

**THE ABSOLUTE LAW
OF KARMA**

(Gahanā Karmanogati)

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PREFACE

The law of divine justice follows a mysterious course. In the world we come across many instances of virtuous persons undergoing endless suffering and pain; sinners perpetually enjoying pleasurable lives; indolents achieving success; hard-working persons meeting repeated failures; the wise suffering adversity; fools living in prosperity; egoists held in high esteem; and the righteous held in contempt. We find some persons born with silver spoon in their mouths and others facing one misfortune after another throughout life. The well-known human norms for achieving happiness and success do not always appear to hold good in practical terms. Such phenomena raise many questions and doubts about the role of fate in life, the will of God and the relationship of virtuous and evil deeds with happiness and unhappiness in life. The rationale given in the ancient literature in this respect does not adequately satisfy the inquisitiveness of modern minds. Consequently, the new generation is becoming more inclined to accept the atheistic ideologies of the West, which regard God and the religion as phantoms creations of sick and fearful minds; the human body merely a chemical combination of inert elements; and denies the very existence of an immortal soul. The new generation is made to believe that there is no Supreme Being or God; that destiny has no role to play in life; and that only arbitrary man-made state machinery has the powers to dispense punishments and rewards.

In the present book an attempt has been made to give rational and logical explanations of relationship between human deeds and destiny. It explains how events of good fortune and misfortune, happiness and suffering in human life are results of one's own deeds. It is hoped that this booklet will provide satisfactory answers to the queries relating to the role played by the consequences of an individual's deeds in the making of his destiny.

- Shriram Sharma Acharya

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WHO MAINTAINS RECORD OF SINS AND VIRTUES?

A verse in the scriptures states that a suppressed conscience takes one to hell and an awakened conscience leads to heaven. This statement explains the enigma of Heaven and Hell i.e. an individual himself is responsible for creating heaven and hell in his life. Scriptures (*Garura Purana*) describes this phenomenon metaphorically. It is mentioned that in the astral world (*Yamllok*) there lives a deity named *Chitragupta*, who maintains the record of good and evil deeds of a sentient being. When a living being dies and its soul enters the astral world, this deity presents the record of its good and evil deeds and, based on this account, the soul is assigned to live in heaven or hell. Common sense would not accept existence of a deity like *Chitragupta*.

The number of human beings inhabiting this earth itself is in billions. If we take into account the other living beings of millions of non-human species, the total number would be beyond mathematical calculation. It would be an impossible task for an individual to work day and night without rest for millions of years maintaining records of each moment of life of innumerable beings of the cosmos. Impracticability of maintenance of such a stupendous record puts a question mark on the very existence of *Chitragupta*. Modern science, however, substantiates the reality underlying the metaphorical descriptions given in

the scriptures. Science has now established that all mental, verbal and physical activities carried out by an individual having a discriminative mind leave subtle impressions on the deeper levels of the psyche. In this way, like the compressed audio-visual recordings of events on a microchip of the computer or compact disc, all good and evil deeds are being recorded in the secret chambers of the sub-conscious mind. This record, like a C.D., remains in storage till it is required to be played at a desired moment through an appropriate mechanism. Since time immemorial, enlightened persons in India have wondered about the role of fate in human life. Sanskrit and Hindi literature has abundant references to the “footprints of *Karma*” (*Karma Rekha*), which it is said, cannot be erased by any degree of intellectual endeavour.

In Indian spirituality, *karma* stands for any physical, verbal, mental or social activity. It means that each *karma* produces an imprint (*Rekha*), which cannot be erased before creating a reaction (*Karmaphal*). There is a belief that the Creator (Lord *Brahma*) inscribes the destiny on the forehead of a human being and this Divine Inscription cannot be erased by anyone (*Vidhi ke likhe ko metanhara*). Let us examine this concept from a scientific point of view. Microscopic examination shows innumerable furrows in the grey matter all over the brain. Medical science has not so far come to know the biological implications of these indentations. Comparative microscopic research studies have shown that density of these crenulations in the grey matter of highly evolved

persons and thinkers is much more, than in the case of common masses. It shows that these microscopic lines in the grey matter of the brain are nothing but compact subtle impressions created by external activities, which we take as imprints of mental, vocal and physical actions. This record of activities (good and evil deeds) on the neurons of grey matter proves the existence of an intelligent mechanism, which Hindu Mythology refers to as the deity *Chitragupta*. In Sanskrit language too, the word “*Chitragupta*” means “a hidden picture”. It shows that there exists in the human mind a hidden chamber, an inner sentient mechanism (*Antaha Chetana*) or a subtle state of consciousness (*Sookshma Man*). (We may compare it with a back-up file of executable programmes in computer parlance).

It is well known that the subtle body (*Sookshma Sharir*) coexisting with the physical human body has four components “*Man*” (pronounced as *Mun*)- the source of desires, longings and aspirations; “*Buddhi*”- the discriminative faculty which deliberates, takes decisions and determines a course of action; “*Chitta*”- which stores traits, habits inclinations and temperament and “*Ahamkar*”- the overall personal sense of selfhood (Ego). It is also established that “*Chitta*” carries forward its record of good and bad impressions after dissolution of the body. It appears the expression “*Chittagupta*” of scriptures came to be known as “*Chitragupta*” in course of time. Hence the internal mechanism of mind, which creates the compact subtle recordings of human activities,

could be taken as the deity “*Chitragupta*” of human mythology. No doubt, this intelligent mechanism (*Chitragupta*) is continuously engaged in maintaining records of all living beings. Since each being has its own personal *Chitragupta* and, therefore, for the entire population of animate beings there is an equal number of *Chitraguptas*. Thus maintenance of records of innumerable beings does not seem to be an impossibility.

Human mind has an infinite capacity for storage of information. It is quite possible for the subtle sentient mechanism of subconscious mind to maintain a systematic record of activities of a living being. There is also no contradiction in the one *Chitragupta* of mythology being countless *Chitraguptas* in innumerable beings. Divine powers of God are omnipresent. The universal life-force-*Prana* is one, but it is individually present in each living being. Similarly, the subtle celestial elements designated as deities *Indra*, *Varun*, *Agni*, *Shiva* and *Yama* in mythology are also all-pervasive. Air, for instance, in spite of being identified as fresh air of a garden or polluted air of an industrial area, is an integral part of the same atmosphere enveloping the earth. Similarly, though inhabiting and operating in numerous bodies independently, the deity *Chitragupta* is a single universal celestial entity.

HOW DOES *CHITRAGUPTA* MAINTAIN THE RECORD?

Let us now discuss the working of *Chitragupta*. Why and how this deity evaluates the deeds of a person

and what are the yardsticks of this evaluation? We shall also find out how after physical death, the lines of fate drawn by *Chitragupta* determine a soul's new incarnation in conditions of hell or heaven. In the foregoing discussion, the reader has been introduced to the concept that our sub-conscious mind, itself operates as the deity *Chitragupta*. It keeps a continuous micro-record of our good and evil deeds in a condensed form, like the recordings on a small compact disc, the details of our virtuous and sinful deeds registered microscopically and subtly on certain neurons on the inner chambers of mind. In this way the writings of *Chitragupta* could be regarded as shorthand notes taken by the divine stenographer, *Chitragupta*, for presentation as testimony for objective evaluation of the total span of our life.

We are aware that human mind works on two levels- one external and the other internal. The outer mind is analytical. It analyses the pros and cons, accepts and discards, takes decisions and changes resolutions. The inner mind, on the other hand, is like an innocent but resolute child. It neither accepts nor discards anything, but as the true faithful representative of the Divine, functions impartially toward divine justice. The external mind may think of escaping punishment by suppressing or overlooking the recordings of the lines of evil deeds and highlight only the virtuous deeds for reward. The inner mind (conscience is one of its constituents), on the other hand, works differently. It takes decisions like an unbiased judge of highest integrity, who cannot be influenced by allurements, fear or vested

interest. It is said that in each human being there co-exist a saint and a devil. You may consider the secret inner mind as a representative of divinity and the external mind, which is ever engaged in reasoning, rationalizing, deliberating, conspiring and hypocrisy, as a tool of the devil. The external mind may deceive the soul by justifying each and every action of a person. The inner-mind, on the contrary, is the flame of the soul and a projection of the Absolute Truth. It is, therefore, incapable of conceit and deceit and is innately calm and detached. That is why God has entrusted it with such crucial responsibility. For the common man, it is the deity *Chitragupta*. Being absolutely impartial, this deity has been given the high seat of Divine Judge. Like a secret service agent, this deity is all the time vigilantly shadowing a person and recording his action in its secret diary.

