

From Religious Books:

*An Auspicious Blueprint For A Happy Life*¹

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Introduction:

Of all living beings, man is considered to have the highest and most important position, because he possesses intellect and discernment. Obviously, this implies that man can discriminate between propitious and ominous, desirable and undesirable, and effectual and futile. Thus man can plan the course of his life and make a concerted effort to achieve happiness and peace. In addition to worldly accomplishments, man can make spiritual progress, purify his/her soul and attain the state of supreme being (SIDDHA). Other worldly beings neither possess such acute sense and intelligence as man or the potential to acquire such traits. On the one hand, man's life can be singular and phenomenal. On the other hand, by abusing the means and intellect at his disposal, man can be extremely baneful and dangerous in comparison to other animals. Well, the key to a successful life is to follow the cultured and decorous paragons.

Moralistic and scrupulous stream of life:

The thought process and lifestyle of a veritable individual follow the moral values and sublime social traditions. One who is unscrupulous can never be a religious person. In addition to being ethical, one has to follow the edicts of the society and the laws of the country. Circumventing the laws of the land is treason and it is irreligious. In the present environment, standards of moral and legal values have suffered grave decline. In daily life, most individuals do not consider or follow these values. Their conduct does not become their status. Their intentions are deceitful, corrupt and misguided. However, those who wish to attain genuine happiness in life should remain ethical and just by exercising their intellect. In this manner, the lives of individuals, society and nation will be invulnerable, unburdened and propitious. Thoughts of exploitation, resistance and intolerance vanish and the call of duty prevails. A man of impeccable conduct enjoys happiness and contentment. Further, such a human being promotes social and national advancement. The first step

¹ Abridged English adaptation of the article 'SUKHI JEEVAN JEENA KE MANGAL SUTRA', published in the prestigious journal 'Tirthankar' of February 2005.

to spiritual and ethical life is impeccable conduct and a clean simple lifestyle including pure vegetarian food. In the absence of ethical character, human life is worse than that of an animal.

Sentiment for universal well-being:

The secret to happy life lies in the sentiment for universal well-being (SARVODAYA) along with the well-being of the self. Man starts to exploit society from birth. Society helps a child to grow up, learn good culture traits (SAMSKAAR), acquire proper education, and so on and so forth. Later, it is necessary for one to contribute one's fair share for the welfare of all segments of society. Blossoming of civility in life entails the desire for prosperity of every one. The plant kingdom is an excellent example of this phenomenon. The plants take water, air, light and nutrition from nature. In return, they provide fruits, flowers, vegetables and medicines for all living beings. Is the role of humans less important in this respect? Certainly, the feelings of welfare of all bring happiness to the provider as well as society.

Conscientious thought process:

Modern man has become very 'smart'. He applies his intellect to deceive others. He indulges in inappropriate and capricious activities. Even in the field of religion, which is meant for pursuing peace of mind, man uses his iniquitous intellect to exploit others. The virtue of renunciation has been turned into the devil of acquisition. Those who are capable of reaching the apex of spiritualism are engaged in ignoble sanctimony. The discrepancy between their words and deeds is a blemish on the individual, society and nation. Even the legal system is proving to be inept in dealing with their disgraceful activities. It is a shame that individuals, who elucidate sophisticated philosophical concepts and exhibit lofty religious practices, lead an ignominious life. Such instances result from ignoble thought process. Such individuals change their stance, try to present untruth (wrong) as truth (right), and apply logic with culpable intentions. This process leads to mental tyranny. They forget that on account of their conduct, not only do they lose their peace of mind, but they also become instrumental in causing pain and distress to others. The illustrious ascetic Saint Taaran Svami² has censured such tendencies. He has advised that one should give up false pride and deceit. One should

² Saint Taaran Svami observed that, in temples people were engaged in the pursuit of money and materials in the facade of the worship of the qualities of VEETARAAG. So he underscored the study of scriptures rather than idol worship. - DCJ

concentrate on the pristine attributes of soul. Such conscientious thought process brings peace of mind. It also leads to amity in society.

Amicability and religious tolerance:

Those who believe in reality never feel hostility toward others. An important aspect of physical and mental nonviolence is amicability and religious tolerance. All great religious personalities of the world, including Bhagwaan Mahaveer, emphasized religious tolerance and amity for promoting spiritual development and goodwill in society. Mahaveer did not depreciate any personality or religion.

He did not criticize or disregard any individual. He merely enunciated reality according to his vision. This was the magnitude of his unique accomplishment.³ Without the mental violence of hurting others' feelings, Mahaveer instituted the concept of reality, invoked rational transformation of life, induced the sunrise of multiplicity of viewpoints by discarding one-sided views, and, attained freedom from abnormalities, misunderstandings and immoral conduct. Conviction and respect for pristine attributes of soul unite the entire living world and point toward a unique ideal. Disparity breeds antagonism, absolutism and misconduct. Amity and tolerance are the foundations of democracy. Antagonism and the intention of annihilating the opponent are irreligious and barbaric. Goodwill and tolerance constitute the blueprint for happiness in life.

Constant vigilance - living in the present moment:

Those who live in the present and are constantly alert are indeed happy and in pursuit of spiritualism. Others are either concerned about the future or preoccupied in the events of the past. They are neglecting their present. Neglect of the present is the root cause of grief. Disregard for our thought process and creativity is responsible for our worldly cycles of existence. Learn to live in the present. Remain vigilant about transgressions of mind. Know and perceive. This will lead to shedding of past demerit and avoid future demerit. Here are the factors that obstruct living in the present:

³ In the same vein, in an article published in 1983 and being reprinted in the present issue, Ahamindra Jain wrote, "Well, I can honestly say that I do not feel that my religion is 'better' than anyone else's. But I do not think that this makes me any less of a believer in its principles. On the contrary, I think that this is one aspect of practicing Jainism: to respect the beliefs of others and to appreciate their good deeds without regard to any motivations."
- DCJ

1. Belief that one depends on external objects for accomplishment and gratification⁴
2. Proprietary feelings for ominous thoughts
3. Excessive regard for karmas and their fruition
4. Lack of discernment between auspicious and inauspicious - desirable and undesirable
5. Attachment to external objects and feeling of pride for one's physical being
6. Intractable attitude for one's biased one-sided views
7. Neglect of the intrinsic attributes of perception and knowledge of soul, and disregard of spiritualism
8. Sinister thoughts, speech and action
9. Delusion and disregard about the pristine attributes of soul

One should realize that knowledge is an important attribute of soul. One can learn the art of living in the present through the study of scriptures and meditation on the aspects of reality.

Feeling of trusteeship:

Individuals acquire money and material, status and fame, and various assets on account of good endeavor. These achievements captivate an individual who is not wise while one who is wise considers that society has entrusted him with the wealth. This is non-possessiveness - an aspect of nonviolence. Such an individual utilizes his/her fortune for the benefit of society.

Importance of thoughts and feelings:

Success and failure in life depend on one's attitude. Our thoughts and feelings are the focus of our endeavors. We act according to our thoughts, and our accomplishments follow our actions. Such a frame of mind, which is focused on spiritualism, leads to true happiness and peace of mind.

⁴ The substantive cause for modifications is the self. The external objects may serve as instrumental cause only. - DCJ