



Pursuit of Eternal Bliss

III

Divine Discourses by
Yug Diwakar Pujya Gurudev
Shree Namramuni Maharaj Saheb



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**Yug Diwakar Pujya Gurudev
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A Legendary Visionary

Tapsamrat Pujya Gurudev Shree Ratilalji Maharaj Saheb's blessed disciple, a versatile visionary and revolutionary with an extraordinary personality is our Pujya Gurudev Shree Namramuni Maharaj Saheb.

Pujya Gurudev aims for universal welfare and hence dreams for the progress of the society and the nation with open eyes. He then reflects, analyses, meditates and develops his dream into a vision with closed eyes. The vision then turns into his mission which he accomplishes by hard work and commitment.

His vision about how to mould the next generation on to the right path led to the formation of Look n Learn Gyan Dham for children and the Arham Yuva Group for youngsters. Pujya Gurudev's other missions are the formation of the Arham Senior Citizen's group, Arham Satsang, Guru Spandan, Shree Uvasaggaharam Bhakti Group and many more.

To ensure that Jainism spreads across the globe, Pujya Gurudev's discourses are available in print and audio-visual form. Various booklets for children and adults are published on a fortnightly or monthly basis. He also organized the Aagam Mahotsav, with an aim of spreading awareness and knowledge of Jainism amongst people.

His simple, unique and exemplary style of imparting knowledge has drawn many youngsters, Jains and Non-Jains towards spirituality. His principles involve dedication, discipline and humanitarian services.

Introduction

Parmatma's preachings are served to us in the most palatable form by Yug Diwakar Pujya Gurudev Shree Namramuni Maharaj Saheb. '*Pursuit of Eternal Bliss*' is a series of the divine discourses. This translated version in English stands for its clear explanations and relevant anecdotes which act as a step by step guide on how to progress towards the divine. We must understand *Parmatma's* call and experience an awakening from within. *Sadhana* is the answer to *Parmatma's* call.

Let us make ourselves worthy by cultivating true virtues i.e worship, goodwill, acts of giving and totally surrendering to our *Satguru*. Our predispositions from previous births play a role in our current pursuit. Our *sadhana* is to overcome these predispositions and continue moving forward in our chosen path. We should work towards inculcating humility and eliminating ego and intellect as we move towards *Parmatma*.

Inner Awakening

In this modern day and age, a person has no time to stop and think about himself then, how can we expect him to think about his next birth? One out of many, may think of introspecting within, he is the one who is inspired to move ahead in the field of spirituality and begin to practice true religion. He engages into self-introspection and thus elevates his soul by bringing about a change within himself.

The first essential is, to love your own soul. Those who love their soul can recognize their inner self, understand it and also experience it. Once one recognizes the soul, one can strive to make it as pure as *Paramatma's* soul by diligently following His preachings. Those who follow His path will inevitably inherit the qualities and virtues of *Paramatma*. In order to know *Paramatma* it is important for us to emulate those who follow the path shown by *Paramatma*.

In this 5th era (*kalyug*), the one who has a clear vision of *Paramatma* can tread on His footsteps. A *Satguru*, is the one who brings *Paramatma's* teaching to us and hence should be worshipped like *Paramatma*. By following his preaching and by emulating him, one can achieve emancipation.

Close your eyes for a few moments and visualise

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the *Samovsaran*. The celestial beings create a beautiful throne for Lord Mahavir overnight. The grand throne was made of gold and silver embellished with gems, pearls and precious stones, and it was the most beautiful and divine visual. What a pleasant sight that must have been!

Huge crowds of eager and enthusiastic people gathered at the ground where the assembly was to be held. Did they even know that the one on the divine throne had attained omniscience. They slowly proceeded towards the *Samovsaran*. They saw that *Paramatma* was seated on the divine throne under an Ashoka tree.

What thoughts could be flowing in their minds at that time? What were the feelings in their heart ?

“Ah! How attractive the sight of *Paramatma* is ! This set up is so grand ! Let us listen to His discourse for a while and then leave for our daily chores ?”

Once they leave *Paramatma's* assembly or the discourse, would they be visualizing the love and peace in *Paramatma's* eyes and think about his discourse or would they get back to their routine tasks like household chores, business, children etc.

