The path itself too was very hazardous. And to top it all was the absence of the milestones that were the travelers' guide! While writing these lines, I feel the distress all the more.

How insignificant is a milestone! Its cost, qualification, ability, education, intelligence etc. are all ridiculous. But it stands erect at a fixed spot with a fixed duty. It never thinks of moving from the spot. It knows only one thing i.e. the distance from Dharasu to this spot is so much. With this much knowledge it has set out to serve. How useful its firm faith proves to be. Innumerable travelers like me get guidance from it and get relief from worrying about the distance between the places.

When a small piece of stone can serve to guide, when a small earthen lamp of little value can offer light in darkness and help save from mishaps and dangers, should service-minded human beings remain idle only because of their ability, education, intelligence etc. being little and limited? Everybody has some drawbacks and shortcomings, but each one of us can serve at least those among us who are less educated, less intelligent and less fortunate. Instead of indulging in useless talk that such and such thing could be done if such and such potentiality and ability were there, would it not be better to do whatever we can with whatever we are capable of to help and guide others to better themselves. The milestone knows only the distance between Dharasu and Gangotri and nothing else. Yet its service is not of any less importance, the inconvenience and hardship caused by its absence during the journey from Uttar-Kashi to Bhatwadi is pestering me even in the midst of the happy imagination of the joy. I am going to have the Darshan (a view of the holy sight) of Gomukh tomorrow.

Most of us are capable of serving humanity better than the milestone, but the opportunity to prove our utility will come only when we firmly come forward with self-confidence and dedication with whatever ability we possess.

OWN AND ALIEN

Constant walking has caused blisters on the feet. Today when I looked at the feet, there were in all ten blisters of Varying sizes, I had worn canvas shoes hoping that they would help to walk on the hard terrain, but they too caused injuries on two places. The small injuries and blisters were white and the larger ones filled with water inside were of yellow color. The walking became painful. It looked as though the legs were expressing their helplessness in walking by bearing their suffering.

The destination is far ahead. In any case I have to reach at the appointed place by Gurupoornima day, the full moon of Ashadh. What to do when the legs are not in fit condition? Somehow I walked limping yesterday, but today I feel it difficult. Some of the blisters have ruptured and are becoming septic. If it gets worse, walking would become extremely difficult, and if I could not walk, I would not be able to reach the destination in time. It worried me the whole day.

To walk barefooted is also difficult. The entire way is littered with sharp stone chips that pierce like thorns into the feet and cause immense pain. A solution was devised. Half of Dhoti (lion cloth) was torn out and made two pieces of it. Each foot was bandaged with it. The shoes were put in the bag. It worked, slowly I started walking.

On one side there were my own feet that began to express their inability at my hour of need, and on the other side was this Lathi of bamboo (staff) which, God knows where it was born and how and when it came with me, is helping like a brother. Like the old and sick people when felt tired are carried by their near and dear ones on their shoulders, this lathi, is lending me support like one's own relatives and friends.

The way beyond Gangnani camp was very slippery due to rains. The path alongside Ganga was narrow and the high mountain stood beside it. On this fatal path, this lathi alone helped to get over the difficulty, had this one too given way like the shoes, God alone knows if I would have been here to write these lines today.

The shoes that were bought with high hopes have caused injury. The legs that were relied upon also expressed inability in this critical time. But this worthless lathi proved to be so helpful that I feel indebted to it to no end. I feel like going on singing its praise.

Expectations from those that were one's own failed. It annoyed much. But at the next moment the thought of the faithfulness of this unknown alien lathi, came to mind. It gladdened me. Instead of worrying over and cursing those that created trouble, why not remember the one that has graciously helped aliens? In this creation of God all are our own and all are aliens too.

SO SATISFIED WITH SO LITTLE

Today all along the way I have been carefully observing the hazardous life of the hilly people and pondering over it. Wherever small soil patches admeasuring a few square feet were found in the hills, they were made use of for cultivation. Tilling the land using bullocks was out of question here. So the job was done by pickaxes. When the crop matures it is cut and carried to their residence up above the hills, where thrashing is carried out. Where there are no streams, water from the valleys down below is carried on head or backs to the mountain above. Men are seen few. Ladies do all the work themselves. Collection and carrying of firewood from the jungle higher above are also done by ladies.

These people have to climb up and down many times more than we do on our journeys that tire us. They have no means of entertainment either. They were clad in hand spun woolen or cotton clothes, mostly torn or patched. Yet they were happy. While working in the fields they were singing in chorus. Being not acquainted with their language, the meaning of the songs could not be

understood but the joy and enthusiasm coming out of them was easily comprehensible.

In comparison to the people here, those living on plains are many times better off in richness, wealth, education, food, shelter, clothing and convenience of all sorts. Comparatively they have to toil much less. Yet they are unhappy and unsatisfied. They always go on crying over their wants. In contrast these people enjoy peace, happiness and satisfaction by living on whatever comes to their lot after putting up a lot of hard work. Why this difference?

It appears that dissatisfaction is a tendency which is not due to materials but greed. Greed cannot be satisfied with materials. It is an abyss. Had it not been so why should those living on plains, with much more comforts than the hilly inhabitants with so little, be unhappy and dissatisfied? Why should the hilly people with so little enjoy peaceful and joyous life?

Having more means is not bad. They are also necessary. But what is desirable is to be satisfied with what one gets and not to indulge in acquiring more than required. And why remain unhappy and dissatisfied by disregarding the available gift of God.

The path we have adopted in the race of modernity by spending more and remaining more dissatisfied is not correct. It is amply illustrated by these hilly people, though they are unable to deliver lectures on it or write thesis on this subject.

THE ROARING “BHERON” VALLEY

Today I crossed the Bheron valley. The traders' route to Tibet via Tailang valley passes by this way. Merchants from Harshill use this route to take timber for sale in Tibet from where they purchase woolen articles to sell here. Since the ascend is very steep, one gets tired and starts panting which makes it necessary to take rest at frequent intervals.

I was resting leaning against a mountain rock. Down below Ganga was roaring the like of which was heard nowhere else along the way. Particles of water were seen rising high up to about 30 to 40 feet. I became curious to know why Ganga is roaring so loud, why she is so much energetic, why so violently speedy here. I began to look below, around and far and wide.

It was noticed that here Ganga is passing through a narrow course between two closely standing hills. The width might hardly be 10 to 15 feet. So it is natural for the water to develop so much velocity. Along the course there were

also blocks of rock against which the water was striking resulting in the roaring sound. The water, when broken, used to rise like pieces of brick. The scene of the speeding Ganga here is worth seeing.

At places like Soron, where Ganga is miles wide, the velocity is very slow. It has neither fury nor hurry. But here the velocity is intense because it has to pass through this narrow space between the mountains. Man remains unhappy because of his activities getting scattered in numerous fields. So he can not create anything worthwhile. But when a man restricts his fields of activities and concentrates his energy thereon, astonishing results are found to be achieved. Is it not what Ganga proves here? Should we not emulate Ganga's example so as to achieve something worthwhile by proper use of our energy, rather than frittering it away on inconsequential matters?

The blocks of rock lying in the course of the stream compel the water to face the struggle by striking against them. The roaring and thundering were due to this struggle. The water particles were rising above like balloons of cotton. The action made me think that man's potential too would remain unexploited and unrealized if life is spent in peace, pleasure and merriments without any struggle. If man could conserve his courage, capabilities, endurance, patience, and perseverance, his fame too would echo far and wide, like the roaring of Ganga here. The particles of the special qualities of his personality would be seen rising high like the shining water particles of Ganga. Ganga is unafraid, passes through the little narrow available path; she does not get frightened by the hurdles, on the contrary she strikes against them and makes her way. Alas! If only our inner sense were charged with such profound energy and enthusiasm, we too could have had the opportunity to refine our personality.

STRAIGHT AND CROOKED TREES

Today I passed through a dense forest of Pine and Cedar trees. Seeing these tall and straight trees I felt very happy. They were so straight that they appeared like poles kept erect on the mountain slope. They were thick and strong too.

There were also trees of Tamar, Dadra, Pinkhu and the like which were bent and crooked. They had sprouted branches in all directions and all of them were thin too. Except few, all the rest were used as fire wood. The contractors used them to prepare coals as well. These trees occupy a lot of space, but they are of ordinary use only. The pine and cedar trees are used for building and furniture works, but the bent and crooked variety of trees are not useful for such works. So they are not considered to be of much worth and are cheap in price.

It is observed by me that the trees which are tall and straight have not sprouted their branches all around. They have grown straight to the top without caring to turn this way and that. It is natural to rise high when energy is concentrated only in one direction. The pine and cedar trees have adopted this very policy and they are proclaiming the success of this policy, holding their heads high. Contrary to this, the bent and crooked trees that had no firmness, or constancy, but had the flirting mind spread their branches in all directions, wanting to enjoy the tastes of all sides, as well as to see where better comfort could be had from, and how to get fast success. In this endeavor branches were spread in all directions. Its body was covered with numerous small twigs and the tree appeared to be huge and expressed false pride in its achievement of the large number of branches and twigs.

Time passed. The roots found it hard to procure water and manure to feed all the branches and twigs well enough. As the result, the growth was hampered and the twigs became thin and weak. The trunk of the tree also grew weak, and could not gain much height. When divided in all directions, how could it remain strong? These poor Dadra and Pinkhu trees expanded themselves by spreading branches in all directions, but wise people did not find them of much value. So their search of success by flirting in all directions ultimately proved to be unwise.

No wonder, if the cedar trees who unwaveringly grew up, aiming only upwards laugh at the silliness of these trees. Likewise, if wise men look down upon our failures due to frittering our energy in various interests there will be nothing unjust in it.

LEAFY VEGETABLES

Vegetables are not much in vogue here. Other than potatoes no vegetables is available here. Potatoes are costlier too because these have to be brought from far away places and transportation is also very difficult. The shopkeepers at the camps sell them at the rate of one rupee per seer (half kg.). Though there are small cultivable patches here and there by the side of small streams, there is no practice of growing vegetables. I am bored of eating potatoes daily. On enquiry from the shopkeepers and the local inhabitants they told that the leaves of three kinds of trees in the forest can be used as vegetables. They are (1) Morcha, (2) Lingda and (3) Kola.

One of the natives was given some money and was asked to bring the leaves of one of these varieties. The tree was there right behind the camp and the man brought a good quantity of the leaves of Morcha within no time. The mode of preparation was also learnt from him. When prepared, it tasted nice. The next day Lingda leaves and the day after Kola leaves were obtained and cooked. They

too were tasty. Each of the three varieties of these leafy vegetables was tastier than the other. It pleased the mind. The deficiency of green vegetables for over a month was made good by these tasty leaves and I felt very satisfied.

On the way thereon as well as in camps, I used to talk to the natives and asked why they were not using these green leafy vegetables that were abundantly available there. I explained to them that leafy vegetables are very good for health also. But none of them took my advice nor considered these leaves to be tasty and beneficial. Finding their disinterest, the topic was dropped.

I feel that unless the utility is known, the importance of no matter in the world can be realized. In my view all those three leafy vegetables were useful and hence I found them important, apart from being tasty. The natives here neither knew their utility nor considered them of much use and hence could not make use of them despite being abundantly available there. Be it matter of knowledge, unless the utility is understood, man is neither attracted towards it, nor makes any use of it. So more than a thing being important, the greater role lies in knowing its use and getting convinced of it.

All around us, there are many things and means whose knowledge and adoption in life would benefit us a lot. Celibacy, physical exercise, getting up from bed before sunrise, prayer in the morning, noon and evening, proper utilization of time, pious food, regularity in daily routine, non-indulgence in bad habit, sweet talk, good behavior etc. are some of the many useful practices, which are not only highly beneficial but not difficult to adopt too. Yet most of us disregard them as useless and remain deprived of the benefits attainable by their adoption.

These hilly natives were unaware of the benefits of these leafy vegetables abundantly available around them and hence were unable to take their advantage. But they are not to be blamed. How many means of self-betterment are available around us? How many of us adopt them and take the benefits? In folly too, none like to lag behind.

