

How to generate austerity?

prabhāta-raśmiḥ

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Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru.

I was continuing austerity yesterday also, and I would continue the subject again. Austerity is a very important nay, inevitable part of spiritual and religious life; I would even say any good and noble life. Goodness and nobility are two important words, concepts, like beauty, gold, brilliance, splendor etc. Goodness is also something very very magnificent and beautiful. Equally so is nobility. For any good or noble life also, austerity is important.

What is this austerity? As I mentioned, part of it consists in eliminating or denying some of the practices/thoughts indulgences etc., which you already have, either habitually or as inborn traits. Many of the people are given to speaking lies! So to lie is a habit; to hurt another by words and otherwise is also a habit. To find fault with others is another habit. Not to be happy over others' qualities and virtues is another trouble. Intolerance of various kinds, then any other commonly spoken of traits like jealousy, hatred etc., these are all undesirable. These undesirable traits should be identified and a definite effort should be made to eliminate them.

How will you eliminate them? First of all, by trying to know that they are undesirable! What is the meaning of the word 'undesirable'? Something that is not desirable by the normal human mind and its judgment. If something is undesirable, is there anybody who should like it or will like it? So, the moment you have an evaluation that this is undesirable, from that moment onwards, that undesirable element should vacate from your system. Be sensitive and conscious about it!

Idleness, lethargy, postponing matters, wild imagination, expectation – all these are undesirable. They tense the mind, congests, constrict the mind and normal functioning will be greatly and adversely affected. Then what is the next step? It is inclusion or incorporation of the desirable elements. What are the desirables? You will find a list of items are there! A list of them. Not hurting anybody, speaking truth, not taking

another's property without his consent, keeping the body, the place of stay, the articles you use, all of them in a clean and orderly manner, *ahimsā, satyam, asteyam, śaucam, ātmani vinigrahaḥ*, have control over your body, senses, tongue, mind, intelligence etc. This is something that you have to include!

As part of austerity, we have some very good practices. Going to participate in *satsang* is very important. Normally ever since you wake up till you go to bed and sleep, we are exposed to, and we interact with the world objects. Within these objects, you will find members of the family, society, colleagues in the professional front and unexpectedly many others. All of them will form part of our interactional circle. The objects may not talk to us. But living beings will always have their reactions. So that interpersonal interaction becomes more complex and sometimes very displeasing also! So we have a number of interactions with the world, many of which are not pleasant. So you must progressively develop a system of providing better, good, and noble inputs into your system. This can be had only by *satsang*. Attending places where good and truthful things are spoken. All our *satsangs* are supposed to be discussing Truth and virtues surrounding the Truth! That is why it is called *satsang*.

Another important part is *svādhyāya*! Reading spiritual and philosophical texts like the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Geeta, various prakarana granthas, and the like. You can read good biographies of mahatmas, high souls - discuss them also. So you must yourself provide good inputs into your system. Otherwise we only have secular, world, undesirable inputs.

So make sure that everyday, you have atleast one hour of good inputs into your system. That is very necessary! Either you listen to, participate in the *satsang*, or generate the *satsang* for you yourself by reading books and reading the holy texts. We have something like *sahasranama japa* and Bhagavad Geeta recitation. So many types of Vedic recitations are there! The purpose is to undergo the austerity of reciting it on the one hand and trying to make it an input into your system. When spiritual and philosophical inputs go on filling your system, and the system starts reflecting them, radiating them, you will find the personality changes. After all it is a very scientific, systematic, rational process, but people don't understand it to be so, that is the trouble.

Every day we are seeing members of the family, and as children grow, you will find difference of opinion will be there, they get distant from the parents. What is to be done? You must have a positive input through *satsang* - listening to or reading.

Two are the important issues - audio or visual - either you listen to, or you see a book and you read. These are very important! When the system is sufficiently saturated with

this kind of good, noble and elevating inputs, you will find the personality changes. You will start understanding the ephemerality or the transitory nature of the world.

I have received an email yesterday, or day before yesterday! A young woman has written, "Swamiji, enough of this household life." She and her husband, both of them are professionals. She is having a little unpleasantness. "I am trying my best but I find this life is not alright! I want to be exposed to something entirely different. I want to have peace, joy from within myself. The usual secular routines and secular procedures are not going to give me what I want! I have understood!" See, a change in personality takes place.

This world is always supposed to generate or create *tāpatrayam* – three fold misery. Anyone in this world cannot avoid this. The only way to eliminate them and redress them is by knowing the Supreme Truth as Shreemad Bhagavatam says: *vedyam vāstavamatra vastu śivadam tāpatrayonmūlanam* (Shreemad Bhagavatam – 1.1.2).

To eliminate the *tāpatraya*, the three fold misery, the supreme truth, in the nature of auspicious self, has to be known. So read it, understand it, evaluate matters, and develop more and more of what? A spiritual fondness, a good and noble personality, a benevolent nature!

So it is a process of a systematic growth and there is nobody on earth who can resent it, because it generates joy, it gives you more sensitivity, it makes you more efficient, clean, honorable and worth emulating. The spiritual person is a model person; a devotee is a model human. Everyone looks to such a person as a good, effective and benevolent person.

Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru.

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