In human society, there are two departments for punishing the violators of law- namely the police and the court of justice. The police arrest the accused, collect the evidence and present these in the court of law. Thereafter the process of justice takes over. The judge delivers the judgement after considering all aspects of the offence and related circumstances. Depending on the circumstantial evidence, individuals are handed down varied sentences for the same type of offence. Let us consider an example. Three persons are accused of killing a person. Because of different circumstances associated with the crime, one is set free, the second person is sentenced to five years of imprisonment and the third is sent to the electric chair. The person, who was released, was a mason. While working

at an elevated level, he had accidentally dropped a brick, which killed a passer by. The presiding judge found that the brick was dropped accidentally and unintentionally, without an ulterior motive. Hence the accused was released without punishment. The second accused was a farmer. Finding a thief stealing his crop, he had given him a fatal blow, killing the offender. Taking the circumstances, which prompted the offence, the judge considered that though it was natural for the farmer to show his anger on finding someone stealing his property, nevertheless, since he had over-reacted to a small offence, a sentence of five years imprisonment was given. The third person was a notorious robber who had robbed a rich man and intentionally killed him in the process. In this way the worldly court of justice pronounces judgement after minutely examining all circumstantial evidences.

In the inner-mind the secret recordings of *Chitragupta* discharge the dual responsibility of the police and court of justice. In the material world, if the prosecutor presents inadequate or false evidence, the judgement of the court is likely to be unfair, but in the inner occult world there is absolutely no possibility of such miscarriage of justice. The inmost mind, being the direct and transparent witness to all physical as well as mental activities of a person, is wholesically aware of the intentions, motives and circumstances of each and every action. Being wholesically informed, the secret mind does not require the testimony of the external mind to arrive at a conclusion. In Divine Justice the gravity of a sin (vice) or merit of a

virtue is decided on the basis of the motive and degree of emotional involvement with the deed. Whereas in the material world objects are measured materially on the basis of their mundane worth, this measure is irrelevant for dispensing Divine Justice. The material world may ignore a poor donor of ten cents and admire a person donating ten thousand dollars, but in Divine Jurisprudence the worth of such acts of altruism will not be assessed on this gross physical basis.

Let us take an example. In a remote, undeveloped tribal area, one may barter a kilogram of food grains for sugar, but in a developed country one has to pay in hard currency. In the material world, people do earn fame and name by making large contributions to charity, helping in popular welfare activities, joining religious or charitable institutions, delivering or listening to sermons, and participating in pilgrimages; but the “Domain of *Chitragupta*” does not accept this currency. The ledgers of this domain record only debits and credits of motives and emotional involvements in the performance of deeds and convert these into virtues and sins accordingly.

Upon being exhorted by his Divine Teacher *Krishna*, *Arjun* got millions killed in the war of *Mahabharata*. This great confrontation, during which the entire battlefield became littered with corpses, took place because *Arjun* agreed to take part in the war. In this way, *Arjun* could have been considered as a great sinner, but *Chitragupta* gave credit to his motive for waging the *Mahabharata* war. *Arjun*’s intentions were pious. He had

fought only to re-establish the 'Moral Order' (*Dharma Sthapana*). *Chitragupta*'s ledger did not take into account the slain bodies of the dead soldiers. Physical objects have no relevance in the invisible realm. *Chitragupta* simply ignored the number of toys of flesh and bones destroyed during the war. Does a king bother about the number of toys broken or the number of grains spilled? In this world billionaires are held in high regard but in the realm of *Chitragupta* they are paupers and non-entities. On the other hand a poor man of this world, if he is kind hearted, could be counted in the realm of *Chitragupta* amongst the king of kings. Whatever a man does, only his motives-good or bad are recorded in the corresponding account of *Chitragupta*. A public executioner, who, in course of duty, hangs a person condemned to death without any malice, could be considered a virtuous person by *Chitragupta*, Whereas a priest, who meticulously follows the rituals, but is secretly engaged in corrupt practices will be labelled as a sinner.

In the realm of God of Divine Law (*Dharmaraj*), the decorations of the exterior world have no values. There only the interior worth is evaluated. It hardly matters whether externally an action of a person appears good or bad. The determining factor is the interior or emotional input. The roots of vice and virtue unquestionably lie in the motives and intensity of emotions and not in the external deeds. In the foregoing paragraphs we have discussed how the deity *Chitragupta* living intimately associated with our inner lives (*Pranas*), impartially records our good and bad

deeds on the sub-microscopic elements of our inner conscience and that this subtle recording is popularly known as the “Lines of Fate” (*Karma Rekha*). We have also understood that the process of divine justice does not regard an act as sinful or virtuous by the external appearance of the activity but on the basis of the quality of the motive of the doer. The intensity of motive is directly proportional to the gravity or greatness of the sin or virtue respectively. Take the case of two individuals nursing a sick person. Apparently both are engaged in the same service, but whereas one is doing it indifferently, the other serves with tenderness, sympathy, large-heartedness and love. Here, in spite of apparently identical service, the measure of virtue will depend on the quality of emotional involvement and love. Similarly, amongst two thieves, one of which is compelled to steal because of starvation and the other steals for acquiring drugs, the sin will undoubtedly be considered greater in the latter case.

In Divine Jurisprudence, there is significant clause for treating each individual independently according to the state of purity of the soul. The laws of spirituality hold that each soul is perpetually in the process of progressive evaluation i.e. purification through the course of successive cycles of birth and death. That is, at each successive stage the soul acquires greater purity and is given a body in the species of higher consciousness (wisdom). The birth as a human being is believed to be the highest phase of conscious evolution on earth before liberation from the cycles of birth and death. The rewards and punishments of heaven and

hell depend on the state of consciousness i.e. wisdom of the being. If accused of bribery, a peon, a clerk and a juror will receive three different types of punishment. The peon may be acquitted after a serious reprimand, the clerk may be temporarily suspended from the service; but having been entrusted with a great responsibility, the juror cannot escape dismissal. Take one more example. A primitive tribesman hunts and kills animals for his daily meal. On the other hand, a priest preaching virtues of non-violence secretly consumes non-vegetarian food. In Divine Jurisprudence, the priest will add greater sin to his account than the tribesman. Here the states of awareness and morality are being considered for evaluation of the merit or demerit of the deed. As the soul becomes more evolved with acquisition of greater wisdom and morality, the inner conscience (*Antaha Chetna*) becomes more and more awakened and refined.

A sinful act leaves an indelible dark spot on the conscience of a relatively more virtuous individual. In other words, the gravity of sin is considered lesser in the case of an illiterate, ignorant, uncivilized person. With the increase in wisdom a person acquires a greater capability to discriminate between right and wrong, proper and improper. The conscience becomes aware of the consequences of proper and improper actions. The “Voice of Conscience”, therefore, becomes more assertive. It becomes more responsible. None blames an infant for dirtying its undergarments. Nor does the child feel embarrassed for it. On the other hand, if a grown-up person

behaves in such a manner, the society considers it disgraceful and the individual too feels embarrassed and humiliated. With self-evolution, the soul also has to share additional responsibility for higher level of morality and ethics. A soldier will probably be discharged after a minor punishment an account of disobedience, but an officer will have to face court martial for a similar misconduct. When wise, intelligent and empathic persons indulge in corrupts practices, *Chitr Gupta* records these in the category of grave sins.

Mythology tells us that king *Nripa* had to face hell for a minor offence. When an ignorant person commits a crime, it is not taken seriously, but if a person made responsible for upholding standards of morality for the masses (a *brahmin*) deviates from his course of duty, in the court of divine justice he/she deserves a stern punishment. A social reformer has the status of a leader in society. Being a leader has its own advantages, but the leader also has the highest responsibility. Knowledgeable persons have the formidable responsibility of adhering to upright conduct and unimpeachable character, failing which; divine justice will make them suffer the agony of falling from a mountaintop to the depths of a valley. In the following chapter we shall discuss the various types of actions (*karmas*) and their relationship with Divine Justice.

