

Satsang

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SAPTA SHLOKI (Seven Verses)

Verse 2

Purport: What is good Karma What is the science of the soul? If you truly wish to know,
Shruti (Vedas) is the standard reference.

COMMENTARY ON VERSE 2 by Vasant:

He's a jolly good fellow,
He's a jolly good fellow,
He's a jolly good fellow,
That nobody can deny.

So runs the refrain. Who is this jolly good fellow of modern times? How does he live? He is a connoisseur of good food and hard liquor. He likes to get "stoned" once in a while. He also takes delight in "tripping." As a pre-schooler, he spent more time watching TV than he did in classrooms during his years of college. He has witnessed thousands of murders and other crimes on his TV set; he has also enjoyed several promiscuous movies. He has been brought up in a permissive atmosphere, mistaking bra-burning for women's lib. He has been starved of good health food products. He is reared in vitaminized, homogenized, fortified and strengthened food items. He is the victim of hundreds of food additives that ravage the bodily sheath. He eats corned beef, smoked fish, hamburgers and frankfurters which have chemical preservatives and colour retainers. Food chemists have now discovered that additives like cyclamates and others prove to be most formidable carcinogens. To use plain language, carcinogens are cancer-producing agents. These agents of death have simmered in our kitchens disguised as taste builders and eye soothers.

In his school, college and home, the jolly good fellow is using deodorizers and air fresheners which have adverse effects on his respiratory system. Out of several such products examined by a research laboratory, many were found to reduce reading comprehension among children.

The jolly good fellow has to spend many, many hours over his auto, either commuting or repairing. Carbon monoxide belches out of his exhaust pipe, spreading colourless, odorless and tasteless death. He thinks he has paid only four thousand dollars for his new model car. He forgets he is paying through the nose in terms of polluted air and all the diseases that follow. He is bled

white but does not know it. If the jolly good fellow were told that he may enter paradise after death, the first thing he would like to find out would be whether sufficient parking place is available there.

The jolly good fellow commutes long distances to go to his place of work. He has to pass through rush-hour traffic both ways, thus adding terrific strain on his already overburdened mind. Every traffic signal that turns red throws him into a fit of emotional reaction. If he manages to cross the intersection while the light is still yellow, he feels greatly relieved. Every small thing disturbs him. His emotional pendulum is swinging all the time. His wardrobe is stuffed with clothes enough to last a lifetime for any person. However, he persuades himself to add to his wardrobe every time he sees something nice in a newspaper ad or on a TV commercial. Mail-order literature is flooding him all the time and he takes recourse to that also. He must have a credit card of course, nay, several credit cards. Sometimes the profits on credit charges exceed profits on the article itself. However, our jolly good fellow pays for both.

With hectic living, his nervous system is wrecked and his mind tortured. He may know how to reach Frankfurt from Washington in a few hours, but he does not know how to enjoy deep sleep without recourse to sleeping pills. He has become a pill-pooper, a barbiturate addict. This habit intensifies feelings of depression after the sedation has worn off. He then takes recourse to more and more liquor, drugs and sex to counteract his depression. He derives moments of pleasure, but he is paying heavily in terms of neurology.

All this changes attitudes to life, and he becomes a hapless victim of man-made chaos. Add to this heavy doses of pollution that result in various bodily and mental ailments. The automobile pollution, pollution from factory chimneys, the noise pollution, the nuclear pollution, pollution from the carpet of oil that surrounds coastal areas --- all these beleaguer, fatigue and destroy the jolly good fellow. Is it small wonder that psychiatry rules the roost?

The jolly good fellow while in his early teens had already started imitating his parents and playing the "become-a-man" game. He has cajoled himself into having a few puffs of dad's and mom's cigarettes. His bronchi became irritated and any germs from polluted air that landed inside could find a fertile soil to thrive. This could have been the beginning of a tubercular or cancerous region within the bodily tabernacle.

The "do-it-yourself" jolly good fellow is a glutton at the dinner table. Constipation leading to gastritis attacks him. A few pills, some rest, and he is back at it again. However, the cause persists and the effect follows. His heart pump overworks to supply the necessary energy eaten up in digesting the loaded intestines; his liver gets sluggish.