REACHED UPTO THE CLOUDS

Today it has been raining since morning. Normally, clouds were seen daily passing over the mountains top, but today they have come down much low. The valley that has been crossed today was over 10,000 ft. above sea level. The sight of clouds attackingly approaching us was very entertaining to watch and very exciting too. The clouds appearing like mountains of carded cotton were flying fearlessly across us. A sort of white darkness made of thick fog

surrounded us and dampened our clothes. Had it rained then, we could have seen for ourselves how the clouds were melting and forming rain drops.

When we used to see clouds in our village, they were seen very much high up. My grand mother used to tell us that gods lived over there where the clouds were seen. According to her, clouds are the vehicles of gods by riding on which they roam about wherever they want and also send down rains wherever they pleased. In childhood I used to wish how nice it would be I could avail the pleasure of riding on the clouds and go roaming about at will. In those days I imagined the clouds to be very costly – many times costlier than aero planes. For riding on aero plane, one should purchase it, arrange for petrol and oil and learn to fly it, all of which were very difficult. But for clouds! Nothing to bother, sit over it and get going, that's all.

Today I did not ride on the clouds like I imagined in childhood. But seeing them flying and moving with us thrilled me. We rose to such a height where clouds touched our feet. It made me think that the difficult targets that seem to be too high and unattainable could be reached in this manner. The endeavor to climb over the mountain made us reach up to the clouds. The magnitude of duty is also of Himalayan height. If we go on climbing, without giving up we can rise much above the common people who are engrossed in mundane needs of food and sex. Take this example of ours in reaching over 10 thousands feet height due to going on climbing.

Clouds are difficult to touch. But on top of mountain they are very close. High sense of devotion of duty can take us as high as the clouds and the clouds which were thought to be unreachable were forced to come to us. The tendency to rise high, carry us to the height of clouds and make them come to us. Thoughts like these were swelling up in the mind while touching the clouds. But what can thoughts alone do? If they can not be put into action they would die out like a ripple in the mind.

APPLE OF THE FOREST

In today's journey there were any pilgrims to travel together. Among them there were some women too. Along the way Binni trees were seen bearing beautiful fruits. The ladies began to ask among themselves as to which king of fruits they were. Some one among them told that those were apples of the forest. Do not know wherefrom se had heard of them being apples of forest. But it was concluded that those were apples of the forest anyway. Fruits were in abundance, and wore a mixed color of red and yellow which imparted the impression of their being ripe.

The group of ladies stood back. A grown up girl climbed on the tree. It seemed that she must have had the practice of climbing on trees in her village. She shook down about 40 to 50 fruits. The ladies standing on the ground picked them up scrambling. Some could pick up more than the others, and some of them less. Those who got less were quarrelling with those who got more. While quarrelling, the lady who got less was accusing that the other woman blocked her way and picked up more, letting her not to pick. The woman who picked up more retorted that she picked up more because of her speed in work and her ability to move fast are bound to be in profit. If you had quick movements you could have outdone me and collected more.

They decided to eat them at the camp along with the food. The fruits, they opined, were sweet and beautiful and would taste well with the food. Putting the fruits in their apron, they began moving happily for having collected so much of these costly fruits so easily. Though the quarrelling ceased the ill-will of collecting less and more continued. They were angrily ogling at each other.

The camp was reached. Everyone sat down. Food was prepared. Fruits too were taken out and served. And oh! Those who put in the mouth began to spit out. The fruits were bitter. The beautiful fruits, for collecting which they quarreled and labored a lot and also spent their energy, have turned out bitter. They were greatly disappointed. The native porter standing beside was laughing. He said, "These are fruits of Binni tree. They are not eatable. The seeds are used for extracting oil." The ladies felt ashamed for having collected and carried the fruits without knowing the truth about them.

I too was there and was a witness to entire episode from beginning to end. The ladies now started laughing over the fruit episode. They got a chance to make fun. It is common that people feel happy on laughing over other's mistake and faults. Their mistake was that they assumed the fruits to be sweet and tasty because of their beautiful shape and beautiful be sweet? They would have known it. The ignorance caused them to be ashamed of and made them sorrowful. Moreover they have quarrel led for a worthless cause.

I ponder as to why these ladies alone are laughed at, while nobody laughs at the whole society which is crazy after attractive appearance. Like moths dying over the flame. In the world of appearance, god of beauty is worshipped; pomp and show attract everyone towards them; and due to the temptation people madly fall for worthless things. They spoil their path and in the end repent over the futility of their pursuit, like the ladies who are repenting here now due to having collected the bitter fruits of Binni trees. People who go after appearance would do well to correct their misconception and try to realize the worth rather

than the form. But it is possible only when one is sensible enough to judge the pitfalls of attractive appearance and be able to keep away from it.

None could eat the Binni fruits. They had to be thrown off. Those were not eatable at all. Riches and wealth, beauty and youth, merriment and fun sex and infatuation, enjoyment and easy going and the like are some of the many things which unsettle the mind. But most of the glittering things in the world are such that their acquisition will cause only repentance, like having had to throw away the wild apples.

MULES THAT WALK CAREFULLY

On mountainous region, mules are also used, apart from sheep, for carrying luggage. They are the only means available for transport too. Like we see carts, tangas, rickshaw etc. on our roads, only mules are seen moving safely on the difficult paths of the mountains region.

As we walk with great caution on these mountain foot path, taking proper care of avoid hitting the foot against stones, the mules also walk carefully in the same manner. Our head is so positioned on the body that we can see where we are putting our step and can thus avoid danger. But it is not so with the mules. With the type of movement of neck and position of eyes they are endowed with, they can see ahead, but can not see where the legs are being placed. Yet every step of the mule is always carefully placed at the right spot. Else the slightest fault will cause it fall down and end up the life like the calf of a cow we saw yesterday lying dead on the way to Gangotri due to falling from a height of about 80 feet. The poor thing lost its balance due to keeping one of the legs on the wrong spot. Such happenings are rare. But in the case of mules such instances were never heard of.

The man in charge of the mules told (me) that these animals were extremely careful and were wise in treading the way. They walk fast, yet every step is kept carefully. When they apprehend any dangerous spot they suddenly control themselves, take the step back and search out the safe spot with the leg and then go forward. While walking, its attention is concentrated on the balance between the foot and the ground. Had it not been so they would not have been useful on this difficult terrain.

The wisdom of mules is commendable. While man repeatedly takes wrong steps without caring a bit and consequently suffers without growing wiser, the mules make no mistake in finding the balance of their feet. If only we learn to carefully put our steps on the uneven path of life, our status would also have become commendable like that of the mountain mules.

SIGHT OF GOMUKH (The Origin of Ganga)

Today my long cherished desire of seeing the origin of mother Ganga got fulfilled. The journey of 18 miles from Gangotri to Gomukh is fraught with much more difficulties than those faced in the journey up to Gangotri. When the road to Gangotri gets cut off or blocked, the Government officials of the public works departments arrange to repair it. But this route used by pilgrims not very frequently lies neglected and unrepaired. The mountain roads get damaged every year and if they are not repaired for a year or two the paths become very hazardous. In some places the paths were cut off in such a way that to pass by it was nothing short of gambling with life. A slight slip of step and there ends your life.

The glacier, from which Ganga comes out, is of blue color. This place of origin of Mother Ganga is magnificent by the presence of snow clad mountain peaks. The course of water appears like an ordinary fountain. Though the course is thin its velocity is tremendous. It is said that this course of Ganga comes from Kailash – Shiva’s matted hair. From Kailash to Gangotri Ganga travels underground. The tremendous speed of Ganga at this visible origin is attributed to her having endured the weight of millions of tones of glacier for over hundreds of miles. Whatever that be, for imaginative minds, it is milk coming from mother’s breast. A pious urge surges within to drink it and to get immersed in it like it happened with the writer of “Ganga Lahari” (Waves of Ganga) a composition of poems written in praise of Ganga by Shri Jagannath Mishra, who went on reciting his own composition, putting one step ahead with the chanting of each stanza and at the end of the last stanza plunged into Ganga in a fit of emotion and accepted the watery grave (Jal Samadhi).

I satisfied my urge by taking the sip and dip in Ganga. Throughout the way imagination and emotions were billowing like the waves of Ganga. Many thought appeared and disappeared. At this time I can not restrain the urge to write down an important thought surfaced on the mind. So here I put it.

Here at Gomukh Ganga is only a thin tiny course. On the way hundreds and thousands of fountains, streams and rivers join it. Some of them are many times bigger than Ganga at its origin. It is only due to all those rivers and streams and fountains joining her that Ganga has become so large and wise as seen at Haridwar, Kanpur, Prayag etc. Big canals are constructed to carry water from Ganga for irrigation. The water from Gomukh will not suffice of even a single canal. If no other stream or river had joined Ganga its water would have been absorbed by the soil within the matter of a few miles, and it would have come to halt, thereby ending the opportunity to progress. Ganga is great, certainly great,

for it has bound the streams and rivers in the bond of love. She threw open her apron of magnanimity and embraced them to her heart. Taking no notice of their virtues and faults, she assimilated them all in her fold. How can one whose heart is full of feeling of boundless love, intimacy and oneness be short of water? When the lamp burns, moths also get ready to burn themselves over it. When Ganga has set out on the path of public welfare by spreading coolness, why should not the rivers and streams come forward to sacrifice themselves in it. We can see for ourselves in the soul of Gandhi, Buddha, Jesus and the like.

Ganga's bed level is the lowest. This has enabled the streams and rivers to fall into it. On the contrary if Ganga had, instead of keeping herself low and humble, held her level high feeling proud of her qualities, other streams, though not much worthy would not have tolerated her conceit and would have turned away from her feeling rather jealous. The magnanimity of the streams is truly great and their sacrifice is also praiseworthy, yet it is the humility of Ganga in presenting herself low that has given the opportunity to the streams to make their existence fruitful. Ganga has many other great attributes but this one virtue alone is so great that one cannot adequately admire her.

The farsightedness of the streams and rivers in renouncing their own ambition of attaining fame, keeping their separate identity and importance is also highly appreciable. They enrich the capacity and greatness of Ganga by losing themselves. They realized the importance of collectivism, unity and co-operative working. So they deserve unbound appreciations. They did not preach nor discoursed on the strength of unity but showed it practically by their deed. This is called courage of conviction. This unique example of renouncing one's identity is not only great but fraught with foresightedness too. Had they insisted on perpetuating their separate identity and sought to acquire the credit of their performance for themselves, they could surely have had their own name and fame, but that would have been considered not of much value. In that condition, no one would have considered their water to be holy nor worth using for sanctifying body and soul.

The sacred Gomukh that I saw and bathed in today is only the origin of Mother Ganga. The complete Ganga is formed by the collective effort of thousands of streams and rivers. Gangasagar has welcomed it. The entire world worships it. Only a few fellows like me go in search of Gomukh and reach it.

I wish that a sacred united force may emerge to eradicate sin and promote universal welfare. If only our leaders and their followers could pick up this example of collective working like Ganga and her tributaries are doing.

MAIN DARSHAN (VIEW) IF TAPOVAN

I felt blessed on having had the sacred sight of the origin of goddess Ganga. In appearance, Gomukh is a gap in a huge rock through which a small fountain having the purity of milk is gushing out. Due to the tremendous force of flow the water strikes against the stones lying on its way so hard that the drops of water rise very high. The sunrays falling on this spray of water create rainbow whose beauty is simply to be seen to be enjoyed.

The soul gets purified by merely remembering the message of redemption and the great culture which mother Ganga, starting from this pious source, has been spreading throughout ages. I wish I were able to contain forever this sight in my eyes.

My destination was still ahead. The area surrounded by Ganga, Vamak, Nandanvan, Bhageerathi peak and Shivlinga Mountain is the heart of the Himalayas. Innumerable unknown souls of very high stature are dwelling here and are engaged in acquiring the necessary power required for the purpose of redeeming this world. It is neither fair nor necessary to discuss it here. It would be rather premature too. Hence I desist from throwing light on this matter.

Here onwards my guide has been directing me along the path. After negotiating miles of hazardous ascends I got the glimpse of Tapovan an interior region situated beyond Gomukh. The snow-clad mountain peaks were spreading their supernatural beauty all around. There was the sight of Shivlinga Mountain in front looking exactly as if huge serpents are poised with their raised hoods. Those who are endowed with the vision of imagination could see with their naked eyes, the sight of God Shiva with matted hair. On the right side there is the purple snow mountain of Sumeru. The other radiant bluish mountain peaks are called Brahmapuri. A little behind on the left side is Bhageerath Mountain. It is said that this is the place where Bhageerath performed penance (tap) whereon Ganga was pleased to grant his request to come down to earth.