THE SECRET OF UNEXPECTED GOOD FORTUNE AND MISFORTUNE

There is a saying in the scriptures that the factors responsible for mental-physical agonies and natural disasters (*Daivik-Daihik-Bhautik Dukha*) are self-generated. We often come across phenomena, which appear quite contradictory to the known laws of nature, creating doubts about the impartiality of divine justice. For instance, an honest, duty conscious, morally superior person is suddenly struck with a great misfortune in life as though he/she was being punished by God for a great sin. On the other hand, we find persons engaged in worst type of corrupt practices living in peace and prosperity. An idler wins a jackpot or inherits a fortune from unexpected quarters, whereas a hard working intelligent person is found suffering endlessly for want of basic necessities. One person achieves great success with little effort, whereas another does not succeed in spite of his best efforts. Such phenomena are popularly ascribed to the role of the fate (*prarbdh, bhagya*, etc). Similarly, unprecedented natural calamities like famine, epidemics, tornadoes, deluge, damage by lightning and eqrthquake and ‘untimely death’ are commonly attributed to the ‘Will of God’ and known as predestination (*bhagya*). Such unexpected happenings as financial loss, accidents, sudden mental/physical disability and physical separation from a dear one are also attributed to fate.

Such unexpected adversities are rare, but they do occur in life. At times, they leave such deep imprints on the psyche, that it is not possible to ignore them. Those who are not familiar with the mysteries of divine justice become very much perplexed by such phenomena and form opinions, which are extremely dangerous for life. Many become resentful towards God, blame and abuse Him for an unjust injustice. A few even become atheists, considering the futility of worshipping God who does not respond to prayers in distress, despite their prolonged adherences to religiosity. Then there is a class of devotees who serve the saints and worship deities in expectation of some material gains. However, if they are visited with some unfavourable phenomena coincidentally, their adoration changes to contempt or disbelief.

There are quite a few “Believers” in this world who correlate people, places and things with good and bad luck. Such superstitions have caused extreme miseries to innocent persons. The root cause for such irrational behaviour is the belief that whatever comes to pass is predestined by God and the beings created by Him have absolutely no role in shaping their own destiny. Quite a few persons in this world forsake their responsibility in the mistaken belief that the gain and loss being predestined, there is no necessity of personal effort. They mistakenly believe that they cannot change the Will of God who is supposed to have programmed their life beforehand. We often hear expressions like – “Whatever is destined cannot be changed” or “Who

can change the fate predestined by God?" or "It was the Will of God". As a matter of fact man uses such expressions when he finds himself helpless, disturbed and confused while undergoing adversity.

In the absence of an understandable cause, the agitated mind finds a scapegoat in the Divine Will. Nevertheless, such outbursts do have an advantage. The help in releasing the stress of the disturbed mind, which would have otherwise done incalculable harm to the person concerned. There are however many more persons who shirk their responsibility of self-effort to meet a given challenge under the pretext of inexorability of Divine Will.

Because of their influence, the less knowledgeable younger persons around them too begin to feel helpless and despaired because of the so-called "inevitability of fate".

Readers would appreciate how ignorance of the real causes of unexpected calamities create ridiculous concepts, which distort and vitiate the value-system of life.

Since times immemorial, man has been attempting to correlate human activities with events of life over which he has no control. Research in deeper spirituality has discovered ways and means to find answers to such problems of life. In the following section, we shall discuss how mental and physical actions of an individual and collective activities of the society become responsible for good fortune and misfortune of individuals and the community.

THE THREE TYPES OF AGONIES AND THEIR CAUSATION

Sudden happenings of good fortune and misfortune are part of life and there is no escape from them. Saint-poet Soordas has rightly stated that the effects of actions (Karmas) cannot be avoided even with the best of guidance from an enlightened and experienced person. In spite of having Maharshi Vashishtha as his Guru, Sri Ram had to undergo the agony of the death of his father, abduction of his wife, Sita, and subsequently her forced banishment to rishi Valmiki's Ashram. It would not be proper to assume that misfortunes are punishments given by an angry God to chastise an erring person. The Epic Ramayana says that each individual is himself personally responsible for his happiness and miseries (*"Kahu na kowoo dukha-sukkar data| Nij nij karm bhog sab bhrata||"*). All beings reap the fruits of their own *karmas*. They rejoice or wail, weep and suffer because of their own doings. With each living being, God has provided an unerring and intelligent mechanism, which determines fruits of his actions. Like a fish swimming in the water of a snake moving on sand, we leave behind footprints of our own *karmas*. These impressions are known as "*samskars*" in spiratual parlance. Evil deeds generate distressful *samskars*, which in course of time sprout as sufferings, like self-growing thorny bushes.

Now we shall discuss the three categories of *karmas*, their characteristics and consequences.

Happiness and peace is the natural state of mind. Man is instinctively inclined to act for welfare of self and

others, which naturally results in peace and joy. He suffers only when he is mentally disturbed. He dreads mental turbulence, sorrow and grief. Hence it would be useful to discuss about the causes of unhappiness. As the medical science has two independent streams, one for promotion of health and another for treatment of diseases, there are two branches of spiritual effects – one for promoting happiness and the other for unhappiness. Righteous living is essential for inner peace and happiness just as nutritional food is for health. In therapy it is necessary to first have a diagnosis and then look for treatment. The same holds true for unhappiness. By discarding the karmas, which produce bad Samskars, we can get rid of the resultant suffering and pain.

Let us now discuss the three types of sufferings in detail. As mentioned earlier, misfortunes influence a person by creating three types of adverse reactions: (1) Mental suffering, (2) Physical pain and (3) Distress caused by natural disasters. In spiritual parlance these are known as “*Daivik*”, “*Daihik*” and “*Bhautik*” - *Dukhas*.

MENTAL SUFFERINGS (*Daivik–Dukhas*):

All types of sorrows, mental suffering, are results of ‘Mental Sins’. Worry, anxiety, anger, humiliation, animosity, separation from a beloved one, fear, grief, etc. are signs of divine justice for mental sins. Mental sins are those willful karmas (deliberate acts) of mind, which are carried out under the influence of strong negative emotional stimuli. We may call mental sins as corrupt functions of

mind like jealousy, perfidy, deception, annoyance, cruelty, etc., which pollute the environment around the inner psyche. Mental sins do not provide any physical gratification. Like a smoke-filled room, an environment created by pollutants of mind suffocates the soul. The soul, being a portion of the omnipresent Divinity, is intrinsically pure. It does not permit accumulation of sinful thoughts around itself and is always eager to push out of pollutants in some way or the other, in the same manner, as the body expels the harmful food. The soul is meticulously careful about its purity. The moment it finds the mental sins polluting its environment, it feels uncomfortable and immediately reacts to discard the pollutants. Though our external conscious mind is hardly aware, the inner, subtle mind is always seeking the opportunities to throw off this burden. Sometime, somehow, from somewhere, it involves man in situations, which neutralize the samskars created by mental sins through such reactions as humiliation, failure, disrepute, etc.

Death of a beloved person, loss in business and property, public-defamation, poverty etc. are also mental agonies. Such situations bring out the inner pain to the surface and the aggrieved person weeps, wails and is reminded of the futility of worldly attachments and impermanency of material things. Situations creating acute unhappiness bring out a greater awareness of the need for righteous living. Man is motivated to refrain from committing sinful deeds in future and follow an upright path in life. While attending funerals, people are reminded of the urgency of living a purposeful life. When suffering from financial loss man seeks God's help. On being

defeated and becoming unsuccessful, vanity is deflated. When the intoxication is over, the drunk begins to talk sense.

The only purpose of mental distress is to cleanse the mind of garbage of mental pollutants such as jealousy, ingratitude, selfishness, cruelty, heartlessness, cunning, hypocrisy and egoism. Through suffering, the intelligent divine mechanism ensures removal of samskars created by *Prarabdha Karmas* (discussed later). Pain and anguish spring forth to wash out the deleterious samskars generated by *Prarabdha Karmas*. Apparently, sins like theft, burglary, robbery, adultery, kidnapping and violence are committed physically, but since these are basically outer manifestation of mental stimuli such acts fall in the category of mental sins.