The jolly good fellow indulges in sex exuberance calling it "fun in life." This demands additional energy for recuperation. He takes recourse to alcoholic beverages to do the job. A glass of wine works remarkably well in the beginning. Soon, he must have more and more of it to keep him going. He becomes an alcoholic. The acuity of his intellect suffers; his cognition becomes dull.

The jolly good fellow then takes to drugs. Drugs relax his muscles and stimulate his tensed nerves. The effect is temporary and chances of addiction increase. Addiction leads to

accumulation of toxic factors. More drugs and symptoms are suppressed while the root persists. The misery continues with weakened power of discrimination. With battered bodily apparatus and shattered nerves, the jolly good fellow happens to come across some yoga books. He is enamoured of ancient wisdom and imagines he can acquire all the yogic powers by doing a few yoga ASANAS (physical postures) and PRANAYAMA (breathing techniques). He accentuates his flight of fancy and wants to ride to heaven on someone else's back. Somebody tells him he must meet a GURU. He joins some organization, spiritual or not-so-spiritual. He fondly hopes to extract happiness from his crude attempts at meditation. His attempts at meditation may be compared to the attempts of a toddler trying to pilot a spacecraft. He fails miserably and dispairs. He does not yet realize that he tried to have the best of both worlds. However, this can never be.

Sometimes, by fortuitous circumstances, he meets a truly holy person and gains some light. (No circumstances are truly fortuitous, as it is all the interplay of destiny and free will.) He wants to continue the discipline but his state of mind and body does not allow him to practice any discipline for any length of time.

The jolly good fellow has children who are stepping into adolescence. The children have their own problems and he does not know how to handle them. Dad and Mom have been too busy all these days earning dollars and keeping up with the Joneses. No wonder the children get irritated, confused and boisterous. Dad and Mom plan a remedy. They must start going to some church, synagogue, temple or mosque hoping that the children would follow suit and thus keep away from undesirable company. Alas, the children do not generally do what Mom and Dad want them to do. Mom and Dad become members of various neighborhood committees to allow free play for their ego. This has no effect on the children either. Then start the rounds of counselling and psychiatry. In the meantime, two out of seven Moms and Dads part company, and this puts immense strain on the minds of growing children.

All the above takes place despite the best of intentions, best of intelligence and best of material paraphernalia. How can we expect to find contentment in such a life full of complicated behaviour patterns? Contentment can only come when we refuse to seek happiness outside of ourselves. Contentment can come only when we recognize the law of cause and effect, the law of "reap as you sow," the law of Karma.

The jolly good fellow is the product of a society where things have gone too far wrong. All efforts to get out of the rut are most likely to prove futile until we consider man in his entirety and not in compartments. It appears we are in a blind alley leading towards destruction.

Ancient wisdom given through Vedas sheds enough light to get us out of this impasse. Vedic wisdom is the basis of KRIYA YOGA. The Fivefold Path covers KRIYA YOGA. It is well-suited to the sharpened intellectuality of modern times. Tranquil mind helps to keep the somatic and hormone functions in equilibrium. Medico-philosophical concepts given through the Vedas need no revision. The harmonious flow of Pranic energy through the system helps change the reactions of the mind to the conditions outside. Purification of Prana reduces the burden on the mind. The process of Pranic purification through the agency of fire is given through Vedic wisdom. Purified mind automatically makes clear to us what is good Karma. When we cognize the law of Karma and its corollaries, we are better able to plan our future. We then refuse to blame others for our circumstances. We shake off all indolence, catch the initiative and take quick steps towards the Kingdom of Bliss that is within us.

Our jolly good fellow one day reads about the Fivefold Path of Eternal Religion (Satya Dhama). He starts Agnihotra, the smallest form of purificatory process through the agency of fire. This is a great material aid and he experiences tranquillity of mind. His load of anxiety is reduced. He begins to experience that he can control his greed and lust. He starts treating all his assets as a trust and begins to share a portion of them with others in a spirit of humility. This brings about detachment to worldly possessions. Detachment gives strength to bear the ups and downs in day-to-day life. He willingly undergoes simple discipline, practices simple methods of body, mind and speech purification, and notices that powers which lie dormant slowly become manifest. He invariably gets into the habit of performing good deeds without getting attached to the fruit of the action. Thus he never becomes prey to emotional outbursts that accompany every change in circumstance. He is always watchful of his thought, word and deed. Thus springs forth an attitude of love towards his fellow beings which expresses itself in service to his fellow men without expectations of name, fame or material gain.

