

CULTIVATION OF VIRTUES AND SOUL KNOWLEDGE FOR SELF REALIZATION

PRASANNA KUMAR MOHAPATRA

P.G Department of education, Banki College, Banki, Cuttack, Odisha, India

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is by cultivating virtues and knowledge about the self helps to realise the self. Virtues are universal and recognized by all cultures as basic qualities necessary for our well-being and happiness. Virtues are the essence of our character and character does indeed determine destiny. The more we recognize the potential impact that practicing virtues can have on our lives, the more our lives open up to new possibilities and to greater joy and fulfilment. The easiest path to cultivating virtues is to stay focused on our life as an expression of pure spirit and on our intention to grow into that awareness and role. The 'I' or 'I'ness by which we can able to see, watch, feel, hear, speak, think, feel etc. Paramahansa Yogananda defined Self-realization as "the knowing-in body, mind, and soul—that we are one with the omnipresence of God. Self-realisation can be achieved through: Freedom from worries and fear, Scientific solutions to inner and external conflicts, Smoother relationships, Inner peace, Equanimity amid any circumstances, Eternal happiness, Experience of your true eternal Self, Experience the depths of spirituality while fulfilling your worldly responsibilities, through Patanjali meditation, Knowing self where no worldly unhappiness will touch you and following the Buddha's Astanga marg. I am pure Awareness. This awareness is by its very nature being consciousness- Bliss (Sat-Chit-Ananda). I Sat, Chit, and Ananda (Truth, or Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. The Cultivation of virtues and self-knowledge supports for self-realisation which may lead to human being to be innovative, creative, constructive, progressive etc.

KEYWORDS

Virtues, soul and self-realisation

INTRODUCTION

Virtues are universal and recognized by all cultures as basic qualities necessary for our well-being and happiness. Virtues are the essence of our character and character does indeed determine destiny. The more we recognize the potential impact that practicing virtues can have on our lives, the more our lives open up to new possibilities and to greater joy and fulfilment. Virtue, by definition, is the moral excellence of a person. A morally excellent person has a character made-up of virtues valued as good. He or she is honest, respectful, courageous, forgiving, and kind, for example. MODERN-DAY dictionaries define "virtue" as "moral excellence; goodness." It is "right action and thinking; goodness of character." Lexicographer Marvin R. Vincent says that the original classical sense of the Greek word rendered "virtue" denotes "excellence of any kind." Not surprisingly, then, such qualities as prudence, courage, self-discipline, fairness, compassion, perseverance, honesty, humility, and loyalty have been hailed as virtues at one time or another. Virtue has also been defined as "conformity to a standard of right." Virtues are the essence of our character and when we keep the practice of virtues at the heart of everyday life,

we live with purpose. One list of virtues which is widely promoted in Buddhism are the paramitas (perfections)-dana (generosity), Sila (Proper conduct) Nekkhamma (renunciation), panna (wisdom), Viriya (energy), Khanti (patience), Sacca (honesty), Adhittahana (determination), metta (Goodwill), Upekha (equanimity). The understanding of the spiritual nature of this world and the sense which will make to act with honesty, compassion, surrender, and humility helps to realise the virtues. When we understand, realize, experience, and express the greatness that we, knowingly or unknowingly, already are, spiritual virtues naturally manifest through the way we think and the things we do. When we see life with an expanded spiritual awareness, virtuous actions are the only ones that make sense. Therefore, the easiest path to cultivating virtues is to stay focused on our life as an expression of pure spirit and on our intention to grow into that awareness and role.

SOUL KNOWLEDGE

Everybody feels the 'I', existence of 'I', 'I am', 'aham'(I), I am doing, I am having, I have possessed, 'I'ness', etc. Then what that 'I' is. If we will think little bit then we can know about our 'I' or 'I'ness which we can able to see, watch, feel, hear etc. Here, another question arises in our mind i.e. whether eyes are watching, ears are listening, tongue is speaking or any other is within. Who is watching, hearing, feeling, walking, smelling, speaking? let us take an example of a dead body. The dead body is having every sense organs but why not that is listening, feeling, walking, speaking etc. So, it is clear that I am not the body- skeleton, heart, respiratory system, circulatory system, reproductive system, digestive system, nervous system etc. but it is sure something is within us by which we can able to speak, feel, write, think etc. In 25th chapter of Bhagbat Geeta it is reflected "soul" with the help of mind receives through the ear, eyes, skin, tongue, nose etc. Paramhansa hariharananda Giri(1996, In Nectar Drops) the disciple of great Risi Yogananda, the self realized super soul has said:

"Do you know, your birth and death

Your dream and thought Your sexual pleasure and movement,

Your anger and love

Whatever you are perceiving, is feeling is your soul only".

