

CHAPTER XII

RELIGION : THE PATH OF SELF- REALISATION

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Introductory:

Religion is universal. It is spread throughout the human world. It seems as if it has been with man always and everywhere. From his primitive state it prevails with him, as some sort of discipline, accepted consciously or unconsciously with faith, fear, belief, hope or realisation, by way of some necessity or enforcement from outside or call from within. It is ^{with} all tribes, races and classes in the form of discipline. It is so interwoven with life that it is observed not only at the times of birth and death of man, but also at all important events, ceremonies and festivals in life from birth to death. In whatever form it be, crude or refined, it has been some significant universal aspect of human life.

It has been a source of inspiration to arts and literature. On one hand, it looms large in arts and literature, and on the other hand, they are highly fed and fostered all over the world by it. Arts and literature have preserved it from the immemorial past to the posterity for inspiration and for imbuing faith and spirit in man to make ^{him} human and manly. See the temples and tombs, churches, castles and caves and pyramids and peaks of mountains, banks of rivers and falls, you will find the stones singing the grace and glories of religion, whereby you will feel grandeur and depth of something sublime and immortal that frees your mind and heart from cares, worries and limitations of mortal life. But beware, do not go there with a cynic or sectarian mind, but go there with heart and mind open and you will find you are possessed

heart and soul by something and yet ~~hammer~~^{noiser} the heart as if it were your own innate and ultimate !

In a deeper and wider sense religion is a way of living. Everybody generally knows what religion is; but few, very few know the real import and essence of religion. As there are different religions with different countries and different races, they are taken as sectarian way of living. So with different people, religion has different concepts, principles and practices. Different religions have their own philosophies for their justification. And thus they are professed to be the panacea of all the ills of life, here and hereafter. Generally common people have no time to scrutinize and test the grounds of validity of religious truths, principles and practices. They, as members of a tribe or race, are used to follow it with blind faith or favour, instinctively with pride or prejudice for their ancestral sect, with little or no understanding of it.

However, religions in their origins or at the stage of reconstruction might have been an earnest ~~or~~^{search} a research for some human souls seeking ~~for~~^{panacea} all the ills of life. The founders and some inquisitive followers might have in the main taken it as a quest into the ultimate reality. With men it may be different, for men it is a quest. Religions, whatever may they be, but as religion they are in the main a human quest into the reality at large wherein man tries to seek his status, the goal and the role. Whatever it may be with men but with men religion is not an ordinary problem like that of getting a living or of making a career, but it is a life and death problem, or it is with him, so to call, a "to be or not to be" question facing his being.

It is the human soul within, dissatisfied with the mortal world without, that carries on the search into reality. It is a question of being, and therefore, it is a way of living.

In the preceding chapters on philosophical survey of reality in general, we, in the light of Srinad's view, concluded that the self being the ultimate in the main, spiritual approach is the sure, straight and sufficient solution of the problems that life ultimately poses before us; and accordingly we tried to know about self on lines of Srinad's treatise on Self, and thereby realised self-realisation to be the only way leading to liberation wherein lies genuine, everlasting happiness, eternal bliss as Srinad has concluded. What is that path of self-realisation? It is in fact nothing else, but essentially what we call religion, dharma.

General definition of religions

Religion is differently defined by different systems of philosophy. But there is one definition which can serve as a satisfactory basis of all conceptions of religion and which can be justified on the metaphysical grounds. Srinad writes: "Self-~~ness~~ manifestation realising its natural state¹ is called religion by Vithankara." This definition is based on the metaphysical principle of things in reality. In terms of metaphysics dharma is in fact the very nature of a thing. So, for the self, "functioning of the self in its own nature is dharma + religion."² Before we go to the broad implications of this definition, it would be worthwhile to know, in general, how religion has been evolved out by man, according to Srinad's view, in his search for lasting happiness or bliss.

1. S.R. p.450/569

2. S.R. p.761.

Miseries the cause for the search of religions

Strindberg writes how human souls in search of lasting happiness happened to arrive at religion as a remedy of all the ills in life. "The souls troubled and tired of the infinite kinds of physical and mental sufferings though wishing intensely to be free from them by many ways cannot be free yet - what is the reason thereof? Such a problem faces many souls, but the rare may find its right solution. So far the root cause of the misery is not rightly known, whatever great effort for eliminating the misery may be done, the misery cannot be destroyed; and inspite of disliking, disfavour and disregard whatsoever towards it, the very misery must be suffered. On trying to put off that misery by the improper remedy, and trying it with all the unbearable utmost efforts, when that misery prevails that spiritual seeker is perplexed and remains puzzled as to what should be its right cause or right remedy. He is at a loss to find out why the misery does not end? In no way and never the misery has been wished for, and even in the dream not the least affinity has been shown towards it; yet the misery rears up automatically itself, and whatever efforts I try, turn out futile and I am obliged to undergo the experience of the misery - what is the cause thereof?"

"Is it so that one can ^{never} end misery? Is it to be miserable really the nature of soul? Is it so that there is the creator of the world who might have considered it proper to do so? Is it the matter of destiny or is it the result of some past fault of mine? Such and the like fancies and guesses do the embodied souls with mind go on hazarding, and those without mind undergo unconsciously the suffering and yet unconsciously go on desiring for its end.

"In this world it is the conscious or unconscious desire of each and every living being that anyhow there should be no suffering at all and let there be happiness ever in every way and all-ways. For that the efforts are, yet why does it not end ? Such a question occurred in the past to too many thinkers, occurs in the present and shall occur in the future. But from those infinitely infinite thinkers only the infinite thinkers got the right solution thereof and got liberation from the sufferings. In the present too, those who get the right solution thereof do get the same result and in future too, whatever thinkers happen to have the right solution of it shall, without doubt, get the very result.

"If the physical suffering would have vanished merely by medicines, mental miseries by money and other wants supplied, and external unions and relations leave the mind quite unaffected, then the means that are tried by each and every one shall all be successful; but when it did not so happen, then to the thinkers it occurred that there must be altogether a different (means) remedy for the cessation of sufferings, our usual means are false, and futile are all the efforts, and therefore, if the root-cause of the misery is rightly known and duly remedied accordingly, then and by that way alone shall cease the suffering, otherwise it shall never cease.

"Now, from among those thinkers who rose up with a zeal to find out the right root-cause of misery, only the rare got the right solution thereof, and lot of them, though without having any right solution owing to delusion, believed that they had arrived at a right solution and preached it to the

people, and people on their part followed them too. This is the main cause of the birth of different sects and systems. Most of the thinkers came to believe that religion is the means to end the misery. But in grasping the nature of religion there happened to be a great difference among them.

Many lapsed their original theme, aim and attempt, and many being nervous in the matter turned out sceptic, pessimistic or hedonists, or the like."

(S.R. p.576-77).

Religion as a remedy of all the ills:

In short, it is a fact that on one hand there are infinite kinds of physical and mental miseries in the world, and on the other hand every being consciously or unconsciously desires that it may ever have happiness in every way and never should have in any way the slightest misery. Not only do they desire so, but try and hazard all means and measures at their disposal for attaining happiness and ending the miseries. Yet, only the rare become successful. Why so? Plainly, the root cause of all the miseries should properly be found out first and then should rightly be remedied. Then alone can it be completely destroyed once for all; otherwise vain are the efforts and futile are the means and measures to end the miseries.

Man as animal learns by trial and error and improves upon common experience and evolves out thereby the better way of living; on the other hand man as man i.e. as a rational being, through insight into the reality of things and through enlightenment transcends limitations and adopts a higher way of living. Thus by both the ways religion and philosophy are evolved out. Brinard writes: "Miseries though disliked by all the souls are

inevitably suffered, then they must have some cause at the root. Mainly from such a basic thought, springs out the thought-series of a thinker and therefrom on, it seems that the conceptions of the soul, action (karma), other world, birth-rebirth, liberation and the like might have been arrived at respectively." (S.R.p.485/646).

Now let us see Srimad's own search, quest and conclusion in the matter. "From the smallest insect to the huge wild elephant all the animals, human beings, gods and goddesses one and all have a natural desire for attaining joy and happiness. And therefore they are engaged in the efforts after it; but without the rise of a sense of discrimination they remain therein baffled in illusion. They wrongly attribute different kinds of happiness to the mundane existence. But on close scrutiny it is proved that such attribution is futile." (S.R.p.33).

But on what grounds one can call them futile ? What is the test of the futility of such attribution ? Srimad's answer for that is this: "The happiness and joys that are wrought with danger are not really the happiness but, in fact, the unhappiness. Happiness at a thing, if there is great agony in the efforts of attaining it, and greater agony in enjoying it, and which incurs great agony, infinite sorrow and infinite danger, is only apparent or no happiness at all." "Beautiful but transient means of mundane existence are all wrought with danger. Thinking with discrimination it is realised, where there is danger there is sorrow, where there is sorrow there is non-existence of happiness, and where there is no happiness at all, there behoves utter disregard towards it." (S.R.p.33).

Śrīmad gives an instance of Gautama Buddha: "Mahatma Buddha on seeing old age, poverty, disease and death - all the four unsurmountable by all the means, went away renouncing the world, the source of all the four. Infinite enlightened souls like Rishabhadev and others have adopted that very means and have preached it ~~old~~ to all the souls." (S.R.p.491/667).

Renunciation for religion:

"On seeing them (things) all momentary, the thoughtful souls renounced the status of supreme emperor whereby abide the highest power, position and wealth, and went away all alone." (S.R.p.481/666).

He writes to one of his followers: "On seeing refugelessness, helplessness, transitoriness, worthlessness and otherness of all the unions, the self is alerted at it and is warned of against affinity for the mundane existence if any and repeatedly urged to give it up as it is fruitless and futile; for no refuge, help, eternity or anything worth having can be had ever in this world, and without thoughtlessness no affinity in the world is possible, for that affinity is the root cause of infinite birth and apparently of the grief and regret, the seed of miseries and agony. So keep it calm and do away with it. Oh ! soul there is no other beneficial means. Any soul who rightly thinks over it finds such a course of things."

"If for the soul there were no death to be suffered on account of its union with the body, there would not have occurred any idea of its tendency towards anything other than the mundane existence. Mainly because of the fear of death that the soul's tendency is inspired and instigated by the blissful status of the soul and that too of the rare. Most of the souls

having some incidental effect, undergo the touch of non-attachment because of the danger of death, but that touch being momentary soon vanishes without having any deep impression or considerable effect. Only to some rare thinker or a soul worthy of enlightenment there springs out some tendency towards the abode of everlasting bliss at some instances of the danger of death."

"Were there merely danger of death, but if death were a regular phenomenon occurring in old age alone, then there would not have been so much thinkers as had been in the past; or on seeing no danger of death until the old age, they would have succumbed to laziness and delay. But it is on seeing death unavoidable and too irregular, and on realising helplessness of all sorts of refuge of kiths and kins at the time of death, it seemed beautiful to think without delay or laziness of the path of bliss or liberation and relations of all kinds seemed harmful after all. Such a decision of the thinkers is undoubtedly true, verily eternally true - true for all the three times past, present and future"

"Were there no possibility of such incidents, if it would have been seen that neither the self nor anyone else would have to undergo such a miserable incident at all and there would have been no helplessness as such, then for what reasons the great souls like Sri Rishabhadev and the supreme emperors like Bharat, who had boundless wealth and supreme power, who knew not any want or scarcity for the means of worldly happiness, would have renounced these all? Why would they have resorted to absolute loneliness, asanga-tva? " (S.R.p.502/689).

"Generally all the souls of the world wish to have happiness through getting something or the other; even the great supreme emperor is making his

efforts with a view to increase his wealth power and possession and believe happiness in attending them. But the enlightened souls on the contrary determined quite reverse therefrom the path of happiness that holding the slightest, whatever it may be, is verily itself the destruction of happiness." (S.R.p.620/832).

So, in short, realising, as Śrīmad observes, "refugelessness, helplessness, transitoriness, worthlessness and otherness (anyatva) of all the unions" they decided for once for all that the "affinity for the mundane existence is fruitless and futile; for no (lasting) refuge or help, eternity, or oneness anything worth having can be had ever in this transient world."

Metaphysical justification for renunciations

This is not merely the emotional outburst on the instant of adverse circumstances seen or suffered. It has a metaphysical basis. As Śrīmad observes, refugelessness, helplessness, transitoriness, worthlessness and otherness are in a sense ultimately the characteristic results of all the unions. Things united are subject to separation. It is ever a law with composite things. All the living beings are the outcome of the union of the soul, call it by whatever name, with the matter, the body. So every worldly soul has to suffer, sooner or later, the separation from the body and we call it death. And on the eve of death, because of unfailing separation, all refuge, help, and union are of no avail. Ultimately they prove worthless, false and futile. Unions by themselves are not ultimately real things. They have no ultimate reality - *paramārthika sattā*; but they have inter-related reality - *vyāvahārika sattā*. They have no reality of their own; theirs is

the borrowed reality. Secondly, integration and disintegration - uniting and disuniting being the nature of matter, it is called pud-gala in Jain metaphysics. Composition and decomposition are the characteristics of matter. So no material form or the union with the matter is of any avail for the soul in order to have help, refuge or union in the last resort. Nor does it behove on the part of the soul, the only knowing and conscious element in the whole of universe, to believe as its own for ever the qualities that belong to the composite form. Yet it is a fact that the living beings believe so, and act and behave accordingly, whereby they incur actions good or bad resulting in bondage, the source of unhappiness and miseries - mental, physical and material (ādhī, vyādhī and upādhī). Such a belief of oneness with the mundane form i.e. composite form, one or the other, has been ever with the soul because of its beginningless union with the matter.

Hence, for the root cause of all the unhappiness and miseries, Śrīśād concludes: "The root of all the miseries is the union (or the contact). So has been said by the Tirthankaras that are enlightened and omniscient. All the enlightened souls have realised it so. That union (or contact) has been stated mainly of two types: internally related and externally related. For contemplating over the internal, the contact of the external one should be given up." (S.R. p.489).

Union with the matter a ground for rise of unhappiness:

It would be worthwhile to consider how union or contact of the soul with other substances or things has been ever the cause of unhappiness.

Firstly, as we saw, all unions by their very nature being subject to separation or disintegration cannot provide any lasting and, therefore, any real refuge, help or oneness. Refugelessness, helplessness, transitoriness, worthlessness and otherness are the characteristics of all the unions. So to wish and try for refuge, help, everlastingness and oneness from the unions is false and futile and therefore miserable. So unions are cause of miseries even before and after; secondly, they are also responsible for inculcating a wish and want in the self for the unions. Because of the union of the self with the material body, the self has mistaken the composite form for its own real self. Now the composite form being subject to change, decomposition, defects, deformation, wants, separations and unions, the self naturally wishes and seeks from others refuge, help, everlastingness and oneness. Had the soul realised itself separate from the composite form it would not seek any outside refuge or help; for, a non-composite thing is self-sufficient, self-supporting, self-existent, everlasting, pure and perfect. But because of its union with the body, the soul is unconscious of its own self, and it is highly difficult to distinguish itself separate from the composite form.