Imagine if a deity from heaven comes in his heavenly vehicle and takes you along with him to the assembly of Simandhar Swami in Mahavideh Kshetra, then will your interest lie in worshipping *Paramatma* or in

admiring His assembly ? Will you be influenced by the grandeur of the assembly or will you purify yourself by worshipping *Parmatma* ?

An ignorant person is always attracted to the worldly life whereas an enlightened person heads towards spirituality. The difference between an ignorant and an enlightened person is that one is attracted to the worldly pleasures whereas the latter is interested in his own spiritual awakening and hence worships his Guru or *Parmatma*. When an enlightened person gets connected with his Guru or *Parmatma* he vibrates from within and knowledge automatically starts flowing from his soul.

What category of people are we ? Are we ignorant or enlightened? We are neither completely ignorant nor entirely enlightened. We belong to the ‘intelligent category’ which lies between the two, ignorant and enlightened.

An ignorant person has no understanding, an enlightened person never boasts about his knowledge, whereas an intelligent person does not refrain from displaying his intellect. He wastes more time in being judgmental rather than experiencing *Parmatma*’s knowledge. He spent his time evaluating the gems and precious stones on the throne, whereas in the case of an enlightened being, all he has to do is to look at his Guru’s or *Parmatma*’s

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face with devotion and he will start feeling their divine vibrations.

By receiving the positive vibrations from *Parmatma* or Guru, one's heartbeat increases and one starts to forget his existence.

By going to a Guru if you feel humbled, your ego melts, your existence begins to vibrate then you can invariably conclude that this is the place where you can surrender yourself. If you devote yourself then and there, at that very moment, it means you are entering the field of spirituality.

The first condition for entering the field of spirituality is that you think from your heart and not your mind. Let go of your beliefs and thoughts, humble your ego, and fill your heart with faith and set it ready for true devotion.

If you have feelings for *Parmatma* or Guru, then truly your heart will experience something very different. Pure feelings alone can make a devotee's heart throb and awaken his dedication. It moves the devotee and awakens him, enlightens his soul, inspires him to dedicate himself, gives him happiness while offering selfless service (*seva*) and gives him a deep sense of satisfaction. A devotee's sight is always on *Parmatma* or his Guru. Every moment he gets inspiration and hidden instructions from their vision.

In present times, only one in a million get the opportunity to completely surrender to a *Satguru* and accept his precept. Being completely dedicated to one's Guru makes one's life successful. Therefore, a devotee must worship his Guru or *Paramatma* with deep feelings of gratitude so that it arouses devotion and dedication and thereby making his life spiritually successful.

Were all attendees in Lord Mahavir's divine assembly enlightened beings? Had they come prepared to renounce the world ? No, they were neither enlightened nor they had come prepared to renounce the world, but they changed after they worshipped *Paramatma* and listened to His discourse.

If we do not change after worshipping means that we have not truly worshipped our Guru! In the field of devotion and spirituality, if in spite of, being in the presence of a Guru if we do not experience any change in ourself, it means we are not receptive! If our inner self does not transform even after days and days of listening to holy discourses and sermons then, it is understood that we are there just physically but mentally we are elsewhere.

Cause, the presence of a Guru in our life increases our level of consciousness and receptivity leading to inner happiness.

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Does the voice of *Parmatma* echo in our ears as the worldly clutters ? Can we be compared to a tree that is dying from one end, whereas the other end is budding? The tree does not express its sadness for dying neither its joy for the new sprouts. The tree does not know the reason of its immobility? Why is it alive? Why is it dying? The tree is completely ignorant. Are we also like the tree ?

Life without awareness is meaningless. It has no purpose, no understanding it is similar to that of a tree.

On worshipping *Parmatma*, in the company of a Guru, in their refuge, in the aura of their positive vibrations, within the sphere of their pure divine influence, our negativity will vanish, a voice from within echoes “This is someone miraculous, he is unique and incomparable. Because around him I find my innerself peaceful. My thinking ceases and joy radiates from within. All my discomforts and problems get resolved, and above all everything is understood with less explanation.”

When Guru Gautam enthusiastically climbed the steps of the *samovsaran*, when Lord Mahavir saw Gautam ascending the stairs, he affectionately called him “Goima”. Did *Parmatma*’s voice have any influence on Gautam ? Yes, *Parmatma*’s voice had a divine force, a positive energy which penetrated through Gautam’s

ears deep inside his heart and caused tremendous turmoil. His heart began to vibrate. Indrabhuti Gautam thought, “I do not know this person; I’ve neither seen him nor have I met him, yet he knows me? He is calling my name so affectionately?”

