Self development through scientific spirituality

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Abstract

In modern scientific age everything including the traditional spiritual practices get accepted only after proper evidence or logic is provided. Ācārya Śrīrām Śarmā had proposed scientific spirituality for evolution of every person; this contains four pillars (4S) Sādhanā, Swādhyaṇa, Saṁyam and Śevā. Individual development is the basis for the development of the society and the entire humankind. Citta is purified by Sādhanā of Cāndrāyana practice. Manas is purified by Swādhyaṇa (Self study). One can change the muscular tension while speaking from muscle tension level 10μV to 2-3μV in EMG reading. Saṁyam of speech for 3 months changes the brain wave pattern in occipital region and left hemisphere Broca's and Wernike's area. 4. Śevā (Service) comes only after self transformation; as according to Ācārya Śrī, Śānti Kunj is a nursery where people come and practice spirituality and cultivate good character; when they go back in the society they change it. These practices are not based on any specific religion, but instead they are for the entire human kind, as Ācārya Śrī set a goal of Yūg Nirmāṇ (transformation of the era). Since early 1970s, this nursery has been cultivating ideal human character. It is hoped that eventually an ideal human society will be formed; as one candle can light every other candle without losing anything.

Key words: Sādhanā (Practices), Swādhyaṇa (Self study), Saṁyam (Self control) & Śevā (Service).

Uddhāra-deśaṁ samānaṁ nātaṁnamavasāday
Ātmaiva hyātma-bandhurāmaṁ ripurāmaṁ

(Gīta, 6 / 5)

As Gītā (Vyas, 2012) says one should lift oneself by one's own effort, because we are our own friends and enemies. So we should start right from where we are. Whole world will change if individuals change. Individual development is the basic unit of society and mankind development. The elements of self development have been described in fig. (1).

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Fig. (1). A scheme of self development

All four faculties of mind are inter-related to each other as they together help in the evolution of human values. In the holistic approach for self development all these are equally important. This is not just a theoretical argument, but it has already been put in practice since early 1970s at ŚāntiKunj,
where people come from all spheres of life to a course named Gāyatri Panchkoshiya Sādhanā (Ācārya, 1978).

**Concept of self in Indian philosophy**

According to Cambridge International Dictionary, personality is defined as the way in which one behaves, feels and thinks. How a person behaves, feels, thinks and conducts himself depends on his state of mind. So mind is the one that determines the personality. In Yoga philosophy, mind has been be divided into four sub-parts as follows (Bodhasarananda, 2007):

1. Citta (Subconsciousness)
2. Manas (Imagination)
3. Budhi (Discriminative Faculty)
4. Ahamkār ("I" consciousness)

The *Katha Upanishad* sets an aphorism about mind and how it works. Human self is like a chariot; and Budhi the charioteer. The Manas is represented by the reins by which the horses are attached. Here horses are represented by senses. The road on which this chariot is moving is represented by objects of the senses, as for example smell is the object of nose sense organ. So, with this example it is clear that all four elements of the mind should be in our control. Ācārya Śrī has given four sets of practices to control and develop the skills of this chariot (Ācārya, 2001).

(1). **SĀDHNA (spiritual practice)**

Sādhanā means to give a direction or evolution to the values and good characters (Ācārya, 2010). According to the philosophy of rebirth, we have taken many births earlier; in those births we may have done many unwanted deeds. These are deep rooted in our unconscious and subconscious levels of mind. Even in this life, since birth we have been accumulating several imprints on our mind. These impressions influence our actions or daily participate in spiritual practices for one month in behavior. These imprints need to be changed or uprooted with the weapon of sādhanā. These impressions of past experiences are not easy to uproot; they need strong will power and strength. Not only this, place, time and surrounding also influence the spiritual practices. So sādhanā should be done in a special spiritually charged place; thus, Śānti Kunj is an ideal place for Sadhana. This place was established by Ācārya Shri. Here a course is conducted every month known as Cāndrāyana Vrata. It is one of the sadhana for citta purification.

**Cāndrāyana Vrata**

Cāndrāyana is similar to Ayurvedic Kalpa in which the transformation of the entire body takes place. In Cāndrāyana Kalpa sādhanā, spiritual transformation also takes place. Before the practice of Cāndrāyana two things are required: 1. Write the problems, tensions, expectations on a paper. 2. Write those bad deeds, which you remember often.

Laws of nature apply equally to all. We know that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Every bad deed gets accumulated in our unconscious mind and influences our natural actions. These unconscious impressions cause stress as well as different psychosomatic disorders. These may also lead to vices like alcohol drinking and other bad habits. So, writing of bad deeds is a kind of vomiting or Vaman or Virecan as is done in Ayurvedic Pancakarma. When one accepts one’s fault, it causes less harm and does not form a Samskār (unconscious impression). During Cāndrāyana a devotee should not waste time in thinking about the past.

Usually this type of spiritual practice is not possible at home, because it needs strong will power. So it is better to find a spiritually charged place for this practice.

There are two steps of this spiritual practice - first is to clean the dirt on our unconscious self,
which gets deposited during our innumerable births. Second step is to increase inner potentials.

*Steps of Cāndrāyana Vrata:*
(1). Start from full moon night and end on next month's full moon night. (2). Jyeshtha, Shravana, Ashvina, Magh months of Hindu calendar are the months in which the best results are obtained; but usually all other months are also good. (3). It has been recommended that the meal that a person eats in one day should be taken in the form of a round ball. One should eat one whole ball of food on full moon day or first day of lunar month. Next, divide that ball into 15 equal small balls. Reduce one ball of food each day till no moon day. On the fifteenth day one should do complete fasting. Now on 16th
introspection while speaking. After one month of training EMG was again recorded from the same muscles. Before training it was 10 μV for 5 minutes of recording while speaking. After training for one month of self study while speaking, fig. (2) shows a clear difference where the value recorded is 2 μV. It shows that the muscle tension in forehead significantly decreased while speaking, in comparison to pre-test when there was no introspection while talking. It signifies the level of relaxation while speaking.

![EMG recorded at Swami Ram Sadhak Gram (Rishikesh, India). Electromyogram (EMG) recording during normal speaking and introspection of self.](image)

(3). **SAṂYAMA (Self control)**

SAṂYAMA is self control; it preserves the wastage of energy (Ācārya, 2010). Human beings waste their energy more than they use it. Just like the flood washes away everything, but the same water used in a controlled manner might produce electricity and irrigate the farms. In the same way we waste our potentials in doing unconstructive work. If we use our energy wisely, then every human being has the potential to do miracles. We should control wastage of physical, mental and
**EEG (Electroencephalogram) study on silence of speech**

Fig. 3

EEG recording by 64 channels EEG by Biosemi machine at MRI, SRSG (Rishikesh, India). Pre-Post test of 90 days Silence practice. Data have been analyzed by EEGLAB Toolbox in Matlab.

EEG study of practitioner
In 1894 Swami Vivekananda had written to King of Mysore - “This life is momentary, sensual