Try to understand the law of Karma and how it operates. For this, Vedas is the standard reference.

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Place: KIWANIS CLUB
Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C.

Vasant spoke on POLLUTION AND MIND before a group of doctors, lawyers, judges, church ministers and other professionals.

Excerpts from Vasant's speech:

"Enough manhours have been spent to find out the harmful effects of pollution on the human body. Medicine knows that anything that affects the body affects the mind. However, science does not yet have the parameters to gauge the damage done to the mind. This problem becomes all the more serious since our happiness depends on the attitudes of the mind, our reactions to the conditions outside. Science can probe the field only when it widens its universe of discourse. For new hypothesis, science will have to take one step in the domain of the yet unknown.

"The damage done to the mind as a result of pollution is devastating. We notice it in terms of heavy psychiatry that is rampant today. Despite material enrichment, the quality of life is in inverse proportion. Worry and tension are writ large on every forehead.

"It is no use merely offering the diagnosis. We must also know the remedy. The remedy is given through the Vedas, the most ancient knowledge known to mankind. All this is in Sanskrit language. Sanskrit was nobody's mother tongue any time. It is the mother of all languages.

"Vedas prescribe a process for mind purification through the agency of fire. It has three inputs. Cosmic radiation, vibrations and burning of specific organic substances into fire are the inputs. Any change induced in the atmosphere affects PRANA (life energy) and consequently the mind. This is the modus operandi of the process.

"Science has recently taken note of the undulatory cycles in nature that affect us. Many biological functions such as metabolic activity, enzyme production, blood cell formation and diseases like manic depression, menstrual syndrome are governed by these undulatory cycles of nature. Sap in plant life is similarly affected by these undulations.

"Vedas prescribe the process to undo the effect of pollution on the mind through the agency of fire. It is based on the rhythms of these undulatory cycles of nature. A small discipline is now made available for anyone who cares to know. This is AGNIHOTRA. It will nullify the effect of pathogenic bacteria on the human organism, give nourishment to plant life and cleanse the water resources. It will reduce the anxiety and tension load on the mind.

"Everyone knows that he should 'Love Thy Neighbour.' The difficulty comes when we try to implement this judgement given by our intellect. Our physical appetites pull us in different directions. All these pulls could be halted by the process of purification of mind through the agency of fire given by Vedas.

"Our happiness depends on the attitudes of the mind. The attitudes change by the practice of Agnihotra. This is the smallest process for ridding ourselves of the cobwebs of desire in which our intellect is wrapped."

* * *

Discipline Code

Cary H. Sanders

Cary Sanders has evolved a code of discipline for students who have already completed preliminary training and wish to prepare themselves as teachers.

"Cleanliness is next to Godliness. Even if being an instrument in spreading the message seems remote to you at this time, dress and cleanliness still apply greatly to your spiritual development. The point is to be neat and clean.

"Make the first steps so that we can go on to serve the Great Ones in greater capacities. If you go to a job interview or go to see your best girl or guy, you make sure you look your best. We expect nothing less in the presence of the Great Ones.

"In any spiritual gathering there will be but one kind of speech - spiritual. If you have a tendency towards the profane, utilize the antidote of silence. In our manners, one-pointedness and introspection are the key antidotes. Treat everyone with respect. See God in all your fellow men. Let the one with no sin cast the first stone. Your manner should reflect humility, sincerity and a spirit of helpfulness.

"Usefulness is an expression of love. When you come to a class you will be asked to participate. We all have the same responsibility - - - to spread the message of the Fivefold Path. How we accept and carry out this responsibility will be the sum total of our fate. If you balk when asked to render your services, the privilege will be taken from you. 'If X does not do the work, Y will.' When given a task, do it just as it was directed to be done - no deviation.

"Be responsible in appearance, thought manners and speech. Reflect responsibility. If you are not responsible and come to a class unprepared, you will be asked to leave. Anyone may ask you to leave, so be responsible to all.

"Do not shirk or share your duties.

"Responsibility, like love, has no boundaries. However, you also have a responsibility not to take on a task until it is allotted to you.

"The Discipline Code has five constituents: DRESS, HYGIENE, MANNERS, SPEECH AND RESPONSIBILITY."