All right, then it is a final conclusion that union is the cause of all the miseries and it should be given up. But how is this union? Is it natural or otherwise? Can it be given up or is it everlasting? Sriisad writes: "The cosmos is beginningless. The soul is existing from the infinite past. Material atoms are existing from the beginningless time. So also the relation or union of the soul with the karmas. That union is not by its nature, but it is of the form of 'vibhava' ex-natural." It is due to the

co-existing substance, matter. Matter and soul interact upon one another when united in their impure state. Yet they remain what they are. One does not give up one's nature. One always manifests one's own nature. Otherwise, nothing can maintain its own reality; hence, things would be anything and everything or may at times be nothing at all. But in fact soul remains sentient, ever conscious; and the matter remains non-sentient, non-conscious.

Yet the soul is unaware of its own real self and believes itself to be as the composite forms. Śrīmad writes: "By the reflection of the neighbouring colourful substance in the pure crystal gem (sphatika) its original form remains unnoticed; in the same way the pure tranquil self, by the super imposition due to the union with the other substance, does not realise its own natural state. It has been stated thus in somewhat slightly different form by the Jaina, the Vedanta, the Sāṅkhya, the Yoga and other systems." (S.R. p.769).

This shows that the union of soul with the matter though of the infinite past can be given up. It is maintained by the 'vibhāva' ex-natural tendency of the soul prevailing because of the self-ignorance due to beginningless union of the two. But on self-knowledge one becomes enlightened and having realised its own self, frees himself by distinguishing the self separate from the union and ultimately attains an absolute state. So we realise that union is the root cause of all the miseries; and the self-realisation is the means to end the union and the miseries resulting therefrom.

Positive side of the problem considered:

But so far happiness is concerned this is altogether a negative side. As we have observed, Śrīmad states a universal fact of life that the living

beings one and all naturally desire that they should ever have the happiness all-ways and should never have the slightest unhappiness at all. So, by doing away once for all with the causes of unhappiness one can end unhappiness and miseries. But it is no guarantee for happiness. It is a guarantee only for the cessation of unhappiness. It is no doubt a guarantee of the final end of unhappiness. Unhappiness and miseries are altogether ended thereby once for all. It is a guarantee - a negative guarantee for happiness, because no miseries are ever to be suffered as they are ended once for all, as its root cause is completely destroyed. By self-realisation the self shall attain liberation, the absolute, pure and perfect state of the self, above all unions and miseries resulting therefrom. So far so good. But what about really positive happiness - eternal bliss? As all the external unions are cut off once for all, one cannot get any happiness from outside, hence there should be guarantee for all the happiness in the soul - the self itself. Otherwise, we lose even "our sweetest song of the saddest thought" on one hand; and invite the pangs of isolation - solitary soulless loneliness on the other hand! So it should be proved that all the happiness lies in the soul alone.

Real happiness:

Before going to prove it, we should know what real happiness is. Before considering the whereabouts of happiness, we should have a clear concept of real happiness. Happiness is a matter of feeling and experience. Some sense of joy and satisfaction is felt in the very conscience. Happiness or unhappiness belongs to the soul and never to the matter. Matter being inert and absolutely without consciousness cannot be said to be happy or unhappy.

So it is eternally true that happiness belongs only to the soul - the consciousness and never to the matter. No consciousness, no happiness. But so far our practical life is concerned with joy, satisfaction or happiness there is double reference regarding all of them. So far these feelings of joy, satisfaction and happiness are concerned the soul is the subject. But there is some object external or internal about which these feelings are experienced. These feelings are undoubtedly internal and therefore are of the soul. But these feelings are about something external or internal. It is not necessarily and always that they are about the external things. As we have noted, in Erismad's view, happiness at the external things is no real happiness but it is an attributed happiness. That attribution has been resulted from lack of a sense of discrimination. (S.R.p.33). Erismad has given a criterion for real happiness: "If there lie great agony and pains in the efforts of attaining a thing, greater agony in enjoying it and if all that inner great agony, infinite sorrow and infinite danger in the consequence then the happiness felt on having that thing is apparent or no happiness at all." (S.R.p.33). This ^{is} always the case with external things; for no lasting refuge, help or oneness can be had at the union with other things. So now it remains to see whether lasting help, refuge and oneness can be had from within.

Source of real happiness: the soul itself:

Soul being the ultimate reality, it is certainly everlasting, self-sufficient, self-supporting and self-existent; there can arise no need of help or refuge; there exists no fear of death, if resorted to its natural state which is pure and perfect, absolute and eternal. Therefore Erismad writes: "Soul has forgotten its own self, and therefore it suffers ^{from} desolation

of real happiness. This has been said with confirmation of all religions." (S.R.p.262). "Happiness lies within, not without. I tell the truth, Oh! soul, beware, do not make a mistake, do not forget, to thee do I tell the truth. Happiness lies within the self, it won't be attained by any outside search." (S.R.p.215). "Remain absorbed within the self that which is light of all lights that reveals its own self and others and which is ever distinct from the body. Oh! gentlemen, being introvert and steady, remain within the self; then you would experience eternal boundless joy." (S.R.p.620/832).

Metaphysical justification:

Now for this positive side of happiness it would be worthwhile to seek on metaphysical grounds the justification for the help, refuge, everlastingness and oneness from within i.e. from the very self itself. Metaphysically it is eternally true that a self-existent, self-supporting and a self-sufficient thing being itself pure and perfect ^{is} ever-lasting, and it needs no outside help, refuge or union for maintaining its own reality. It is itself the ultimate reality.

Let us for the support see in details the characteristics of the soul as experienced and stated by the lord Tirthankara. Srined writes: "Sri Tirthankara says not: 'By whatever way in this world the substance called soul might have been stated, let that be left to itself, we are unconcerned with it. We have clearly stated it distinct as we ourselves have realised it free from all the super-impositions. By the characteristics by which it is described it stands altogether absolute and distinct. We have known, seen and distinctly experienced that soul, verily we ourselves are that very soul.

1. That soul is having the characteristic called Samata-substantial equanimity. At present as the soul is having integrate state of innumerable consciousness - points (pradeshas) it so has been maintained in former

first, second, third, fourth, tenth, numerable, innumerable, infinite moments in the past, is maintained at present, and so shall it be maintained in the future. Never do depart from it all its natural functions like innumerable pointedness, consciousness, formlessness (anupitva) and the like. Such a characteristic like a substantial equanimity - samatā belongs verily to the soul.

2. Whatever loveliness that seems in the bodies of birds, beasts or men or in trees, plants and the like or by which all of them seem animated, seem obviously full of beauty, to whom that characteristic of loveliness (ramatā), graciousness (ramanipitva) belongs? It belongs to the substance called soul. To whom that loveliness, without which the whole world would be null and void, belongs is verily the soul.

3. It is never possible that the knower, be he any, in his own absence can know anything at all. First there must be his own presence and he himself is verily the cause of acceptance rejection or disinterested cognition of anything. In acceptance rejection or slightest cognition of any other substance acceptance, rejection or cognition are possible only on instant of whose pre-existence is verily the pre-existent substance called soul. By ^{avoiding} existing/it i.e. in its absence anything being wished to know is an utter impossibility. Anything else can be known only if that alone is predominant. To whom such a characteristic of predominant priority 'urdhvata dharma' belongs is called soul by Sri Tirthankara.

4. The obvious material substances and the soul, the characteristic by which they stand different, distinct and distinguished is verily the quality

of the soul called cognitiveness. None can ever experience the soul without cognitiveness, and no where else can there be this cognitiveness. To whom such a characteristic called cognitiveness - an ultimate cause or basis of experience belongs is called soul by Sri Tirthankara.

5. In the conditions like sensual enjoyments or the yoga samādhi where seems happiness possible. On analysing it there can ultimately be found the cause of all that happiness the soul alone. Therefore of this ultimateness there, the characteristic of feeling happiness is said by Sri Tirthankara to be of the soul and on a practical instant like sleep it seems obvious. The sleep wherein there is elimination of all the other substances, even there prevails knowledge of one's being happy, then it is of the ultimately remaining substance called soul. Therein nothing else is present; and feeling of happiness is extremely obvious, the characteristic quality by which it is felt has been never seen anywhere else except the soul.

6. This is saltless, this is sweet, this is sour, this is salt; I am in this connection; suffering from cold; it is too hot, I am unhappy, suffering the miseries - such a distinct knowledge, knowledge out of experience and suffering - the very capacity of 'experiencing' (anubhavyana) can be had only in the soul or ^{so} to say the substance having that characteristic for 'experiencing' must be the soul itself and it is the experience of the enlightened souls like Tirthankara.

7. Fool-proof light, light of infinite lamps, light of gems and jewels, light of moon and sun - all cannot come in light without the light of soul i.e.

they themselves are unable to feel or to know even their own self. The substance by the light of which they come in light is known, cognised, as distinct, that substance whatever it be is verily the soul. That characteristic ever obvious and distinct, the light of all lights, the constant and ever unshaken consciousness can be realised on turning one's attention towards the soul within.

"On contemplating over again and again these characteristics of the soul just mentioned the soul can be known without all obstructions, hamperings, and hurdles. The characteristics by knowing which the soul has been known are thus declared by Shri Tirthankara." (S.R. p.367/432 369/438).

Here in these characteristics of soul we shall find so wide a source and basis of all positive and lasting happiness that we cannot ^{but} call it all-comprising, all-pervading and all-embracing. It would be worth-while to view their wide application from some important angles.

Metaphysically the substantial equanimity - Samata - proves soul to be self-existent, self-supporting and self-sufficient, indestructible and inobstructible. By the strength of its natural quality, Samata, it prevails throughout all shocks and changes ever the same, everlasting and eternal, constant and unchanged though undergoing all forms of birth, life and death. Here, on this metaphysical basis of soul's nature we can realise the truth of Bhagvad Gita's teachings:

'avinashi tu tat viddhi, yam karavidam tatan

vinasham - avyaya-aya na kashit kartum arhati. 17, 11

Na jāyate mryate vā kadāchin
 Bayam bhutva bhavita va na bhoyam /
 Ajo nityam sūratoyam purāṇo
 Na hanyate hanyamāne śharīre // 20. 11

Nainam ohhindanti śhāstrāni
 Nainam dahati pavakāḥ
 Na cinam klādayantyaṇo
 Na śhoṣayati mārutaḥ // 23. 11

'Acchedyo ayanādāhyo ayan
 Akledyo aśhoṣya eva ca
 Nityaḥ sarvagataḥ aśhāṇura
 Calo ayan sanātanaḥ // 24. 11 (B.C.).

Thus by its characteristic *sanātā*, soul maintains its integrity. From the metaphysical aspect soul maintains its being eternally. Life if seen from its metaphysical aspect, it is the soul that maintains forms of life. Soul itself is verily the life of soul. It is in this sense the popular saying, 'jīvo jeevāya jeevanam' can metaphysically be interpreted as such. Thus soul by its very nature remaining ever the soul, it needs no outside refuge, help or union, it is itself its own refuge, help and indivisible whole.

Mental equanimity (*sanātā*) preached morally in order to attain and enjoy peace of mind has its justification on the grounds of this metaphysical truth. Otherwise, all mental equanimity is false and futile, vain and pretended. Mental peace is a natural consequence of the deeprooted faith in the nature of soul - mainly its characteristic *sanātā*.

Religion in its basic sense of the term is nothing but the real nature of a thing or substance 'vatthu-sahāva dhammo'. Things manifest their own nature. It is always the law of things. All the nature of ultimate reality like soul prevails throughout the eternity. It is its characteristic called *asatta*. Therefore, resort to one's own self is dharma in the main. And that alone provides ^{refuge} resorting to it there remains or rises no necessity of any outside help or refuge or any union. Outward refuge or help depends upon the union or contact which are subject to disunion disintegration or departure. It is on this basic truth that we should realise the proper and full implication of the Bhagavad-Gita's teachings on lasting happiness or bliss that

"*evadharmā nidhanam śreyas*

parādharmā bhayāvahah." (33, 111)

Lasting happiness or bliss resides in one's own real nature, the path of resorting to the nature of others is (incurring or) wrought with danger.

But this metaphysical basis however fundamental it may be it is not all and everything. Mere being, however long and lasting it be, is not itself happiness, though a guarantee for happiness if at all, it flourishes and functions with the being of the soul. Eternal existence or self-sufficiency by itself is not happiness, though it be the home of happiness. Existing is not being happy, though it is being. At the same time, being happy is not additional to being. It is not something added from outside. Being happy is itself a type of being. For this happiness as we have a sufficient guarantee in the eternal existence of soul we shall further quest for the justification of happiness itself in the very characteristic of the self.

Existence by itself considering from the time-sense of the term is not necessarily happiness, but existence in the sense of being and being everlasting is undoubtedly happiness. Metaphysical equanimity of the self in this transient world is itself happiness, of course for soul - the consciousness. For the conscious principle like soul among all the joys there is first and foremost joy of being. To be itself is at once a joy and happiness, and to be eternal how guaranteed a joy and happiness without any danger and fear it would be ! When one knows oneself above all these births and deaths of mundane forms and above disasters and destructions in this transient world how happy would he feel from the sense of his safe and secured status among the cosmic order of things !

Besides the joys of being there are other joys of manifesting and functioning in different capacities for becoming, knowing, enjoying, feeling, valuing and exposing etc. Let us see how they flourish. Life metaphysically seen functions in both of its aspects of being and becoming. Being is mainly concerned with persistence and with material or substantial functioning while becoming is mainly concerned with formal aspects. This becoming of soul provides all joy by its characteristic of animation and loveliness - "ramatā, without which whole of the universe would seem desolate and void." So the soul itself being the source of this animating loveliness is itself the cause of joys resulting therefrom. Nowhere else other than the soul this quality of animating loveliness can be found. Hence futile is the attempt of attributing it to anything else than the self. In short, if life is joy, soul itself is the principle of life; and if life has joys, soul is verily the life of life. Being and becoming for the consciousness is always a joy.

And soul has a double role of being and becoming in life. So life from both aspects would flourish with joys real and positive joys if resorted to its real being and becoming.

There are joys of cognition too. It is from the double aspect of consciousness. Firstly, knowing in its natural functioning and secondly knowing applied or utilised as an instrument for achievements, safety and security. Knowing is the very nature of soul. For soul, ceasing to know is ceasing to be. So knowing has the natural joys and happiness of being. And knowing being a preliminary and prerequisite condition for achievement, safety and security, it is a means for happiness or joys resulting therefrom. Highly and widely advocated principles like 'Knowledge for the sake of knowledge' or 'all knowledge is valuational' would here find their due importance in the capacity ^{for} its cash-crop returns in terms of happiness and joys.

Soul in its mundane form undergoes different states of happiness in the situations like sense-enjoyments or meditation. Analysing all the situations by the process of elimination like 'nati neti' there remains soul the only source of happiness. This quality of feeling happiness is afterall a conscious activity and it cannot be had anywhere except consciousness i.e. soul. So attributing happiness to other things in the complex situations is false and futile. Soul being the source of happiness it should be duly recognised as such and be resorted to.

On close examination of our life, we realise that experiences form our life good or bad, happy or unhappy. What is experienced is mainly what is

lived. Were there no capacity ^{for} of experiencing in the soul, all life would have been a mere unfeeling statal survey or view and not an animated living. For feeling happiness this capacity of experiencing is prerequisite and it is mainly the positive basis for happiness. Take away experiencing capacity from life and all happiness and joys would turn out devoid of their essence and all life would be a make-believe. So the positive grounds for happiness lie in the capacity of soul for experiencing.