PHYSICAL SUFFERINGS (Daihik Dukhas):

The cause of congenital deficiencies and genetic diseases is misutilisation of the corresponding organs in the previous life–cycles. After death, the soul discards the physical body but carries forward the astral body (Sookchma Shareer) to the next life. In the succeeding birth, the new body is shaped by this astral body. The astral body carries with it nuclei (seeds) of samskars of earlier physical existence to the next reincarnation. The corresponding components of physical organs, which are immorally used in the previous life, lose their vitality in the astral body but manifest as malfunctioning of those organs in the physical body of the next birth. Thus it is possible for a sexually indulgent person to be born with congenital

impotence or with imperfections in sexual organs in the next life (Note that Roman Catholic Church defines indulgence as “a partial remission of the temporal punishment that is still due for sin after absolution). Giving exemplary punishment for over-indulgence in this manner, the divine justice also provides the being an excellent opportunity for self-upliftment.

The temporary period of non-function or malfunctions of the affected faculty serves the purpose of caution as well as rejuvenation for the next life. That is to say whichever organ of the body is recklessly misused for sense gratification is deemed to be engaged in a physical sin. In the next life that organ is either found missing or appears as a congenital defect. Thus congenital physical deformities or diseases are for remission of sins. (ref. Absolution–Roman Catholic Theory.) The compulsive rest rejuvenates the organ of the body and also relieves the burden of sin from the mind through repentance. When a mental sin is intermixed with a physical sin and it has not been neutralized in the present life by punishment by the state, society or by atonement, it is also carried over to the next life.

However, if the sin is basically physical with little or no input of mental sin (deliberate intention), the biological system immediately takes care of it. For instance man gets intoxicated and deranged on taking drugs, falls sick because of dietary irregularities or dies on consuming the poison. This is a physical punishment for a physical sin. The body cleans itself of the small physical sins speedily

and these are neutralized in this very life. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, serious physical vices, which are also associated with mental stimuli, are carried over by the astral body for being worked out in the next life.

SUFERINGS RESULTING FROM NATURAL CALAMITIES (*Bhautik Dukhas*):

Of late, science has begun to appreciate the impact of lop-sided human activities on pervasive global life-sustaining elements of nature. Indiscriminate use of chloroflouro carbons by some developing countries is damaging the global atmosphere for entire humankind by producing the greenhouse effect. Reckless deforestation in certain parts of the world is creating worldwide ecological imbalances. Such examples illustrate that basic elements of nature are globally interdependent and local changes in them have universal implications. The following observations bring out this eternal truth.

“*Pran*”- the universal life force, is one of the vital elements of nature, which is an integral constituent of all animate beings. The entire human race is inter-connected with this all-pervasive element. Each spark of life in the individual animate being, which is known as “*Atma*” in spiritual parlance, is part of the omnipresence of THAT universal life force. The science of spirituality maintains that karmas and samskars of all living beings are mutually interactive. In social milieu these reactions are quite prominent. A criminal brings shame to his parents and family as well. The latter too suffer disgrace since

disregarding their responsibilities by not performing the right karmas; they did not exert enough influence to make the person a good citizen. The responsibility for spiritual development of the child (a virtuous karma) lies with the parents and other adults of the family. Hence, though in the *material* world only the offender receives the punishment from the law enforcers and the society, the souls of the parents and other family members too have to suffer partially for this dereliction of duty, which the divine jurisprudence considers as a sin. When the neighbour's house is on fire, you cannot remain a silent spectator, since soon you may also become a victim. If in spite of being capable of preventing, one looks on at acts of theft, burglary, rape, murder etc. indifferently, the society would look down upon such a person contemptuously and the law would also not spare him. The laws of divine justice too follow a similar norm.

Divine law expects man to abide by time-tested moral codes of conduct and also make maximum possible endeavor to prevent others from violating them. If some country or community or race does not make an effort to prevent or dissuade others from committing wrong deeds, in spite of being in a position to do so; or does not promote morality and ethics despite having the means to do so, the former too has to suffer its consequences. Such collective sins of inactivity or indifference invite combined punishment from divine justice.

Earthquakes, deluge, drought, famine, world wars are consequences of collective sins of humanity, in which karmas for vested interests were given priority and welfare of the rest of the humanity was ignored. Examples are -

spread of AIDS, drug abuse and alcoholism, disintegration of families, juvenile delinquency, terrorism, environmental pollution etc. The developed countries are suffering consequences of their smug indifference towards the welfare of the underprivileged masses elsewhere.

**PASSIVE ACQUIESCENCE BEFORE EVIL
ACTS IS ALSO SINFUL**

It is seen that in a society the affluent and powerful exploiters suffer much less from natural disasters than the submissive, under – privileged masses. The brunt of excessive rains or droughts is mainly borne by the poor farmers. The laws of divine justice regard tolerance of a sin as a greater offence than its committal. There is a saying that “the father of a tyrant is a coward”. Cowardice and timidity tend to invite suppression and oppression from some quarter or the other. Big powerful fish is always on the prowl for the timid small fish. The latter may manage to escape from one but some other big fish will devour it.

Laws of divine justice consider cowardice, weakness and ignorance as grave sins. It is not surprising that these invite harsher punishments. Natural disasters should be taken as stealthy acts of divine grace. These are frequently manifested by the invisible Supreme Justice for removal of corruption from the society. Natural calamities are not aberrations of nature. Instead, these are reactions of out-of-tune actions of living beings themselves. It is like

the process of refining in the blast furnace. Through such loud warnings, God mercifully tells us again and again to work for eradicating sins from the society. In the next chapter we shall discuss how and when divine justice gives rewards and punishments for the various types of good and evil *karmas*.

THE THREE CATEGORIES OF ACTIONS (KARMAS) AND CONSEQUENT SAMSKARS

We shall now proceed to correlate the three categories of *karmas* and their *samskars* with the three types of miseries suffered by man. *Samskars* are produced by each of three categories of *karmas*, known in spiritual parlance as – (i) *Sanchit Karmas* (ii) *Prarabdha Karmas* and (iii) *Kriyaman Karmas*. Let us keep in mind that as Chitragupta, the inner conscience of man, which is impartial, pure and wise, goes on recording each and every good and evil deed for dispensing justice of high integrity.

SANCHIT KARMAS (Involuntary Mental *Karmas*):

Unknown to the conscious mind of the individual, association with good and bad company leaves some impressions on the psyche. Unless willingly and consciously accepted, *samskars* produced in this process are faint, weak in potency and feebly reactive. The *karmas*, which produce such weak *samskars*, are known as *Sanchit Karmas*. These *samskars* remain stored in some odd

corner of the inner consciousness, buried in dormant state. Then there are *karmas* unwillingly, reluctantly performed under compulsion or in a state of helplessness. If one is forced to carry out such *karmas* with revulsion and these are not made into a habit, these too fall in the category of *Sanchit Karmas*.

Being extremely feeble, the *samskars* produced by *Sanchit Karmas* may remain in a dormant state in the psyche for thousands of years through successive births. These *samskars* generally remain inactive, but if a suitable stimulant is provided to them by deliberate, strong, conscious repetition of similar deeds, these, too become active. In the company of strong healthy horses, a lame horse too begins to trot.

With good soil and adequate rains even rotten seeds germinate. Association with identical *samskars* makes the weak *samskars* gain strength, whereas if the past *samskars* repeatedly come in contact with the opposite type of *samskars*, the former are completely wiped out. If for a long duration evil *samskars* face a long continuous inflow of good *samskars*, the latter destroy them totally. As a matter of fact, the good as well as bad *Sanchit Samskars* bear fruit in favourable environments and are destroyed when confronted with an adverse milieu. Pilgrimages and rituals recommended in religious practices are meant to wipe out the weak, evil *samskars* accumulated as *Sanchit Karmas*.