Attraction, grace and awe are the beginning of devotion and spirituality. That precious moment comes in our life when we feel elated, special, a divine energy flows from within us. We feel like a changed person from what we were years back, a different force. Our feelings and sensitivity take a turn. What is the reason?

Before Gautam could gather himself and understand what was happening within him, Lord Mahavir continued further, “O Gautam! From time immemorial, your mind has doubts whether the soul exists or not?”

Gautam is astonished! There is confusion inside as if *Parmatma* had read his mind. *Parmatma* can read his feelings, but how?

“Our heart throbs when the inner self is sensitive”. When the heart becomes receptive it starts vibrating and makes a different kind of gesture! That gesture or signal is the foundation of devotion. From that divine moment the soul starts its transformation experiences true spirituality.

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Our biggest fault is, that we hear wrong, we see wrong and hence act wrong. Has there been a single moment in our life when *Parmatma*'s voice has touched our hearts?

The flow of divine words of *Parmatma* captured Gautamswami's heart and shook his inner being, made him sensitive, dedicated, devoted and got him close to *Parmatma*, thus he became enlightened. This may seem very ordinary to a normal human. But do we know that such an incident, a wondrous event occurs with a soul only once in infinite years.

We are unable to experience divinity because we are too engrossed with our routine of household chores, business, finances, family, friends and raising our children. We keep revolving in the cycle of birth and death from time to time. Sometimes to be born as plants, sometimes as animals, sometimes as birds and may be sometimes even as humans! Have we ever stopped to think why we are a born in different forms? Why should there be death?

Amidst all this ignorance, it just takes a moment, a fraction of a second, when you get the golden opportunity to hear a discourse from a *Satguru* in that eternal moment, your heart vibrates and you experience and understand your inner self.

Intrinsic Worthiness

When the holy discourses of the *Satguru* have an impact on you such that, at a fortunate moment your heart vibrates, do you recognize the soul only by this vibration? No!! This is only the first step towards spirituality!

When an ignorant person comes in contact with the enlightened being, when a normal human is in the company of a *Satguru* and when the soul is in the company of *Paramatma*, a spectacular event takes place!

Ponder over this, do the trees get to worship the Lord ? Do they hear the sermons of the *Satguru* ? The tree under which the Lord himself sat to give sermons, can that tree worship *Paramatma*? Can it hear the discourse? Can it feel the closeness to *Paramatma*? Does it have a heart to express all that it feels ? No ! The tree has no ears, eyes, heart or mind and no desires or feelings.

A tree lives, and dies, all just by standing fixed in one place. What the tree lacks, we have, but even then it is as good as not having at it all.

Do not regret what you do not have, but surely consider regretting when you do not realize the importance of what you have? *Paramatma* says, “The time when the soul is in good company and environment and is awakened

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even a bit, a feeling arises from within and one needs to recognize that moment ?”

Our five senses are our windows to the world and energy flows bothways, the senses receive impressions and information from the world, and at the same time transmit our personality to others. Our eyes receive a constant stream of visual messages, but we may also use the eyes to show how we feel. Through our ears we hear the sounds of life; while by lending an ear to others, we give comfort to them. Our sense of touch allows us to experience texture; but can also transmit love and exuberance.

Our senses are not merely instruments for the outer world but deep-rooted aspects for the upliftment of our soul. When Indrabhuti Gautam Brahmin came to the holy assembly wearing an orange robe, a rudraksh rosary around his neck, a water-pot in his hand, as he climbed each step, he saw *Parmatma* for the first time and when *Parmatma* saw him with His loving eyes and showered His blessings on Indrabhuti, what could have happened?

Until we do not show good virtues, until we do not harness our traits, until we are not receptive, no matter what we achieve, no matter how much grace is bestowed upon us, we prove to be like a broken pot which cannot hold water.

We should regret from within saying. “O *Parmatma*,

in the past I may have worshipped you many times, been in your company, may have come to your assembly, and heard your sermon, but probably at that time I was not receptive and worthy therefore, I am wandering until today! Today I am born as a human and in shelter of a *Satguru*, I am able to understand and rationalize, yet I do not understand the importance of this valuable moment! By the *Satguru's* grace I can hear *Parmatma's* sermons, I got the opportunity for self-realization and to purify my soul and the invaluable chance of making my soul merge with *Parmatma*. However, till the time I do not make myself receptive and worthy enough, all the precious achievements are pointless!"

