

Discourse # 3. **Aparigraha:** (non-possessiveness)

May 5, 2006 – Day 3 (8 pm to 9:30 pm)

- *Vandami Namam Sami* – greeting *Swami Ji*
 - *Navkar Mantra* and *Chattari Mangalam*
 - Breathing Meditation for 5 minutes with “*AUM*” sound
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- **Aparigraha:** nonpossessiveness
1. First off, violence is the result and possessiveness is the CAUSE of the violence. It creates violence in the world.
 - Possession of land, ex. India and Pakistan fighting over the land/territory of Kashmir
 - Possession of money, ex. Killing people for stealing their money
 - Possession of fear and superiority, ex. Terrorism → holding power over everything
 - Mahavir Swami said, nonviolence occurs automatically when NONPOSSESSIVENESS occurs
 - The saying “*Ahimsa parmo dharma*” is NOT from Jainism. Jainism adapted this saying from Krishna in *Mahabharata*. *Ahimsa parmo dharma* means “Nonviolence is the supreme religion”.
 - In Jainism, the saying is “*Aparigraha parmo dharma.*” This means “Nonpossessiveness is the supreme religion.”
 - Does *Dharma* mean having mansions, bungalows, and such luxuries? NO! So, obviously, *parigraha* is not *parmo dharma*. Possession of luxuries here is not practicing supreme religion.
 - In fact, *parigraha* is the 5th of the 18 *paapsthanak* (sins).
 - So, you do *purusharth* (hard, honest work) and then *karma* comes into fruition, and luxuries come.
 - Money is not a factor in any of the 8 *karmas*!
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2. Religion is NOT possession. You do not gain possession based upon your *punya*.
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3. Life is a journey. Just like less luggage makes the travel easier, life is easier with less possessions.
 - In India, you need someone else to carry your bags if you have too much luggage. You should travel lightly.
 - More possessions do not necessarily mean more enjoyment because you are wasting your time maintaining those possessions.
 - Less possession = more happiness. Key to time management is DECREASING POSSESSION.
 - There are 2 types of people in this world: those who learn from others and those who learn from their own experiences only. We should be the ones who learn from the experience of others.
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4. Gandhiji once said, “There is enough in the world to satisfy every man’s need, but not every man’s greed.”
 - Greed has no limits. Focus on your needs only.
 - Five keys to become non-possessive (tips)
 - 1) Buy whatever you want to buy but create a balance. For every item you want to purchase, you must donate the same number of items. In this way, you are not adding more possessions. You are not caught in a vicious cycle. Your garage/basement/storage areas can be manageable.
 - 2) If you are earning a lot of money, that is fine as long as you agree to donate a percentage of your income annually to charities.
 - 3) Thinking deeply, one realizes that the cause of possession is ATTACHMENT. But know

that having lots of money and detachment to the money is good. This is because you control the money and money does not control you. It is not holding you with a tight grip. You are detached from your possessions.

- 4) Before falling asleep at night, say “Khamemi savva jive, savve jiva khamantu meh, mitti meh savva bhavesu, veram majjham na kenai” three times.
- 5) Read 2-3 pages of *kshamapana* every night

• Stories:

- Samanji visited a house where he was told to give lecture only 2 hours before. He was wondering how the word would get out that he was going to give a lecture for a house-warming party. As he approached the garage, he became very happy. There were about 50 pairs of shoes near the doorway to the house. When he entered the living room where he was going to speak, only the 3 members of the house were sitting there. Samanji asked, “where is everyone? There are many shoes out there. Where is the audience?” The *shravak* (Jain layman) of the house answered, “Samanji, those shoes are ours. No one decided to come here to hear the lecture.” Moral: FIFTY pairs of shoes for only THREE members living in the house is too much.
- One time Samanji was running late to a lecture where he was to speak. The *shravika* (Jain laywoman) of the house ran after him to jump in the car. Samanji said, “You left your eyeglasses on the kitchen table.” The *shravika* replied, “I have another pair in my car. Let’s run!” Moral: We have all these luxuries in America. We should reduce possessions.
- One time Samanji was giving lectures for a week. Everyday, one *shravak* would come in late. It turned out that Samanji visited the same *shravak* on the last day of his visit. Samanji noticed that the house had many, many different clocks and watches in every room. So Samanji kindly asked the *shravak*, “You have so many clocks in your house. Yet you were always late to the discourses. Why?” The *shravak* said, “I was very confused as to which clock was telling me the correct time.” Moral: Too much is confusing and causes tardiness.