There is rock called Bhageerath Shila near Gaurikund in Gangorti which is also said to be associated with the tap of Bhageerath. Anyway this snow-clad mountain is Bahgeerath Mountain in fact. Engineers also consider this mountain to be the place of origin of Ganga. Behind Bhageerath mountain there is Nilgiri Mountain wherefrom Neel River with bluish water flows. All these colorful mountains of heavenly beauty can be seen from a high spot. When snow starts melting, the wide expanse of Bahgeerath plateau becomes inaccessible. When ice breaks, huge gaps are formed. If anyone ventures to get there, the chance of his coming back is remote. When the melting is over by August September, it really appears like Nandanvan, the garden of heaven. This is not simply a lovely

name of the place, but here the atmosphere is truly heavenly. In those days there sprouts soft grass all over and the whole area is filled with the fragrance of flowers and rare plants. The earth here is decorated with flowers. There is no wonder if gods dwell on such beautiful part of earth. If Pandavas had come here for heading to heaven there appears to be no exaggeration.

The beauty of Tapovan which is the heart of the Himalayas is inexplicable. Reaching here is equally difficult. Hardly anyone may venture to stay here and enjoy the beautiful sight at temperature below Zero degree Celsius. Badrinath and Kedarnath come within the range of this holy Tapovan. Going along the existing route, the distance from Gomukh to Badrinath is about 250 miles. But if one goes along the route crossing Mana pass the distance from tapovan is only about 20 miles (32km.). Likewise Kedarnath is only 12 miles (20 km.) from here. But it is not possible for everyone to tread the snow-clad track. This Tapovan is called paradise. On reaching here I felt that I was really standing in heaven. This is all due to the showering of kindness of that supreme power at whose orders this body is merely dancing like a puppet in the hands of puppet artist.

THE HUT IN SOLITUDE

It is silent all around this hut. The nacre is till. Silence of the solitude is unnerving. The day passed off and the night arrived. Due to strangeness of the surrounding, sleep was eluding me. The fear was not due to ferocious animals, thieves, snakes or evil spirits, but loneliness. The body had no work except turning from side to side. The brain was also idle and devoid of any work. So the old habit of thinking started its process. Why fear arises in loneliness?

An answer sprouted from within. Man is a part of Samashti (The totality of universe). It is Samashti that has nourished him. Like fish which is blended with the element of water can survive only in water, man can also be happy and comfortable only in the society due to his being the part of Samashti, being a spark of the vast expanse of consciousness. In loneliness the connection with the vast society is snapped, with the result that his inner growth is arrested. The uneasiness due to this deficiency can be the reason for fear.

The imagination went still further. In support of the established faiths, it brought forth many memories of loneliness and many instances of having suffered in loneliness. Those instances had no trace of happiness; it was simply passing the time somehow in boredom. The memory of the loneliness in the condemned prisoner's dark cell of solitary confinement where I was put in during the days of freedom struggle surfaced. There was no disturbance in that room, but solitude exerted pressure on the mind. When I was released after as month my body was pale like a ripe mango. I felt dizzy, while standing.

Since solitude was uncomfortable every part of the brain was engaged in proving the futility and demerits thereof. In fact brain works like a loyal servant. According to the mood of the mind it gathers and presents a mountain of proofs, evidences, logic, reason, thoughts and examples. To judge what is right and what is wrong is the job of the sense. The duty of the brain is only to present necessary materials to justify the stand taken by the mind.

The brain now began to think like a philosopher. The selfish people think only of themselves, only about the profit and loss to self. They consider none to be their own. So they remain deprived of the joy of community. Their conscience is barren and devoid of any noble feeling. There rose before my eyes, the example of some persons who had everything by way of riches, wealth and earthly means of comfort, but due to their narrow outlook they have nobody of their own. All of them are unhappy and suffering from something.

The flow of thought was going fast in its own direction and it seemed that it is bent upon proving that solitude is not only futile but harmful and

troublesome too. Personal inclination would then be able to stress its point i.e. why to go after this folly. Why not live among the society and gain what is possible?

The discretion sensed the wrong going of the mind and said. "If solitude is that worthless, why should the Rishis, Sadhaks, devotees, aspirants, thinkers and scientist go after it? Why do they avail such atmosphere? If solitude has no importance why is it sought after for availing Samadhi (The state of super-consciousness and self-realization). Why is solitude sought to be availed for self study, thinking, penance, concentration etc.? Why do the great men spend their valuable time in this uncomfortable solitude?"

Suddenly the flow of thought that was speeding ahead to prove the solitude to be harmful stopped like a horse does when the reins are pulled. Faith said, "The inspiration of Sadhana in solitude cannot be wicked." Devotion told, "The power that has put me on this path can not guide me wrong." The conscience said, "Soul comes alone and goes alone. It weeps, sitting alone in the jail of this body. Does it feel uneasy in this solitude that is already destined? Sun moves alone and so does the moon. The wind flows alone. Do they feel any discomfort in this?"

Thoughts can be checkmated by counter-thoughts. This psychological principle was proved here. The thoughts that seemed to be fully developed and strong a little while ago crumbled like a house of cards now. The counter-thoughts have defeated them. Spiritual scholars, therefore, tell us the importance of attacking evil thoughts by noble thoughts. Evil thoughts, however strong they may be, can be nullified by noble counter- thoughts. I directly experienced in that lonely night, how faulty conviction can be moulded into noble ones. Now the brain began to work in the direction of finding the utility, necessity and importance of solitude.

Slowly the night began to pass. Getting bored due to not feeling sleepy I came out of the hut and saw Ganga, flowing fast as if being impatient to meet her beloved, the sea. Blocks of stones tried to stop her on the way, but she crossed the hurdles and went past them. Though her body was getting wounded all over, she was neither complaining nor getting disappointed. She hardly made any notice of these obstacles. She was not at all scared of darkness of loneliness. Her thought about the lord of her heart did not let her worry about all these matters. Deeply engrossed in the thought of the beloved, she moved on singing the song of love, renouncing the comfort of sleep and rest.

The moon had reached over the head. Its numerous reflections were glittering on the waves of Ganga, as if Brahm (The Almighty) was explaining this

illusion in the visible form by showing one Brahm becoming many by entering into numerous bodies. The scene was very fascinating. Coming out of the hut, I went over there and sitting on a block of rock began to see the sight attentively without winking the eyes. Within a short while I felt sleepy and slept there on the rock.

It seemed to me, that the course of waster got transformed into a lotus-like beautiful celestial maiden. In that posture of supernatural calmness and ocean-like gentleness it seemed that all the purity of earth has been collected and filled up in one human body for her to appear in. without pausing she came over to a block of rock nearby. To me it appeared that it was happening in reality.

The divine maiden began to say something in her sweet world in very calm and gentle way. I began to hear it attentively as if hypnotized. She said. "Oh Soul in the human body! You don't consider yourself alone in this unpeopled forest. With open eyes, look around and see that it is yourself that are lying scattered in every thing you see around. Don't confine yourself to the conception that you are limited to being a man. In this vast creation, man is also a small creature; he too has a place. But man is not everything. Why feel loneliness where human companions are not present. Other living and inert creatures are also dear to God like man is. Then why don't you consider them your brothers? Why don't you have intimacy with them? Why don't you make them your colleagues? In this solitude there is no human being, but there are innumerable creatures here. Souls in many forms like birds and animals, flies and insects, plant and trees live here in this mountain forest. All these souls have feelings and emotion. If you are able to develop the relation between your soul and that of these supposedly inert and soulless creatures, you can feel the completeness of your incomplete soul.

The divine maiden of heavenly beauty continued without pause:- God has given intelligence to man, but the poor guy could not make use of it for gaining happiness. He misused this divine boon for greed and fancies and remained deprived of the happiness he could get. He, who deserved to be praised, became a creature to be pitied upon instead. But such folly has not been adopted by other creatures on the earth. They may have only very little intelligence, but you to assimilate your feelings with theirs and then see if there is solitude. All are your companions; all are your relatives and friends.

The sleep was broken as soon as I turned the side. I got up hurriedly and looked all around. The divine maiden who was rendering the nectar-like sweet advices was not to be seen. It seemed that she has merged herself in this stream. She might have been transformed back into the course of water. The words spoken in human language were not there to be heard. But the same message

was echoed in the gurgling sound of water. The physical ears could not hear them, but the soul of the ears still understood it, perceiving it.

Was I awake or in dreams? Was it reality or illusion? Were they my own thoughts or divine message? I was confused. I opened the eyes and moved the hand over the head. I tried to find out that which was seen and heard a little while ago, but was unable to find it and was getting no clue either.

By then I saw many reflections of the moon gliding over the waves that were coming together from all sides and appeared to be telling something with smile. When I tried to hear their talk the tiny children-like reflection began telling:- see so many of us moons are here to play with you, to smile and laugh with you. Won't you take us as your companions? Are we not good pals? Man, you have come from the selfish world of yours where only those who are intimate, those who would serve your interest, are dear to you. Those who would be of use to your self interest are yours, and those who won't do so are aliens. Isn't the custom of your world? Leave it and learn the customs of our world here. Here there is no such complication. There is no distinction like own and aliens. There is no selfishness. All are our own. We believe that our own soul dwells in all. You too learn to think this way. Then, with so many of us here you won't feel alone.

You have come to perform some Sadhana (dedicated spiritual pursuit) here, isn't it? Don't you see this Ganga engaged in Sadhana? Engrossed in love how single-minded she is heading forward to meet her beloved. No hurdles on the way can stop her. Does she get darkness or loneliness? Does she get distracted from her aim even for a moment? If you want to adopt the path of Sadhana, then you too have to adopt this way. When your soul too will start moving fast to get to the beloved like Ganga, how can the crowd of people attract you or solitude frightens you? If you want to stay on the shores of Ganga, dear Sadhak, you learn Ganga's Sadhana of love too.

Many tiny moons were dancing with the waves. It seemed like the dance of 'Krishna' and 'Gopis' said to have taken place at Mathura. The waves were the 'Gopis' and the moon played 'Krishna's' role. A Krishna with each Gopi. What a wonderful dance was being seen by the eyes? Mind was immersed in joy. The inner conscience was asking me, "Look, see the glimpse of the supreme beloved. One soul is dancing in each body like the one moon dancing on all the waves.

The whole night passed. Reddish radiance of the dawn began to appear in the eastern horizon. What was seen was simply wonderful. The fear of solitude disappeared. Legs slowly pulled me towards the hut. Now it was light of loneliness that filled the mind.

COLLEAGUES IN SOLITUDE

Man has the wonderful capacity of adapting himself to the surroundings he lives in. When I came to stay in this hut in solitude, I felt loneliness all around. When the loneliness within comes out it sees loneliness everywhere. But now when the narrowness within is giving way to broadness. I feel everything around to be mine and feel oneness with all. Now where is the solitude gone? Now whom to be afraid of in darkness?

It was the night of no moon. The sky was overcast. It was slightly drizzling too. The cold wind was trying to get in piercing the blanket, lying inside the hut on the mat of leaves. The body was today feeling uneasy and unwell. Sleep also deserted me today. The flow of thoughts gushed out. It began to compare the home filled with loving and caring people and means of comfortable living, with this dripping hut in lonely darkness and freezing cold. The merits and demerits began to be enumerated.

The body was feeling uncomfortable. Mind was its comrade. Why should it be pleased with these discomforts? They are one in conspiring against the soul. Brain is their hired advocate. Its business is to support what they are interested in. The brain is like the royal servants who are postmasters in the art of moulding their stand according to the situations in order to please the king and to be in his good books. Judging the mood of the mind it opens the gate for favorable thoughts to pour in. It is expert in easily putting forth innumerable proofs, reasoning, logic and justification of purpose. It was out-doing the advocates in enumerating the merits of household comforts and the demerits of troublesome hut in the solitude. His arguments continued like a tempest.