PRARABDHA KARMAS**(Karmas done with strong emotional involvement):**

Mental *karmas*, which are voluntarily, deliberately performed under strong emotional stimuli, are known as *Prarabdha Karmas*. Being motivated by intense emotions, such *karmas* produce powerful *samskars*. Reactions of violent acts like murder, robbery, betrayal, felony or immoral passionate acts like adultery are very strongly felt by the inner conscience. Its innate spiritual purity is ever eager to get rid of this extraneous deleterious impurity at the earliest opportunity.

It has already been mentioned that our inner conscience keeps a constant watch over each of our *karmas* and determines greater or lesser punishment for each offence according to the nature of the act. A mental chastisement for a mental offence is however not possible without the help of other means. For giving an appropriate punishment, the inner conscience waits for a suitable environment in the subtle world (*Sukshma Lok* in spiritual parlance, where the divine system correlates *samskars* and creates environment for justice).

Occasionally this process is spread over a long time. For instance, for redemption of a mental sin of treachery, the sinner is required to be punished by grief. *Chitragupta* evaluates the grade of treachery to decide the degree of sorrow required for atonement. For punishing a murderer, the divine system will associate the soul of the sinner with the soul of an individual who, according to its

own *karmas*, can inflict the same degree of pain and grief on the sinner, which latter has caused to the aggrieved person. For instance, *Chitragupta* may plan birth of a son or daughter in the family of the sinner, who (the new born) is destined to die at a young age according to its own past *karmas*. The inner conscience of the killer will wait for grief-producing event when the son/daughter meets death by disease or accident. In this way, for *samskars* carried over to next life, divine justice creates an environment for punishment equivalent to the sin.

It is obvious that this process is not unilateral. Divine justice makes souls of both the sinner and the sinned interact in complementary environment. This complex process at time takes several cycles of life and death. We know that in this world, too, it requires a long time and consideration of numerous factors before two individuals become life partners as husband and wife. (The popular saying that “Marriages are made in heaven” indirectly refers to the coincidence of *samsakars* of the bride and the groom. The pain of separation in a divorce, too, is a consequence of sinful *karmas* of past lives.)

We may further try to understand the course of divine justice by an analogy in a natural phenomenon. A shrub in Africa called Venus grows to a height of about three meters. Out of its branches spread out thin thread-like offshoots. These keep on growing and swaying in the air till they meet another shrub and they become mutually intertwined. Sometimes these shrubs meet each other barely after a growth of a few centimeters, whereas the

others succeed in doing so after *growing* for a few meters. This is the way the fruits of *karmas* ripen for interaction over different spans of time.

The punishment for the exclusively physical sins is physical and is given without much delay. (Consumption of poison results in immediate death.) Mental chastisement, on the other hand, is neither instantaneous nor is it unilateral. For instance, if, because of his cruel nature, someone commits a murder and is caught red-handed, the state awards a death sentence. On the contrary, if the killer commits the offence secretly, the inner conscience does not punish him immediately. It would wait for an environment for creating in his psyche an aversion for violence, by making the sinner feel the same degree of pain, which was felt by his victim. That is why, at times, morally vile persons are found rejoicing and righteous ones suffering in life. The enforcer of Divine Law takes time in preparing an appropriate environment for dispensing just rewards and punishments.

IS PREDICTION OF FUTURE EVENTS POSSIBLE?

At times, *yogis* having paranormal powers make accurate predictions about the future events. It should not create the misconception that life is strictly bound by rigid predestination. The future course of life undoubtedly depends on past *karmas*. By virtue of paranormal powers the futurologists and seers are able to foresee the ultimate

outcome of the *Prarabdha Karmas*. In this world, too, we can often predict the probable future on the basis of a comprehensive data. On learning details of legal proceedings an experienced juror may foretell the judgement to be delivered. It does not mean that there is no relevance of prosecutors, defendants, evidence, lawyers and cross-examinations. Foretelling of events also does not mean that certain events can be correlated to some particular past *Prarabdha Karmas*. In fact, fate and self-effort (*Taqdeer* and *Tadbeer*) are two faces of the same coin. Self-efforts (*karmas*) are given the name of destiny when they bear fruit.

We may compare the current *karma* with any raw fruit, which is going to ripen in future as destiny. The fate of today is the *karmas* of the past. If *karma* stands for an infant calf, *Prarabdha* is the state acquired by it late in life as an aged cow. The word *Prarabdha* is frequently misunderstood as predestiny though *Prarabdha Karmas* and *Prarabdha* (fate) are two names given to the same phenomena- with a time lag in between.

GOD IS NOT VINDICTIVE

Misfortune occurs in life in a particular order and according to a well-defined process of divine justice, but people reconcile to their inevitability by believing in so-called “Wrath of God”, “God’s Will” or “Natural woeful state of this world”. As a matter of fact, God neither creates any good fortune nor misfortune for anybody, nor He/She

(God is not gender-specific as a biological being) desires to put anyone in distress. Nor is this world wholly full of woes. A spider gets confined and entangled in its own self-woven web. Similarly, man himself makes his mind vicious, undisciplined, corrupt and sinful and when the evil mind works to create a distressing situation, he weeps, wails and blames others- including God. Here it should be clearly understood that the fruits of Prarabdha are always received as abrupt unprecedented events. (e.g., unexpected death due to disease or accident, collapsing of a house, winning a jackpot, injury due to accident, accidental loss of limbs or cessation of vital functions of body.)

God does not involve other beings directly in enforcing divine justice for a couple of reasons. One: The person enforcing divine punishment on behalf of God would create resentment against his own self- thus beginning a chain of counter reaction between himself and the person being punished. It would increase turbulence of mind. Two: The enforcer would have to be unnecessarily involved in the complex process of cause-effect by committing undesired *karmas* and reaping their fruits.

Here, we may once again recapitulate the characteristics of *Sanchit Karmas* and *Prarabdha Karmas*. Whereas *Sanchit Karmas* bear fruits only on coming across a suitable environment or otherwise get destroyed in a counter environment, the *Prarabdha Karmas* invariably bear fruit, though it may take a period of several life cycles. The current activities being knowingly carried out are *Prarabdha Karmas*, whereas the

unexpected, sudden happenings are the fruits of past *Prarabdha Karmas*. Any failure in life due to indolence is definitely not due to *Prarabdha Karmas* of the past. Unlike the *Prarabdha Karmas*, the physical *Kriyaman Karmas* (discussed hereafter) bear definite fruits within a short time.

KRIYAMAN KARMAS (Physical *Karmas*):

Physical actions fall in the category of *Kriyaman Karmas*. These produce co current results. Consumption of drugs is followed by intoxication. Death follows consumption of poison. Human body is made up of five natural basic elements. Interaction between these natural elements produces immediate reaction. As soon as we touch fire, fingers are burnt. Laws of nature govern interactions between natural elements. Defiance of these laws invites almost constant punishment by nature.

When the physical body is compelled to live on foods and habits incompatible with its physiology, there is an immediate disturbance in the natural balance of the body, which results in disease, and weakening of the harmonious working of the biological system. This is nature's mechanism for rectification. (Vegetarianism is meant for human species, since contrary to the physiology of the carnivora, man has been provided with smaller canine teeth and larger intestine as compared to carnivora. The smaller intestines of the carnivora do not let accumulation of residual toxins of animal fat in the body.

Besides, the flesh-eating animals are provided with long tongues. The vegetarians use their lips for consuming liquids). Physical *Karmas* are mechanically carried out by the body without any emotional involvement unlike *Sanchit* and *Prarabdha Karmas*, they produce fruits in a short time.

WELCOME THE SUFFERINGS

Distress is an unwelcome phenomenon. Its immediate experience is bitterness. Nevertheless, ultimately it is meant for the well-being and happiness of man. Distress is an extraordinarily effective mechanism provided by God for rectification of evil traits and augmentation of positive values. Life is a blissful and self-enlightened spark of the Supreme-Being. He/She has self-created this world which is intrinsically blissful. The brief interludes of unhappiness in life are provided to give the needed momentum to the progressive evolution of the soul, by reminding the being about the true purpose of life, which is awakening to its original nature as a Spark of the Divine. Events producing unhappiness in life are few and their impact is self-evident. Nevertheless, we must remember that whatever little suffering we come across, is the result of our own forgetfulness of our Divine Source. Being a spark of the Blissful Supreme Being, the soul is intrinsically blissful. Nor is there any natural unhappiness in the basic structure of the cosmos, which is orderly and harmonious.