Were consciousness or cognition would have lost all the magnificence, grandeur, supremacy, ultimacy, sublimity and absolute upholding of the soul without its power of illuminating, exposing-'*chaitanyatā*' -. Without it knowing would have been either a licking or a self-losing process. Soul might have lost itself wholly in the objects of knowledge and not remaining itself it would have turned out the object and knowing would have been no knowing then. It is by ignoring or ignorance of this exposing power of the soul that knowing has been identified with being at the hands of the Vedantins. Knowing is in a fact the very being of the soul that it is the being of its conscious nature and never that of the object. There is formal identity of the subject in the capacity of knowing with the object but not the material or the substantial identity. It is by this exposing capacity of soul's power of knowledge that soul substantially remaining where and what it is, can embrace the whole universe, can bring to light the sun and the moon, and stand itself as the light of all lights above all the universe absolute and supreme though remaining within as what it is. Happiness lies in realising this absolute power of illuminating '*chaitanyatā*'.

Now having seen this power of illuminating from the view-point of valuation, we would realise full value of its grandeur and grace. What value would have been credited, what importance would it have earned, if knowledge would not have been wrought with a sense of valuation. Without power of exposing, knowledge would not have so wide and integrated grasp of things of the universe, nor would it have so comprehensive a capacity to do justice to the valuation of things. Without a sense of valuation all knowledge would lose its pleasures, zeal and joys, interest and satisfaction. All efforts would be aimless, all knowledge would be meaningless and life would be dull and dry, ^{al}godless and spiritless drag.

Happiness attained by the self-realisation i.e. by religion:

In our search for everlasting real happiness, when we found the external things of the world unsatisfactory on realising all our efforts for them futile in the end, we changed the course of our search, we tried to find out some immediate and ultimate reality and it turned out to be the self-within. It is realised to be ultimate from various viewpoints as that of metaphysical, epistemological, ethical, axiological and the like.

Not only that, but the survey and valuation of the characteristics of the soul shows that the soul alone by itself is also the source of all real positive happiness, infinite and everlasting. Miseries and unhappiness prevail so far the soul is ignored and self-realisation is not achieved. On realising the self, as it is, one would attain everlasting infinite joy and happiness.

What is this self-realisation? Seeing in contrast to the external tendencies of the soul, it is resorting to the self within. Seeing metaphysically, it is its own dharma - functioning in one's natural state (S.R.p.761)

or manifesting one's real nature -- *vatthu - ashāro dharmo*. Srinad writes: "By whatever ways the self realises itself are all the ways of *dharmas*. And the ways that lead the self to other than the self-realisation are other than religion and are never the religion." (S.E.p.351/403). In order to realise itself i.e. to be what it really is, the soul has first to understand its real nature.

In the preceding chapter we have discussed Srinad's treatise on soul - the self-realisation. Therein he has dealt comparatively the six main problems regarding the self or the soul which provide explanations for cosmic life in general and human life and its goal in particular. We have discussed it as a philosophical probe and have drawn some comparisons, contrasts and conclusions. But we have to think out about their application. There we approached philosophy as the science mainly of ultimate reality - the self; here we shall rather approach it in its applied form. After all religion being a way of life, it is, in a sense, applied philosophy.

Application of the six principles in one's life: leading towards *dharmas* or self-realisation:

Here we shall note facts about the self and shall show their application in the problem of religion i.e. how their proper understanding ^{can} lead us to self-realisation.

1. According to the first fact there exists the soul. It is full of consciousness. It is not material but spiritual. Some have tried to identify it with the body, mind, senses or the vital. But it is neither the body nor the vital (*prāna*), it is neither the mind nor the senses. It is distinct,

separate and above them all. It is the master of them all. He is the knower of them all, always present and prerequisite in their functioning.

So one should give up the belief that he is the body, the mind, the senses or the vital, but believe himself to be the consciousness, the soul the master of them all, ever distinct and above them all. He must feel himself every inch a self, and act accordingly. One should not take himself even to be this composite form of matter and self, though he has assumed that form for the time being by birth.

2. Secondly, the self being a non-composite substance is eternally existent. It being ultimate reality does not derive its existence from others, nor does it depend on others for its persistence or survival in this transient world. It being itself the principle of life, ^{is life} of life, manifesting all over the world and in the universe. So we should have a firm belief that we, being the self, are self-existent, self-supported and self-sufficient, and as a soul should maintain the tendency of self-reliance and give up all fears of death and destruction in this life and beyond. Death merely causes a separation of soul from the body, but never the destruction of the soul.

So, on the strength of these two facts we are convinced of the eternal status of the self as ultimate reality from the view points of existence, being and life. Manifestation of the soul as soul, being of the soul is its very life. Being of the soul is its genuine living. Its characteristic called 'sawata', as we have just observed, is a scrutiny and a guarantee for its eternal integrated status enriched with its natural qualities like *ramata*, *urdhata*, *junayakata*, *sukhhāsa*, *vedakata*, ^{*caitanyata*} ~~*chaitanyata*~~ - or the sat, chid, anand, and the omniscience and eternal bliss on complete self-purification and perfection.

3-4. Now regarding the activities of life in the world we have to consider soul's share and responsibility. So far activities are concerned Srīmad makes it plain: "All things (substances) are having their own activity. All things are seen ever with some or other manifestation activity. The soul is having its own activity and therefore it is ⁱⁿ fact the agent. The soul is the agent in three ways as distinctly stated by the Lord Jin. From the absolute point of view, the soul by modifications of its own nature is the agent of its own self-manifestations (It maintains its own natural self-hood). Secondly, from the relational point of view, when conversant with other things, the soul is the author of its mundane actions; thirdly, as conventionally attributed, the soul is the architect of buildings, cities and the like." And for all his activities the soul being the free agent stands responsible too, for no action being fruitless the soul has to undergo its consequences, good or bad.

These two facts account for and explain activities of the cosmic and individual life. The matter being inert and unconscious the soul takes the initiative in actions with good or bad meanings and motives and stands as a party in the world of related reality and ultimately undergoes the good or bad results thereof through various births. If ^{it} ~~he~~ does not interfere in the world affairs and stops taking interest and initiative in them, goes its own way of functioning as a soul and not as a composite being, remaining merely a witness of the affairs and activities, ~~he~~ ^{it} survives the situation and frees itself from further entanglement with the matter. Thus by remaining strictly confined to its own natural activity, it preserves its purity, perfection and absolute status, above all transient forms of a composite being. Seeing life

as a spiritual evolution we would find pyramidal structure of forms of beings the soul assumes from ekendriya, dvindriya, to panchendriya and to gods, having in general an increasing capacity of knowledge power, position and happiness. So the soul stands master of its fate and fortune and is free to choose eternal bondage or bliss.

If the soul follows its own natural course of a seer, he himself is the abode of bliss. He should give up the tendency of doing good or bad actions, in order to realise its true nature which is pure and perfect by itself.

Brihad writes in the Atmasiddhi: "Thou art, Oh, soul, pure, enlightened, the consciousness, full, self-luminous and the home of happiness. What more should be said, think it over and thou shalt realise."

5. Now to the fifth fact - liberation. What is liberation? Final separation of the soul from the union of the body, senses, and the like." (A.S.91). The soul from the infinite past has been in union one or the other with the matter in form of bondage of the karmas. So it remains under delusion and does not realise its own reality distinct and above those unions. So far it does not realise its own absolute state, it remains bound by the limitations and pangs of union; for, as we observed that union being subject to decomposition and destruction can never provide a lasting help, refuge, support or sufficiency. Only in the absolute state by its very nature the soul can stand as self-existent and self-sufficient, pure and perfect. The Absolute state being pure turns out automatically perfect by itself. Hence all its qualities shall shine out to their full capacities. Its quality ^{of} knowing shall on perfection attain omniscience. Its quality of happiness and joy shall reach the stage of infinite joy and bliss. And yet the strength of its

appeal and application lies in the naturalness of the state which requires no efforts as such. The state of liberation is the natural state of the self, the state which has remained hitherto unknown, unrealised and hampered by its union with the matter for the beginningless past.

Appeal from the axiological point of view:

There is greater appeal from two other points of view. One is axiological point of view. The main characteristic of soul is knowledge. It is never without knowledge. It always functions as a knower. Knowing is its very being. It cannot give up knowing. It is its nature. And knowledge however little and lacking provides data for valuation. It points out something and probes about it. Naturally if it tries to know itself in relation to other things of the universe and arrives at their relational valuation it would realise supreme values like eternity, freedom, omniscience, purity, perfection, absoluteness, self-sufficiency etc. naturally abiding in its own real self. And there is always an urge to know one's own self and also to make one's ownself achieve some ideal state. This tendency, if rightly headed ^{to}, cannot help leading one's self on the path of self-realisation - the religion.

Ethical appeals:

The other appealing viewpoint is that of ethics. Every being has some ethical sense, some moral sense - at once innate and abiding. It is born of sincerity or constancy towards one's own self as well as the society. But the basic and the supreme sincerity of all is the self-sincerity. Self-sincerity is the ^{mother} matter of all morality and ethics of a being. All values moral or metaphysical have their root in this sense of self-sincerity, naturalness or dharma. So this sense of self sincerity has a greater and

inner urge that leads one on the path of self-realization. It is tired of efforts and illusion; and earnestly wants to resort to something natural and abiding within itself and yet absolute, supreme and sovereign.

It is nothing else but the self within, which needs be purified to realise its perfect state. Here the sincerity of the self is posed with the life and death problem of to be or not to be. For the present mundane state of the self is some way or the other in a composite form of soul and matter, and that is why self is not actually what it really is. It suffers from delusion. Srined writes conclusively: "Liberation (the status of everlasting bliss) is nothing but the self-purified state. And the way by which the pure self is attained is the path of liberation."

So to say, pure and absolute state of the self is the state of liberation. On self-purification the self is realised. The process of self-purification and self-realisation are interdependent and interacting. Both are the aspects of the same path of liberation - the religion. They are matters of life to be lived and practised. We shall turn to them after considering the various definitions of religion in the light of the basic and general one.

Various definitions of 'Dharma':

There is, we have observed, one general definition of dharma: "Vatthu - sphāvo dhammo". - nature of a thing is called its dharma. This is a metaphysical definition, in general, for all things. Accordingly, for the soul too, dharma is stated by Srined as preached by Sri Tirthankaras: "Self-manifestation functioning in its natural state is called dharma (religion) by Sri Tirthankaras. (p.450/568). Srined has noted in his name-book some definitions of dharma.

They have been defined differently from different aspects and are useful in tracing out detailed implication of the precise metaphysical definition and in doing justification to the application of philosophy in general.

Etymologically speaking, the word 'dharma' is derived from the root 'dhru'. Hence 'dhārayati iti dharmah' that which forms the foundation and upholds is 'dharma'. We have observed that it is the philosopher's first and final quest - as what is that thing which forms the foundation of all, which upholds them all? In other words, what is the ultimate reality? Metaphysically, reality of a thing lies in its natureliness. If a thing gives up its nature, it turns either nothing or something. But it is not so. Thinghood of a thing lies in its natural functioning. If the salt loses its saltiness, where can it be salted? So it is always a law with things that they owe their reality to their constancy of nature. Nothing can give up its nature.

So with the soul its nature is its dharma. But nature of a thing exhibits itself through qualities - *gunas* and therefore *gunas* are called dharma. Hence, for the soul there being right knowledge, right belief and right conduct the three main qualities, they together form its dharma. Srined has noted, "The jewels - right knowledge, right belief and the right conduct - all the three together are called dharma by Sri Tirthankara."

Let us see how these two definitions form the basis for the various other definitions noted by Srined. As we observed first one is: "Nature of the soul is dharma" (S.R.p.761/222). But if dharma were merely the matter of soul's nature what is there to be preached and practised, for nothing can give up its nature, it is always with it and can never be given up. But in fact

it is not so with the soul. Looking to the three main qualities of the soul it is found that they do not function rightly. Knowledge, by nature, is knowledge no doubt; but it is not always a right knowledge, as it should naturally be. So with belief and the conduct. Hence it can be said that the soul has to realise itself. Therefore it is said that "that upholds the soul to its nature is dharma." (S.R. 361/222) Now for the self, functioning with right knowledge, right belief and right conduct is just holding up of itself in its nature, the second definition - namely "The jewels right knowledge, right belief and right conduct, all the three together are called religion by Sri Tirthankara," stands justified. And as these three make the soul realise its nature we can define dharma to be "that which upholds the soul to its nature," as in the preceding definition. This has the positive aspect of dharma. To support and justify its negative aspect we can say correlarily that "that which does not let swerve the soul from its nature to 'vibhāva' ex-tendency, delusion, is dharma." "Due to the ex-tendency the soul degrades itself into the mundane lower births; so, that which saves its degrading and upholds it in its real nature is dharma."

Further, as right knowledge, right belief and right conduct rise from the knowledge of the six dravyas (substances like soul, space, time, matter etc.) and its right belief, the self-realisation together with these two is defined as dharma.

Lastly, as we have observed religion has been arrived at as a result of our search for real and everlasting happiness, it is defined as something "that which frees the soul from the cycle of birth and death and upholds the soul in the supreme happiness." (S.R.p. 361/222). But what is it that leads to

supreme happiness ? Obviously the right knowledge, right belief and right conduct. And, verily, all the three together are nothing but the soul, functioning in its natural state or soul manifesting its real nature. "Realisation of the soul-manifestations in its natural state is called religion by Sri Tirthankara." (S.R. p.450/569).

Now it is clear that the definitions mentioned here, are all derived from and confined to the main general metaphysical definition of religion. But religion being application of philosophy, or to say of metaphysics, it turns out a matter of understanding, belief and conduct - of knowledge, will and action. It no more remains merely a matter of theory and contemplation, but it turns out to be the matter of principle and practice, aim and action, means and methods. It turns out a question of life - here and hereafter. It at once becomes a question concerning a way of living. It affects the whole of life from bottom to the top.

Knowledge, belief and conduct pervade and affect the whole of life. All the souls in the world live, act and behave in the light of their knowledge and belief and according to their capacities under circumstances and situations, resulting from their past actions. So, for the soul, life and its goal depend upon knowledge, belief and conduct. If they are right, everything is okay. If they are wrong, everything is wrong and reverse in life.

The path of religion explained:

All right then, if right knowledge, right belief and right conduct all the three together is dharma or religion, what are these right knowledge, belief and conduct ?

Srimad writes in a very precise manner on the genuine path of the Jin - the path of liberation, the path to the supreme status of the self.

"Hear, having directed all your attention,

the original path of the Jin.

See, it is said not to win the worship,

praise or prestige as such.

Beware, we wish at heart not to incur

bondage pangs thereby.

1.

"But Bliss being our common aim, here

do we say, so that the seekers rare

may have a secret, sacred way.

Searching through Jin-principles wide,

compare and weigh the words, then decide.

2.

"Purity of knowledge, belief and conduct,

uncontradicted and integrated all, from

absolute point of view, in fact, from the

Path of Jin. (So has been said by the seers

enlightened, in metaphysical scriptures,

essentially dealing in universal principles

of cosmic life.