At that moment a tiny insect in the hut from its hole in the wall against my head, began tuning a song. Getting inspired, one by one all the insects in the hut began singing in chorus. On many earlier occasions the singing of the insects was casually heard. Their songs then appeared to be hoarse, useless and meaningless. But today the mind had no work. So it began to attentively hear the ascending and descending order of the song. The mind had also grown tired of blaming and finding fault with solitude. This flirting monkey always needs new kind of works. It now began to enjoy the song session of the insects.

The insects sang a sweet song. It was not worded in human language, but the ideas and feelings contained therein were same as of human beings. The idea of the song was like this:- Why can't we be infinite? Why not enjoy being infinite? Limitation is bondage. In infinity lies the principle of liberation. How can those whose happiness is limited to sensual pleasure, to whom only a few things and people are considered to be theirs and whose desires are limited to some small

fulfillments, experience the unbound joy available in abundance in the vast world of the Supreme Infinite? Hey creature, you be infinite, expand your soul to infinity; there is happiness all over; experience it yourself and become immortal.

The insects were singing together uninterruptedly like a group of saints, who had relinquished worldly pleasures, singing psalms of salvation to the music of the single stringed instrument. It was for the happiness of self. Moved by the sentiments I got lost in the song. The discomforts in the hut caused by the rain were forgotten. These companions who sang the song of peace in this solitude dispelled the gloom and charged the atmosphere with joy and enthusiasm.

Old habits began to change. The world began to appear wide and vast, when I tried to extend to all the creatures the intimacy, hitherto kept confined to the human beings. I learnt to enjoy the company of other creatures too just like I used to do with human beings. Loneliness was nowhere to be seen now in this un-peopled area.

Today, while I was wandering out of the precincts of my hut, companions began to be seen all around. Tall big trees appeared like fathers and grand fathers. The maroon skinned Birch trees (Bhojpatra trees) looked as if some great hermits clad in their ochre clothes were performing Tap in standing posture. Tall trees of cedar and pine were standing erect in attention like guards standing determined not to let in any wickedness prevalent in human society,

Small tiny plants and creepers were sitting like tiny kids in rows. Their heads were decorated with flowers. When the wind was blowing they began to swing their heads and looked like the children in the lower class shaking their heads in a rhythmic motion while reciting the table of mathematics. The birds perched on the branches were chirping so sweet, that it seemed they were heavenly singers incarnated here in various beautiful forms to sing the virtues and praise of the beauty of the woods. Like naughty boys the deers were playing, running and jumping all over. The wild sheep were loitering in the woods as if they were the landladies' of this forest. Small worms' and reptiles were moving around like the springed toys, their color, shape and graceful gait are all worth seeing. The butterflies and flowers were competing in beauty as if they had a wager to win.

The mountain brook was flowing besides dancing coquettishly like a maiden being unable to hold the freshness of youth within. Its fickle, playing, sprightly movements are so captivating that the eyes and mind stay riveted on the sight. Many other rivers also come and join Ganga. Their meeting at the confluence looked like two emotionally charged sisters embracing each other

while going to the house of their in-laws. Himalaya, the king of mountains, might have given his daughters in marriage to the ocean. How intimately and sentimentally the sisters meet at the time of going to the in-laws' house could be seen here. No duration of time was sufficient to be satiated with this scene of sentiments. One wishes to be looking it for ever.

Like senior kings and leaders who are old in age, the mountain peaks were seen sitting in calm posture as if engrossed in deep thoughts to solve some serious problem. The white snow appearing atop was their white hairs. The small clouds hovering around appeared to be offering head wear of fresh white cotton and also wrapping the naked body with costly blankets and shawls so as to afford protection from cold.

Wherever I looked at, a large family was seen around me. They had no language; they could not speak; but the consciousness dwelling in their soul was speaking a lot without words. Whatever was said was coming straight from the heart and what they preached was practiced too by them. Such unspelt, yet most touching words, were never heard before. Their words went straight into the soul and shook all the cells of the body with a new awakening. Where is the solitude now? Who is to be afraid of? There are colleagues sitting all around.

The golden light of the sun came down to the earth from above the mountain peaks, as if the company of noble souls was enlightening ignorant hearts. The sun stays here and there behind the mountains. Only at mid-day it is seen for a couple of hours or so. Its rays fill vigor and vitality in all the living elements which were otherwise shrinking. Enthusiasm and energy begin to sprout. The sun of knowledge of the self also normally stays behind the peaks of lust and greed; but whenever and wherever it downs its golden rays are invariably seen creating a divine commotion.

My body too came out of the hut in order to enjoy the golden sun rays and moved on to stroll over the green grassy carpet outside. A little distance away there was a hill laden with flowers of several shades and colors. Eyes could not resist their attraction and the legs moved on towards it.

The plants adorned with flowers looked like little children wearing colorful caps, standing together and engaged in planning some game. I too went and sat amidst them, and began to feel like one among them. I wished I would be getting a chance to be a child again, if those little plants accepted me as their colleague.

Imagination went ahead. When the inner self is filled with joy, arrogant thoughts become calm. There is tremendous power in the imagination of man. It

builds the world of its own – not only imaginary but real, powerful and active. Its power is so great that it has created gods and divine beings and by infusing devotion and dedication made them great like itself is. It did not take long to be in that state when the feelings within me began to swell. I felt that these children standing in rows have accepted me as their colleagues and agreed to include me in their group to play with them.

The plant I was sitting by was one having yellow flowers. It was very pleasant natured, smiling faced and talkative. It spoke to me in his language – “Dear friend, you have gone unnecessarily to be born as a man. Is it any life that they live? Always worried, puzzled, tense and grudging! Next time you should be born as a flower and be with us. Do not you see how happy and pleased we are! We all know what peace there is in taking the life like a game and live it that way. Do you not see the pleasure within us coming out in the form of fragrance? The flowers are the manifestation of our laughter. We are loved by all. We offer pleasure to all. We live happily and make happy all those who come close to us. This is the art of living life. Man boasts of his intelligence, but what worth is this intelligence when it could not help him get at the simple process of living the life in peaceful and playful way?”

The flower continued – “I have said this not to tease you nor to extol our superiority, but to acquaint you with a simple truth. While we are not rich, wealthy, learned or talented and yet live the life playfully spreading fragrance around, tell me why man can’t do so. In comparison to us man’s resources are many times more. Yet if he lives in worry, sorrow and unhappiness, it will be attributed to his sheer senselessness.

Dear, you are wise in that you have come to live among and play with us for some time, leaving the ‘wise’ people. If you wish you can learn from us humble beings an important fact about the techniques of living life.”

My head bowed in reverence. “Dear friend Flower, you are very blessed. Though having little resources you have mastered the technique of living life. On the other hand, we waste our available fortune in grudging and grumbling. My dear friend, you are a true counselor. You teach, not by words, but by example of life. Dear young friend, I have come to learn, and will learn a lot from you. Please do not hesitate to teach me like a true friend.”

The ever glad yellow plant laughed heartily, nodded in agreement and said. “There is no dearth of teachers for those who want to learn. At every step teachers are available. But where are the learners? Everyone is gloating over one’s own pride. In order to learn, the door of heart should be kept open. Then knowledge, true knowledge will automatically enter into it like flowing wind.”

MEMBERSHIP OF WORLD COMMUNITY

As per daily routine, today also I set out in the afternoon to enjoy the lovely beautiful scenes of the forest. It served many purposes. Primarily the stroll served to keep the health and physiques in order. But the main motive was to meet and talk to the colleagues in the solitude and enquire of their well being. When the narrow vision of considering oneself as the member of only human being began to expand, intimacy and oneness with plants and trees, birds and animals, moths and insects began swelling up on its own. These members do not speak in the language of man, nor do they have the social order like that of man. Yet the world of this other than human beings has its own place of importance due to their special characteristics and attributes. Man has created many narrow distinctions between man and man on the basis of caste, creed, color, regions, state, nations, language etc. Similarly it is also a narrow concept of man to consider himself to be a member of human community only and other creatures to be of a different origin or to consider them as objects of serving man's needs and greed. Man is only one of the many children of Nature. Though he has many superior qualities and qualifications, the other creatures also have their own special qualities which man does not have. These qualities and specialties are also so wonderful and great as to make man feel himself to be inferior in those respects.

These thoughts were rising in the mind while strolling today. In the beginning the creatures and plants who are the members of this solitude seemed silly and unimportant. But now when they are seen closely and carefully they too are found great and it seems that even though nature has given greater measure of intelligence to man, it has given many other gifts to these unintelligent offspring. Having received those gifts, they can if they choose to, take much more pride than man.

Here there are numerous species of birds that fly to visit far off places very happily. They cross over mountains and change the habitats with the change of climate. Does man have the ability to fly? He has succeeded in flying with aero planes, but can it be compared with the ability of birds to fly on the wings? Man has made a lot of cosmetics and other things to beautify himself; but has he been able to achieve the beautiful color, shape and design of the birds and butterflies who are as attractive as the celestial maidens?

Many kinds of clothes are used by man to safeguard himself against cold. But could any man ever obtain a warm coat of hairs grown on the body like that of bears and sheep? Should not man whose body emits bad odor every moment through every pore feel shy before plants and trees whose flowers spread fragrance every moment? Des man whose body becomes weak and useless and

ends up in death in a span of about 60- 70 years, stand any comparison to pythons, who happily cover a life span of 400 years? Banyan trees live up to thousand years.

The musk deer's sprinting over the mountains here can easily defeat any man in race. Can a man defeat a bear in wrestling? Is there any man who is as industrious and hard working as an ant? Who can collect honey from flowers like the honey bees? Is human eye capable of seeing in darkness, like the cats? Which man can identify man and material on the basis of smell as dogs can? Who can live in water like the fish? Who can separate milk and water like the swans? Who has the strength like elephant? When these virtues and specialties of plants and animals are considered, the pride of man considering himself to be the supreme being in the world can be found baseless.

The thought that man is not everything, prevailed in mind during today's stroll. Not only that he is not the supreme, he is not even the leader of all. True, he has intelligence and power. True, he has amassed a lot of means of pleasure. At the same time it is also true that he has misused this gift. The other creatures of nature are his own brethren. This earth is the mother of them too. They too are entitled to grow and prosper here. But man has enslaved them all. Larded over them, snatched away their comforts and trampled their freedom and happiness. He took away the milk due for the calves and drank it himself. He killed them mercilessly to eat their flesh. He destructed birds and aquatic creatures so as to cater to his taste of tongue and luxury. When you think of the cruel behavior meted out to these creatures by man for the sake of flesh, medicine, fashion, pleasure and luxury, the morality of man appears to be simply a mask that creates an illusion.

The territory where my solitary hut is situated is abundant with terrestrial aquatic and aerial creature, apart from plants and trees. While roaming about, I meet them naturally. In the beginning they used to be scared of me, but not so now. We have now developed acquaintance. They have accepted me as a member of their family. Now none of us is afraid of each other. Day by day closeness and intimacy are increasing. It seems there is a great world on this earth – a world replete with all heavenly attributes like love, compassion, friendship, co-operation, generosity, beauty, peace and contentment. But man is far away from it. He has built a small world of his own- the man's world. This conceited creature boasts of the achievement of material science, speaks highly of his greatness, superiority, education and morality. But his maltreatment to fellow creature of this earth unveils all the false claims he makes about morality, superiority, etiquettes and all.

Today I was so much engrossed I thought that I lost my way. I have been fondly watching birds and animals without keeping count. They too were looking at me in the gesture of approving my thoughts. Man cannot be adjudged great among the creations of nature only because he is intellectually superior. If might is the yardstick of greatness, dacoits, demons, evil ghosts, spirits etc, should be respected because of their superiority in might. The symbols of greatness are truth, love, justice, character, restraint, generosity, sacrifice, prudence, friendliness etc. Without these virtues, man possessing intelligence is a much more cruel animal than the ferocious wild animals. The ferocious animals resort to attack only when hungry; but the intelligent human beast is ever on the campaign of cruel attack, in order to cater to his greed and vanity.

It was getting late. By the time I reached the hut, it was already dark. Till very late into the night I kept pondering. We take pride in having contributed to the betterment of man, having served him and stayed in his company. But is it not communal partiality? Is it not a narrow outlook to think this way? Only on the ground of virtues can man be considered great; else he is the most wicked among all the creatures. Why should our outlook be restricted to the problems of man only? Why should not we extend our intimacy with other than human creatures and contribute for furthering their welfare? Why should not we consider ourselves to be the members of world community rather than human community?