Parmatma sat under the tree and gave sermons in the holy assembly although the tree was alive, it still could not worship or hear the sermons of *Parmatma*, who was sitting under its own shade as it lacked the characteristics, qualities and virtues of a human being!!

All achievements are futile without intrinsic worthiness. If only once, you get the qualities and intrinsic worthiness, only three words from *Parmatma's* sermon alone are enough to create the Aagam. Just a little wisdom is enough to put a worthy person on the path of progress!

Many people have been listening to discourses for

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years, even written them, are punctual in attending the daily discourses by the Guru, but there is no transformation in the manner they talk, behave or socialize. Why? Because they have not opened their hearts to receive Guru's teaching. They are present there to gain knowledge but not implement the teaching in their daily lives.

Spiritual achievements elevate the soul to higher and then to the highest realm!

Therefore, first the qualities have to be purified, then a spark from within ignites, this spark of knowledge takes one towards spirituality.

Cultivating True Virtues

What is more valuable, achievements or virtues? Which of the two has greater importance, oil or the container that holds, the lamp or the *ghee*? Imagine if the purest and most expensive oil is stored in a container smelling of kerosene, what would be the consequence?

The oil vendor first has to wash the old container to remove the pungent odour of kerosene and dry it in sunlight and repeat this cycle of cleaning, rinsing and drying 2-3 times until the odour is removed completely, before filling the pure oil.

Until we do not discard our inherent qualities, we cannot inherit new ones.

Indrabhuti Gautam was a Brahmin, carried a water

pot, practiced fire sacrifice, a proud guru of 500 disciples, but all this was worthless as he lacked the qualities and character required to draw out water from *Parmatma's* well of infinite knowledge. Yes, he did have one characteristic of emptying himself, that characteristic was humility.

Bowing down is only an external activity of service done by one. Humility comes when one empties one's bad deeds, recognizes one's inner being, ignores his thoughts and becomes humble.

Purity is only possible by emptying the mind.

We have heard discourses on so many occasions and have come in contact with saints, bowed to them innumerable times, but have we ever emptied our minds? So many thoughts arise in our mind and opinions are formed about the saint or his discourse, for e.g. "The discourse was not up the mark, today the saints were moody, this wasn't good etc." Why do we forget that we have a golden opportunity of listening to saints or Satguru? Instead of cherishing those moments, we waste our time in evaluating and forming our opinions about everything. Why?

Forming opinions keep a person away from purity. Purification happens only when people stop forming opinions.

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Indrabhuti Gautam practiced fire-sacrifices, laid down procedures to follow this trait and trained his 500 disciples. Due to constant practice all this would have set in so well in his mind. However, the same Indrabhuti Gautam, when he goes to the assembly of Lord Mahavir, hears the sermons, beholds the flow of affection and grace from *Parmatma's* eyes, experiences the divine love, what does he feel at that time? Does he start forming opinions and judgments or does his heart simply experience the moment?

Humbleness lies in shutting down the mind and opening up the heart.

It is not an easy task to block our mind like Gautamswami, therefore we cannot be like him, and if we become Gautam then we ourselves become *Parmatma*.

Imagine the scene, when Gautamswami the one with foresight, prominent presence, skillful attributes, highly knowledgeable, a Brahmin, the one with thousands of followers, the one who is egoistic, proud and the one who had set out to defeat Lord Mahavir by believing that he was more intellectual. But the same Indrabhuti Gautam, after coming in contact with *Parmatma's* divine aura, experiences the serene vibrations of *Parmatma's* grace. What happens next?

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Gautam's ego and pride, all seemed to vanish, as

he got closer and closer to *Parmatma*, the humility in him began to emerge. He became calm and composed, his thoughts became stagnant. He started losing his individuality and his mind stopped thinking. This entire event led to Gautamswami becoming humble and modest.

Just as a river merges with the ocean, even we should merge with *Parmatma*. It means we start becoming more and more like Him, humble and modest.

Spiritual activities start by inspiration and end with devotion.

