

## New Year Talk by Swami Viditatmanandaji

Happy New Year 2020.

For the message of this New Year, we have selected the passage from *yogaśāstra*. A *sūtra* (aphorism) from *yogaśāstra* which says:

मैत्री-करुणा-मुदिता-उपेक्षाणां सुख-दुःख-पुण्य-पापविषयाणां भावनातः चित्तप्रसादः

*maitrī-karuṇā-muditā-upekṣāṇāṃ sukha-duḥkha-puṇya-pāpaviṣayāṇāṃ bhāvanātaḥ cittaprasādaḥ.*



How to attain cheerfulness of mind? How to keep our mind cheerful while interacting with different people in our day to day transactions? So, *yogaśāstra* identifies four kinds of people. People who are happy and successful. Then people who are unhappy and unsuccessful. People who are virtuous, abiding in dharma or virtuosity. People, who are sinful, who are impure in mind, having negative tendencies. These are four types of people that we come across in our day to day transactions. Each one of them can create disturbance in my mind. In fact, these people can only trigger what is already in my mind. The kind of tendencies that are stored in my mind will be triggered when I come across a given type of a person.

So, take the first person, who is happy. If I come across a happy and successful person, a person who is more successful and ahead of me in my opinion then usually it creates jealousy in me. Because it reminds me of what I could not accomplish and therefore I become jealous of that person. This jealousy is sign of grief or sorrow.

Here *yogasūtra* says *maitrī*. To a person who is better than me, more accomplished than me, seems happier than me, rather feeling jealous of that person we must create a *bhāvanā*, an attitude of friendliness. Why friendliness? Because if my dear friend is successful then I don't feel jealous. I will share the joy. *Yogaśāstra* says look upon this person as your dear friend. In that case you share the joy rather than feeling jealous of that person. Just turn around our mind, from looking upon that person as someone, different from me, unconnected to me, I look upon that person as dear to me. In this case, I congratulate that person, I will share the joy and my mind becomes happy.

Third is *puṇya*, which means *puṇyavān*. A person who is virtuous, who is recognized by a society as a virtuous person. When I come across this kind of people, then also I cannot stand before (accept) them. Because when I see virtue in that person, it reminds me of my shortcomings, what sins I am performing and what virtues I am missing. *kimaham sādhu nākaravam, kimaham pāpamakaravamiti*. Oh, how come I failed to perform that virtuous action and how come I performed that sinful action? This kind of guilt arises in my mind when I look at a virtuous person. It is amazing. Then says here, you may have *muditā*. Congratulate that person, be happy with that person. He is what he likes to be. I also like to be a virtuous person. We have value for virtues, I like these virtues. When I see a virtuous person then I feel happy about that person. Recognize that I like the virtues that person already possesses. I should get inspiration from that person, rather than condemning myself. An enthusiasm of becoming like that and that's how self-condemnation goes away. I have a positive attitude of growing, doing something better. That's how my mind becomes happy.

A fourth person is an evil minded person, who may be entertaining evil thoughts for me. He may hate me, dislike me, inimical to me, adversarial to me. My usual response is to retaliate. If he hates me then I also hate. If he wants to hurt me, I also want to hurt. These are one step impulsive responses. In each of these cases *yogaśāstra* says two-step response. Don't retaliate. Be indifferent to that person, leave him alone. Give that person a freedom to be what that person is. He hates me, alright that is his or her perspective. I don't need to identify with that person's view. The reason why I retaliate is I judge myself based on that person's view. When he hates me, I sometimes see myself as hate-able, which I don't want to be. Be indifferent. Don't identify with that person.

Don't judge yourself based on the view of that person. Let that person have his or her own views. We give the freedom to that person, what that person wants to be. I do not identify with those views, do not judge myself by those views. This way I maintain an objective distance between that person and myself, so that these tendencies of retaliation will not arise in me. Because a retaliating tendency also creates agitation in my mind naturally. So *upekṣā*.

Thus, *maitrī* is friendliness, sharing the joy with the person who is happy and successful. *Karuṇā* is sympathy for the person who is not successful, not looking down that person, not feeling proud, but be sympathetic and wishing him well. *Muditā*, I see a virtuous person I like to be.

Rather than pulling him down or criticize and pulling him down to my level so that I don't have to grow, I respect that person, recognize the accomplishments and virtues of that person and get inspiration from that person and get also an enthusiasm to become like that person. *Upekṣā*, I remain indifferent to that person who has negative tendencies towards me. Maintain an objective distance with that person, so that I am not affected by the negativities of that person.

In this way, *bhāvanātaḥ cittaprasādaḥ*. By deliberately maintaining these attitudes, the cheerfulness of mind can be maintained. So how to maintain cheerfulness of mind in our day to day life a very beautiful instruction is given by *yogaśāstra* which I want to share with you. I pray to Lord and our teachers that you are inspired to maintain these attitudes in your day to day life. First requirement is to be alert, as to what kind of thought is arising in my mind when I meet a certain person. When I find that the thought is negative then I should be ready to neutralize it by these stated attitudes. So, identifying a person, identifying a thought in my mind, neutralizing the thought and making my mind calm and cheerful. This is a process that ideally should go on constantly. In that sense our day to day transactions become means of our emotional maturity. An emotionally matured person is a cheerful person. So, in this way we make our transactions also *yoga* - a means of our spiritual growth. So may the Lord give you the insight, the strength and the discrimination to do this and may you enjoy this New Year 2020 happily and cheerfully.

*Transcribed and edited by students of Swamiji*