A good part of the night passed in these thoughts. The intense pressure of thoughts disturbed the sleep. A number of dreams were seen. In every dream, the scene of playing and conversing with different creatures was appearing. The substance of it all was that the consciousness within was experiencing intimacy with all creatures, just like we do with human beings. Today's dreams were very pleasant. It was felt that the soul was expanding in order to play a much larger role. A few days back the solitude of this place was bore some; but no place appeared to be solitary now. Playful companions are everywhere. Though they do not speak like men or their traditions differ from that of man, their feelings and emotions are greater and nobler than man's from many angles. There is no reason to get bored in living in such a place.

WAITING FOR FULFILMENT OF AIM

Sleep is lessened due to light food. Fruits are very rare now but vegetables serve to provide the Satwik (pure and pious) element in food. If Satwik food is taken, four to five hours of sleep is enough for a Sadhak (devotee).

Winter nights are long. Sleep is completed quickly. Ming is rather uneasy today. When will this Sadhana (spiritual pursuit) be over? How long will it take

for fulfillment of the aim? When shall I achieve success? Thoughts like these were coming up. The current of puzzling thoughts tends to unbalance the boat of peace. In the flow of such thoughts neither enjoying the psalms was possible nor concentrating on Sadhana. Boredom got over the mind. So I got out of the hut to get rid of this boredom and began to stroll. I simply felt to move ahead. The legs moved on. The cold was intense. But the pull to sit in the lap of Mother Ganga was too strong to care for the cold. A stone lying close to the edge of the stream was very much extending into the water. This was my favorite place to sit on. Wrapping the blanket on, I got there and sat over it. Judging from the position of stars it was reckoned to be 2 O' clock in the night.

Sitting there for a long time induced sleepiness. The gurgling music of Ganga induces concentration of mind like a swing provides comfort to the body. When a child is put in a cradle and swung, it soon falls asleep. The atmosphere of the place where I am put up these days is so gentle that the divine gurgling of the stream sounds like the lullaby being sung by dear mother. In order to get concentration of mind, this gurgling sound of the stream was as useful as the heavenly melodious music. Mind becomes calm and relaxed. I felt sleepy and wanted to lie down. Curling up my body I lay down there in the rock using the blanket both as bed sheet and wrapper. Sleep slowly began to rock me.

It seemed that the soul of the stone was speaking. Piercing the blanket, its voice reached through the ears right up to the heart. Even in that dazed condition the mind began to hear attentively.

The soul of the stone said, "Hey Sadhak, don't you feel any pleasure in the soul that you started thinking of attainment? Is your devotion to God filled with less pleasure than the grant of his appearance in person? Is the journey any less interesting than reaching the destination? Is the sweetness of performance any less than that of the fruit? Is the tickling sensation in separation less exhilarating than the feeling of joy in union? You learn this truth. God is entwined with the devotee. So why should there be delay in his union? It is only in order to let the devotee enjoy the pleasure of Sadhan that he has hidden himself behind the veil and is watching whether the devotee is getting immersed in the sea of joy of devotion or not. When he gets fully immersed in the joy, god too comes and starts dancing with him. Siddhi (acquisition of supernatural power) is the stage at which the devotee tells God that he does not want fulfillment, but longs for the continuation of separation; that he gets happiness and satisfaction inaction, and that he does not need the matter, but the sentiments.

The soul of the stone went on telling further. It said, "Hey Sadhak, you look in front of you. How eagerly is Ganga racing down to meet her beloved! How pleased she is in this race! Her union with the ocean has already taken

place, but she is not content with that. How can the joy in action and imagination be had in the union? Ganga is not content with union which is the end. She has pledged to keep on her endeavor to attain the union. So, Sadhak, why should you be impatient? Your goal is great, your path is great, and your work is great. Great patience is needed for great purposes. Childish impatience won't do here. What is the use of worrying about as to when the aim is going to be achieved?

The soul of the stone was proceeding non-stop. With self-confidence, it said – You look at me. I too am lying here to merge my identity with that great Being. I am performing Sadhana of merging myself into the great ocean by breaking my gross body, this huge piece of rock, into subtle colloids. With every stroke of waves a part of my body breaks away from me and by turning into colloid it flows towards the ocean. In this way I get rubbed and enjoy the pleasure bit by bit. I am trying to prolong this enjoyment of sacrifice for the sake of the beloved as long as possible. Had I been impatient like the stones lying in the middle of the course, I would have been broken fast and the destination could have possibly been reached long back. But that would have deprived me of the pleasure of getting abraded for the sake of the beloved.

“So don't be impatient, anger, disappointment, inconsistency, meanness and lack of faith. Has anyone having these vices ever become great or achieved the goal? The first requisite of a Sadhak is patience. Holding on to patience is the test of devotion. Impatience leads to failure. The disappointment and anxiety confronted by Sadhak are nothing but testing of patience. What kind of a Sadhak are you who did not learn even this first lesson?”

The soul of the stone finished its talk. My drowsiness was broken. This admonition jerked the conscience violently. “You have set out to become great Sadhak without studying even the first lesson!” my head bowed down in shame and shyness. I was blaming myself and kept trying for long to understand the point. I looked up; the eastern horizon was putting on purple hue heralding the dawn. I got up and went to attend the daily duties.

THE INNER ASPECT OF MY SADHANA OF LIFE

Many a Parijan (member) of Gayatri fraternity wishes to know something more about my sadhana and the achievement thereof. It is natural too. Whatever of my visible physical life that has come to light is astonishing in their view. Glimpses of “Siddhi” and miracles can be found in it. The curiosity to know the secrets hidden behind them is also natural. So if people want to know about my autobiography and are pressing me it is not unreasonable either.

Usually, I have never been in favor of hiding any thing. Hypocrisy, tricks and fraud are not be found in my nature. But these days I am helpless that so long as my acts behind the curtain are not completed, raising the curtain would be undesirable and would not serve the purpose of awakening the sense of duty in common people. People will get intricate in mysticism and my personality will become controversial. Moreover, it will create obstacles in the way of fulfilling the mission I am assigned to. My life throughout is undoubtedly filled with supernatural phenomena. The curtains of mysticism are so many that their premature raising would only be uncalled for. So I leave it to posterity in order to test their veracity on the anvil of rationality and to judge the power and potential of spirituality. It may be seen how an insignificant individual succeeded in transforming his personality just as an ordinary piece of iron turns into gold by mere touch of ‘Paaras’ (the magic stone which is said to turn iron into gold). With this view the secret behind the events of my life may be researched in times to come and my close associates will be of help in this endeavor. But at this moment, it is premature. So let it remain veiled as it ahs so far been.

The wish to write the autography can be fulfilled only in respect of revealing how I carried on my Sadhana. In fact all my achievements have depended on the dedicational life system supported by the Almighty. By taking this cue, those who are interested in this subject can find the path on treading which the bliss of spiritual elevation can be achieved. The readers can get only this much information and have to be satisfied with it in the present.

Of the 60 years of life, the early 15 years are not much consequence. In the next 5 years I have been assimilating spirituality in my life system. Prayers and worship had only a small part in it. Three hours of daily worship for 24 years may not be considered so great at the efforts taken to purify the mind and to developing sublimity. Had not the thinking and mode of working been purified, the net result would have been naught like that of the numerous people engaged in performing worship by resorting to rituals. If the pursuit in my life can be considered successful and the supernaturality thereof be searched for, it will be found that the success is attributable to the purified state of my inner and outer being. Prayers and worship may not be considered of much importance. In my

endeavor to write autobiography on one aspect of my life, I would state only one fact – that is I have applied all my concentration and all my efforts and ability for self-purification. The prayer and worship have also been aimed at this aspect. Now for the benefit of the readers I would present some discussion which would throw light on the path to tread for self-revelation.

Dedicational life has three steps. Treading these steps I covered a long destination. (1) Matruvatparadareshu (Other's women be regarded as mother) (2) Paradravyeshu Loshthavat (Other's wealth be regarded as clay lump) (3) Atmavat Sarva Bhooteshu (All being be regarded as our own self). The first two steps were simple ones. The encounter was with one's own self which had to be controlled. This was done successfully due to the inner trait carried on through previous births and with the help of the able Master. The mind was not so wicked or avaricious as to drag me on the path of evil doings. When it attempted now and then, it was strongly resisted and heavily beaten back where after it became gentle and obedient. Due to being engaged in fighting with mind, I was spared from sin and down-fall. Now that the dangers are over I can heave a sigh of relief. Kabir (the saint) too had worn the blanket (life) very carefully and returned it without a blemish. By this metaphorical expression Kabir meant that he lived his life in such a manner that no speck of impurity touched and thus he returned it to god in as pure a condition as was at the start. I thank the Almighty for having guided me along the same path and treading those footsteps and holding on to those supports firmly, I have reached the point where the danger of falling down does not exist.

The ritualistic process of spirituality is not difficult. With firm determination, dedication and faith one can effortlessly carry on the procedure of prayer and worship. An ordinary grocer carried on his business in the same shop in the same routine throughout his life with full zeal and zest. Neither does he feel bored nor disinterested. A person selling Paan (betel) and cigarettes spends about 12- 14 hours daily in his shop quite comfortably and joyfully doing the same routine all through the life. Then where was the need for me to break the resolve of performing Gayatri Sadhana for 24 years requiring an everyday routine of 6 to 7 hours Sadhana? Boredom occurs only to those who consider Upasana to be less important or less profitable than running a grocery shop or such works. It is lack of interest that creates boredom.

'Upasana' becomes disinteresting and bore some to those whose supreme ambition is materialistic welfare and comforts. Those who think of getting the desires fulfilled by performing ritualistic worship get disgusted when the aim is not attained due to deficiency of dedication and the burden of the past doings. Right from beginning there is apprehension and lack of firm faith in the outcome. It happens to those who complain of not getting concentration. My state was

different. The body was considered only as a means. The materialistic requirements were restricted to the extent necessary for sustenance of life. I never nourished any ambition for becoming a great man or to get appreciation or recognition. With the conviction that I am soul, I thought. "Why not live for its upliftment, for its peace, for its welfare and for its expansion". When I divided myself into two parts- that is body and soul, and identified the requirements of each, an unknown wall crashed down and light rushed in dispelling the darkness.

Satisfaction of sex and lust, fulfillment of greed, amassing money, wealth, pomp, respect, praise, position etc. are the utmost in life for those who consider their body to be their true being. They can forget about the upliftment of soul and can be happy wearing golden handcuff and leg strap. They may be right in their pretext of not having favorable condition to adopt the higher path. It is the desire within that prompts to amass materials. When the aim itself is materialistic happiness and prosperity, the whole conscious efforts and thinking will be engaged in acquiring them. In that condition, Upasana will remain a silly game, - whether done or not matters not. Out of curiosity people do it for fun to see whether it yields something. On doing it for a little while half-heartedly with a view to obtain miracles, it is abandoned for not getting anything as hoped for. Abandoned it had to be. Without dedication and faith, without intense involvement in the efforts in attaining the aim of life, no one could achieve any progress in spiritual field. These facts were already known to me. So I paid only that much attention towards the need of the body and the management of home as was felt absolutely necessary. The conscience was willing to achieve the aim. So there was no need to wander after materialistic temptations and attraction.

When I began to feel myself to be in the state of soul and my conscience to be the sacred seat of God, orientation of the mind became inward. The only thought was concerned about what the soul which is the prince of God had to do and which direction had to be proceeded in. the answer was as simple as the question was. Live only a sublime life and adopt idealistic methods of work. Those who are not familiar with this path are scared that this system will entail a lot of problems and difficulties and that poverty, want, abuse and hazards will have to be faced. Friends will turn foes, and relative will oppose it happened in my case too in the beginning. At the beginning I also had to endure ridicule and reproach. It is the people at home and closes relatives who opposed most. They felt that they would lose the benefit which they expected to get through me. So they declared me foolish on account of their possible loss. But it did not last long. It is the disapproval and contempt against adopting immoral path that stays permanently. Goodness by itself is wealth that takes its own care and remains steady through. Opponents and accusers realize their mistake after a little while and offer co-operation instead of placing obstacles on the way. The higher the

faith and firmness are. The sooner do the hatred and misunderstanding disappear and turn in favor. Opposition at home did not last long. As soon as they realized the truth their apprehensions and misgivings disappeared. In fact there is no loss in spiritual bargain. Though externally appearing poor, such persons remain happy due to inner peace and contentment. This happiness and contentment influence others and prove helpful in converting opponents into co-workers. My problems too were solved in this way.