Do not be afraid of the misfortunes, which create unhappiness. Do not lose your mental equilibrium. Face

misfortunes boldly. Instead of getting worried or uneasy, be prepared to sail through them. Embrace misfortune as though it were an ill-mannered but warm-hearted friend, who uses foul language, makes unpleasant criticism. Nevertheless, when it (misfortune) goes, it leaves behind the gift of a large treasure of wisdom and insight. Like a brave soldier, face misfortune defiantly and say, “O oncoming misfortunes! you are like my children. I am your creator. Therefore, I welcome you with open arms. You are my legitimate offspring. Therefore, I won’t disown you. You are free to play in the courtyard of my life. I am not a coward. I won’t shed tears in desperation on meeting you. I am not morally so bankrupt as to avoid paying for my own misdeeds. Being a creation of That Supreme Being, I am a Spark of That Absolute Truth, Absolute Benefaction and Absolute Virtue. Come ugly products of my ignorant *karmas*. Come! I have courage to accommodate you in my life. I don’t need help from anyone. You have arrived to test how courageous I am? I am prepared to face you.”

Friends! Don’t commit blasphemy. Don’t ever say this world is bad, wicked, unvirtuous and full of unhappiness. In this world, created by God, each element is a masterpiece. Nothing is bad in the wholistic view of creation. If you blame the creation, you are also casting aspersions on its Creator. Saying that the pot is badly-made means commenting on the proficiency of the potter. How dare you underrate the qualification of your Omnipotent Father/Mother? When you say that this world

is full of misery you are casting aspersions on the integrity of God. In this celestial creation, there is not an iota of unhappiness. Our ignorance itself is the cause of our bad *karmas* and consequent miseries. Come! Let us cleanse and purify our inner selves of our evil thoughts and wickedness so that we are totally and finally released from our miseries and acquire ultimate deliverance.

CREATE YOUR OWN WORLD

The physical cosmos, according to a philosopher, is made up of inert components, which can be moulded into any desired configuration. The doer, man, is animate, whereas elements of the cosmos are inert. The animate doer has the capacity to utilize an inert substance as needed. A potter has free choice to make any object of pottery out of raw mud. A goldsmith can make any ornament from gold. With the needle and thread, a tailor may make a shirt or a trouser. The material world consists of elements creating three types of 'qualitative reactions' in life. In spiritual parlance these 'natural attributes' of the world are known as *Sat*, *Raj* and *Tam*. Broadly speaking, *Sat* stands for the most refined cohesive and super conductive medium of the spirit; *Tam* for the most opaque, sluggish and perverted and *Raj* most perturbed and unstable in which both *Sat* and *Tam* coexist in continued disequilibrium. Man is free to choose any combination of attributes amongst these with the one predominant over the other two.

In a garden there is slush, filth as well as fragrance of flowers. Worms creep into the mud, flies find out the filth and the bees go straight to the flowers. Everyone receives things of one's choice. Bats and owls can see even during the darkest of night. Honeybees are able to detect fructose in the tiny flowers hidden in a thick bush and the poisonous snakes manufacture venom out of harmless organic substances. In this world, good and bad things, virtues and vices, morality and immorality exist everywhere. It is like that super cafeteria, where the customer has free choice to procure sweet, sour or bitter food. The shelves of the super market of the world are stocked with stuffs of unlimited varieties. Customers enter the shop and purchase items of their taste. Our Supreme Mother has kept prepared dishes for everyone's taste

The Ideosphere (Personal Ideological Environment) of a thief is overwhelmed with thievery. This ideosphere will easily interact with the compatible ideosphere of other thieves. Be it a prison, society or house, everywhere a thief will find thievery being discussed. His family members will generally talk about thievery. Some will support his avocation others oppose it. When the thief moves in the society, persons known to him will pass good or bad comments about his profession. When he meets fellow thieves, they will talk only about the tricks of the trade. In a prison, thieves will flock together and immediately discuss their favourite subject. In this way a thief will find the entire world revolving around thievery. He will regard thievery as the most important trade and think very little of

anything else. He will be indifferent to other things in life. Similarly an adulterer or adulteress will see an adulterant in each man and woman. He/she will collect and display erotic photographs, paintings and literature in the house. Friends and acquaintances having similar inclinations will be easily found. In his/her mind sex will become the most important issue in life. In the same manner drunkards and drug addicts create their own worlds. It is up to you to create the world of your choice.

WHO ARE YOU?

Each individual has different identities for different roles in life. This identity depends on the relationship with the person with whom he/she interacts. For mother he/she may be an object of maternal affection, for father an obedient child, for the teacher an intelligent pupil and for friends a dependable good-humoured buddy. Wife looks at a man as her beloved darling, whereas his son relates to him as his father. The same person appears to his enemy as an adversary; to the shopkeeper as a customer; to the servant as a master; to the horse as a rider; to the caged bird as the jailor. Bed bugs and mosquitoes find him as nothing else but a source of delicious blood. If one could visualize the various mental images, which people have for an individual, it would be found that each person has one's own peculiar concept and none of these conform to the other. Besides, none of these images identifies the whole individual accurately. Everyone conceptualizes an individual

according to the particular bend with which they are mutually related to each other. It is even more amusing that man himself lives confused in his multi-personal bends. Throughout life he lives with multiple self-identifications. Various thoughts like “I am an adulterer”; “I am wealthy”; “I am old”; “I have no family”; “I am ugly”; “I am popular”; “I am unhappy”; “I am surrounded by vile persons”;.....keep on changing and churning his ideosphere. As other persons form an image about an individual according to their interests, the individual too builds an eccentric lop-sided image of himself based on perceptions of his sense organs. Like a drugged person he keeps on hallucinating in his numerous momentary identities. If he could truly identify with his own inner self, he would be surprised to know how far he has strayed away from Truth. (Read, “What am I” by the author).

Man always lives in a make-believe world created by his own imagination. In this dream world, one man builds castles in the air, the other fights with the windmills like Don Quixote and yet other derives pleasure of embracing and kissing his beloved while fondling his pet dog.

Deluded by ignorance, we are all hallucinating in an imaginary world. One thinks that he is living in a palace. The other trembles because of imaginary fears. Yet another daydreams of being engaged to the most beautiful damsel in the world. Some insane person is found rejoicing in showing off wealth and ‘kingdom’. This world is like a mental asylum where we find all types of mad caps. Each has one’s own eccentricity. Everyone considers himself as the most intelligent person. Go to a mental asylum and

observe the fantasies of the long-term inmates. You will find a close parallel to the daydreamers of this world, who very much consider themselves as sane and sober.

YOUR WORLD – A REFLECTION OF YOUR MIND

In this world, we find people complaining about many types of misfortunes and feeling euphoric on insignificant occasions of pleasure. There are habitual pessimists blaming everyone for everything. Expressions like “This world is very bad”; “Times are bad”; “Honesty is a virtue of the past”; “Religion has been buried for good”- are very commonly bandied about. If someone is in the habit of repeating such phrases, he is expressing only the impressions of his mind and you can safely assume that he himself is a cheat and dishonest person.

Man has systematically built the image of his unhappy world by interacting with pessimistic people around himself. If someone is in the habit of complaining about lack of opportunities for work, widespread unemployment, failure of good industries and non-availability of good jobs, take it for granted that his ideosphere is full of thick clouds of indolence, torpor and incompetence. This he finds reflected everywhere in the world. If someone sees this world as full of self-centered hypocrites or sinners or evil and uncivilized persons, infer that the individual himself has an abundance of corresponding negative attributes in his own self. This world is like a magnificent large mirror, which faithfully reflects your

ideosphere. As mentioned earlier, elements of this world precipitate three types of qualitative attributes (*Sat, Raj* and *Tam*) in life. Whichever attribute dominates in the personality of an individual, it attracts its counterpart from the world at large.

Wherever a short-tempered person goes, he finds someone to quarrel with. One who has hatred in mind will always find out an object to be hated. To an unfair person everyone appears, ill-mannered, uncivil and worthy of punishment. Whenever an individual interacts with someone, he/she views the latter in the same light with which his own personality is coloured. A person of impeccable morality rarely comes across a woman of fallen virtue. Scholars do get avenues for right information. Seekers of truth always find opportunities for quenching their thirst for wisdom. Enlightened souls have always been living on this earth. Wherever they live, environment around them attracts virtuous persons.