The best example is Gautamswami. He was so inspired by *Parmatma* Mahavir, that left everything behind he was so proud of, the 500 disciples, his knowledge and ego. He was highly learned and enjoyed a dignified position in society, yet he was drawn towards *Parmatma* and he was in a hurry to dedicate himself to *Parmatma*. Did humbleness have to be imbibed in Gautamswami? No, it emerged in him from within because of his character and qualities.

A traffic police controls the traffic, but if in his absence all rules are broken, then there is commotion. So spiritual practice or religious practices cannot be done under pressure, but only with love. Humility can never come by compulsion, pressure can bend someone's body, but cannot bow his soul.

There is a difference between defeating someone

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and winning over someones heart. Gautamswami was not taught that he should bow down three times at the pious feet of *Parmatma*, it happened naturally. That which needs to be taught are rules and rules can never imbibe humility in an individual. Spirituality begins with humility.

When one feels modest towards a Guru, a saint or a great soul, then the person needs no invitation to come, he just gets attracted to the Guru or *Parmatma*.

“*Nay*” means to get drawn and “*vinay*” means to get drawn in a special way. To understand a *Satguru’s* or *Parmatma’s* gestures, to be receptive to their sentiments, and their messages through eye contact, one needs to be drawn in their direction constantly.

Spirituality does not begin until humility emerges. Humility is essential for spiritual progress.

Humbleness makes us realize that *Parmatma’s* each and every word is like nectar. Just as a drop of water can save a dying person, similarly humbleness triggers the awakening of the soul. Spirituality is adorned by humbleness and a good character is needed to create this. After entering the field of spiritual practice if humbleness emerges from within, then spirituality yields fruits.

The journey from spirituality to emancipation needs the awakening of our senses and strength of character.

Experience the Divine

A person who enters the field of spirituality first hears the discourses of *Parmatma*, as recited by the Guru. His inner self receives these positive vibrations which cleanses him from within and then finally he becomes humble and worthy.

In the current time frame we cannot experience *Parmatma* personally therefore, we go to a *Satguru*. Imagine yourself in the company of an ordinary man as compared to a *Satguru*, when will you realize the difference between the two? It may take an hour, a day, a month, a year, few years or maybe even few births or all of it could take just a moment.

A place that does not give peace and tranquility is ordinary, whereas a place where one feels peace and tranquil is auspicious. Such calmness can only be present due to the vibrations of a pure and divine aura, the essence of a supreme being.

The eyes of Gautamswami bow down in gratitude. Gautamswami enters the assembly of Lord Mahavir, when he is at the Lord's pious feet, seeking refuge, when *Parmatma's* eyes fall upon Indrabhuti Gautam, when their eyes meet, that is the moment of surrender and Gautamswami's eyelids droop in modesty. Did Gautam think at that moment that "I am highly learned, a great saint, a Guru of 500 disciples.

Innumerable people bow down to me and today I have bowed down to someone unknown, someone whom I have never seen before. Do I need to take his refuge?” Did any of these thoughts come to Indrabhuti Gautam?

No! When the soul begins to experience the divine person and his divine aura, he is in the sphere of the positive vibrations. His heart is overwhelmed, his inner self is overflowing with radiant joy and purity and at that moment his mind ceases to exist, his knowledge zeroes down and his entire existence comes to a standstill. His ego simply melts.

The Cycle of Birth and Death

Today many souls have attained emancipation by purifying themselves and in comparison to them, in spite of getting a *Satguru*, hearing his discourses, we are still unable to break from the cycle of birth and death and worldly life. Why? Why are we still entangled in this vicious cycle?

The main reason for this is our ego! Our mind forces us to be judgmental or repeatedly gives rise to difference in opinions and creates doubts in our minds. This leaves us in a confused state as to what to do, and what not to do? Has *Paramatma* actually said this?

The moment you doubt *Paramatma's* or *Satguru's* words, you are back in the cycle of birth and death. This

soul has been in *Parmatma's* refuge infinite times. It has benefitted by hearing discourses of the *Satguru*. The reason for us still in this vicious cycle is our ego and our intellect. Only when we blank our thoughts and stop using our intellect, stop interfering with others and stop giving our views, we become humble.

Till the time we exercise our intellect, our humility will not surface from within. Our intellect always stops us from being spiritual. This is explained in the 3rd chapter of *Uttradhyayan Sutra* - Jain Scriptures, Aagam, that dedication arises only when our knowledge and intellect subsides.