When the chain of desire and greed for high position, of fame applause and of lust was broken, I felt having been liberated from the worldly bondages. The creatures that are fastened by these three chains are getting dragged along the mundane roughness and keep moaning the pain due to discontent and distress. When the futility or fickleness of these three bonds are realized and greed converted to dedication, one may be assured of attaining salvation while in the living state itself. As per the saying that, "As you behold so you see", with the advent of the knowledge of the self, misconceptions became extinct. Thereafter the need to achieve the aim of life started to guide me like a child. Then neither want nor discontent remained. After fixing up the minimum requirement for sustenance of body and maintenance of family and making arrangements to meet these requirements, when the roots of greed and lust are snapped and withdrawn wherefrom, immense amount of energy and enthusiasm sprout in and the heart gets filled with happiness. Anyone can test and experience it one self. But people want to extinguish fire with oil. People want to extinguish fire with oil. People want to satisfy greed with wealth and satiate lust with sensual enjoyment. Who will make them realize that these efforts will only ignite wild fire, those who tread such a path will be wandering in wilderness. Like the evil spirits and devils of the graveyard they will remain restless and disgruntled and can do only evil things. How can any one teach them?

The seeker and the teachers are both making farce. Several Satsang (moral communion) and discourses were attended, but no one who had dived deep into spirituality and who could inspire others into it could be found. When the discourses' doings were delved into, the dirt and rubbish in them were found to be much more than those who they were addressing. So I was disgusted. Great discourses and communions were taking place, but I found none of them interesting and capable of delivering the goods. When enlightenment occurred it was from the self within. Only when I valiantly came forward to snap the bondages, mustering the courage from within the soul, did the aim get fulfilled. Had I waited for and relied upon others to do it for me I too might have been made as ignorant as themselves pretending to possess knowledge. I now feel convinced that if any one gets enlightenment, it happens only from within. In my case this is the proven fact. If one wants to tread the path of spirituality, the huge

mountains of obstacles can not be crossed over and can not reach at the top destination, without firm faith, courage and adventure. The courage worked in my case too. When I stood firm, help also came by. From Gurudev to God everyone came forward to help me constantly by making my way easy. Slowly but firmly I marched forward. This is how things got on so far.

People go on saying that spiritual life is difficult. But my experience is to the contrary. In fact life fraught with greed and lust is very difficult and complicated. Looking to the amount of efforts being taken, worries being carried, pain being endured and the complications being put up with by people of lustful and greedy life, the inconveniences in spiritual life can be considered insignificant. So much labor, so much thinking and planning, so much worry; and yet not a moment's peace! Before the efforts to fulfill the earlier need are completed, scores for further needs crop up due to which man remains unsatisfied and discontent, despite having gained a lot. Though it is difficult to fulfill even small needs, he takes upon himself the responsibility to meet larger and larger needs which call for ten times harder work. Along with accelerated speed, more problems arise and create complications. Mind and soul get tired and weak in trying to find solution to these problems. Ordinary physical and mental efforts cannot meet the requirements that widen their jaws endlessly. So, immoral and undesirable means are required to be resorted to. Despite carrying on with flagrant sinful activities, the desires do not get fulfilled. Considering the damages caused by the constant anxiety and the dark future, the attainments can be said to be insignificant. In general, people, instead of living the life, carry it like a corpse, - weeping, lamenting. Cursing and complaining. In fact these people should be called saints. Had they taken so much trouble, endured so much hardships, gone through so much worries and anxieties and suffered sacrifice for the sake of spiritual progress, these very people would have not only risen to the state of Yogi, Siddha Purush (enlightened soul), Mahamanav (great man) and Devata but would have become God. In fact, real renunciates, benevolents, self-sacrificers and martyrs are these folks who did all sort of adventures and misadventures ranging from hard labor to the acquisition of sin and distributed all the gains among the offspring's, and relatives, and remain empty handed in the end. To my mind these people who suffer everything for the sake of others are great men and philanthropists in the real sense even though they consider themselves to be greedy, fallen and degraded.

When I look at the internal and external life system of innumerable people and the repercussions and results of their life style, I feel that I lived a far more happy and comfortable life than they did. The worst disadvantage, if at all, had been that I lived with less wealth and luxury. I commanded less respect and was looked upon as a poor man. Being not wealthy and rich, the world considered me to be a small fellow and had little regard for me. This is the maximum loss a

spiritual pursuer may have to suffer. But these wants or shortcomings did not affect me any way – no loss occurred, nor any work suffered. While others were eating spicy food, I lived on barely and gram. The pleasure of taste put people to various sufferings, pain and agony. My cheap food was easily digested and kept me healthy. What did I lose? Instead of catering to the pleasure of taste, I stuck to the theory that hunger is the best spice and proved its veracity. As for the enjoyment of taste my coarse bread was more delicious than that of the luxurious people. People in the pursuit of wealth in order to cater to their ego endeavored to impress others by show of wearing costly clothes, building beautiful mansions and putting up catchy decorations. Though I could not put up any matching show with my little resources, the happiness and contentment I enjoy are not any less. Albeit, silly superficial people may have thought it childish and ridiculous, people of eminence who possessed the ability to perceive the substance and penetrate below the surface commended the greatness concealed behind the simple looking exterior and bowed in reverence. Who is at gain? Me or the pleasure seekers? On subjecting myself to severe tests, it can be confidently said that I have physically and mentally been not only more happy despite less labor, less risk and less responsibility but the respect showered. On me was also of no lesser measure. I do not least mind in not being respected or appreciated by the mad ones. I have no complaint with myself. Right from the Soul to the Supreme Soul and from gentlemen to prophets everyone appreciated the plan and mode of my working. Less risk, any yet more profit! In order to carry the load of expensive, greedy, luxurious and pompous life, it needs a cart with the wheels of sin and downfall. In my case the luggage was light – took it myself and walked on. Neither fatigue nor any worry. My own experience is that the ideal life is simple. It has everything light, satisfaction and joy. There may be apprehension of getting attacked and harmed by evil people. But this fear is there in the life too. While saints and sages have to bear this trouble, materialistic people have to face greater risk of competition, jealousy, revenge etc. These days we hear daily of killings, loot, accidents, and such horrible news. In these incidents the people suffered are mostly those whose orientation is materialistic. If so many people voluntarily come forward to die and to part with their wealth they would have become gods and history would have been blessed. Saints like Jesus, Socrates, Gandhi and only a few people of that orientation and suffered such end. The number of unethical and immoral people who are murdered is thousand times more. People like Bhama Shah who became poor due to donating in charity are very few, but rich people who become poor due to fraud, miseries, loot, burglary, litigation, illness etc. can be counted in lakhs these days. The danger of lot and attack is less in spiritual field, but many times more in materialistic field. If this truth were realized, people might not have been scared to adopt ideal life and would not have fallen to the folly of plunging into vortex of materialistic lust and greed. My conclusion from personal experience is that there is more loss than gain in the pursuit of greedy and lustful life. What I have had to lose is

inconsequential but what is gained is so rich and great that I wish to request everyone to adopt ideal and sublime tradition of living spiritual life. But it is not easy. Citing my own direct example, I have long been appealing to people at the top of my voice to adopt noble life; but how many have cared to hear and among those who heard, how many have cared to follow it?

It would have been difficult for me to climb the two steps of “Matruvat Paradareshu” and “Paradravyeshu Loshthavat” and I did not have the will to realize the real form of life, its aim and its utility as also the courage and valour to tread the superior path. Those who considered their real form of life to be their body and remained indulged in lust and greed had to remain deprived of the spiritual progress. My boat of progress had reached the shore not on the strength of prayer, worship and rituals. I had to remain engaged in Gayatri Purashcharan for 24 years in order to complete a major phase of Upasana. The full benefit of this Sadhana could be derived only when I assimilated the substances of spiritual progress in the process of practical life. If I too had adopted the way of others performing prayer worship and ritual for subjugating gods in order to fulfill the desires and had not rallied the needs of life and regulated it, surely nothing would have come to my lot. I personally know many a ritualist worshippers engaged in the routine for long. Their prayer, worship etc. are much more vast and elaborate than mine. But on careful observation it was found to be all hollow. Of course, they have the misconception that they can avail enjoyment in heaven after death. But after analytical examination I declare that none of them will go to heaven nor are they going to get any power of miracle. The prayer, worship and rituals can yield useful results only when life is regulated and progress made towards loftiness and sublimity, when the outlook improves and it reflects in the action and behavior which is an essential phenomenon of spiritualists. I do not subscribe to the view that those, who are insincere, selfish and working only for the welfare of one's own children, would not get any benefit of prayer, worship, fasting and pilgrimage if they do not bring about any improvement in their thoughts and action. These are no doubt useful, but their utility is like that of pen for the purpose of writing. How can you write without pen? How can there be progress without prayer and worship? With this logic it should also be known that it is not possible to write by possession pen and paper alone. In order to write, the matter has to be acquired by study, reading, thinking, refining the thoughts and intellectual development. Without these, no writing is possible and no poem can be composed. The inner excellence is like intellectual development and prayer and worship be likened to the pen. Coordination of both is required for the writing to materialize. Without one of them, the other is incomplete. I knew well that the cart of Sadhana cannot run with one wheel and hence properly provided for both the wheels. There is no secrecy or mystery in my Upasana. I have performed the Gayatri Upasana in the normal way as described in book “Gayatri Mahavigyan”. So long as I was sitting

in Upasana, I imagined and felt that the divine light of mother Gayatri which is the supreme power of effulgence was entering into every cell of mine and just like the iron gets hot and red in powerful fire, my impure existence was purified to the level of my deity of worship itself, that every part of my body became effulgent due to the assimilation of the divine brightness of mother gayatri in every cell and atom of body; and the lust of organs got burnt in this fire and turned ashes and the flaws like laziness etc. were destroyed. The disorders and diseases were also burnt by the fire. Only the body is mine, but intense Brahmavarchas (sublime divine predominance) is waving within. Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge, has occupied the tongue, the organ of speech. The devils of untruth, deceit and taste left that divine temple and ran away. The eyes are left with the ability to see only goodness and beauty of God in everything. Defects like fault finding and sensuality are no more left in the eyes. Ears can hear only the auspicious voices, deflecting back all the unnecessary noises.

When the effulgent light of Mother Gayatri entered into the subtle body – the foursome of the consciousness i.e. is mind, intellect, heart and consciousness – began to experience that Brahmavarchas is putting me towards the role in which evil desires and ambitions take retreat and noble thoughts and desires that foster divinity become active. The intellect resolves that the rare gift like human birth is not meant to be wasted away in catering to fleeting desires and silly temptations and that every moment of it must be utilized for promoting ideals. Faith of high order should be planted in the conscience and the urge to march forward to Satyam (Truth) - Shivam (Auspiciousness) – Sundaram (Supreme Beauty) should be created. The brightness of God Savita (Sun, creator of universe) is refining my being by entering into the inner body. God elevates me miles above the stage of mortals and flying aloft, places me in the omnipotent, purest blissful stage.

While engaged in Gayatri Purashcharan, it was not only 'Japa' (reciting of mantra) that was being done but the mind too was dancing on the waves of blissful feeling. The causal body was experiencing the feeling of Atmabodh (knowledge of self), Atma darshan and Atam Vistar (Expansion of self) in the form of inner light. I felt that my soul was merged in that supreme bright Savita like moths surrendering on the flame of lamp. My existence ends and in its place comes the supreme brightness. There ends me and the reign of Sat (Supreme truth, purity) takes over. Every moment, I was feeling such absolute blissful joy of the merger of soul with the supreme soul that all the mundane pleasures put together can be sacrificed for its sake. In the beginning of Japa, the divine light was consciously assumed in the Sthool (gross body), Sookshma (Subtle body) and Karan Sharir (casual body) but in due course its illumination therein became an automatic phenomenon and ultimately culminated in direct experience. So long as I was sitting in Upasana the ocean of divine light of Savita kept waving

within and without of my being and felt that my existence was getting engrossed in this divine light. Within and without there was nothing other than light. In every spark of life nothing but the brightness of light existed. This experience of Divine Sight was kept on at least throughout the duration of worship. The entire duration of Sadhana passed off mostly in this state of feeling.