Kathaupanisad (Ed. Swami Sarvananda, 1995) pure intelligence or consciousness or soul cognizes light, sound, taste, smell, sounds, touches and the sexual contact. The 'I' intuited gives us sufficient proof of the existence of the soul (Kundu, C.L. 1989). I am soul.... Life force.... Driver..... a tiny shining star..... pinpoint of light.... Ruler of my sense organs..... Peaceful..... Joyful..... loveful. Aristotle: Soul is obscure and a form inseparable from the body. St. Augustine (Christian theology): Soul as 'rider' on the body making clear the split between the material and immaterial. Soul as a motivating principle of the body. Descartes: Soul is equivalent to the mind.

Pythagoras: soul is a divine origin and existed before and after death and Plato and Aristotle have defined Soul is immortal. Bhagban Sri Sri Sathya Sai Baba (1995) says "It is an indestructible divine spark which has come into their distractible body which has been called man's soul or human spirit" The Soul and psyche as synonyms. Soul is in corporal (Ghazali, 1302), it is different from body having no color, smell and volume (Abn- Al-Arabi). According to Razi (In Khan, 1995) soul is of two kinds , one is that aerial in nature and generated in the mind or heart and the other is immortal but present in the body and is the source of human knowledge , intellect and reasoning. Human body is the outcome of evolution but soul is a bounty from God (A-Moore, in Khan, E. 1985). Soul is beyond the reach of thought and intellect, the soul is limitless where thought has beginning and end. Thought is having its own experiences, perception, and imagination. A limited mind cannot understand the infinite soul. Atma(soul) is a unique ubiquitous substance to which all cognitions, feelings and conations belong (kundu,C.L),1989). Atma is neither the body nor mind or senses but what control them and synthesizes their operations. It acts as a unifying factor of all types of cognitions and actions (Sharma, R.P. 1985). Nyaya Shastra states that self (Atma) is "who sees all, enjoys all, knows all and experiences all" (in kundu, C.L., 1985). Most of the realized super souls of India and abroad defined soul as 'chaitanya', 'Energy', 'air', 'Light', 'Bliss', 'Absolute', 'Vibration', 'Sat-Chit-Ananda', 'Space', 'Spirit', etc. Hence, it is clear that cultivating virtues and soul knowledge helps to realise the self.

SELF-REALIZATION

For human beings like different needs such as: physiological needs which include water, air, food and sleep; security needs which include needs for safety and security Social Needs These include needs for belonging, love and affection; esteem needs which include the need for things that reflect on self-esteem, personal worth, social recognition and accomplishment; self-actualizing needs which is self-aware need for self-realisation is necessary for each and every human being. The Self-realization is an expression used in psychology, spirituality, and Eastern religions. It is defined as the "fulfilment by oneself of the possibilities of one's character or personality. Paramahansa Yogananda defined Self-realization as "the knowing - in body, mind, and soul — that we are one with the omnipresence of God; that we do not have to pray that it come to us, that we are not merely near it at all times, but that God's omnipresence is our omnipresence; that we are just as much a part of Him now as we ever will be. All we have to do is improve our knowing. We say, 'My head,' 'My body,' 'My feet,' 'My eyes,' 'My ears.' You don't say, 'I am head,' 'I am body,' etc. This means that all your body parts fall under 'My.' Similarly, you say, 'My watch,' 'My eyeglasses,' 'My house,' 'My car,' you don't say 'I am watch,' 'I am eyeglasses,' etc., which means that all your belongings also go under 'My.' So then who is the owner of everything that comes under 'My'? Keeping all the items that fall

under “my” aside, we are only left with the owner – “I”. That “I” is precisely what we need to realize and that is Self-Realization. Self-realisation can be achieved through: Freedom from worries and fear, Scientific solutions to inner and external conflicts, Smoother relationships, Inner peace, Equanimity amid any circumstances, Eternal happiness, Experience of your true eternal Self, Experience the depths of spirituality while fulfilling your worldly responsibilities, through patanjali meditation, Knowing self where no worldly unhappiness will touch you. Self-realization is an expression used in psychology, spirituality, and Eastern religions. It is defined as the "fulfilment by oneself of the possibilities of one's character or personality. Paramahansa Yogananda defined Self-realization as "the knowing—in body, mind, and soul—that we are one with the omnipresence of God; that we do not have to pray that it come to us, that we are not merely near it at all times, but that God's omnipresence is our omnipresence; that we are just as much a part of Him now as we ever will be. All we have to do is improve our knowing. The lord Krishna in bhagbat Gita said : fearlessness, purity of heart, perseverance in acquiring wisdom and practising yoga, charity, subjugation of the senses, performance of holy rites, study of the scriptures, self-discipline, straightforwardness, no injury, freedom from wrath, renunciation, peacefulness, nonslanderousness, radiance of character, compassion for all creatures, absence of greed, gentleness modesty, lack of restlessness, forgiveness, patience, cleanness, freedom from hate, absence of conceit (The Bhagbat Gita xvi:1-3) helps to realize the self. I am pure Awareness. This awareness is by its very nature Being- Consciousness-Bliss (Sat-chit-Ananda). I am Sat, Chit, and Ananda (Truth or Existence, consciousness and bliss). If we will realize and understands this golden rule of self-realization then life will not only become simple and easy but also free of hassles and disagreements. Self-realization holds a significant position in life as it helps us understand the real clichés of an issue. If we are aptly enlightened with the concept of self-realization nobody can ever drag us into any heated scene of disagreement. Even criticism should be constructive at all times. Cultivation of Virtues and Self-knowledge supports for self-realisation which may lead to human being to be innovative, creative, constructive, progressive etc.