*“There’s no knowledge without right faith,
Right conduct is not possible without knowledge,
Without right conduct, there’s no liberation,
And without liberation, there’s no deliverance.”*

After all these years of going many a times to saints and hearing numerous discourses, one is still unable to surrender, why is this so? It is our ego and intellect acting as barriers.

Think about the time when you were a school going child, where was your attention? What were you more inclined towards? In what the teachers taught or in how the teacher taught? You were interested in how the lessons were conducted more than the lesson itself.

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One's intellect always judges whereas a purified heart always cherishes.

In short if you go like Gautamswami you will achieve success but if you follow like Gaushalak-an egoistic disciple of Lord Mahavir, then in spite, of all the achievements, you will lose it all ultimately. What did Gautamswami gain by shedding tears at the feet of Lord Mahavir? Gautamswami bowed to Lord Mahavir, felt the divine vibrations, humbly devoted himself, and accepted his refuge. What did he gain by doing so?

What do all of us gain by bowing to the Guru. One should know that by doing so we show our humility. This humility drives away all our karma. Karmas related to our unhappiness, karmas that give us unbearable pain and suffering, and give rise to infinite obstacles in whatever we do.

When a person becomes humble, devoted and nullifies his ego, all the doubts in life automatically begin to depart. Jainism tells us that surrender leads to freedom from all misgivings. But if you hold on to your thoughts, form opinions, have differences there is not freedom.

Humility liberates you from qualms. Devotion and complete surrender purifies the soul. As your thoughts and qualms decrease, you move closer to liberation, and once you free yourself from misgivings, then liberation is

attained. Even in your practical, day to day life by being polite and modest many incidents take a better turn. Devotion leads to simplicity, simplicity makes you calm and quiet, hence lovable to all.

Take the example of a mother who has two children. One child is loved, pampered, cared more for by all and is the pet of the house, while the second child is a loner, why? The reason being the first child's simplicity and gentleness creates white (*shukla*) aura around him which draws everyone towards him like a powerful magnet. The divinity of this aura creates a peaceful atmosphere. When the child is naughty, stubborn, breaks things, and causes damage, it means that the child is hyper, hence, has a black aura around him.

Tranquility comes by dedication, and thus, a white aura is created around the person who is calm and quiet. Dedication is the third step to achieve spiritual success. We should purify our aura by taking refuge at our Guru's feet. Make your aura white by being calm and quiet!

Success is attained only by devoting yourself to the Guru!

All your unfinished and ongoing jobs will be complete, if you enter the stage of the white aura. You would be easily able to find solutions to your problems if you are calm and composed this will lead you to success

in all walks of life even in unexpected things.

When Gautamwami was in the presence of Lord Mahavir and showed complete dedication, his negativity decreased by the influence of Lord Mahavir's positive aura.

Spirituality can only be achieved when there is total acceptance, gratitude and complete dedication to the divine.

Delete Past Inclinations

A soul can look at its future plight by retrospection into its past. This is possible only by being in the company and refuge of a *Satguru*, listening to his discourses and transforming our inner self under his guidance. A bright future is only possible by introspection of the past.

We must delete all our past memories, ill-will, pain, suffering, miseries, vengeance, and hatred to have a brilliant future. The past memories that lie deep within us compel us to be caught in the web of worldly life and therefore, make our present miserable.

We have committed so many sins and mistakes in the past. We still carry them with us in this birth, as bonds attached to our soul in the form of karmas. These karmas, good or bad, keep us revolving in the vicious circle of life and death. In spite of being with Gautamswami in the past births, we did not imbibe his virtues, his character and qualities therefore today we are

here and not with *Parmatma*.

Gautamswami surrendered himself to Lord Mahavir, took his refuge, bowed to him in respect, served him and was totally devoted to him. What were the results of his virtues: sensibility, humbleness and devotion? Can the soul be transformed by this? We have heard *Parmatma*'s teaching in our past innumerable births, yet we have not succeeded in complete transformation because we do not absorb everything that we hear or see. Our change is superficial.

True change comes from within only by erasing all the past memories stored within us and filling in new ones as per the guidance of a *Satguru*. The soul after being in the company of a *Satguru*, feels that it wants to imbibe something, achieve something and safeguard its future. Then the foremost thing to do is to erase all the past and start afresh!