3.

"Distinctions of garb, sex or vow are due

to aspirants' worth, or time and clime.

But purity of knowledge, belief and conduct

regardless of distinctions as such, stand final

and absolute for all the times - past, present

and future.

4.

"How have their meanings right and
essential, said here in a manner precise.
Thinking deep especially over them
shall surely bring home to the soul the
best and supreme course.

5.

"Distinct from body, mind and senses
stand the soul ever conscious and ever
so lasting. If known as such on the
enlightened teacher's preachings it is
in fact termed true knowledge in the main.

6.

"On enlightenment as such what is known,
if held up with faith and belief pure,
then it is right to belief, known as
Samakita, said by the Lord.

7.

"As is held by belief the soul, and
known as absolute and above all, so
if realised so calm and steady, verily
by its nature then it is really the
conduct, unconditional and above all
distinctions of garb and sex.

8.

"Then all the three together function
as one single soul itself, in fact is
already pursued the path of Jin or is
assumed one's own nature, form and status.

9.

"For attaining such genuine knowledge,
 belief and conduct and for cutting off
 bondage of the beginningless past, one
 having given up self-conceit and hurdling ties
 should resort to the preachings and
 precepts of the enlightened master. 10.

"Such has been said pure form of the path
 of liberation by Lord, the lord of Jinas;
 and it is precisely stated here in the
 interest of bhavyas - bonafide aspirants
 of liberation and bliss." 11.

So the right knowledge, right belief and right conduct all the three
 together form the path of liberation or self-realisation and it is, in fact,
 a religion proper.

Self-knowledge explained:

Liberation being perfect self-realisation, self-knowledge is the
 prerequisite condition for it. Here and everywhere Śrīmad has laid greater
 stress on self-knowledge. Self-delusion being the cause of bondage, it should
 be removed first. It can be removed on self-knowledge or enlightenment.
 There prevails the tendency of body infatuation (dehādhyāsa). That body-
 infatuation should be given up. Śrīmad in his treatise on self-realisation
 has concluded: "On giving up the body-infatuation thou art no more the agent
 nor the enjoyer of actions. This is the secret essence of religion." (A.S.115).
 "By that very religion the liberation is attained. Thyself is verily the
 liberation, thyself the infinite vision, infinite knowledge and the

transcendent, absolute, ultimate self." (A.6.116).

The body-infatuation prevails mainly in the form of identification of self with the body by mis-taking the self to be body and vice versa. It is due to self-ignorance and self-delusion. So one should know the self, distinct as it is. Therefore, Srivid has termed true knowledge as knowing the self, distinct from body, mind, senses, vital and such other unions. Realising the importance of such a comprehension and conviction, Srivid in his treatise on self-realisation has made the disciple expressing his obligation towards the master for showing him the self distinct by explaining the six fundamental doctrines. (A.3.127). It would be worthwhile to see, here, how the explanation in the treatise shows the self distinct.

In arriving at a true knowledge of reality of things, we always take into consideration the characteristics of things which distinguish them from others and which are essential qualities of their own. Here, too, to distinguish the self from the body their essential characteristics (lakṣaṇa) should be marked. The body is material and the soul is conscious. One would never have the capacity of knowing while other would never remain without knowing. These characteristics are open and obvious. So the seeming identity of self with the body disappears and their real natures are realised on marking their distinguishing characteristics (A.3.49-50). This logical approach of considering the characteristics of things for distinguishing is usual in our life. So here lies an appeal to avail of it.

If seeing, knowing, feeling and experiencing are taken away from life, life would be no life - it may merely be a dull growth and decay, unknown;

unfelt. But we do see, we do know, we do feel and experience. Then verily, the seer of the sight, the knower of the form and the experiencing consciousness within is itself the soul. Epistemologically, ¹⁷ we go to seek the original seer of the sight, we would find it to be the soul within which is separated and distinct from the scene. We know the forms of things through senses. The knower is separate and distinct from the forms of things and the senses. But the sense experiences, however positive, are subject to termination in this transient world. But there remains experiencing of the self ever with the soul, which can never be discarded. No experience is possible in the absence of the conscious self, the ultimate reality. (A.S.51).

Now metaphysically, the soul is undergoing different states and assumes different mundane forms. But in all these states and forms the soul within is felt distinct and above them all. In the states like sleep and samadhi, the enjoyer thereof being a principle of consciousness remains distinct. Similarly in the states like childhood, youth and age, the soul though ⁸⁰ understanding the effects thereof, remains distinct and above them all. Under all these changes it remains, verily, the same soul.

Again metaphysically soul and the matter, of which the body is composed, by their verily nature are obviously different. One is conscious ever and everywhere; while the other is never conscious - it can never know anything at all. They are so different and distinct that they never become one. For all the three times - they are different and separate eternally as ultimate reality, however composite forms and states they together may assume.

So it is a delusion rather utter ignorance to take them as one. Their separateness is felt, known, experienced and realised and is not merely

a matter of laws. However harmonious and composite form they together may assume, they being ultimate realities are eternally separate and distinct by nature. Neither turns out to be the other.

Next to existence, the quest of lastingness of a thing has been ever important. Nothing on earth has been felt or found as everlasting, everything is found subject to decay and destruction. It is even a law with things composed of some ultimate things. But it cannot be said about ultimate things. Ultimate things are above time, they are eternal. They undergo changes but never a destruction. Genuine separation and difference of the soul from all the mundane states and forms is maintained on this natural difference of things. It should be understood and realised.

The soul is unborn and immortal. It is uncreated and indestructible. Creation and destruction of the soul is unknown and unexperienced. And yet if anyone goes to challenge the fact on the strength of experience, it is an utter impossibility. For one who wants to establish the creation and destruction of soul as a fact on the ground of experience cannot do so. Epistemologically while seeking for the basis of such an experience one shall have to preexist and outlive the actual birth and death of one's own self which is an utter impossibility. Claiming of such an experience proves the contrary - survival of the soul from the so called momentariness. Secondly momentariness of things is felt and experienced but the experiencing self outlives the momentariness of things; hence separateness of the self is marked every moment.

There are metaphysical grounds too. The unions and compositions of things are a matter of our experience. But no such experience of soul being composed is available yet; it is felt ever obvious. Empirically no such experience is at hand, soul is ever felt existing.

Secondly, matter and consciousness ^{being} /the two naturally contradictory ultimate realities, nobody else can ever have the experience of the soul being created out of matter or vice versa; and one that is not composed or created of any unions is imperishable, everlasting and eternal..

But if the ultimate realities are to function in the universe they have to manifest themselves in one form or other. And as such they undergo formal changes, materially remaining the same. It is seen that the same being undergoes different status like childhood, youth and old age. And there is the proof of it on the epistemological grounds as the same soul arrives at a knowledge of the different states through experience of actual living.

There is final principle of metaphysics which holds for reality at large, ultimately the basis for the whole of the universe. In the universe nothing undergoes utter destruction. Metaphysically there is no increase or decrease in total amount of matter, so also it holds true with the total number of souls whether they are infinitely infinite. Change, transformation and reductions are admissible within reality, reality remaining what it is. Consciousness however fine and non-sentient it may be never reduced to anything else. It is eternally irreducible indivisible; nor can it multiply itself.

Thus as ultimate reality by its ^{non}compositeness and substantial integrity ^e maintains through all changes and states its natural individuality and stands thereby ever separate though united with the body and can be separated finally for ever from the body.

Seen from the points of being and becoming, whatever form of becoming the self may assume it cannot give up its being. So the process of self-realisation can ever be kept on throughout the changing forms and states of the self.

Seen from the dynamic point of view, there arises with the question of being and becoming, the question of doing. In the field of activity where actions are followed by its consequences matters of initiative, aim and responsibility are supreme importance. Almost all the systems of Indian philosophy have considered the matters with deep concern and great interest. And in the light of the conclusions arrived at, they have preached 'dharma', sacred and supreme duty for the soul. Even those who believe either God or Prakriti the ultimate authority and source of all activities of the universe enforce upon soul the responsibility of good or bad actions and consider him accountable for them on his part. Those who advocate mechanical continuation of changing universe as the never ending activity resulting from actions and consequences, allow for availing of the opportunities for the enjoyment at one's disposal. There too they anyhow accept initiative of the soul regarding the actions. Epistemologically, for all conscious activities soul alone stands responsible, he being its initiator and the agent. Never can the matter be their initiator or agent, it being the work of a conscious principle. Metaphysically it is beyond the limitations of the nature of matter. Consciousness by nature is having such a unique capacity whereby

it can maintain itself as the seer of the activities run by itself, and conscious^{ness} being ever continuous, one is free to continue or withdraw one's response in the activities and actions. Soul's responsibility of actions rests upon its own response in the matter. If the soul does not, the actions (karma) do not occur; so doing actions is never the innate nature nor the natural characteristic of the soul. (A.3.75). So the soul being enlightened can give or withhold its response to the actions. If the soul is self-conscious, he is the author of its own natural self-manifestations, but if it is devoid of enlightenment and behaves in self-delusion, then it is the author and source of actions and ultimately stands responsible for them. (A.3.76). Thus the soul however engulfed or entangled in the mundane composite form as a result of past actions and however bound and united it may be with the matter, the soul maintains its separateness by its conscious nature and also can maintain it by withholding its response to actions on having enlightenment or self-realisation. Really speaking, the attachment and hatred or good and bad wishes and motives are, in fact, the potential actions. So, if one, turning out a seer, subdues such good or bad tendencies, one naturally experiences freedom from their entanglement. The ties of attachment and infatuation are loosened and broken on maintaining the outlook of a seer, and it can be maintained from any moment and for ever. And this stands as a guarantee for the separateness and separation of the self from the matter and actions that bind the soul.

Lastly, the matter of liberation is to be considered from the view-point of time. How far the liberation lasts? Is the liberation final and for ever or timely? Srimad has written: "Ultimate and final separation of the soul from the body and other unions is liberation, the state and status of the

liberated wherein lies enjoyment of one's own infinite eternal bliss." (A.S.91). So here separation of the soul from the body is final and for ever. Never again shall the soul have to undergo any birth or have to assume any mundane form. It is to remain ever an absolute self. Though the union has been from the beginningless past, its termination is final and for ever. The union in the form of bondage has been prolonged on the strength of good and bad actions caused by self-ignorance, attachment and hatred. Now on enlightenment when self-ignorance, attachment and hatred are completely destroyed, there remains no root for any good or bad actions. Hence, no bondage, no birth, nor the union, but only the absolute state of the self separate aloof and above all the unions. This possible, final and complete separateness of the soul needs to be well understood and to be duly realised. Enlightenment dawns on clear comprehension of this truth. Otherwise the soul is never so emboldened as to throw away all affinity. It is the right knowledge that gives the firm conviction, faith and belief whereby one becomes dauntlessly zealous, vigorous and deadly against the inward foes like self-delusion, attachment and hatred. The deceptive self-delusion which bred the notion of soul's oneness with the body, mind and senses the vital and others can be rooted out only on the clear cut conception of the absolute separate self above and aloof from all the unions and composite mundane forms.

The clear cut concept of the pure and perfect soul is very difficult. So it is explained by exemplifying the Jin's state, the ideal to be achieved. Brinard writes in plain terms: "The nature of the self is highly inconceivable; so it is stated with the help of the state of the Jin. There is no essential difference between the Jin and the soul. In order to draw attention to and bring home the very fact of the blissful scriptures are said." (S.R.p.699/954).

Again he writes in his simple precise manner: "Vedanta says that the self is asang (absolute) - separate and distinct ^{from} form and beyond and above all unions and contacts - , ~~also~~ the Jin too tells that it is so from the absolute point of view. And attaining, realising that asangata (absoluteness) is verily the liberation." (S.R.p.464/646).

"The preachings of all the Jināgas are one and all contained in asangata alone; because they all are said in order to attain it." (S.R.p.469/609).

"The self and the body are materially and substantially separate and distinct; but relationally they are co-existent so far the soul has to undergo through the body the fruition of its actions. The Jin has described the union of the soul and actions (karma) similar to that of milk and water; the underlying idea behind it is that though the milk and water apparently seem together they are in fact ultimately distinct, substantially separate and by having process they can be separated as such; such is the relation between the soul and actions. Actions somehow are embodied in the form of a body and the soul being seen performing them through senses and mind etc. the soul is commonly said to exist. But without enlightenment the distinction and difference between the soul and the body is not so sharply and clearly realised by the self, yet they are distinct as milk and water. On enlightenment their distinction is realised completely clear." (S.R.p.409/509).

Spiritual enlightenment:

Enlightenment dispells and destroys the delusion. It dawns by the teachings of the Master and attains its unique glory on being perfect. On the rise of enlightenment delusion - vibhava cannot stand. It has to give way immediately. As the darkness cannot stand by the sun, so also the 'vibhava'

cannot prevail on shining the perfect knowledge. "The dream, be it of millions of years, vanishes at once on awaking, similarly the delusion of the infinite past ends at once on enlightenment." (A.S.114). Śrīmad writes this from the absolute point of view. This is mainly in context with the omniscience or kevaljñāna, stated in the previous stanza. However it does not mean that the delusion is not dispelled by the enlightenment. Enlightenment doth dispel the delusion, but at a lower level it cannot do away completely with the delusion. It can destroy it completely on being perfect.

Properly speaking the real spiritual life or the religious life begins only from the rise of the enlightenment and the real religious efforts for progress start from the moment till the achievement of the kevaljñāna. In the Vedānta, only the absolute view is adopted and they find nothing to be done after enlightenment. No doubt, there comes a state but at a last stage of the process, when one has to do absolutely nothing. If one does not mind this, he becomes, inspite of his sudden enlightenment, a victim to the body-infatuation. The seers, though in an embodied state, are above it, as they have given up the body-infatuation (deshadhyasa).

Essence of religion:

Hence Śrīmad wonderfully discloses the essence of religion in the following stanza:

"On giving up the body-infatuation you are no more the agent of the actions, nor any more the reaper of the fruits thereof. This is the secret essence of religion. (dharmaṁ mātma)." (A.S.115).

As has been already observed '*dharmavattva sahāvo*', on giving up the body-infatuation there remains no basis for the ex-natural tendency - *vibhāva*, and with the cessation of the *vibhāva*, no karma, nor the bondage, is formed. Hence the soul remains no more either the '*karta*' or the '*bhokta*'. Meta-physically, what happens when the soul gives up the ex-natural tendency? It becomes what is itself, pure. It is in its natural state. It is *dharmo*. And when remains manifesting one's *dharmo*, what happens ultimately? One attains liberation. Hence the master further revealsⁱⁿ the revelling words - persons with floods of light and delights: "By that very religion liberation is attained. Thyself is verily the liberation, thyself the infinite vision, infinite knowledge and the transcendent absolute self. (A.S.116).

"Thou art pure, enlightened, sentient whole, self-luminous and the home of happiness. It is a sufficient say. What more can be said? Think over it, and thou shalt realise." (A.S.117).

