



Paryushan Celebrations - Monday, 17 September 2012

Day 6

Who creates our destiny?

Whatever is available easily in life, it is the most expensive (or has the most value). And that which is difficult to get is the cheapest (or that with the least value). This has to be understood from a spiritual viewpoint and not an earthly view.

In order of least to most important, these are the things that are the most valuable in life. Food, water, breath, Bhagwan's name, Satsang. Satsang is the most valuable, but is available most freely. For example, attending and listening to Swamiji's lectures. It is true that Satsang is difficult to a lot of people to achieve, or get to.

So before we get into the detail of who creates your destiny, it's important to know a little about the two types of belief systems that exist in this world. The first type believes that whatever happens in this world, or to myself, or to anyone, happens because of God. Without God's doing, not even a leaf can move. And hence, whatever happens to me, my destiny, it is all preordained by God Himself. Most major religions of the world believe that God created the world, man's destiny, and is the controller of all.

So here's a thought - if God created destiny, then HE wouldn't create such a destiny for mankind; look at the major diseases today like cancer and AIDS; major economic crashes; famine and starvation. All God's doing. Let's say for example, God's work is handed over to a common man, and God takes a back seat for 24 hours. HE hands over all destiny writing responsibilities to this common man.

Now, what type of destiny would this common man write for the world? Would he write a glorious life for all, or one that makes them suffer like in hell? It's obvious that any common man with any common sense would write a glorious life for all - create a glorious destiny. Even if this man had a child who was on the wrong path, he would still write a glorious life and destiny for his child. So if we expect a common man to write a glorious destiny for all, then why would someone infinitely more powerful than man write a hellish destiny for so many people? So we have to believe that God does not write the destiny of man.

The second belief system says that God does not create man's destiny, but man himself does. Religions like Jainism and Buddhism belong to this system. So if man creates his own destiny, then it begs the question why would man create a bad destiny for himself! According to a misbelieved philosophy, one would say it is the karmas. However, karmas are created by man himself. I am the creator of my own karmas. Which ultimately means that I am responsible for my own destiny.

I am responsible.

The responsibility is not limited to ones action in life, but also expands into thought. Even if you do good, but think bad, your karmas accumulate and you create such a destiny for yourself.

I make my own destiny.

So how am I responsible for my own destiny? Swamiji gives us a seven step process by which we create it.

1 - Situations and circumstances - The common belief is that if we are put into a negative situation, we develop negative thoughts. And if in a positive situation, we develop positive thoughts. However, there are people in this world who rise above these situations and create their own thoughts. Your thoughts are not a slave to the situation. They are the master. You must have heard of incidents of cancer patients on their last leg of life, but with a smile on their face and positive attitude in their mind. Whilst all around them are miserable and unhappy. The situation is negative, but the person suffering from it is infinitely positive. They are a master of their thoughts.

Always remember: Suffering is optional.

Even so, there is some effect of a situation on your thoughts. It is inevitable. However, your response to that situation is under your control. One important thing to remember is your situations are not in your control. They are a result of your good and bad deeds. The more good deeds in your account, the better your situation and circumstances.

2 - Thought pattern - Today's modern psychology states that there are four types of thoughts (or thought patterns) that a man has:

a) Positive - This type of person always remains positive in any given situation and circumstances. In Gujarati, there is a saying "Jey thayu tey saaraa maatey." Always adopting a positive attitude. Think about this. If you're driving your car and your headlights crack, would you define this as a good or bad thing? Most people would agree that it's a bad thing. But without knowing the future, how can you define something as good or bad? However, positive thinking has to be adopted with the right wisdom as well. When the other person is showing negative emotions or attitude towards you, you use positive thinking. Not when your own negative qualities come out.

b) Negative - This type of person always finds fault in any situation; always moves around with a negative attitude.

c) Neutral - This is neither negative or positive. For example, when you're at work, you think - but it's a necessary thought. It's not positive or negative.

d) Unnecessary - These are the most useless thoughts that have no impact in elevating oneself or improving our life. But sadly, most of our life is spent on this level of thought.

Thoughts can also be categorised by their time definition: past, future and present.

What kind of thoughts do you spend most of your time in? Generally, over 70s spend their time in the "past". The youth spend their time thinking about the "future". Kids and small children are always in the present.

3 - Feeling - Your feelings are created on the basis of your thoughts. First you have to fix your thought pattern on the situation or event or person. And based on that

thought pattern, you express that feeling. Most times, we look at people with this feeling system.

4 - Attitude - When water is in its original form, it's called feeling. And when it freezes into ice, that becomes attitude. It is hard to change an attitude. For example, when you pass judgement on a person, even if you meet him after 10 years, you will still look at him from the same attitude viewpoint.

5 - Action - Pravrutti - People see the action, but never introspect on all the points that come before the action. Every action is influenced by your attitude.

6 - Habit - Whatever your action, that becomes a habit over time. It takes 21 days of repeating the same action to make it a habit, according to new research. So be careful what actions you do and repeat. It will become your second nature.

7 - Sanskara - A group of habits becomes your sanskara. Action is in the body, Habit is in the mind, and Sanskara is in the heart. Sanskara can either be acquired by this process, or like small babies and children, they can be acquired directly from elders. When you work with a baby, you are working directly with his/her subconscious. Swamiji implores everyone to at least give their kids from a very young age (before the age of 12) these sanskara: respect all elders and guests, be honest, speak in a low voice, help anyone you can in need. A man is recognised by his sanskara.

8 - Personality - From your sanskara comes your personality. Sanskara is the flower, and your personality is the fragrance. People cannot see your sanskara, but they can see your personality. And this personality becomes your destiny in every field of your life.

In these eight steps, the root center of it all is the thought pattern because the situation may or may not be in your control. But the thought is.

How is this thought created? It has three factors:

a) Information - Whatever information you feed yourself, the thought develops based on it. Good information leads to good thoughts and bad information leads to negative thoughts. This information is fed through the five senses, including when we eat, we read, we hear, we see. So it is said that when cooking, your thoughts should be pure as that filters through into the food. So always filter what

information you take in. Two hours before you go to sleep, your sub conscious mind is more active than the conscious mind. And when you wake up in the morning, your subconscious mind is more active. Hence, it is said that you should do some good reading at night, and start your morning with prayers and meditation.

b) Past experience - Your past experience creates the mode and type of thought today. If your past experiences have been bad, then try to clear them off. And do that through Pratikraman. Any uncleared issues should be resolved as soon as possible so that your present thoughts are more clear and pure. Swamiji implores everyone that if you ever have an argument or issue with anyone, don't ever bring the past into it.

c) Belief system - If you realise that your current belief system is incorrect, you should break free from it. You have to remove the shackles of such outdated belief systems and conditionings so that you can take in new experiences and elevate yourself. It is a huge sacrifice, but it is essential so that you can lead a righteous life.

So the eight step process is how our destiny is created every moment of every day, and at the center of it is the thought process. Once you purify and bring clarity in your thought process, you take control of your destiny, and become the master of your own future.