5. There are 3 types of *parigraha*:

- *Tan*: body (clothes, shoes, jewelry)
- *Man*: mind (gossip, garbage thoughts, negative ideas, so cannot develop memory)
- *Bhavan*: house (furniture, appliances, cars, art/painting, decoration, garage, bathroom toiletries)
- Maximum possessions should be: 20 pairs of clothes, 10 pairs of shoes

• **Below is a chart that shows the levels of greed:**

- If you fit description of grade F (dangerous), you want to increase your goal to grade A
- Grade A is the most optimal level. We should all strive to follow this level.

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My Things

Greed	
F	Obsession with bigger house, car, money, jealous of friends and family.
D	Desire for better and bigger house, car, money, jealous of friends and family.

C	Occasional desire for comforts. Mild jealousy of others.
B	Minimal internal greed, no envy of others. Appreciation of things.
A	Equanimity. Balance.
Money	
F	Obsessed with money, Work day and night. Minimal donation.
D	Spend great deal of time managing money. Donate less than 0.5% of income.
C	Strong financial planning for family well being. Donate 1% to local and 1% to central organizations.
B	Vow to limit total amount of assets. Donate 4%/year. Donate non-anonymous only to encourage others. No desire for name recognition.
A	Anonymous donation. Pro-active donation up to 10-20% of income or excess money beyond need for simple living.
Material Possessions	
F	Rampant purchasing of clothes, shoes, jewelry, boarding, and impulse buying.
D	Not ready to share your stuff
C	Internally and externally ready to share stuff. Lend people car/stuff if needed.
B	Vow to limit # of shoes (10), clothes (20 pairs) and purchases.
A	Minimal purchase only when needed. Non-extravagant celebrations. Minimal clutter in home.
Travel	
F	No spiritual retreats. Focused only on pleasurable travel. Gambling.
D	1 day retreat per year. Visit two new spiritual places/ year. Gambling limit of \$100/ year.
C	2 times/year retreat. Visit 4 out of town spiritual places/ year. Appreciate culture, traditions, nature.
B	5 times/year retreat, 10 out of town spiritual places/year. Regular visit to ashram, temple, church. No gambling.
A	20 days/year (10 days spiritual places and 10 days retreat).

- Practice this every time you are considering increasing your possessions: DO I REALLY NEED THIS? CAN I LIVE WITHOUT IT? If answer is no, do not buy it!
- Right from childhood, we are increasing our possessions in this world. We should practice what we preach
- Minimal possession = maximal happiness
- Having lots of money is fine as long as you are making good use of the money

Discussion

- Non-possessiveness is good, but pragmatically, can we really do this? When we are young, we cannot be as successful if we were non-possessive... so after age > 40 years, possessions should decrease
- In *Upanishads*, two types of people: *Anulom* and *Veelom*. *Anulom* is following the world and all of the possessions multiply and *Vilom* is the opposite: less and less possessions. Reduce/give up!

- Story: What is the limit for savings for retirement? There is none. Instead, it is good to donate a fixed percentage of income annually.
- For youth and adults: we should try to balance in buying and donating. Either donate to India or donate to charities and such.
- General observation: When hard work increases, needs increase, and then attachment increases because you did everything to obtain it → you must stay detached! Be content/satisfied (*santosh*)
- Where there is income, there are wants.
- Women have this nature of having good memory of things. By having garbage memory, you are increasing your possessions.
- “Whatever happens happens for a reason.” Just forgive and forget. Imagine that it is not happening to you... look at yourself and remove yourself from the situation.
- When small kids fight, they start playing again the next second. What a nice phenomenon!
- Look at those around you who are less fortunate for material happiness, and look at those around you who are more fortunate for spiritual upliftment.
- There is a fine line between need and greed.
- Story: There were 2 men in an elevator (or lift). One man was in a wheelchair with no legs, and the other man had a healthy body. The healthy man was ☹ and the disabled man was ☺. The healthy man asked the disabled man, “Why are you smiling? You have no legs.” The disabled man replied, “But I have everything else – 2 hands, eyes, mouth, etc.”
- Start with good health! If you give up health for money, then you will end up paying money for your health for the rest of your life.
- We should all always visit spiritual places because there are no possessions to take. When you are there, only spiritual thoughts exist. When garbage thoughts decrease, *aparigraha* increases.

End of discussion and Manglik

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