Now with the single masterly stroke at a key-point, the master has revealed the heart of the whole religion. Do away with the body-infatuation and you are the pure and perfect soul. Religion is experiment with one's own self. It is also an adventure in the space within. This essence is arrived at after a research carried on within and without in the whole vast universe and in the depth of the mundane sea of delusion within. All the living beings are the composite forms of the soul and matter. Both are altogether opposite by nature. What is composed is to decompose. So the union is not everlasting. It is not self-existent. It is dependent and destructible. What is dependent and destructible cannot be a source of lasting happiness. Nor have the matter any sense or essence of happiness.

Happiness lies with the soul. Now if union with the body be given up the soul stands pure, perfect everlasting and absolute and on the other side its qualities on reaching perfection the soul turns out omniscient and eternal source of bliss. This union of the soul with the body is the formation of vibhāva - ex-natural tendencies of both. But ^{if} the soul on his part gives up the extendancy the matter won't put forth the corresponding extendancy in the form of the karma which result ⁱⁿ the bondage. Hence, the soul will turn out pure.

Vivekajñāna

But when the soul pursues the course of giving up the 'dehādhyāsa' he must have a deep conviction and viveka. Thus its giving up of the deha-dhyāsa touches all the six principles. When one tries to give up body infatuation one has a sense of distinct self - separate from body and senses and also from the sankalp-vikalp, the form of the vibhāva - ex-natural tendency, the cause of the union. So he retires therefrom too. Now he feels! Now buoyant and prepared with confidence, faith, insight, viveka and conviction ! -

"By the teachings of the Master, I came to know what was never known, got the unique sense of consciousness, whereby I realised my real self within, and at this enlightenment the ignorance vanished." (A.3.119).

"I realised my own self as the pure consciousness, immortal, everlasting and above oldage and embodiment." (A.3.120).

"The soul is the agent and the enjoyer of the karma, so far its ex-natural tendency prevails, but on its turning towards the self within, he is no more the agent as such." (A.S.121).

"Or he is the author and enjoyer of his pure sentient state, beyond all mental manifestations.

"Liberation is verily stated to be the self-purity, whereby it is attained is the path of liberation. Thus, is explained precisely by the Master the entire path of the nirgrantha - the non-attached." (A.S.123).

Right belief:

As a result of right knowledge through the preachings of the enlightened master one gets right and pure belief. Wrong belief and the self-delusion have prevailed so far, because of the lack of self-knowledge. Things remain what they are, but because of the wrong belief they are mis-taken and ill-treated. The material things like body, senses, the vital and such other things are taken to be the self itself and are treated as such. They are identified with the self. This self-delusion is responsible for soul's undue affection i.e. attachment and hatred; and thus all the three go to incur actions good or bad, resulting in bondage and the birth cycle.

Wrong belief is at the root of self-delusion. So wrong belief should be rooted out by the right understanding of the real self. Religion has been on the strength of belief, generally held up to be a matter of belief.

Belief is at the basis of the course of life, and belief depends on the total view of life in regard to the universe as a whole, of course according to one's powers and means to survey one's ^{own} naptic capacity and the judging which is subject to influences faculty of bias, pride, prejudice and partiality.

So Srinad has very forcibly attacked on the sluggish mentality of the soul in order to bring home and improve ^{its} ~~his~~ pretended way of life. He writes: "Tirthankaras and others have often preached the souls; but the soul wants to remain baffled and misdirected. Hence, no remedy can be of any avail. Often and often, with full force and insistence, it is appealed that if only the soul himself understands, liberation is naturally at hand; otherwise infinite remedies are of no avail. And that understanding is not at all difficult; because the soul's natural state alone is to be understood - grasped, and it is never the matter of the state of anybody else, so that he may perhaps hide or let ^{it} ~~us~~ not know and keep it secret whereby it cannot be understood. How can one remain hidden from one's own self? But, as in the state of dream one sees one's own death - an utter impossibility - so also in the dreamlike state of self-delusion this soul believes other substances than his own self to be more as his own self, and that belief is, verily, the mundane existence (samsara), that, verily, the ignorance, that verily, is the cause of hellish and heavenly births, that verily, is the birth and death, and that, verily, is the body and its ex-manifestations; that, verily, is the cause of the wishful notions like that of father and son, friend and foe. And on its secession, there naturally prevails the liberation. And for doing away with that belief, are stated the means like ^{the} seers and company of good; and those means too are of any avail, if the

soul puts in his efforts therein without any slackening or so. What more to be said? If this practice preaching is headed ^{to} and responded by the soul, then doubtless, he has performed all the vows, penance and religious practices, yatra, bhakti and scriptural proficiency." (S.R.p.436/537).

Right conduct:

So the conduct depends, after all, upon the proper understanding and the right belief. They are the essential pre-requisites. Srined states: "As is held by the belief the soul, and known as distinct from and above than all, so is realized calm and steady, verily by its nature, ~~that~~ it is really the conduct, unconditional and above all distinctions of garb and sex." (S.R. p.523/715).

As 'jñan-kriyābhyaṁ mokṣaḥ', one, having completely understood the distinctness and absoluteness of the soul from the unions like body and k having a sincere doubtless belief in the fact, has to turn towards the accomplishment of caritra - 'calm and steady natural state', (S.R.p.523/715) as stated by Srined.

In Pravacanasara about caritra - conduct is said:

"Caritā^t khalu dharmo
 dharmoⁿ jo so saṁtīⁿ; nidittho
 Moha-khoch-vibhavo appano hu
 Parināmo saro."

"Conduct is really the religion - dharma^a and what is religion - dharma? It is nothing but sama - resorting to quietude and what is that sama? It is in fact the natural and manifestation of the self, free from delusion and

interruptions." So conduct is nothing but one's own natural manifestations free from delusion and interruptions. And that verily is dharma - a religion for essentially 'dharma' is nothing but 'vatthusahavo'.

How can it be attained then? As we have observed first step in the process is clear understanding of the absolute distinct nature of the self and sincere doubtless firm belief with full grasp and conviction of it. So having got a clear concept of the goal, the ideal, one has, as a next step, to try to realise it. One has to direct one's attention and efforts to realising the ideal conceived. One has to direct all attention and efforts towards it. One has to change the course. For it is the underlying principle of bondage and liberation that : "If one ^{breeds} ~~breeds~~ the sense and spirit of oneness with other substances i.e. takes ^{them} heart and soul as one's own self ~~then~~ he attains the state of bondage - birth tour (paribhramana) and if selfhood is realised in one's own self ~~then~~ bondage is destroyed." (S.R.p.436/539).

But how can that "ātma-bhāva" a sense of selfhood, ^{sanita,} ~~sanita,~~ can be achieved. One must have clear insight into the nature of things and viveka - higher capacity of discrimination. Śrīmad has tried his utmost to bring home the nature of things in clear precise manner. He conclusively writes:

"Realising the natural state of the self is called liberation by Sri Vitarāga.

"The self is not devoid of its natural state, but it is not conscious of it; to be conscious of it is just assuming the natural state.

"The self has forgotten its natural state because of its union with others. On ^{at} secession of that union contact and touch (sanga) naturally there ^{sense} ~~sense~~ dawns directly the ^{at} ~~at~~ of selfhood."

"All the preachings of Jina^{am} are contained in 'asaṅgata', because they all are said for acquiring it. All the activities from that of an atom to that of fourteen regions of the universe, and from that of an eye-winking to that of "caṭṭesi" avasthā - the state of rocklike firmness." (S.R.p.469/609), are described with a view to attain that asaṅgata.

This asaṅgata is to be understood mainly from two view points. Metaphysically speaking the soul is substantially distinct from the body, not only that but all their activities though ^{related} ~~realised~~ are quite distinct. Śrīmaṇḍ has laid a great emphasis to understand this metaphysical fact, pervading the universe so as to grasp the essentially absoluteness of the self.

Śrīmaṇḍ recommends his nearest and dearest disciple, who got the higher enlightenment, to grasp the metaphysical asaṅgata of the self. He writes him a verse from Saṁaya Sūtra and goes on to explain it.

"No two substances have a single common manifestation."

"It is a metaphysical principle that a thing (substance) manifests itself within the limits of its own nature. The soul manifests itself as a soul, and the inanimate (jada) as inanimate. Soul's essential manifestation is in the form of consciousness; and that of the inanimate is in the form of non-consciousness. Consciousness of the soul would never turn out to be the non-conscious manifestation; nor the non-consciousness of the inanimate would ever attain to conscious manifestation. Such are the limitations of a thing; and the two distinct manifestations conscious and the non-conscious are an approved fact of our common experience. Neither of the two manifestations

can be put forth by both together, mutually i.e. the soul and the in-
-animate both together cannot turn out absolutely in the form of consci-
-ous manifestation, nor can they turn out absolutely as the non-conscious
manifestation. It is really the order of things that the soul functions
in the form of conscious manifestations and the in-animate in the form
of non-conscious manifestations. Therefore, the Jin says no single
manifestation can be put forth by the two substances (dravya) together
whether whatever substance (dravya) exists remains in its own state and
manifests within its own nature."

"No substance is having two manifestations."

"And it is also an order of things that no single substance puts
forth the two manifestations together. Single substance, the soul, cannot
function as both the conscious and the non-conscious manifestations, nor
would the material substance would function in the form of both the
non-conscious and the conscious manifestations. One can function only
in one's own manifestations. Conscious manifestation cannot be had in
the non-conscious substance, and the non-conscious manifestations can not
be had in the conscious substance, therefore, no single substance can
function into two manifestation^s, cannot put forth or bear two-manifes-
-tations.

"No two substances together can ever run a single activity".

"Therefore, no single activity can be run by two substances together.

Absolute unity of the two substances is impossible. If one substance can be had out of the union of the two, then a thing would give up its thinghood; and it would never happen that a thing would absolutely give up its own thinghood.

"If it does not happen so, then how can two substances together without having one formation as such be ever able to run on only one activity? i.e. they never do.

'Nor are two activities run by one single substance'(dravya)'.

"Similarly, no two activities are run by a single substance.....
Therefore,

'Soul and matter though being co-existent,
occupying the common space.' Neither of the
two gives up its own nature.'

"Neither of them turns out to be other than its own selfhood, and because of that, do we say that

'The door of the non-conscious manifestations
is matter (pudgal).'

"The door of the manifestations that occur by the body etc., is matter. Because the body etc. are non-conscious and non-conscious manifestations are within the matter. If it is so, then there needs no other proof for the fact that the soul functions in its very selfhood. Considering so

(he) concludes :-

^{an}
'Cidanda, the soul adopts its own nature.'

The author wants to bring home the fact that if you understand the order of things as such, then the sense of selfhood attributed to the matter (material body) would vanish and the hidden selfhood would naturally start shine out. Think over it, the situation in reality is just the same. Highly in-accessible, secret has been here stated precisely. Of course, to the enlightened it is easily conceivable." +

Again for the clear distinction of the soul and the body ~~the~~ he quotes the ^{an}authentic verse from Sri Bechandraji :

"The soul is never a material one, nor is it ever a matter. It is not dependent on matter - matter sustained or tinged with matter. It is not a matter of others, because there is no masterliness over others in one's own selfhood. And from the view-point of elemental nature it is always beyond and above union with others." *

So having realised such a metaphysical distinction one has to change his attention with the help of sharp discrimination and firm conviction. No soul, no substance is ever devoid of activity. Even in its absoluteness it goes on manifesting every moment its selfhood. Otherwise, it is no more and nothing, but that too is not and never a matter of one's choice. One cannot give up manifestation of its nature. And as for ~~soul-its-charge-into-creation~~

soul its dharma, i.e. religion, is its functioning in a natural state. Charitra - right conduct for the self is defined mainly to be resorting to its own natural state, and it is stated as really a religion according to Pravachanasūtra quoted by Śrīmad.

So the right conduct is mainly the matter of activity, rather a change in the direction of activity of its attention - upayoga.

' The mundane world-samsāra being every inch attractive to the soul's consciousness the enlightened souls have not allowed to have a repose therein even for a moment, they have absolutely refused to do so.

"If the soul's consciousness (upayoga) gets relief from the attraction even for a moment, then on that very moment the consciousness (upayoga) attains its real selfhood, on that very moment the attention becomes one with the self itself." +

Śrīmad writes : "The state of an incessant introvert self attention is verily the parama dharma, of the nirgrantha. Not to allow the conscious-ness to go outside even for a moment is verily the main path of the nirgrantha." *

Śrīmad writes in a highly conclusive manner elsewhere :

"The soul is pure consciousness, above birth, age and death, the absolute self. In such a conviction there is contained all the knowledge. In its belief all the right belief is contained. Having, to the self, a

natural state absolutely distinct and free from saṅga - the contact is right conduct, highest spiritual control and the non-attached state. The fruit of the perfection thereof is the abolition of all unhappiness and misery. It is quite doubtless, absolutely beyond doubt." +

Integration of the three as the path :

So now to turn to Śrīmad - said original path of the Jin :

"All those three when function as one single self without any distinction or difference among themselves, then one is said to have attained the path of Jin or one's own natural state of the self." *

Enlightened master's refuge indispensable :

"In order to achieve such genuine knowledge, belief and conduct and to do away with the beginningless bondage one having destroyed self-conceit and hurdles should seek the preachings of the enlightened master." *1

"The soul has two great bondages : one self-conceit and other the pratibandha, hurdles. One, who has a desire to do away with the self-conceit, should carry out with regards the order (ajñā) of the enlightened, and one who wants to put off the hurdles should take a complete renunciation unto him. If it does not happen so, bondage is not destroyed. One whose self-conceit has been checked, would get an opportunity to do away with the hurdles. This advice is worth-remembering." 2

~~ANANTARAHAS :~~

+ S.R. p. 605/761.

* *1. S.R. p. 523/715.

2. S.R. p. 261/196.

'Ānā dharmo':

Śrīmad lays a great emphasis on aṅga. He quotes from the Ācārāṅga and justifies the statement: "Ānā dharmo, ānā tavvo - carrying out with worship and devotion the orders (of master) is, verily, the dharma, religion, and it, verily, is the tapas - penance." (S.R.p.260/194). Let us see his statement on the matter.

"The soul has not got the path, what is the reason for it ?

"I feel that the path (of religion) is straight forward, but arriving at it is highly difficult."

"The real self-hood is not realised without having firm and constant love for and right faith in the lotus-feet of the 'enlightened', who goes on spiritually ever/ⁱⁿ bounded in various walks of life; and on having such faith and love, one attains the very state and status whose lotus-feet he has worshipped. All the enlightened have followed this path, are following and shall ever follow in the future. Achievement of the enlightenment to us has been through this very path, at present it can be had by the same path, and in the future that alone is the path of having enlightenment. All the scriptures, essentially, aim at this very truth. And being, whoever wishes to have liberation, should follow the same path with incessant undivided firm devotional attitude. Without worshipping the very path, the soul has undergone a birth-tour from the beginningless past.

"So far the soul is blind with self-conceit, he cannot even visualise the path. For removing the blindness, they should think over that path,

should inculcate a firm desire for liberation, should remain dauntless, then having attained the path one is cured of blindness, remain doubtless therein. From the infinite past the soul has taken the reverse course. No doubt he has tried penance, scriptural study etc. for infinite times, yet he has not done what is worth-doing, which we have already stated at the outset.