Hence, Self Realisation = Cultivation Virtues + Soul knowledge with techniques or methods.

WAYS TO REALIZE SELF

If we will accept criticism, feel some with more problems, accept our weakness, be optimistic, be patient, do'nt worry, become cheerful, be social, free from stress, be a servant of all, control our negative emotions, change ourself not of others, develop creative hobbies, don't react immediately, feel every problem has a solution, enjoy the work assigned to us, help others, know the meaning of mind and life, know the nature, learn to laugh, learn to give thanks, learn to forgive, make friendship with us, learn nothing is permanent, realize the birth death and purpose of life, don't criticize

etc. then our thoughts will be something different and we may be able to realize our self-i.e. Self-realization can take place. Self-realization is said to be achieved through 4 types of spiritual practices.

- **Karma yoga** - without attachment to the fruit of action, acting by offering the fruit of the action to God. The aim of Karma yoga is to surrender the personal view of ahankara ("I am the doer") and to move towards a more universal appreciation of action as service (meeting the need without any claim).
- **Raja yoga** - psychic control or one pointed meditation that first focuses thought onto one point and then stops thought leaving only the underlying awareness.
- **Bhakti yoga** - the development of love for God and other beings.
- **Jnana yoga** - Jnana or knowledge is not exactly like book learning. Rather Jnana is discovering one's self and uncovering its mysteries through direct inner contemplation. Ultimately knowledge of relative phenomena dissolves and only the original Life-Force or God remains.

Following the Buddha's Astanga Marg like: 1. Right View, 2. Right Intention, 3. Right Speech, 4. Right Action, 5. Right livelihood, 6. Right Effort, 7. Right Mindedness, 8. Right Concentration. One may also realise the self.

If someone will realise his self then ultimately he may be dedicated for the society for which one must acquire virtues and possess sound knowledge about self. January 14, 2010 Bhagavan Ramana explained the three approaches or methods to strengthen Self-Inquiry and gain Self-Realization.

- Destroy the power of mind by seeking it. When the mind is examined its activities cease automatically.
- Looking for the source of mind is another method. The source may be said to be God or Self or Consciousness.
- Concentrating on one thought, all other thoughts disappear; finally that thought also disappears. It is necessary to be aware while controlling thoughts; otherwise it will lead to sleep.

Source: TALKS with Sri Ramana Maharshi: No. 345

MASLOW'S EFFECTIVE METHODS TO REACH SELF-ACTUALIZATION:

1. EXPERIENCE LIFE FULLY AND VIVIDLY

Maslow taught us that the process of self-actualization begins when we start to become completely immersed in our experiences – living fully, vividly and selflessly.

2. BE HONEST IN YOUR CHOICES

Think of life as a series of choices, one after another. If you are being truthful with yourself as you make your choices, then you are on the way to being self-actualized.

3. BE AWARE OF THE UNIQUENESS OF YOURSELF

As you realize that you are unique and begin to learn how to express yourself and your feelings truthfully, rather than reflect what you believe others want you to do or say, then you are on the right path.

4. ACT WITH INTEGRITY

If you have a choice, act in a way that is honest and true to your nature. As you take responsibility for your own actions you will be working on the way to self-actualization.

5. BE COURAGEOUS

Learn to have the courage to express your likes and dislikes and to speak up if someone's actions are not pleasing to you.

6. SELF-DEVELOPMENT

Becoming self-actualized is not an end-state, rather it is a process. Maslow talked about it being the process by which you 'are working to do well the thing that one wants to do'.

7. PEAK EXPERIENCES

Maslow talked a lot about 'peak experiences', describing them as 'transient moments of self-actualization'. These experiences are times that you feel truly at peace and in harmony with your environment and the universe and are marked by a feeling of euphoria and deep joy.

8. LACK OF EGO DEFENCES

Learning to let go of troublesome defence mechanisms that you may use to protect yourself is a necessary part of this process. For example, if you have a tendency to blame your partner for your frustrations or to become angry when things do not go your way, then learning to react in a different manner is part of becoming self-actualized.

Lastly, it can be concluded that cultivation of virtues and self-knowledge will support to the human being to realise the self which is highly essential. The self-realisation widens the thinking horizon. It also helps not to confined oneself within the self rather the individual soul become the universal soul. This thought supports to the human being to be inventive, innovative, creative, progressive constructive etc. which society desired and almighty desires.

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