Let us take a moment to reflect on one of our most common beliefs - "It's not me, it's them." An illusion that someone else is responsible for what we think, feel and do, making ourselves a slave of circumstances. Let us release this belief and allow the truth to emerge and establish itself within our consciousness.

The truth is always simple, "It's not them, and it's me". We have a choice in how we respond to every situation. We can choose to remain calm, positive and

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stable regardless of what may be happening around us.

Let's remember the mantra to change our life from being a slave to being a master. "It's not what others say or do to me that makes me feel this way, it's what I do with what they say that makes me feel this way". Now choose how you would like to feel.

On the basis of our similarities of form (soul and the Supreme Soul) let us try and be like Gautamswami.

*I can learn from Gautamswami,
The original nature of my soul is peace,
purity, love, knowledge, power and bliss.
As I tune my thoughts with him,
his influence instills these original qualities in me.
He is the perfect and infinite fountain,
indeed the ocean of these qualities.
His superiority lies in the depth,
clarity and continuity of his divine traits.*

Whilst human souls waver between peace and violence; love and hatred; knowledge and ignorance; sorrow and joy, Gautamswami is ever stable.

We are lucky to have got the opportunity to listen to the Lord's sermons and also got the means of giving service to others. What have we achieved after acquiring all this? How much have we transformed?

Indrabhuti Gautam, who practiced fire sacrifice,

did not know *Navkar Mantra*, had never seen saints, did not know *samayik*. Although he was a Brahmin, he took Lord Mahavir's refuge and inculcated all the virtues that Lord Mahavir had. It is this inculcation of character and virtues that helps us attain success in spirituality.

Gautamswami brought about self-transformation, he switched from orange robes to white, from being a Brahmin to a Jain monk, from performing fire-sacrifice to meditation, from being the master of 500 disciples to serving Lord Mahavir, from walking with pride to bowing down in front of *Parmatma*, all this brought him mental and physical well-being. We should take a lesson from the life of Gautamswami. He deleted his entire past, surrendered himself to Lord Mahavir, devoted himself in the service of Lord Mahavir and brought about a complete self-transformation. By putting ourselves in the shoes of Gautamswami even for a moment, we can expect a similar transformation.

We can only accomplish spirituality by changing our past behavior.

Comparing ourselves to Lord Mahavir, we have the same soul as His but there is still a huge difference between Lord Mahavir and us. The first condition towards spirituality, purification and betterment of the soul is to

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forget and leave all your past behind. The present is damaged and spoilt by past activities and inclinations.

What is the difference between the past activities and past inclinations? With good behavior we can improve our present but by good inclinations we advance ourselves for the future life and also our future births.

Take the example of a lady who comes to the religious centre in a chauffeur driven car. She is bare feet while getting off from the car. After performing all her religious activities like *samayik*, *jaap*, and listening to discourses she goes back and while getting into the car, she is wearing a pair of brand new slippers!

This lady was a millionaire. She could afford to buy 10 new pairs of slippers everyday. However, she had a habit of stealing slippers and till she did not steal a pair, she would have no peace of mind. People generally rob if they are jobless or poor and need to steal to run their homes, to feed their hungry children and family. But the action of the millionaire lady, who lives in a bungalow, has one of the best cars, yet stealing slippers and that too from a religious centre in broad daylight! Such an act is called habitual behavior.

When questioned, the lady said that she knew what she was doing was wrong. She was binding karmas by doing this. All those who knew her scolded her for this,

yet her habit did not change despite her repeated attempts to curb it. She would get terribly restless on the days she did not get a chance to steal slippers. This uneasiness led to a loss of appetite and she would feel miserable, why?

This is because in her previous birth she must be in the practice of stealing. This became such a strong habit, that it got attached to her soul. Stealing has now become a part of her, even in this current birth. Now, even in spite of her having all the luxuries in life, this past inclination towards stealing has remained in her. What if instead of stealing, it had been some other positive habit or behavior?

We all have within us some past inclinations that are attached to our soul. Till the time we do not bring transformation within ourselves by altering our inclinations and past habits, they will remain with us. All the meditation, fasting and spiritual activities will have no meaning if we are unable to get rid of these past inclinations.

Deleting our past memories, behavior and inclinations is a step forward towards being spiritual! This is possible only by the grace of the Guru and *Paramatma*!

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