"In Sutrakṛtāṅga Sūtra where, God Rishabhadevaḥ has preached and brought his ninety-eight sons on the path of liberation, he has preached the same:

'O long-living ones, this soul has done everything except this, and what is it ? Nothing else but, verily, we say that he has not heard or heeded to the preachings of the enlightened, nor had he put them well into practice, which we in fact call sāmāyika = self-realisation of the seers.'

"Sudharma Śwami preaches Janbu Śwami that omniscient Sri Mahavier Śwami, who has viewed the whole of the universe, has thus spoken to us: 'Infinite souls who lived with complete self-surrender to the master, having attained the path have attained liberation.'

"Not only here but at all places and in all scriptures they aim at bringing home that very thing.

Ānā dharma, ānā tava.

"Carrying out with worship and devotion the orders (ājñā) is verily the dharma, religion; and it verily is the tapas = penance." (Ācārāṅga, 1, 11, 51-52).

"It is everywhere a purpose and aim of preachings of the great seers, but the soul has not conceived it. The main cause thereof is self-conceit, and for one who has toned down the self-conceit think over the best (remedy) means for removing the hurdles (like social ties, family ties, body - egoistic ties and mental unrest (sankalp-vikalpa) Keep a search particularly of the man whereby 'upasana' can be attained and whose orders be honoured and obeyed.

"Else, all the rest (means) are to be tried afterwards. On contemplation no path of liberation other than this will be felt or found." (S.R.p.259/60 /194)

Śrīmad writes again with the utmost emphasis: "By no ^{way,} whatsoever, the soul can attain ultimate reality on the strength of his own imagination. Only on having the living idol (the seer) one can have ultimate reality (sat) and its comprehension; one can obtain the path of self-realisation and can have a glimpse of the ultimate reality. Whatever done without keeping in view the 'living idol' (the living enlightened master), is a bondage to the soul. This is our heart." (S.R.p.261/198).

"True religion is not available without the enlightened sage, as sat cannot be had in asat.

"Contemplation over the great sages of the past is no doubt blissful; but it cannot be the cause of self-realisation, because what the soul should ^{do} is not known by their mere remembrance. While by the direct contact without any preaching, we believe, there is possibility even of self-realisation; and therefore we arrive at a decision that the fruit of such

a direct contact and direct contemplation is decidedly the liberation, because the living idol of liberation is verily the enlightened sage." (S.R.p.267/249).

1. "The soul has forgotten itself, and therefore it is suffering a separation from the real happiness. It is said ^{in accord with} ~~on conformity~~ of all religions.
2. "It should undoubtedly be believed that ignorance in the form of self-delusion vanishes on enlightenment.
3. "Attainment of knowledge can be had from the enlightened. That fact is naturally understood, yet the soul does not give the refuge of the deluded, which is verily the root of the anant-anubandhi kashaya (infinite bondage + incurring passions.).
4. "Jināgama and all the scriptures ^u state that one, who wishes the attainment of enlightenment, should honour and follow the wishes of the enlightened. The soul, in order to follow his own wishes, loitered from the beginningless past.
5. "So far the wishes i.e. orders of the enlightened are not carried out, there can be no possibility of the ^{at} ~~accession~~ or removal of ignorance.
6. "He, who, having given up the infatuation of body, mind and soul, joins with undivided faith in the devotion of the enlightened, alone can carry out the orders of the enlightened.

7. "Although the enlightened wishes no devotion, the preachings of the enlightened fall flat and serves no purpose of contemplation and meditation for the soul-seeker without devotion as such; therefore, the sages have recommended ^{to} the ~~mukha~~ - the true seeker - a devotion towards the enlightened as imperative.
8. "The fact stated here is recognised by all the scriptures.
9. "Rishabhadevaji had preached his ninety-eight sons the same for the swift attainment of liberation.
10. "Sukadevaji too preached the King Parikshit verily the same.
11. "If the soul on the lines of self-conceit continues his efforts even for the infinite time he cannot by himself attain the enlightenment, but one, who carries out the commands of the enlightened, gets within ~~anta~~ ^{antar-muhurta} (within 40 minutes) the Keval jñāna - absolute knowledge.
12. "The commandments of the scriptures are indirect and they are stated to make the soul qualified; for attaining liberation one must carry out the commands of one's living enlightened master.
13. "This is the line of the path of enlightenment. By other path than this there can be no liberation.
14. "One, who devotes himself to this essential secret, having received the nectar secures abhaya - fearless state.

- Iti Shivan. " (S.R.p.262-63/200).

"The soul should mind that religion is not worth-hearing, not worth contemplating, nor worth worshipping by his own whims and notions nor by the other deluded soul. It is worth hearing, worth contemplating and worth worshipping through only the enlightened who has realized the self. (S.R.p.351/403).

"In the infinite past, either the soul has not attained worthiness or has not met the enlightened sage (wherein abides true masterliness, satsang and satskatha). Otherwise it is sure that the liberation is at hand within one's palm. In fact on the Isht-prak-bhāra i.e. Siddha-prithvi - (the land of the liberated) liberation takes place only afterwards. All scriptures confirm it and this fact is proved and valid for all the three times." (S.R.p.183/55).

What should be done ? Right approach:

So now if one gets an opportunity to have the company or the contact of the enlightened there remains, before and after, the question of qualification - worthiness. What should one do to be worthy ? Should he renounce, should he attain scriptural proficiency, should he follow the lines of penance or ritual practices ?

Srimad very resolutely replies: "The soul of his own accord had observed yama and niyama; had put in untiring efforts at non-attachment and renunciation, had accepted hermitage and remained speechless; had taken a firm padmāsana pose. 1.

"He had controlled the breathe and mind, had preached his own self and practised hathayoga, and got internal harmony. He had practised all kinds of benediction and penance, and had heartily turned averse to all. 2

"All the view points (naya) of scriptures are conceived and kept at heart and the secrets of the refutation and establishment of ^{sects} ~~masters~~ mastered. ~~mastered~~

"All those means had been tried infinite times and yet nothing absolutely has been attained, all those means have turned out false and futile and all the efforts vain. 3

"Then, why not think over within, if the efforts have been short of some particular means that has been remained unveiled ?

"To tell you the truth without true master no body can have a key secret thereof. ^{He just you.} /It is facing/justness. What else can be said ? 4

"Indeed! I feel pity for you. It is a matter of Gurugana - Master's key-secret. It springs out at once within a moment just face to face when all love and respect flow into the lotus-like feet of the Master." 5

"When the true master's decree (commandment) firmly abides by one's own self physically, mentally, financially and in every way, then shall one achieve one's goal and shall enjoy love-abundant nectar." 6

"It would lead to real nectar. It is not far to be sought. There

is direction of the sage and it can be attained through insight.

One who having availed of the master's (company) contact drinks the nectery juice of the absolute self (niranjan deva), lives for ever from age to age - enjoys eternal life." 7

"The love-stream turning averse to all else flows on ever-multiplying towards God and then shall all the essence of the scriptures abide by the worthy heart. It is verily stated to be the 'Naalya-bij' - the seed of the absolute self, by the enlightened. Here have I stated my own experience." * 8

In short undivided love for the enlightened master ^{is} the means of all the means. " To believe supreme Godhood in the enlightened is said to be the greatest or supreme religion - paramodharma - by the enlightened." +

Srinid writes about attaining the path of liberation - religion from this particular point of view :

"Without insight, guidance and view one cannot attain liberation and this verily is the matter above sight, guidance and view-points. But one who devotes the feet of the enlightened attains it directly unconcealed. 1

"O, the thirsty one if ^{you} desire earnestly of quenching the thirst there is the way thereof. One cannot attain it without the 'gurugana' -

* S.R. P. 295/263.

+ S.R. p. 289/254.

master's key secret, and that is the law at from the infinite past. 2

"Tharuni

"That is not an imaginative thing nor is that a mis-conception (vibhanga); some souls even in this fifth age have realized it perfectly. 3

"Don't go to preach, but first seek the sermon. This field of the enlightened is inaccessible and absolutely distinct from all. 4

"Japa, tapa or vrata all are delusion so far the grace of the seer is not earned." 5

"This is the matter of and for realization, so give up self-conceit and follow, rather pursue the enlightened sage. Only then, can you break the bondage." + 6

Self resignation to the Master indispensable :

In his treatise on the self realization, also he writes in such forcible terms about complete self-resignation to the true spiritual master.

" Indirect Jin (Lord) cannot oblige,

As does the direct Teacher true;

Without this key, would not arise

The thought of self, or searching through.* 11.

+ S.R. p. 292/258.

* Sri Brahmachariji Govardhandasji
Self-realization : Translated
Atma Siddhi.

" Without true Teacher's exposition,
 None can know the Lord as Lord;
 In ignorance no obligation,
 Such understanding makes him God. 12

" If one controls his self-conceit,
 Gets surely as infinite souls -
 The final state that is most fit,
 So says innocent Jin in scrolls. 15

" One's self-conceit is checked at once,
 In direct Teacher's nearness;
 To root it out use other means
 It grows two-fold in general sense. 16

" If one has true Teacher's guidance,
 Putting aside one's whims and views,
 Sectarian ways, obstinacies,
 'Tis termed true faith for direct cause. 17.

" One cannot kill by self-conceit,
 Foes pride and all, but seek refuge,
 True Teacher's, easily defeat,
 All mighty foes extinction huge. 18

" Who know^e full soul, attained Godhood,
 By means of ~~sermons~~ such sublim^e
 Hevers his Teacher of true mood,
 Not yet perfect for form^{cy} crims^e. 19

" Such system of Reverence so deep,
 The Lord proclaimed in holybooks;
 Profit thereof they only reap,
 Few fortunates, who knew the nooks. 20. +

Characteristics of bigots :

Hence, on considering the significance, of and stress laid on the necessity of the enlightened master, we may easily conclude that those, who are averse to him, are mainly the disqualified. Srinad in his treatise on "the Self-realization" has specially mentioned the characteristics of the disqualified, mainly the bigot and the qualified self-seekers, who are worthy of liberation. It would be worthwhile to have a glimpse of it and its proper consideration.

" Some bigots follow false teachers,
 Who outwardly renounced the world;
 Or their hereditary preachers,
 But soul-aimless, believe their word. 24 *

* These qualified quoted verses are from the Self-realization, Srinad Rajchandra Artha Satabdi Grantha. / Smarak

* These verses are quoted from the Self-realization by Sri Brahmachariji.

"Some confine their own ^{own} ~~unhappy~~ night,

In pompous godly congregation;

Jin's pictorial form and height,

Or superhuman revelation. 25

"Even in presence of true teachers,

The bigot takes the perverse side;

Confirms his former false preachings,

To mostly gratify his pride. 26

"Celestial abodes, universal loves,

He takes for inherent knowledge;

Sectarian forms and creed adores

Believing cause of final stage. 27

"Is proud of vows, ignorant all,

Of mental yearnings for world-fame;

He does not heed to inner call,

Thus loses chance, remains the same. 28

"Or talks of original state,

Of souls, refutes practical ways;

Lip-wisdom is not heaven's gate,

Without true means, he wastes his days. 29

"He who follows one unduly,

Not expert in true soul-motion,

Neither practicing it truly,

Is drowned in this vast world-ocean. 30

"For one's prestige and selfishness,

If one lets his ideals go;

Consider that too foolishness,

The bigot he unfit also. 32

"Controls no passions and the heart -

Contains no unattachment true;

No frankness and no open heart,

Unfortunate that bigot too. 32

"The bigots badges, thus described

To give up bigotry for good;

Soul-seeker's virtues now prescribed,

Are for attaining supreme god. 33

Qualities of a true aspirant of self-realisation:

"Sainthood is there where's true self-knowledge,

Soul-seekers follow such true teachers,

Not family-priests, or one who plays,

On worldly stage the part of preachers. 34

"The company of the teacher true,

Directly does the greatest good,

Soul-seekers all accept this view,

Complete obedience understood. 35

"The path of perfection is the same,

In all times past, present, future,

Its path practical worth the name,
Acceptable, if helps soul-nature. 36

"Determines thus and tries to find,
The proximity of true Teachers,
No ideal else, that eats the mind,
The soul alone for all soul-seekers. 37

"See seekership in soul-compression,
Suppression of all passions four,
The hope of only liberation
Dejection of such rebirth tour. 38

"Unless one reaches such a state,
No company of teachers good;
No soul-seeking gets a gate,
Cannot attain the freedom-road. 39

"While one comes up to such a state,
The sermon of the saint awakes -
The inner-thought, that is good fate,
Soul-seeker's sleep so deep, it breaks. 40

"With inner-thought, self-knowledge shines,
That knowledge delusion roots out,
The topmost state the seeker climbs,
Thus gets the salvation, no doubt. 41 *

* From the 'Self Realisation' - a translation by Sri Brahmachariji.

So, even the contact of the true teacher - the enlightened master is of no avail without having worthiness as stated above.

Regarding qualified and unqualified:

Scripted elsewhere, too, in his last message writes about worthiness:

"One whose mental manifestations are subject to sensual reactions and whose internal manifestations (parinams) are inequanimous, cannot avail of the master's contact, to him yoga is a-yoga."

"Mild passions, straightforwardness, good contemplation with obedience to the decree, qualities like compassion, gentleness etc. are the characteristics of the first stage of worthiness."

"Those who have controlled the senses, those who have affinity for the means of self-control, are worthy of the medium stage, really highly fortunate souls and ^{with} ~~to~~ whom the world is never superior to the self."

"Those who have no wish for living any longer, those who remain undaunted even at the encounter of the death, are really greatly worthy of the path." They are really the greedless great yogins." (S.R.p.659/954)

He writes elsewhere of best worthy souls:

"Broad outlook, non-party spirit, straightforwardness and control over the senses - the soul having these virtues is really the best worthy one for attaining the tatva - the reality ⁱⁿ truth."

"To such a worthy soul springs out from within, the compassion for the soul, that has really undergone infinite birth and death, and he alone can be called really the aspirant of liberation from bondage. That soul alone having understood the ultimate reality in its true form, joins into the efforts for liberation." (S.R.p.171/40)

Spiritual situation in present age:

Taking a broad perspective of the spiritual situation in our age
 Brinsford writes about the seeker'ship.

"In this degrading age, who knows -

Salvation-way, mostly unknown ?

For seekers true, this Gospel shows,

Unhidden as their fingers own.

2

"Some follow rites forgetting self,

Some learned fools believe freedom;

Misled are both, none knows the self,

Merciful state, I feel for them.

3

"The first are stuck in outward deeds,

With heart unturned, they save and serve;

But prohibit they knowledge-seeds,

Believing old as gold preserve.

4

"No bondage, freedom new or old,

The other preach in words, the soul;

Attachment all in acts behold,
So word-wise they get not the goal. 5

"Unattachment and all fruitful,
If you have knowledge of the soul,
Of self-knowledge they are the tool,
The real knowledge is the goal. 6

"And if the heart contains no merits,
The real knowledge cannot shine;
If only satisfied with merits,
They prove the block to knowledge fine. 7

"Whatever, wherever is fit,
The seeker understands and acts;
Without this virtue, cannot be unfit,
For seekership of real facts. 8 *

Basis of all qualifications:

How this true seekership or worthiness for the path of liberation can be attained ? Brinad shows a very short way.