* * *

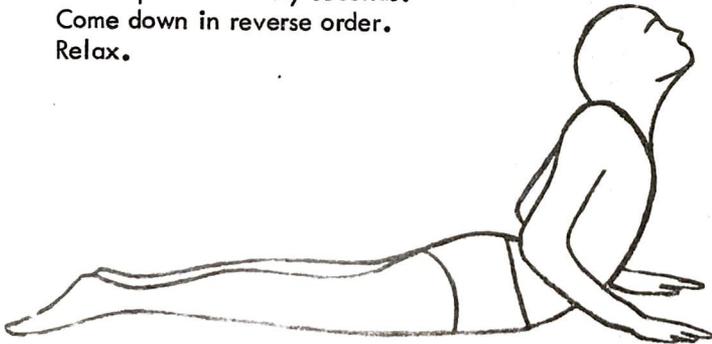
(Fivefold Path is Eternal Religion. Anyone in any walk of life may start practicing the Fivefold Path and he will notice that Grace unfolds within him. Those who teach the Fivefold Path must first live it in their own lives. Then alone the light shines.)

* * *

YOGA ASANAS (Physical Postures)Cont'd.

COBRA POSE

Lie on the floor, face downwards, forehead touching the floor.
Palms flat on ground by the side of chest.
Legs stretched out.
Inhale and lift head backwards.
Slowly throw head backwards fully.
Shrug shoulders backwards while you raise the chest.
From navel downwards, body remains pressed against the floor.
All upper part of trunk remains curved backwards.
Eyes gaze upwards.
Retain pose for thirty seconds.
Come down in reverse order.
Relax.



Cobra pose benefits the spine and adrenal glands.
It tones up the abdomen and relieves constipation.

Place: Washington, D.C.

Royal Reed writes: "One day my parents arrived at my apartment for a two-day visit. They arrived just as I was preparing to perform Agnihotra. Therefore, I asked them to sit quietly while I performed it. My father was very impressed with the effect of Agnihotra on the plants in my home, so I gave him a bag of Agnihotra ashes to put on his plants at home."

* * *

Place: Randallstown, Md.

Jim Hackley informs Satsang that he taught Agnihotra and the Fivefold Path at Owings Mills, Maryland and in Baltimore during January.

* * *

Place: Boston, Mass.

Henry Haney writes: "In Boston, we are trying to form a small Satsang group for meditation. Agnihotra will be our mode of operation. I have taught Agnihotra in December to three persons from three states. One is from Panama City, Florida, one from Baltimore, Maryland, and the third is from Roslindale, Mass. I am enclosing two names to be added to Satsang mailing list.... Vasant has shown us that spirituality cannot be bought in a marketplace. Truth is for all to have without a price."

* * *

Ronnie and Jay have sent us the following excerpts from a letter received by them from White Hall, Maryland:

"Dear Ronnie and Jay,

Many thanks for your letters, phone calls, and kindness....You would never guess what began our New Year's Eve party. Agnihotra. It was totally accepted and fifteen persons took part. The meditation was terrific, wonderful.

"Your Satsangs are quite interesting. Little by little I am just beginning to kind of understand what your group ideas are. Would sure love to receive this paper regularly but would like to pay the cost and postage. Will we learn totally with this paper or should we have something else?

"We have been seeing some unusual lights in the sky up here, first in the south and then the north. Just waiting for them to land.

"Trust you get back to Maryland now and then."

* * *

Jackie Blackburn of Madison, Va. has sent her greetings in verse:

"Through Time and Space
It is Thy Grace,
To give, we've got,
To serve You is the way."

Practice AGNIHOTRA for purification of the atmosphere.
Practice DAAN (sharing your assets in a spirit of humility) for generating non-attachment.
Perform TAPA (self-discipline, austerities, purification) for fruition of thy affirmations.
Perform KARMA (meritorious deeds) for self-purification.
Perform SWADHYAYA (self-study) for liberation.

This is the Fivefold Path. Start the spiritual discipline today. The span of life will not be extended. What is given unto you is to utilize wisely every moment of your existence. Let us engage ourselves in meritorious deeds without expectation of reward in the form of name and fame. We live only in the present moment. The past is no more. The future is yet to be. Do not waste precious moments on trivia.

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