However, it is not our intention to prove that there is absolutely no evil on this earth and whatever good or bad we find here is totally a reflection of our own field of view. It has been repeatedly stated that in this world, good, average and bad (*Sat, Raj* and *Tam*) coexist and one receives what one gets tuned into.

THE RELATIVITY OF VIRTUES AND SINS

The qualitative assessment of good and evil is always relative. On the scale of virtue you will find persons, who belong to a grade lower than yours, those who are in

the same grade as your own; and others who have a much higher grade than yours. Suppose you are studying in a college. You may consider the persons with the highest character (*Satoguni*) studying in a class senior to your own, your classmates as students of the intermediate class (*Rajoguni*) and the juniors, being educated in the lower class (*Tamoguni*). However, as mentioned earlier, this relationship of moral status is relative. For instance, in comparison to a bandit, a thief is more virtuous (has more *Satogun*), because the latter is more humane. Compared to both the thief and the dacoit, a labourer has more *Satogun*. A social reformer would have more *Satogun* than a common man, and a spiritual teacher more than that of the social worker. Thus, on the scale of *Satogun*, a spiritual teacher stands at a much higher level than a bandit, but he is graded lower than enlightened, liberated soul whose Silent Presence is the greatest of sermons. It does not mean that the dacoit is the most degraded soul. He is better than animal.

The superiority of spiritual status of a person is measured by the number of people being ethically benefited by his altruistic deeds. On the lowest level, a self-centered person acts only for the welfare of his own family. A dacoit does not rob members of his family. A thief does not commit theft in the house of a friend. For a social worker, welfare activities are confined to a particular class or community. The spiritual teacher works for enlightenment of all human beings. The enlightened souls see all living beings, as manifestations of God, be it man or beast, plant or animal.

In a nutshell, in the process of progressive evolution, before attaining self-realization, all living beings are at different stages of conscious awakening. Everyone lives with lack of one virtue or the other. When all impurities are removed, nothing can stop a person from reaching the ultimate state of liberation from cycles of birth and death. This is the ultimate goal of human existence.

Taken together, virtues in this world are far in excess of vices. No doubt, immorality is also there, but morality is much more prevalent. There is more enlightenment than ignorance in this world. There are bad people everywhere in the world, but they have more virtues than vices in them. We should keep in sight only the goodness of the world, enjoy the beauty of the virtuous and work for enhancement of these virtues.

Nature has made a provision of day and night to teach us how to behave in the world. During the day we keep awake, take advantage of the sunlight for working and prefer to live in an illuminated place, than in darkness. Light gives us the advantage of acquiring knowledge through sight. When darkness of night descends, we go to sleep or, if required to work, use artificial light. Because of the natural structure of eyes, man intrinsically prefers to live in an illuminated environment. Light makes our perspective illuminated. In the light we clearly see objects as they are and dispel our ignorance about them. It shows that we should ignore the dark side of the world and become more enlightened by preferring to look only at the brighter aspects of human personalities i.e. virtues.

We should make an endeavour to enjoy, imbibe and encourage only the virtuous traits in a person. It does not mean that we close our eyes to the blemishes. Be aware of the vices but do not get involved in them. There is that well known story of Rishi Dattatreya. As long as he continued to compare the bright and dark aspects of life he remained troubled and unhappy. When he concentrated only on the positive aspects of creation, he found that in this world all living creatures were sacred and adorable. He realized that he could learn something from each of them. It is said that he acquired his spiritual insights from twenty-four beings (teachers). Amongst these were insignificant creatures like dog, cat, jackal, spider, fly, vulture, crow etc. He felt that no animate being was despicable, that each one had within it, the soul, which is a spark of that Super-Being, that each was a link in the spiraling chain of evolution. When we make ourselves receptive to virtues, the field of vision changes. Shortcomings are overlapped by excellence, wickedness by goodness and prevalence of unhappiness by abundance of things of joy. The world that we earlier thought to be full of wicked people now appears rich with decent, well-mannered, altruistic and aspiring persons.

Each individual has his own personal perspective of people, places, things and events. On account of the confusion of perspective, one finds the world bad, whereas the other sees only goodness in it. Throw away the cobwebs of your old biased perspectives. Use your third eye of wisdom to see through the illusions of your old world. Let

your present wicked world (*Kaliyug*) destroy itself and in its place create your own Golden Age (*Satyug*) in your inner psyche. Stop being deluded by the darkness of the world (*Tamogun*) and focus your vision at the brightness (*Satogun*). You will find the world changing into heaven. When you change your field of vision, you will find your disobedient son/ daughter changing into an obedient one. Your worst enemies, quarrelsome wife and hypocritic neighbours will appear totally different. Actually, the factor of negativity in the character or behaviour of a person is usually very small.

Antagonism in the mind of the observer magnifies it manifold. Suppose your husband or wife does not behave as per your expectations because of preoccupation or some other valid reason; when you are not aware of it, you are likely to take it as an affront and become resentful or angry. With the anger, the evil traits lying dormant in the inner recesses of your mind become activated and produce negative mental image of the subject. Darkness makes out a monster out of a bush. Similarly, anger, due to distortion caused by inner turbulence, produces a defiant, disobedient, disrespectful picture of an otherwise simple, innocent person who receives a harsh punishment for a small lapse. On the other hand, this unjust reaction also infuriates the recipient of the undeserved treatment. The counter-reacting angry person too begins to see wickedness, foolishness, cruelty and many other negative traits in the other person. On repetition of such trivial incidents, the two imaginary ghost personalities continue

to grow and their confrontations convert two simple – hearted warmly related persons into bitter antagonists.

On many occasions, I have succeeded in reconciling the differences between bitter adversaries by making them understand the triviality of the root cause, which had made a mountain out of a molehill. Such situations arise because of gap in communication. With mutual understanding, sharing of feelings and objective analysis of each other's expectations, behaviour and psychological background, ninety percent of estrangements can be amicably resolved. In fact the factors responsible for such estrangements are very minor. We may compare their incidence with the quantity of salt in our food. Salt and pepper themselves are distasteful, but a small quantity of these makes food palatable. Occasional cooling off of warmth in close relationships is required to break the monotony of life. Given mutual trust, we bounce back into the relationship with deeper understanding and warmth. It has already been discussed that on human birth, the soul brings with it many imperfections and traits of its past lives including its embodiments in sub-human species.

The newly born human child is very little qualified to live amongst human beings. It falls asleep anytime during the day, keeps awake during nights, soils the clothes and makes loud hues and cries for its biological needs of fondling, food and water. Nevertheless, neither these baby-tantrums disturb the household, nor does addition of one more member make the house unlivable. On the contrary, the innocent and immature child becomes a means of entertainment for the family. The morally less evolved persons of the society should be treated in the same way.

For evolutionary soul growth, it is the duty of each enlightened soul to work for the progress of other persons, who are at lower stages of soul-growth and encourage them, to work for their own upliftment. Wickedness will always be there in this world. There is no reason to be afraid of it. Whosoever is desirous of self-enlightenment should learn to face and overcome the disturbances caused by the wicked. It is necessary to restrain the evil and prevent the beastly traits from polluting humane values. Flies have to be kept away from sweets. The efficiency of one's karmas is demonstrated in preventing spread of sinful traits in the society. A great deal of caution is required in this endeavour. It is like walking on the razor's edge. This truly is yog-the skill in works- equanimity in the face of all provocations.

What should be our course of action in this world to eliminate evil? The Sun sets an example worth emulating. Its light dispels the darkness. Its heat forms the clouds; clouds bring down rain and cool the heat. When we take food, hunger goes by itself and when we follow laws of health, weakness is removed without much effort. In order to remove ignorance, try to acquire knowledge. For making the world free of evil, we should work for proliferation of virtues. The proper way for eradication of disease is to educate the masses about the significance of laws of hygiene and health. The sick do need the medicines, but hospitals cannot cure the entire society. Law enforcement machinery works like a hospital for the wicked- the morally sick. It takes care of only contingencies. Law cannot remove the root causes of societal ills.