"Without the worthy, the worth cannot be held or kept. Only the deserving can have the self-knowledge (spiritual enlightenment). For being worthy of self-knowledge, Oh ! intelligent, observe celibacy for ever." (S.R.p.85)

He notes in his diary the significance and importance of celibacy.

* From the 'Self-realisation' - by Sri Brahmacharaji.

"In order to master all the conduct (caritra) in order to eliminate - destroy all the pramāḍ; in order to have incessant tendency towards the self within, in order to win over all kinds of the means of liberation, brahmacharya (celibacy) is the wonderful and unique tonic rather the root there of all." (S.R.p.830/19).

It is because of its highly invigorating capacity and it being the basis or the root of vitality and spirit that in India in the fourfold Ashram system, Brahmacharyasram was the first and foremost in order to have a sound basis of the individual development, one's education, training and character-building on one hand ^{and} of the society on the other. Not only that but Brahmacharya was observed periodically even in Grāhasthasram in various ways and for the rest too it was a pre-requisite and indispensable element.

Two fundamental factors for progress in the path:

Now coming to his stated perspective it would be worthwhile to note two fundamental matters, that are just the exact diagnosis of the modern mentality so far the pursuance of the path of Liberation is concerned.

He had brought to light the two misleading notions and practices of the soul-seekers of the modern age. They lead them to form two kinds of their own. One of the 'sūkshe jñānin' - the lip-wise and the ^{other} of the 'kriyā-jāṇin'. As liberation is by the harmonious co-operation of jñāna and kriyā, both should be respected and be given a fair play in the process of self-realisation. So Śrīmad clearly warns both of them:

"Unattachment and all fruitful,
 If you have knowledge of the soul;
 Of self-knowledge they are the tool,
 The real knowledge is the goal.

6

"And if the heart contains no merits
 (i.e. renunciation and non-attachment)
 The real knowledge cannot shine;
 If only satisfied with merits,
 They prove the block to knowledge fine.

7

*

Elsewhere by quoting a passage from the Sthānanga Sutra, Śrīmad wants to bring home the importance of renunciation and non-attachment.

He writes, "In Sri Thānanga Sutra having shown the strength of Ārambha-parigraha, thus have been said the dvibhangi in order to be free therefrom.

1. How far the soul may suffer from the 'anti-jñānavarāṇīya' -
 the cover over the mental knowledge ?

So far there are ārambh^h and parigrah^a.

2. How far the soul may suffer from the Svut-jñānavarāṇīya ?

So far there are ārambha-parigrah^a.

3. How far the soul may suffer from the avadhi-jñānavarāṇīya ?

So far there are ārambha-parigraha.

4. How far the soul may suffer from the manah-paryaya-jñānavarāṇīya ?

So far there are ārambha-parigraha.

* A.S., translated by Sri Brahmasaharaji.

5. How far the soul may suffer from the kevaljñānā^avarniya ?

So far there are ārambha-parigraha.

Having said thus, stating the categories of the darsana seventeen times is said verily one and the same fact that those āvarana + covers shall be existing so far there are ārambha-parigraha. Having stated such strength of ārambha-parigraha again has been said corrolarily the same fact differently.

1. When can soul have the satijñāna ?

On being free from the ārambha-parigraha.

2. When can soul have the shrutajñāna ?

On being free from the ārambha-parigraha.

3. When can soul have the avadhijñāna ?

On being free from the ārambha-parigraha.

4. When can soul have the manasaparyaya-jñāna ?

On being free from the ārambha-parigraha.

5. When can soul have the kevaljñāna ?

On being free from the ārambha-parigraha.

(result)

Thus having said it seventeen times the fruit^a of the cessation of ārambha-parigraha is shown to be ultimately upto the kevaljñāna and the fruit^(result) of the activity of ārambha-parigraha having been said to be the cause of the cover over the kevaljñāna." (S.R.p.408/506).

"All the beings of the world wish to have happiness by attaining something or the other. Even the ^{world} great emperor is busy after the increasing luxuries and believes happiness in attaining them. But it is

wonderful ! the enlightened souls decided reverse the path of happiness that to own anything even the slightest is verily destruction of happiness." (S.R.p.620/830).

The path as self-purification: its stages :

Erinad always tried to free religion from the sectarian narrowness in order to bring to light the real form and essence of the path of religion. In short, he has said: "The religion of the soul is within the soul itself."

"By whatever means and ways the soul attains self-hood are verily the ways of religion."

"Religion is that which is preached or practised by the conscience of the seers."

So he has sung the path of the great seers in his unique and authentic way wherein are comprised all the stages of it. It would be worthwhile to remember another definition of the path of liberation i.e. religion which Erinad has stated in the *Atma Siddhi* - a treatise on the self-realisation. Therein he has stated:

"Verily the self-purification is really called the liberation.

And whereby it (the self-purification) is attained is the path thereof. Thus has been explained the whole path of the nirgantha." (A.S.123).

So the soul is to be purified by removing ignorance, attachment and hatred.

Erinad has written in one of his letters:

"To be free from attachment and hatred from everywhere is verily my religion-dharma and that I am at present preaching you."

(S.R.p.170/37).

"Let me have over a refuge of the nirgrantha-marga stated by the enlightened master.

"I am not in fact this body or the like, nor are the body, wife and the children are mine. I am verily the pure eternal sentient self." By maintaining such *atrabhavana* - sense of selfhood - the attachment and hatred are thoroughly destroyed." (S. R. p. 504/592.).

"If the body-infatuation is given up, you are not the doer of the deeds (actions). Nor are you the enjoyer of the fruits thereof. It is really the essence of religion." (A.S. 115).

"By that very religion there results the liberation". (A.S. 116).

So, here in his poem shall we find the path of the nirgrantha which the seers themselves have preached and practised in the form of increasing intense self-purification putting off delusion and the body-infatuation. Let us turn to it.

- ' The unprecedented occasion.'
- " When shall we chance to have the unprecedented occasion ?
- " When shall we turn out nirgrantha within and without ?
- " Having cut off sharply the bond of all relations,

- " When shall we follow the path of the
Great Secret ?..... 1
- " Having attained awareness to all things
and internal manifestations,
- " The body is availed of the cause of
self-control. ^{as means}
- " Nothing else is desired, ^{whatever} ~~however~~ the
circumstances.
- " Nor the slightest infatuation prevails
even in the body..... 2
- " By the enlightenment that has shown out
on the removal of the faith-delusion
(darsan + mohs),
- " The knowledge of the absolute self
separate from the body,
- " Thereby is seen the action-delusion,
highly reduced.
- " And there prevails the meditation over
the pure self.....3

- " There prevails the self-steadiness of the three introvert yogas, i.e. mind, speech and the body
Mainly for the whole life-time.
- " The steadiness that suffers no destruction.
- " Even on the attack of ferocious calamity or threatening danger from the outside. 4
- " The Yoga-activity i.e. activity of the mind, body and the speech is maintained for the sake of self-control (Sanyas^{ma}).
- " And that too with the aim of self-realization confined to the commandments of the Jin,
- " Goes on reducing every moment and absorbs ultimately in the natural state of the Self.....5
- " There prevails non-attachment towards the objects of the five senses.
- " And the mind remains undaunted in the five pramāṇas (Inquiries).

- " The leading of life as it is destined without the slightest greed.
- " And without any hurdles of things or substance, of time and space and of manifestations inward or outwards.....6
- " Anger against the anger, and for the desire of honour the ~~humility~~ humility.
- " For (maya) deceit the deceit of the ever witnessing consciousness.
- " But for greed, no equal meet. It must be given up, short and sweet.....7
- " No anger rises even to the inflictor of great misery and hurdles.
- " No vanity felt even at the salutation from the Emperor.
- " No care or fear doth ^{up} crop even at the encounter of death.
- " Nor ^{doth} ~~death~~ rise the slightest greed however great and tempting the mysterious powers awaiting the command.....8

- " Nudity, hairless head, no bath no
brushing of teeth.
- " No ornaments put on, no hair an or
nails kept.
- " In short the realized state of the
Nirgrantha with renunciation inward
and outward.....9
- " There is equanimity towards the
friend and the foe;
Towards insult or honour.
- " No distinction, no preference for death
or life;
Even for rebirth or liberation, there
prevails thorough and pure equanimity.....10
- " Alone he frequents the crematory,
Dwells among the tigers and lions in
the mountains and forests.
- " And there he maintain meditates fearless
and dauntless;
Considering it a company of the fast friends. 11

- " Even in the ferocious perience the mind knows no trouble.
- " No liking or taste for the delicious dishes.
- " To him all are equally material by nature; Be it dust or heavenly wealth.....12.
- " Thus having defeated the action-delusion Let us attain the state of unprecedented enlightenment.
- " Having (ascended) mounted the 'Karpaka-sarani' there prevails unique contemplation, extremely pure natural self.....13.
- " Having swum over the delusion, swayan - bhūramana sea.
- " There is landing at the stage of Kainamoha (delusion-destruction).
- " At the end of it, having been completely non-attached,

- " I shall bring into light my own
Keval-jñāna = nidhāna.....14.
- " There is extreme destruction of the
Chandhātī karmas;
and the roots of the rebirth are
finally destroyed.
- " So there shines out infinite power
of the self - a state of Godhood;
Omniscient seer, pure and perfect....15.
- " There remains the other four karmas -
Vedanīya and others,
Just like the burnt cord, a mere shape
that cannot bind.
- " It lasts for the life-time,
At the end of it, bodyless state
is achieved.....16
- " Then there comes up such a blissful stage
completely free from hurdles and bondage;
Where all the contact of the matter, - mind,
speech, body and the bondage-links departs....17

- " Now there is not the slightest contact even of an atom,
- " There prevails never-swinging natural state of the self, perfect and absolutely blotless,
- " Pure, niranjana, sentient through and through, unique and absolute by itself, Aguru - laghu, anurta and at once natural.....18
- " As a result of the past practices undertaken and owing to the other natural factors,
- " There is upward flight of the liberated to the land of liberation, where it enjoys eternal steady state.
- " And remains in neverending infinite bliss of self-equality with infinite knowledge and infinite vision.....19
- " The state that the omniscient God saw within the range of their omniscience

" Could not state it all even with his
unique power of speech
Then, how can the speech of others
express it as it is?

" It can only be known and realized
through experience alone.....20

" I have pursued it as a goal the
attainment of that supreme, unique
absolute state with meditation,

" Without worthiness and out of fond hopes,
Yet I am confident at heart,
That by following the Lord's commandments,
I shall attain that very state of the
Self, rather, turn out the same.....21.

As religion depends on bhāvanā, Śrīmad has insisted on the ātma-
-bhāvanā and has shown in this poem how the spiritual aspirant progresses
on the path of the Nirgrantha, step by step, stage by stage on the
strength of his bhāvanā, hearty aspirations. The master knows the
process well and he has rendered the descriptive process of the
scripture in the poetry form, so that from the heart flows all the
bhāvanā in a natural emotion. " Indeed by cherishing the ātma -
- bhāvanā ' the soul attains absolute knowledge - kevaljñāna. It is
a general process. But in order that one can cherish it, one needs

follow some supporting process. It is seen mainly of three kinds : Jñānayoga, kriya yoga, Bhakti yoga. Śrīmad has maintained mainly the adhyātma mārga, the spiritual path which comprises all the three together and it can be seen in the above poem : 'Unique Occasion!' Śrīmad has thereby removed the controversy prevailing then regarding the Gunathānān. It being purely theoretical and abstract could hardly help the common aspirants. Even the scholars would not ^{be} able to actually realize what type ^{of} approach and condition will form a particular stage of the path. They won't realize what is 'anantambandhi Karmāya' and what emotion and insight or understanding or viveka destroy it, while the aspirant on the rise of his hearty desire will make it a point to do away with the anger and will abhor it at its slightest evidence of it, and thus will be able to destroy 'anantambandhi' Krodhā. Thus will he be able to progress step by step, stage by stage so naturally, so effortlessly as his emotions become stronger, as his viveka becomes firmer and, sharper and keener.

Śrīmad had no time to write and he was not in a position to write, whatever the cause, on all topics explicitly; he wrote in highly precise and suggestive manner. Perhaps, it may be, he might have thought to write books if circumstances permitted him to establish some order or institution. Fortunately he wrote few books like the Mokṣamāta, Ātmaviddhi, Bhāvanābodhi etc. Some were lost and spoiled. So let us try, from his letters and notes, to form some idea of the three yoga paths.

Srīmad writes about the three : "Jñānāmārga - the path of enlightenment is almost inaccessible; there are many pitfalls on the path before achieving the state called 'parama avagāha dāśā'. Doubt, fancies, self-conceit, too much revelling or fondness and the like are very often the causes of the fall for the soul from the heights or they do not allow him the ^ccess to the upper (transcendental) stages.

"On the kriyā-mārga - the path of rites is wrought with possibilities for the faults and demerits like vanity, undue insistence for 'vyavahāra', Siddhi-māya, puja-satkāra etc.

"Excepting rare seers most of the thinkers have, because of those very reasons, sought refuge in the Bhaktimārga; and obedience or complete self-resignation to the great Master has been regarded by them as worth-honouring with all the humility and homage, and they have behaved too accordingly. (S.R.p.504/693).

As we have seen before in the 'Vachanāvali' Srīmad has shown how it is indispensable even for adopting the Jñāna mārga to have the refuge of the enlightened. It is right and reasonable that enlightenment can be had from the enlightened. If we want light, we should approach the source of light. Only the enlightened can show the procedure for enlightenment. It is obvious and natural.

He has written in a highly forcible manner which is both the warning as well as the way for the aspirant of the Jñānamārga:

"The supreme Lord proclaims it as the enlightenment thus

Oh hear you Bhavyas all;

Even if one is well-versed in the 'pirvas' nine,

But lack in the knowledge of the soul,

It is all ignorance called,

Scriptures stand as evidence right.

These scriptures are preached and taught, in the main

To make the soul pure and tranquil

The supreme Lord calls it as knowledge fine

Oh hear you all the worthy souls !

1

No knowledge is laid in books

Nor it is the poetic gift,

No incantations, no spells,

Can work as knowledge, nor can it be a language form.

Nowhere else the knowledge shown

Except in the soul enlightened

Realise there the knowledge unique

Hear, you, all the worthy souls,

What the supreme Lord proclaims as knowledge.

2

This is the soul and this is the body

Such clear distinction is not felt at all,

Verily then, they go in vain;

Whatever renounced, of no avail

And cannot lead to liberation

Oh, hear you all the worthy souls,

What the Lord calls as knowledge.

3

Not merely by calibacy
 Nor by mere self-control does knowledge abide by
 But by absolute state realise knowledge
 Oh ! you bhavyas, hear knowledge, Lord proclaimed. 4

Along with the scriptural knowledge
 If you have attained knowledge proper,
 It is better; or else seek such refuge
 Heartily at the feet of the enlightened —
 It is termed as knowledge sure,
 Refer Samati, scriptures wide
 You will realise so, Oh ! Bhavyas all
 Hear, the supreme Lord calls knowledge so. 5

If the eight 'samiti' known
 From absolute view-point of the seers,
 It is the knowledge as proclaimed
 So as to lead to liberation - and
 Millions of scriptures to fanciful mind
 Are merely the hypotheses of the psyche
 Oh ! hear you Bhavyas all
 The knowledge what Lord proclaims. 6

ॐ
 From Vedas, Purāṇas one and all
 are termed as scriptures of the deluded
 According to Bandhūtra, wherein proclaimed
 The final desecration on principles, scrolls,
 But to the seers, all that is knowledge

From perspective proper, Doubt it not
 Oh you Bhavyas all, hear it well
 As does Lord call it as knowledge.