The six hour's time spent in prayer provided inspiration for the remaining 18 hours. While at work the feeling that the light of the deity of my worship is my guide and every act is accomplished as directed by him, was prevailing. The thought that any of my work is inspired by greed or lust, never occurred to me. Like a mother helps the child to walk by holding its fingers, the divine power, taking hold of my brain, compelled me to think aloft and by holding the body made it work in ideal manner. Apart from Upasana all the time while awake, the feeling that all my actions including daily routine, study, thinking and earning for the household were being done under the guidance and direction of the supreme soul, persisted throughout. The six hours of sleep, at night passed off as if in Samadhi (trance, intense mediation) and like enjoying the bliss of oneness with the supreme power, lying in the lap of mother in total submission. And when woke up the feeling was that new life, new light and new joy and enthusiasm were waiting by to show the path and guide along.

During the 24 years of 24 Purashcharans, there was not much of any social or family responsibility. So the process of recitation of mantras, meditation and concentration were done very attentively and without any distraction. The firmness of faith in the dictum of "Matruvat Paradareshu" and "Paradravyeshu Loshthavat" spared the body from falling into any sinful act. The pious food controlled the mind and saved it from all pitfalls of degradation. The bread of barley and the buttermilk of cow were relished and well digested. At every step throughout my life, I experience the veracity of the dictum that "Yatha Ann, Tatha Mann (As is the food, so is the mind)". Had not the body and mind been ruthlessly kept under control, I doubt, if it would have been possible to progress to this extent, however little it may be.

THE INVISIBLE EXPERIENCES OF MY VISIBLE LIFE

Two phases of my spiritual life have been completed in 24 years. Deviations in the ideals of “Matruvat Paradareshu” and “Loshthavat Paradravyeshu” normally occur in the state of youth. This is the period when lust and greed are powerful. So this turbulence subsided during the period of 24 years between the age of 15 to 40. This is the period when normally cravings, lust, greed, and ambitions are unhinged. This period in my case was spent in studying, thinking, introspecting, self-restraint, meditation and Sadhana. Since this period is generally prone to emotions, people of receding age are usually selected for spiritual work.

People of upcoming age can, and should, shoulder the responsibility ranging from financial management to military service. There is enough scope in these fields for fulfilling ambitions. The youth can also contribute in service activities. But youth is not the appropriate time for spiritual leadership. There are a few exceptions like Shankaracharya, Dayanand, Vivekanand, Ramdas, Meera, Nivedita etc., who right in their rising youth, successfully shouldered the responsibility of spiritual leadership. Generally immature age is devoid of clarity and creates complications. Those who enter the public field while still gripped by greed for power and fame as well as prone to temptations and sensual attractions, create disorders. Downfall of even the best institutions is caused by these people. Though evil is not attributed to any particular age, the tradition of nature has been such that youth is considered to be the age of ambitions. With receding age, man grows weak and so do his material desires. With awareness of death entering in the mind the interest in spirituality, and religious activities develops. Hence scholarly seers have considered the latter part of life appropriate for Vanaprasth (transition from material life to spiritual life) and Sanyas (renunciation of material world).

I do not know the secret as to why My Master engaged me in tapascharya (life of devout austerity) at the growing age and in accomplishing that I reached the age of 40 maybe, he apprehended that I may slip down and get carried off by temptations and ambitions of ego and coming in the limelight. It might have been considered that without inner strength and maturity, accomplishment of great work would not be possible. Or I might have been found lacking firmness, patience, courage and equanimity in the required measure. Whatever it be, my growing age was spent in Sadhana which has been described time and again.

Everything went on normally in that duration. The only uncommon feature was the “Akhand Deepak” burning day and night with ghee of cow. It was incessantly burning in the prayer room. Its spiritual or scientific secret was not exactly known. To me guru was everything; his instructions were everything;

discipline was everything; my submission was everything. On testing it once and getting convinced of the reliability, I got in this boat and sat with no care of apprehension. To a soldier discipline is dearer than life. Call it blind faith, or love for discipline. The installation of Akhand Deepak in the prayer room is part of this process. After relying on the Guide and fully submitting to him, where comes the question of doubt or debate? So the question did not arise in my case. On being told that Akhand Deepak had a role in the Sadhana prescribed to me. I simply complied with it and kept it burning throughout the duration of Purashcharan. Later on it became dearer than life. It could not put out after 24 years, but such a thought was tantamount to extinguishing my own lamp of life. Hence it was decided to keep it on. When I was away in unknown part of Himalayas and now when I am going again my dedicated life partner will take care of it. Had I been alone and had not had the wife. I would not have been able to do any other Sadhana. It was very difficult to maintain the Akhand Deepak. Servants, disciples or people of weak spiritual conviction can not keep up the divine flame of this nature. The Akhand Deepak of ma a people gets extinguished and rekindled time and again. These are Akhand (unceasing) only for the name's sake. My lamp remained Akhand (unextinguished). The reason is not merely external alertness, but can be attributed to inner dedication. The contribution of my wife in maintaining it incessantly is very much extraordinary.

May be this Akhand Deepak is the form of Akhand yagna. The joss sticks may be playing the role of material for oblation, japa playing the part of recitation of mantras, the Deepak (Lamp) playing the part of offering of ghee in the sacrificial life. In this way an automatic process of sacrificial offering may be getting accomplished. Due to the pitcher of water and the lamp kept together, they may be instrumental in producing vaporization in a subtle way and be generating some subtle power like in a steam engine. Or it may be that this external light may be helpful in kindling light within. Whatever be it, I have been getting spiritual light and unique pleasure from this Akhand Deepak in immense measure. This lamp placed on the pedestal was burning externally in the beginning. Later I experienced that the lamp was burning within me in the same form and was illuminating the entire inside of me as the outer one illuminated the room. The illumination I was feeling within my body, mind and soul, - in the gross, astral and causal bodies - might have been its repercussion. Throughout the duration of Upasana this light was glowing in the senses, just like the room was illuminated by the lamp kept on the pedestal. Everything about me became illuminated, the veil of darkness is removed, desires and wants vanished. Mind and body are draped in bright feelings, thoughts and actions. The ocean of light was waving everywhere and I was merrily playing in it like a fish in the lake. The role played by these sensations in the development of the power of self, divine outlook, and joy is beyond description. May be it is imagination, but had not the Akhand Deepak been kindled my inside too would have perhaps

remained as feebly lighted as the prayer room. Now it is seen glittering like the festive light of Diwali. It is in this emotional flow that the magazine I started years back in 1937 was christened “Akhand Jyoti”, the name that I liked most in the world. May be it is due to this emotional start that the small sapling has now grown so large that its present circulation is estimated to be over 10 lakhs and the magazine is spreading the ray of light all over the world.

On hearing the third phase of Sadhana, the rays of “Atmavat Sarvabhuteshu” began to sprout. The first two phases i.e. “Matruvat Paradareshu” and “Paradravyeshu Loshthavat” were concerned with my own body only. When sin entered in the two eyes, the third eye of discretion frightened and made them retreat. The body was subjected to severe discipline and snapped the roots of the situations conducive to ill doing. So the evil behavior became impossible. The “Sadhana of Matruvat Paradareshu” was mastered without any difficulty. Mind created a little trouble in the beginning, but the body was always at my side. On getting disappointed, the mind ultimately accepted defeat and began to co-operate like a good friend. Due to voluntary adoption of poverty and minimizing the needs to the barest, as well as giving up the tendency to hoard, there was no question of coveting “paradravya” (other’s wealth). When one’s own earning was well enough to feed the stomach and cover the body, why to think of grabbing other’s things? Whatever I got and whatever could be saved, were distributed among others. Those who are addicted to giving and distributing and deriving joy out of it can not afford to hoard. Then why earn the sin of coveting other’s wealth? The life of minimum wants, simplicity and on-hoarder Brahman (one who is devoted to spiritual pursuits and leads a simple philanthropic life) has filled my inner-self with extraordinary happiness and contentment. Had there been anyone wanting to earn sin by coveting other’s wealth? Merely boasting to be Aparigrahi (non-coveter) would not do. How many can feel in themselves, in the inner conscience, the unique joy that comes out of giving? In my case, I got the treasure of these divine gifts effortlessly.

Now comes the phase of “Atmavat Sarva Bhooteshu”. It means seeing others like oneself. These are very ordinary words while hearing and talking about and normally its extent is limited to observance of civil duties, formality and good behavior etc. but in reality the bounds of this principle are very vast and extensive. Its extent goes up to the stage of achieving oneness with God. In this Sadhana, one has to mingle one’s conscience with that of others and get into the stage of experiencing others’ feelings to be ours. The concrete form of this concept of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” (universal brotherhood) is to consider everyone to be ours, feel ourselves to be entwined with others and others with us and dissolved in each other. The result of this feeling is that we begin to feel others, sorrow to be ours and others’ happiness to be our own. Such people can

not restrict them up to themselves and it becomes impossible for them to be bound within their selfishness. Such a person feels that the efforts he makes to alleviate others' sorrow and to promote others' happiness are for his own sake.

In this world there are innumerable people who are noble and happy, live a moral and contented life and bring about the welfare of others and self. Seeing this, one gets pleasure and feels that God has made this world for fulfilling some noble aims. Here goodness and knowledge are available aplenty and by making use of them anyone can obtain divine gifts of happiness and joy, peace and contentment in adequate measure. There is no dearth of saintly, philanthropic and spiritually oriented people here. They may be few in numbers but they keep on spreading their light. Their existence proves that there is divinity dwelling in man and it can be aroused and made active by anyone with a little effort. The earth is not devoid of the brave. Divine men do exist here. How great, magnanimous and divine God is can be visualized on seeing these persons who, being his own models, have adopted superior path and overcoming all the obstacles on the way walked ahead towards their goal with peace, dedication and courage, the very existence of these people upholds the dignity of man and has made this earth so nice that God himself is tempted time and again to take to human form and incarnate here. Seeing how the great men treading the path of ideals and adopting noble work, are inwardly rich and happy, though appearing outwardly poor, my inner being began to get delighted and feel immense peace. I often recall the story in Mahabharata in which Yudhishtir (the eldest among Pandavas), goes to hell for a little while and his presence there made everyone in hell feel engrossed in joy. If mere recollection of these noble souls instills so much joy and imparts illumination I wonder how much divine feelings they might be experiencing themselves.

Whatever beauty is seen in this ugly world is the gift of these noble souls. The stability and order that exist in this world made up of unsteady atoms and molecules that ever dance like devils are brought about by these virtues souls. Whatever splendor and charm seen in the inert elements scattered all over, give the glimpse of the efforts and the capacity of these great souls who have adopted noble path. The very dedication of these souls who have pledged themselves to protect and beautify this world by breaking all bonds of temptations and attractions, make the world blessed. I wish I would earn the blessings of God by having the glimpse of and being engrossed in thinking about these noble souls whose noble efforts are ever deployed for the welfare of the world. I wish to be blessed by touching their feet with the forehead and don that dust thereon. On seeing the glimpse of these excellent human beings who elevated individual soul to cosmic soul, it is felt that God is dwelling and moving on this earth in the visible form. It was delightful to see so much goodness and nobility existing all around and made one wish to live here up to eternity. In having the presence of

these noble souls, one gets much more pleasure and happiness than that of heaven or salvation. This truth was proved as clear as day light and I remained joyful by thinking of this beauty of the world amidst the hardships of life.

This phase of “Atmavat Sarvabhuteshu” has not been one sided; it had the other side too. There is no dearth of sorrow and grief in this world. Innumerable persons are suffering from hellish troubles, and miseries, grief and sorrows, want and poverty etc. Problems, worries and complications are eating into the vitals of people. Many people are squeezed by injustice and oppression. Perversity has created hellish atmosphere everywhere. The pain of people burning, mourning, crying and screaming in the wildfire of crimes and sins and so horrifying even to the onlookers that the pain of those who suffer it be better left undescribed. There is no want of things of comforts and convenience, yet nothing other than misery and sorrow is to be seen. By lending mutual support of love and goodwill the sorrow could be eliminated, progress and prosperity could be achieved, but what can be done when the mentality has become perverse, thinking become reverse and actions become undesirable? How can one hop-e to reap the fruit of heaven when the seeds sown are of hell?