It is not possible to eradicate evil by violence. Violent opposition would only incite a stronger counter reaction. A surgeon does not act like a butcher. He makes a precise incision. Instead of direct confrontation, blabbing, showing resentment, expressing helplessness, follow the positive path of forgiveness, reformation and love. According to a philosopher, “A word of love creates much greater impact than a blow on the head”. Everyone has more or less goodness in him. Make an effort to identify your own virtues and make them more effective in life. Also find out the virtues in the other person and try to encourage him to more and more cultivate these virtues. Do not fight your battle in the darkness of ignorance. Make your battlefield illuminated. Do not be disheartened by the spread of immorality. Counter it by promoting morality.

The only way to remove evil from this world is to encourage goodness. Remove the air from the bottle by filling it with water. Do not associate with evil. Why should you like to collect the garbage (evil)? Let others do this dirty job. Your work is to disinfect the rot. Why should you do skinning of dead animals (finding faults of the evildoers)? Assume the more dignified role of a teacher. Remember! In this world quite a few persons have a faultfinding attitude. Perhaps there are more persons inclined to punish the guilty than are necessary. When a child teases another one, quite a few of his companions slap him on the cheek. But how many in this world are prepared to give free food and clothes to a needy child? Let the evildoers suffer the consequences of their misdeeds.

Take the venerated seat of the mother, who feeds the infant by the extract of her own blood; who suffers in cold but shields the child in her bosom. Like a learned teacher, distribute the wisdom acquired by you amongst the immature, ignorant and way lost people. The glorious path of reformation is not easy to follow. People may make you suffer, insult you, make fun of you. They may even regard you as a crackbrain, may oppose you and create hurdles in your work for no rhyme or reason. Be least apprehensive about such persons. Do not deviate from your path. The number of such habitual faultfinders is always insignificant. Against hundreds of appreciators of your good work, the number of denunciators will be very small. Their antagonism, too, will come to you as a token of Divine Grace. It would provide you opportunities for introspection and corrective action. This will charge you with higher potency energy for speedy progress.

You might have understood that significance of persons, events and objects, which come in our lives in this ever-changing material world, is momentary and illusory. Therefore material objects and relationships are not worthy of blind pursuit for their acquisition or attachment thereto. Such detached attitude would in no way discourage us in performance of our duties. On the contrary, only on being detached to the material world, we can pay attention to our progress without worry. It is a great misconception to regard this world as full of misery. World is full of things of beauty and joy. Had it not been so, the free, spotless, illumined blissful soul, which is spark

of the Supreme, would not have chosen it as its abode. Unhappiness is nothing but absence of happiness. Unhappiness means abandoning a highway and wandering waylost through the thicket of thorny bushes. As discussed earlier, mostly the unhappiness, antagonism, enmity, distress and conflict faced by us is illusory and people are not so wicked as we assume them to be. If we clean our minds of prejudices and throw away our coloured glasses, things will appear in their true colours.

The mirror of the world reflects happiness for the virtuous and the optimist, and unhappiness for the pessimistic evildoer. As soon as we change our field of vision, see the virtues only and resolve to convert the unvirtuous with love, the entire world showers us with petals of love. You become a recipient of uninterrupted blessings from the liberated souls of the invisible heavenly world. The glaring and burning blaze of the hot summer changes into the soothing light of the full moon. His creation is full of beauty and joy. When you look for happiness, each particle of nature is prepared to give you peace and joy. Your mind can give you the taste of dishes from a king's palace in your own dry morsel of bread. True, in the human experience there is some unhappiness in this world, but it can be tolerated. It underscores the importance of happiness. Whatever is wicked is meant to test your endurance and accelerate the pace of your self-evolution. Without a system of examination, how could one differentiate between a learned person and a rustic illiterate?

In a nutshell, being inert, this material world is incapable of giving us pleasure or pain. The world is a mirror reflecting the beauty or ugliness of your own mind. When the philosopher calls this world “An existence in virtual reality”, it is implied that one sees the world according to one’s own state of mind. It is like the many blind persons giving their description about the shape of an elephant after feeling only a part of animal’s body. You can change your world by changing your environment. Project your brotherliness, benevolence, love, sympathy and optimism and you will find it reflected back to you as a world full of bliss like the Biblical Garden of Eden.

MISFORTUNES ARE NOT ALWAYS RESULTS OF PAST MISDEEDS

For most of us misfortunes are unwelcome. These are popularly believed to be the result of past sins and displeasure of God. However, this view is only partially correct. It is true that one of the reasons for unhappiness is past sins, but all unhappy events do not necessarily have their roots in past misdeeds. It may appear paradoxical, that at times misfortunes also befall us because of the grace of God and accumulation of past virtues. Unhappiness may also be felt while undergoing hardships in course of virtuous activities. When God shows His condescension towards a highly evolved soul and wills to release that soul from the bondage of sins of materialism, He creates distressful situations in life. Such unhappy events jolt the individual

out of his slumber and to realize the futility of attachment to worldly things. The shock of unhappiness in such cases serves as a Divine Wake-Up-Call.

Our addiction to worldly attachments, infatuations and passions is so strong and alluring that we cannot be easily de-addicted by a casual approach. There are fleeting moments of wisdom in life when man thinks that life is extremely valuable and must be used for achieving some lofty objective, but soon thereafter attractions of the world drag him back to the erstwhile lowly routine of animal-like existence. Through misfortunes, God exerts a strong pull to extricate the devotee from the self-created quagmire of ignorance. Mishaps wake us up from our slumber in ignorance and darkness.

Unpleasant, heartbreaking happenings, such as a near fatal accident or disease, death of an intimate friend or relative, sudden financial loss, humiliation, or treachery by a trusted friend, may occur to give a strong shock treatment so that one may correct the course of his life.

Sometimes, the virtuous samskars accumulated on account of our past karmas also produce unhappy events. Virtuous karmas also act as shields to ward off sinful temptations. The former do not permit the sinful tendencies to dominate and offer stiff resistance. Many a times commitment of sin is foiled by some unforeseen obstacle. If a thief breaks his leg while going for theft, it should be taken as a consequence of his past virtuous karmas.

Those who work hard for moral or social upliftment of the society and meticulously follow their course of duty,

face stupendous problems, hardships and lack of resources. They also have to face antagonism of people who find such activities detrimental to their vested interests. Besides, they are tormented by unscrupulous in many ways. Persons treading the royal highway of righteousness have to face hardships at each step. Misfortunes are like goldsmith's furnace, in which the validity of past virtues and tolerance to hardships undertaken for virtuous deeds are tempered. After going through misfortunes, the character and personality of an upright person becomes all the more lustrous.

Hence while going through misfortunes, do not be under the impression that you are a sinner and a wretched person deserving Divine Wrath. It could be that the distress is a blessing in disguise, with hidden boons, which you are unable to foresee at the moment because of lack of clear vision.

Innocent persons may be found suffering because of unfair ideologies or oppression by others. Any one may become a victim of exploitation, suppression and injustice. The exploiter has to face the consequences of his karmas in due course of time, but the sufferer should not take such trials as outcome of his *prarabdha*.

A student has to face many hardships in course of his education. A mother suffers while bringing up the child. Ascetics, social reformers and righteous persons undergo unbearable hardships while working for reformation of the society and evolution of the human soul. Such voluntarily undertaken hardships, confrontations and

problems faced in course of fulfillment of self-assumed responsibilities cannot be considered as consequences of past misdeeds.

It would not be proper to regard every “happy-go-lucky” person as a virtuous person in his past life or every sufferer as a sinner of his past birth. Such a concept would be unjustified and misleading. There is no reason for someone to have self-pity or feel remorseful on such a false premise. The course from karma to prarabdha follows an occult and mysterious process known only to the Creator.

We have to remain ever vigilant towards our duties and responsibilities and leave the rest to impartial Supreme Justice of God. Let us face the misfortunes and good fortunes of life with equanimity. God has made us responsible only for our duties as human beings. There could be many reasons for successes-failure and happiness-unhappiness. Only the Creator knows their purpose in His Absolute Wisdom. Let us entirely offer ourselves to the Divine to be used for the free and unobstructed flow of His Will through us.