7

"No vow, no penance; nothing renounced at all
 Brenika shall be Maha Padma, Lord,
 Refer *Tharang* and you will find." (S.B.p.297)

Thus Srimad shows the path of knowledge hidden behind all the means and approaches. His negative and positive aspects of every means and method dealt with is worth-noting; as they trace the path on one hand and warn against the make-believe, dogmatism and pitfalls on the other.

Elsewhere he writes: "There is one *alone* Sruti of the Veda that hear, think, meditate and experience the soul; i.e. if only this activity is carried on it seems the soul shall attain liberation." Here we have precisely *by* the path of knowledge in full.

There are some similar procedures noted in his diary for his own meditation and practice which we shall see together with others in the next chapter on Srimad. But before we switch over to his main writing on the *karma kriya-marga* it will be worthwhile to note the significance of the *jñāna-marga* and its aim. As the *Jñāna Marga* begins from doubt and thought on we shall see Srimad's view on thought from the view point of the path. Srimad writes: "The fruit of knowledge is 'virati' - non-attachment." The spiritual aspirants should always remember it. By reading, understanding and contemplating over whatever it may be, if the soul has not become averse to 'vibhava' -

ex-natural tendency, its activities and its results, has not given up the the ex-natural tendency and activities, has not renounced the fruits thereof, it is all, be it reading, contemplating understanding, delusion. It is by conceiving the spirit of renunciation together with the tendency of contemplation that the thought is fruitful. That is what the enlightened meant from their absolute point of view." (S.R.p.568/69). In short contemplation should be followed by self-repose through retirement from and renunciation of the ex-natural activities.

Let us see the same thought at its zenith. He writes: "Those who realised (the self) remained reposed therein," and "those who realised resumed once for all the self-repose." (S.R.p.485).

"To know the nature of the self as it is in fact, is really the realisation. Thereby the consciousness ([^]upayoga) became free from all the Vikalp - ex-natural manifestations and it is self-repose. Substantially the self-realisation and the self-repose both are one and the same.

"On realising the reality as it is the consciousness sought repose in the self and the self and the soul functioned as a natural self. It is the meaning of the first sentence.

"The infatuation for the union with the other substance and believing that infatuation as the soul receded and vanished.....

"Those who realised (the self) withdrew their tendencies like ego and the possessive instinct, because they did not see any self-manifestation by their very nature as such and found their own nature beyond thought and above all obstructions absolutely distinct therefrom all. Hence they naturally resumed their identity therein." (S.R.p.587/651).

Here, side by side, consciousness of the soul being completely pure and perfect shines out fully as perfect absolute knowledge which is at the same time consciousness from the objective point of view in the relative aspect of knowledge. It is to be kept in mind that knowledge helps purification and by purification the knowledge develops; and that purification is in a sense 'shama' - cessation of the ex-natural tendency and activity thereof on the part of both the factors, the soul as well as the matter. The soul being conscious, having knowledge, it takes initiative in the parting with by withdrawing the ex-natural tendency and activity, i.e. by resuming its own real nature. It is just realising - to be real, it is the self-repose, not a mere tranquility but through purity, as both the substances separate themselves and the soul stands absolute at the end. Srinad concludes, regarding both the power and the processing knowledge by way of progress to perfection, as follows: "On realising the natures of the matter (jada) and the consciousness obviously distinct both the dravyas verily arrive at their natural form." (S.R.642/902). It is in this sense that the Gita's preachings should be taken where it proclaims:

"Svadharmo^{na} nidhan^a arjuna
paradharmo bhayāvahah " (iii,35)

Now turning to the kriyāmarga we have to keep in mind, that Srinad has warned against the action - inertia, kriyājādata. We have to keep in mind that it is mainly for the soul and of the soul, whatever activities are carried on as a religious procedure, i.e. it is mainly the spiritual activity. Hence, we have to look after the consciousness and its activities. We cannot afford ignoring it.

As we have stated before, according to Śrīmad, "The state of an incessant introvert consciousness is really the 'param dharma' → of the 'Hirgrantha'. Not to allow the consciousness any escape outside even for a moment is verily the main path of the 'Hirgrantha'. But for that self-control the body etc. are the means for the maintenance of which it is natural that some slight activity happens to occur. But while carrying on any such activity there is due to it some possibility of conscious^{ness} being extrovert. Therefore that activity is allowed in such a disciplined form that it tends to the introvert consciousness. Absolute and natural soul-centred consciousness manifests mainly at the thirteenth stage ^{called} Kaivalya, and the inward consciousness empowered with the pure thought-flow is at the seventh stage. Due to carelessness or laziness (preṣā) that wakeful consciousness does not remain continuous and suffers break, and if it becomes often broken the consciousness having become extrovert manifesting as uncontrolled carries out the activities. In order to stop such a course and it being impossible to give up the activities that maintain the body and such other means they have preached it on such a wonderful disciplined line that it can be carried on with introvert consciousness and it is called as five 'samiti'....." (S.B.p.596).

This forms the general basis and it contains mainly both the negative and the positive aspects of the action or Kriyāmārga. The astanga yoga and such other innumerable yogas are the forms of Kriyā-yoga. But the aim behind all of them is to maintain incessant introvert consciousness always alert, so that whatever souls capacity of jñāna and virya may remain in tact and help efforts at the self-realization. Śrīmad gives right approach and leaves ^{path} for such procedures to the guidance of the master.

Here we are reminded of the principle of the Yoga preached in the Gita: "Yogah Karmaṇa kauśalam", (II,50). We can interpret this here as thus:

While performing the indispensable actions or while running indispensable activities the soul should display such an insight and efficiency that the soul remains unhurt i.e. its ātmabhāva is not deluded or is not manifesting itself as ex-natural tendency due to the flow of the Karmaṇi incurred in the past on one hand and the activities run at present for the maintenance of the means. While plucking 'darbhā' ^{Kuśa}, the hermit maintains safety of the fingers, so also while dealing with the activities and actions one should keep ^{factfully} the soul-manifestation safe and it is Yoga.

'Jñānakryābhāṁ sokao'. Hence we will find almost everywhere in the writings of Śrīmad the wonderful blending of the two - jñāna and kriyā, action and enlightenment. While quoting the verse of the Saṁnyasara of Bhaṭṭarāsidaṁ, "As the door of the non-conscious manifestations is matter,

Cidānanda, the soul adopts its own nature."

he concludes, "The author wants to bring home the fact that if you understand the order (law) of things as such, then the sense of self-hood attributed to the matter (material body) would vanish and the hidden self-hood would naturally shine out. Think over it, the situation in reality is just the same. Highly inaccessible secret has been here stated precisely. Of course to the enlightened it is easily conceivable." (S.R.p.312/317).

Here he has seen the Kriyā-yoga at its zenith, where it blends with enlightenment. But ⁱⁿ the Kriyā-yoga the aspirant has to go to the root of the activities, which flow and function as separate, though in their ex-natural form

both the soul and the matter maintain a common composite form. If this aim of the viveka as seer is forgotten by the soul, the activities - kriyā - carried on are all futile.

Śrīmad gave great importance to the Bhaktimārga. He called it ^a royal road, so far this age is concerned. It is safe and simple and easy of access. His approach in the matter is realistic and rational. He starts not within God, but with the Master - Sadguru. According to him, "Taking the master as God is the parama dharma - supreme religion according the enlightened." (S.R.p.289). He writes with fool-proof logic thus: "Soul's being one with God is the ultimate limit of Para Bhakti - Supreme devotion. To have that fond call ~~and~~ alone from within is parābhakti. The great Gopāngarā lived with such devotion towards the great Vāsudeo. Contemplating God as absolute and formless the soul can hardly attain such intense devotion; and therefore the God-incarnate, who has actually realised God, is verily the prime basis of the supreme devotion - 'parābhakti'. And by having deep faith at heart of oneness with the enlightened by way of identity in all his living (charitra) there happens to have the self-identification with the lord living in his lovelorn heart; and it is verily the supreme devotion. There is no difference between God and the enlightened, and one ^{who} believes any difference between them is not at all worthy for the path and he can hardly attain it. The enlightened master is verily God; and without his touch proper identification ^{of} God can never be realised. Hence, the embodied God in the divine form of the enlightened seer should be devoted with all kinds of devotion right from the bowing down to his feet to the end of the parābhakti with one unique intense love and

complete self-resignation. Such is the import of the scriptures. On having such a feeling that God has incarnated himself in the form of this human being - the enlightened soul, devotion (bhakti) can rise in the heart of the aspirant soul; and that devotion progressing step by step reaches its perfection in supreme devotion. Regarding this in the Bhāgavad and the Bhagavad Gita that very view-point is appreciated. What more should be said? Even in the Jainism to direct attention towards the enlightened (omniscient) Tirthankara, Siddha is given salutation after having saluted the Tirthankara by words / - 'Namo Arihantānam' in the Panch-paramēsti mantra. This then evidently indicates regarding devotion that there must indispensably be *at first* the devotion towards the enlightened and that devotion is verily the cause of having God and his devotion." (S.R.p.276).

"Oh God ! better grant us a chance whereby we may remain absorbed in the meditation of the seer's footsteps and remain by his side than giving us liberation.

"O Purushapurāṇa (the supreme eternal soul), we do not see any difference between you and the seer; on the contrary he is far better than you, because even you stand at their call and wish; while we could not recognise you without having known the seer properly, such difficult access of yours generates in our heart greater love for God. Because though you stand ever ^{the seer} at ^{their} call and follow their wish they are not at all proud and are more straightforward than yourself. Then tell us what should we do now ? We shall do what you please."

"O Lord, do not take ill that we pray more and give greater homage to the seers than to you; the whole world prays you and if some lone soul like us take a stand opposite to you what harm therein to you as it can hardly make any difference to you and hardly do you care for prayers, indeed, as you are not greedy of them." (S.R. p.269).

So, as the first step and in the main one must have full devotion for the enlightened seer but that too should be regardless of any other motive. He should neither wish for enlightenment or for the liberation. He writes elsewhere that "on having chanced to have the enlightened seer one should not inculcate any wish for enlightenment but should heartily wish for intense devotion at his feet." "The enlightened is the Liberation-incarnate in fact." On having the enlightened master what one should do? "One should ever follow incessantly the procedure of aversion towards the mundane world (udāsīnatā) and should get himself absorbed in the devotion towards the seer; should remember the holy lives (caritās) of the seers, should contemplate deeply over their characteristics, should imbibe their face at heart by deep affection and close attention, should meditate time and oft over the import and significance of their mind, speech and every physical action; should agree to and accept whatever is sanctioned and has received their recognition."

"This is the great essence that the seers kept at their heart, worth-accepting for liberation, worth the faith and it should be contemplated over and over every moment and one should keep himself in its ever-increasing absorption every moment (samāya). And that verily is the great path - royal road of attaining the essence of the scriptures, of the hearts of the saints

and verily of the home of the almighty. And the ground of all of them is the attainment of some living master and constant undaunted faith in him."

"What more should be written ? Today, tomorrow, or after millions of years or later if you please, earlier or later on having glimpsed or got that very truth alone, there is the way to liberation. I have full faith at heart and I feel every inch ^{myself} a believer thereof." (S.R.pp.250-251)

Further while explaining Sri Anandghan's prayer he writes: "The mind of the beloved while performing other duties at home or outside remains bent upon or engrossed in her dearest and nearest soul - husband. Having grasped the meaning of that in its wide application one should, after giving full articulation to it heart and soul, let it be batified over the seer to the utmost extremes. It is so ^{preached} said by all the Tirthankaras, are preaching at present and are to preach in the future." (S.R.p.342). Thus Srimead concludes the matter once for all, regarding the Bhaktimarga - its approach, essential nature of the path and procedure thereof for following.

Conclusion:

While concluding it will be highly helpful to understand Srimead's notes in his memo-book. Srimead has tried there to see these popular types from a different aspect. He has noted how religion is variously rooted i.e. how it grows on various grounds. He writes as follows without any explanation or criticism.

"Sarvajna Deva

Hirgrantha Guru

Upasamānā Dharma"

"Sarvajna Deva

Hirgrantha Guru

Dayānā Dharma"

"Sarvajna Deva

Hirgrantha Guru

Siddhāntanā Dharma"

"Sarvajna Deva

Hirgrantha Guru

Jinājanā Dharma"

" * "

"Sarvajnanan Svarupa

Hirgranthanun Svarupa

Dharmnanun Svarupa

Sanyak Kriyāvāda" (S.R.p.824)

It is difficult to read the inner meaning of all this and more his motive behind them. However we can see partly at least that he notes religion from its particular aspect. It is how religion is rooted. Religion itself is the same by nature whatever its form, and whatever the nature of the aspirant.

It is seen as rooted in upasama, in 'daya' - compassion, in 'Siddhanta', in Jinājanā. There are no hard and fast divisions among them, but religion has definitely these various aspects at the root and even its development. One may observe or follow religion on the particular basis e.g. Siddhanta,

metaphysical principles. This approach may fall under the 'jnāna-mārga', 'upāsana-mūla dharma' and 'Dayā-mūla dharma' may fall under the 'kriyā-mārga', as it positively aims at the upāsana and negatively observes 'Dayā' - compassion in its kriyā. It may also be called in a sense 'Jinājñānāmūla dharma' as the Kriyā-mārga is preached and established by the lord Jina in the form of 'Dayā-mārga'. On the other hand if Jinājñānāmūla dharma is followed out of love for the Jina, it may take the form of a bhakti mārga.

Ultimately all these are metaphysically speaking 'śreyak kriyāvāda' because the soul gives up its ex-natural tendency and resorts to its natural modifications; substantially these are all activities on the part of the soul turning introvert from its extrovert manifestations at all levels. It is on the whole an effort of the soul towards self-realisation or self-repose. It is a path of realising one's own self by doing away with impurity by way of giving up extendancy which can naturally result in resorting to the natural manifestation of the self by becoming merely a seer, a witness. Here the self is the agent of natural self-modification. It is a state of peace - śanti, as he has given up all relational activity, all vyavahāra. He is not concerned with the material side the activity wherein goes automatically mechanically by the force of the dravya karma which follow their own course by law of their own nature. Thus by resorting to self we resort to dharma in the forms of law, nature, qualities and duty, the right meanings of the term from various well-known aspects.

Śrīmad^{on} realising this essential form of the path of religion writes:

"Wonderful is supremely peaceful right path
 Wonderful is the omniscient God the basis of
 that supremely peaceful path
 Wonderful is the supreme compassion incarnate
 master who induced right faith in the path
 Be victorious over you all in this universe."

(S.R.p.830)

It seems as if on realising the peaceful nature of the omniscient
 Arihant, ayogi Kevali siddha, ācārya, upādhyāya and the muni that we in
 general at the end of every function invoke the mantras

"Aum Santi Santi Santi".