

CELEBRATIONS

Pujya Babuji Maharaj Birthday Celebrations 2011 - Talk Delivered by Pujya. K.C. Narayana on 8th Prabhu 139 (22/Apr/2011)

Dear associates,

1. My humble Pranam to all. On this auspicious day I like to share with you some basic principles of practicing the system. I have been practicing this system of Rajayoga for nearly 5 decades and I feel I have some information on the problems we face in our sadhana and would like to share the manner in which I tried to understand and meet the situations. When we study the book "The Ten Commandments" of our beloved Master we appreciate the point that this system requires certain definite changes in our habits. It is said that "Man is a creature of habit." This simple statement is deceptively profound.

2. We know that our lives are comprised of a collection of habits that dictate many of our physical, emotional and mental actions and reactions. Depending on the level of conscious awareness we invest in a habit's creation, habits can either

enslave us, turning us into a mindless automaton, or free us to pursue creative, joyful activities that enhance and give meaning to our life. Most of us have a mixture of good and bad habits. The demand of the book Ten Commandments is that we eschew wrong habits and attitudes and embrace the wholesome and holistic attitudes and habits recommended in the book. If some of us feel that the call is too high it reflects the unwillingness to follow the commandments 3 and 2 which stress on the clarity required to understand and reach our goal.

3. Obviously this means our unwillingness to change our habits. When we say 'I am not able to get up early in the morning' we are only saying to ourselves 'what if I get up late and attend to meditation.' When we say we are not able to forgive our brother or sister we are only saying we are not willing to do so. The Commandments demand that we eschew greed, gluttony, hatred, envy, hopelessly undue attachment to persons and property and a host of other habit patterns which having been created by us we refuse to leave them. The plays of the mind are mysterious and funny and deserve greater attention in its role in habit formation.

4. Habit is defined as an acquired behaviour pattern followed until it has become almost involuntary. Habits can be good or bad, productive or non-productive. Good habits lead to developing skills, such as learning to listen, pray, help etc., They also save us time and energy by automating the performance of desirable actions. These acquired behaviour patterns free our mind from having to concentrate, as would be required of unfamiliar actions. It is amusing that every early in the morning there is a ritual of waking up the Lord in every temple and He is yet to develop that habit. I only am stressing how difficult it is to develop a good habit.

5. To obey the Master who has developed total control over his internal and external apparatus as our beloved Master is the way to become like him. He always said that it is his wish that all become like him. It is common sense that we replace bad habits (or as Master puts it spiritual diseases like laziness, sloth or indolence, envy, hatred, jealousy and a host of other negative traits which affect sadhana) with good ones, which is the basis of all self development and spiritual evolution. But habits and attitudes die hard. This is evident when almost everyone who has ever tried to quit smoking, alcohol or coffee will tell that this is not always as easy as it would seem.

6. Smokers are addicted to nicotine. But according to modern science of brain, all habits induce emotional states that produce chemical changes in our brain. Consequently, we become addicted to the chemicals secreted by our brain no matter what kind of habit we create. We are further informed that with every thought or action we undertake, we create electrical pathways in our brain. As some wit said all that we know is "neurons which fire together and wire together." Psychologists aver that repetition etches these patterns more deeply into our brain. In order to replace a bad habit with a good one, we need to break the association with our emotions and the chemicals we have grown accustomed to, and rewire our brain. This requires concentration and will. Obviously our will which has been made weak due to our educational and ethical systems requires support from a genuine person who is prepared to rewire our connections. This is what is being done through the process of Pranahuti. Pranahuti without our willingness to recognise our faults and fallacies and readiness to change into a more productive and integral being would be of no use under normal conditions.

7. If we are unaware or unwilling to acknowledge our non productive habits, we will have a hard time replacing it. If we are not convinced a particular

habit is bad for us, we will have no incentive to change or transform. But, if we are aware of our unwanted habits and undesirable attitudes and are willing to devote our attention to it, then change is possible and more so through Pranahuti quickly. Deeply focused concentration, such as during our meditation increases the potency of our thoughts and more deeply affects our brain's rewiring. Meditation and cleaning processes thus gain paramount importance in our efforts to transform.

8. We should remember that in the original place it took regular action to install our unwanted habit patterns and attitudes possibly over the course of several lifetimes and so it will take regular action and considerable time to undo it. This is where our will comes in as also the help we get from Pranahuti. We strengthen our will, as well as our new habits with repetition. Every time we consciously reject the urge to give in to our bad habit, we strengthen our will. Every time we consciously undertake an action to install a new, positive habit, it becomes easier. This is how we rewire our brain and overcome our addictions and change our attitudes.

9. When these habits are of a positive nature, this self-reinforcing cycle produces positive results, but the

contrary is also true. In other words, consciously acting to install positive habits strengthens our will and further attracts more similar experiences. Giving in to bad habits weakens our will, not only making it harder to install good habits, but doing so may cause us to lose the good habits we already had. This is the logic behind the principles of *aanukoolyasya sankalpa* and *pratikoolyasya varjanam*. The habits and attitudes which are contra to the nature of our goal should be eschewed if we have to develop the habits and attitudes which promote the acquisition of the goal desired. There can be no better reason to develop our will and consciously establish positive habits. The development of good habits and attitudes adumbrated in the book *Ten Commandments* will improve the quality of our spiritual life and free us from the grip of negative habits and attitudes. That leads to better quality of meditation and there by enables us to embrace our Master very quickly and become one with Him. However we should always remember that in *sadhana* we should be guided by our own wisdom acquired through *sadhana* in the proper manner. Conventions and dogmas should be never allowed to dictate our wisdom. This is the primary freedom and can be considered as *Viveka*.

10. Pranam.