How troublesome the misery, poverty, sorrows and grief spread all over are becoming to human beings? How proudly are people marching towards and falling in the abyss of sin and disgrace? On seeing and hearing about this scene my soul began to weep. Why did man forget that he is the part of God himself? Why did he degrade his form and level to this extent? These problems constantly arose in the mind, but found no answer. There is no deficiency here-neither of intelligence nor skill nor time. People present innumerable models of art and skill; perform wonders and miracles. But why do they fail to understand that their aim cannot be achieved by taking side with the evil, that it will be like pursuing the mirage and that the result will be grief and downfall. If one more link was added to human intelligence and realization occurred in his mind that it is necessary to develop goodwill and kindness towards fellow beings for achieving progress befitting to human nobility and dignity, the condition of this world would have been quite different. Everyone would have been living a life of peace and happiness. Nobody would have had to doubt or be apprehensive of others and no one state there would have been no trace of misery and poverty. How pleasantly the sweet fragrance of peace and happiness would have pervaded every where!

Why is it that intelligent man refuses to accept the bare truth that the fruit of evil doings is misery and that of virtuous deeds is happiness? History and experience have it recorded on their pages that grief and downfall have been the lot of every one who took the path of injustice and selfishness. No one achieved peace without undergoing sublimation and purification. Without adopting

idealistic life system, no one has been accorded respectable and elevated position. Wickedness exposes itself piercing all its encasements. Even though we see it all every step, we do not know why we still think that we can fool people and be able to hide our ill doings, that no body will be able to smell our conspiracy and that the process can be continued for ever. Why do the people who think this way forget that the Almighty who sees with thousand eyes, who hears with thousand ears and who grips with thousand holds does not let anything remain concealed? The facts do come out and the evil exposes itself by shouting from house tops. If people could understand the eternal truth – the perpetual facts- and had the awareness about the downfall due to adoption of wrong means, why should they take to narrow thorny and stony wrong path instead of the highways of morality and goodness? Why this priceless life which even the gods cherish to avail should be carried weeping and mourning like a burden of corpse? The sight of the pitiable plight of the mourning and screaming poor creatures who are trapped in the net laid by the crooks has caused me death – like pain. The Sadhana of “Atmavat Sarvabhuteshu” has made me feel the sufferings of all human beings in the world as my own. It was felt as if some one was twisting my own legs. “My own soul is entwined in all the souls and all the souls in mine.” This statement of “Gita” is simple and innocuous as well as immaterial so long as it is only heard or read. But the position becomes different when it becomes one’s own experience and enters into the inner soul. In the same way as the pain of any part of our body makes us restless, or the sorrow of or near and dear ones disturbs us, the worldwide sorrow becomes one’s own and the pain of the depressed and helpless pinches one, when one gets ahead towards expansion of the self.

The pain of the suffering humanity, of the universal soul, of the individual and of the society began to rise and disturb me within. The conditions of my mind became like that of man restlessly seeking remedy from whatever source and manner to get relief from pain in the eyes, tooth and stomach. How restlessly and impatiently does a mother take trouble to avail treatment for her child who suffered fracture of hands and legs in accident, without caring for her own suffering from fever! The condition of my mind was akin to this and continues to be so till now. In this state where is the time to take care of comforts for own self? The things of pleasure and luxury seem to be loathsome like poison. Whenever the thought to acquire the means of pleasure and comfort arose in the mind it was looked upon so spitefully as one condemns the mentality of a person who uses the life saving water of a critical patient for washing his own feet. How can a mother fill her belly by taking the morsel of food from the mouth of her own child dying of hunger? How can a father go to gambling or playing dice leaving his ailing son crying and screaming in pain? Only a man, who is cruel and bereft of feelings, can do so. No sooner the feeling of Atmavat Sarvabhuteshu grew intense then the cruelty became extinct by burning and melting. Only

compassion remained in life and it remains untainted, till this last chapter. It has not diminished the least; instead, only increased day by day.

It has been heard that those who attain the knowledge of the self live happily, free from all worries. This knowledge of the self is still a rare commodity for me. I doubt if I will ever get it at all. I do not wish to be at ease so long as pain and misery exist on this earth and the creatures have to burn in the fire of suffering and hardship. Wherever I prayed, my request to God has been that He grant me, not personal comforts and peace, but the compassion to feel the sorrow and the suffering of others as mine and to grant me, not prosperity for self, but the ability to wipe the tears from their eyes so as to prove my utility. This was all I asked for and felt that God, who saved the modesty of Draupadi (the wife of Pandavas), is going on filling and smearing me with endless emotions of empathy and compassion. When did I get the time to think of personal wants and hardships? When did I have the time to think of getting things of personal comforts? Every cell of mine was filled with pain and sorrow of the suffering humanity and always thought of what can be done to make happy this body of universal family. I have spent every bit of what I got to contribute for reducing the vastness of sorrow and grief and to create the atmosphere to breathe in the sigh of happiness.

Does any one know as to how many nights I have spent sobbing and weeping? How many times, I have desperately cried like children? People regard me as saint, seer, learned, writer, scholar, orator, and leader and so on, but ahs anyone looked into my soul and learnt to know it? Had any one looked in, he could definitely see encased in this frame of bones and skin a soul soaked in compassion and empathy wailing restlessly over the pain and sorrow of the human suffering. Where is the rest and freedom from care of the so-called self-knowledge and where is this soul of mine weeping and crying in agony? There is no co-relation between the two. So whenever I thought of it I was convinced that the knowledge imparting the bliss of worry-free state, concentration and "Samadhi" is far away from me- may be, it will not fall to my lot at all, for while I experience the glimpse of god in wiping the tears of the sufferings, I do not long to achieve the inert, inactive, dull state of Moksha (salvation) or Samadhi. And how can one achieve what is not aimed at? I do not recall that I have done something with a view to please God and gain his favor. By expanding the concept of Atmavat Sarvabhooteshu, when I saw my own self contained in everything all over, it did not remain a mere philosophy. The pain and sorrow of others pinched and pierced me so intensely that I thought of nothing else than the ways to relieve their pain. Who would then endeavor to gain a berth in heaven? Who had the time to be engaged in such form of works? Who knew how to please God and enjoy the pleasure of liberation and of heaven? When the restlessness of human suffering became my own, the first priority was to struggle

against it. Other things could wait. If anyone wants to seek the purpose behind my actions and activities, it would be enough to know that the time I spent in thinking of the saint and noble men and their good will and benevolent deeds was the moments of peace I enjoyed and that when the pain and agony of others were seen, it pained and agonized me more than my own pain. If anything for the sake of universal benefit, public betterment or public service have taken place through me, it may be considered as my compulsion and that I had no other options. What else could I do when the pain and burning did not let me have a moment's rest? When in pain, what else can one do except struggling? In whatever way people may term my efforts so far., whatever color they may paint it in, the truth is that the inner feeling of the world took the form of compassion empathy and emotion and by feeling this universal pain as my own and, like a wounded fellow, I restlessly kept trying to get relief from it. The feelings were so intense that I forgot my own self. If anyone wishes to evaluate my work from the angle of sacrifice, restraint, simplicity, non-acceptance of charity etc, they may do well to realize that it was only a natural course to the frame of mind I was moulded in. I can not definitely say if I detested prosperity, progress, comforts and fame and have willfully renounced them. The fact is that the pain and sorrow of the human beings of the world became my own and occupied the mind all the time that I had no time to think in that direction and they remained forgotten, if someone call this forgetfulness as self-restraint, Tapasya, it is his choice, but I have deemed it necessary to tell the fact to my people, since I have opened before them all the useful chapters of my life.

My Upasana and Sadhana were done side by side. I prayed to God in order that He enters my soul in the form of light and transform the meanness to greatness. I approached Him only for the sake of dissolving my pettiness in his greatness. The gift I sought from Him is that He gives me His magnanimity and generosity so as to experience that all are in me and I am in all of them. All the performance of penance, concentration and self-restraint, of the 24 Purashcharan were orbiting around this purpose.

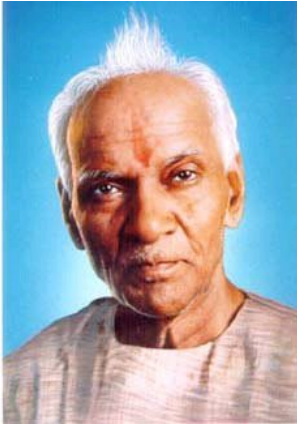
The purpose of describing the ups and downs encountered in the path of progress of Sadhana is to acquaint any one who wants to tread the path of spirituality, with how it is possible in the present day circumstances. If direct evidence is needed, my own journey of life can serve as guide. In fact I have lived an experimental life. Striking harmonious balance between spiritual ideals and practical life I have been searching for the fact which enables one to achieve success by treading this spiritual path without faltering. All my physical and mental activities were centered on it. My Guide rendered me full co-operation in this direction and hence I could avail the facility to go along the right path without getting entangled in any maze. The purpose of this discussion is to avail

certified evidence for those willing to take up this line and searching to verify guaranteed success.

Threading the spiritual path with a definite and systematic plan I have reached the phase of my destination where it can definitely be felt that the efforts have not been in vain and that the experiment has not been unsuccessful. It is not proper for me to describe myself the achievements and gains that came my way. The occasion to tell and hear about it should come after my departure. The evidences are so vast that even the non-believers will be forced to believe that spiritual science is no fraud and that it is not difficult to achieve success for those who followed this path truthfully. Future researchers who want to enquire into now the people who tread this path are endowed with internal peace and innumerable diving powers and achievements, will find my life and mode of work very useful. In course of time these researchers will find out innumerable irrefutable evidences of the achievement which the spiritually and divinely oriented people can avail like me.

About the Author:

Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya: A seer-sage and a visionary of the New Golden Era.



His personality was a harmonious blend of a saint, spiritual scientist, yogi, philosopher, psychologist, writer, reformer, freedom fighter, researcher, eminent scholar and visionary. He pioneered the revival of spirituality and creative integration of the modern and ancient sciences and religion relevant in the challenging circumstances of the present times. In 1979, he founded the Brahmavarchas Research Institute, the research center in Haridwar (India) dedicated to the integration of the modern and ancient sciences in a practical way motivated by the noble goal of health and happiness for all. This center houses well equipped laboratories of Haemetology, Biochemistry, Neurophysiology, Cardiology, Phytochemistry, Psychometry, Yagyopathy etc.

At the age of 15, (Jan 18th, 1926) a great Himalayan yogi, Swami Sarveshvaranandji appeared before him in astral body from the flame of the Dipaka (lamp) and guided him throughout his entire life. The next 24 years of his life were devoted to 24 Mahapurashcharanas –each consisting of the rhythmic recitation (japa) of 2.4 million Gayatri Mantra with strictest of disciplines. In 1943, he married Bhagwati Devi, and ever since, the saintly couple dedicatedly pursued the noble mission of spiritual upliftment of humankind.

Realizing the potential of inspiring literature and its relevance in the present era of intellectual evolution, he had chosen writing as the principal mode towards uprooting the evil tendencies and blind faith from people's minds and arousing the indwelling wisdom, strength and spiritual bliss. He wrote about 3000 enlightening books in Hindi on almost all topics concerning human life. He translated the entire Vedic Vangmaya (4 Vedas, 108 Upanishads, 18 Puranas etc.) in Hindi elucidating the tradition, style, universality and history of Vedic Literature. He also practiced higher-level Sadhana on the arduous heights of the Himalayas and established enliven contact with the Rishis of the Himalayas. During 1984-1986, he carried out the unique spiritual experiment of Sukshmiarana, meaning sublimation of vital force and physical, mental and spiritual energies. He authored a special set of 20 books highlighting the future of the world and conveying the message of the dawn of the New Era of Truth during the 21st Century. On 2nd June 1990, he voluntarily shed his physical sheath.

For more information:

To find out more about Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya and his spiritual establishment visit www.awgp.org

Dev Sanskriti Viswa Vidyalaya is a university envisioned by Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya to meet the pressing need to impart global education on scientific spirituality and life style with new thought of ethical, moral and spiritual transformation. Visit www.dsvv.org for more information.

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