

*Spiritual knowledge is like a hot flame, which burns all the bad qualities present in the mind, body and heart and turns them into ashes and enlightens the internal soul. A small cloud covers the sun and reduces its brightness; similarly the bad qualities of a human being also cover brightness of the soul and block the path of self-realization. The biggest obstacles in this path are ignorance, lack of knowledge and wealth.*



# SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

**Prof. G.R.Verma**

## **What is spiritual transformation?**

The study of human psychology or nature reveals that man represents the mutual contrasting elements. Both god and demon are present in man's nature. According to Brihadaranyak Upanishad, Prajapati the creator has three children – god, human being and demons. According to Shankaracharya, the human beings are differentiated in these three classes on the basis of qualities like self-control, generosity, pity, satva, rajas and Tamas nature. The people possessing good qualities are called god. Those possessing excessive greed and longing for wealth are human beings and those who harm others and are cruel in nature are called demons. The human nature can change from god to demon and vice versa depending on his knowledge and devotion. The human being has continuous ability to bring in moral changes. A man can change his spiritual consciousness and bring in drastic changes in his thoughts and feelings. A human being with unchaste body, mind, and soul can transform into a chaste mind, godly mentality and divine human being. If a worldly person is inclined towards leaving his worldliness and get rid of the feeling of satisfying his sensory organs then we expect to see spiritual transformation in such a person. We will get several examples in our history where people having ordinary and low occupations have become great people due to spiritual transformation. For instance, Valmiki was a cruel dacoit but transformed into a saint due to the preaching of Narada. He wrote the great epic 'Ramayana' and was known as a theologian. Saint Francis preached service, chastity and became the founder of big religious organizations due to his good qualities. Similarly, Guru Nanak, Saint Kabir, Ravidas and Meerabai had immense faith on God and became famous saints. Angulimal, a famous dacoit could leave behind his past and transform his life with the good advice of lord Buddha. There are a number of such devotees and learned people who transformed their lives due to spiritual knowledge. Swami Vivekanand became a wealthy and great theologian due to devotion towards god and spiritual knowledge.

## **Challenges and solutions**

The task of spiritual transformation is not so easy. Wearing saffron clothes, tying your hair, wearing tilak on forehead and garlands in the neck alone are not enough to gain this. Spiritual knowledge is like a hot flame, which burns all the bad qualities present in the mind, body and heart and turns them into ashes and enlightens the internal soul. A small cloud covers the sun and reduces its brightness; similarly the bad quali-

ties of a human being also cover brightness of the soul and block the path of self-realization. The biggest obstacles in this path are ignorance, lack of knowledge and wealth. The man forgets his soul due to ignorance. The lusts, vices and other bad qualities lying deep inside our subconscious mind have deep impact on our conscious mind. All these qualities remain in our emotional body and are expressed through our mental body. We have to suppress them and show high standard and good qualities for the welfare of others. In other words, we have to give them spiritual direction.

The second biggest obstacle is ego, which arises due to ignorance. Ego is the main tendency of a man, which is the result of the mind's temptation towards petty things. When mind is free from desires and temptation then it realizes the true form of soul and gets relieved from all kinds of obstacles. The disorder, which covers our consciousness, meets the supreme soul with the experience of highest level of spirituality and realizes the real form.

The third obstacle is the negative thoughts and feelings arising due to ignorance and ego. These are constantly influencing our mind, body and soul. Wrong attitude makes a person suffer from physical and mental diseases. Confusion, anger, jealousy, hatred, fear and negative thoughts makes the person suffer from several diseases like heart disease, diabetes, psychological problems etc. but positive thinking helps in spiritual transformation and the diseases can also be overcome.

There are different school of thoughts regarding the habits and tendencies, which we aim to control with spiritual lifestyle. According to one view, cruel thoughts depict the quality of anger in a man, ignorance, ego, attachment are its symptoms. Similarly, lust for sex and playfulness of mind makes the person restless and unhappy, which are symptoms of a passionate person. People with spiritual tendencies lead a life of self-control and simplicity, which are pious qualities. In this way human beings perform devotion through mind, body and soul and obtain spiritual goals.

Cleanliness, celibacy and not harming other creatures are devotions practiced through verbal actions. A number of scholars consider environmental cleanliness as a part of spiritual transformation of human being. Some learned person believes that the inspiration to progress in life and life energy present inside a human being are most important.



Some learned person give the credit of this spiritual transformation to ancestors and parents. Some people that the man has these inherent abilities and gets the result of his deeds. According to Geeta, a man discards his old clothes and wears new clothes. Similarly the soul leaves a diseased and old body and enters into a new body. But, its tendencies and nature continue for several ages. The ancestors are held responsible for these human traits or qualities, which is totally wrong. The man should take the onus of his qualities and try to take a good direction. Many times the man wears different types of masks and loses his original identity. Unless the man throws out these masks he will not be able to get self-realization. The false relations that the man gets due to these masks are the real reasons for his unhappiness. As soon as the man removes his mask he becomes free of his relations and he achieves self-realization or self-knowledge.

According to philosophy the mind and sensory organs are cover of the soul and the soul body is the cover of mental body. When these covers are removed the internal light is shown. This is the main aim of all types of ethical and spiritual devotions. Mind is superior to the body and soul is superior to the mind. Our soul has three bodies, the physical body or the unconscious ego in which the human consciousness lies dormant. This is known as the dormant state of the body. The second is the mental body, which is conscious ego, mind, memory and virtues; these are the combination of small organs of work and knowledge. These represent the dreaming state of the body. The third is the physical body, which is slightly better than the dream state. This is known as the awaken state of the body. The mental body controls the physical body. The transformation of character is considered to be important in case of spiritual transformation. But majority of the people pretend to have spiritual transformation, which is worse than the normal life. Such pretentious life should be left behind and the man should try to get actual spiritual transformation. This is possible when the man sacrifices his passion and anger and increases his good qualities and tries to attain self-realization with the help of piousness. False prejudices and pretence has no importance in the absence of chastity. The man should be alert and aware of the dangers of spiritual life and try to bring in this transformation so that he can accomplish the goal of self-realization.