

Akram Youth

May 2023 English

Dada Bhagwan Parivar

Adversity

Is Helpful in
Shaping Our Lives

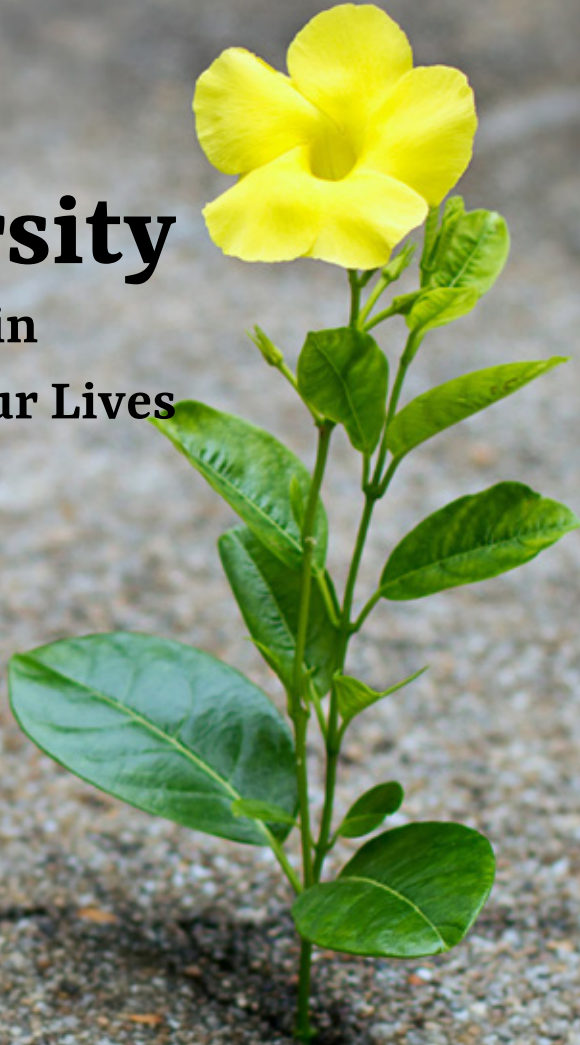


Table of Contents

04 Far From the Shore...

14 Sindhutai Sakpal

06 Let's Do an Experiment

16 Inconveniences Help Us Progress!

08 The Thermometer of Life

18 What Should I Do Now?

12 Let's Make What Is Unlikeable, Likeable

23 Poem

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Editorial



Jai Sat Chit Anand friends,


In our lives, we often come across situations that are not suitable to us or that we don't like. Many times we run away from those situations or we try to change them. If neither of these works, we get upset or disturbed. We see unfavorable circumstances and those who are instrumental in such circumstances as being at fault. Ultimately, the situation remains the same, but we suffer and so do the people around us!

In this issue, we get a new and positive vision with which to look at unfavorable circumstances. With this vision, we will get the understanding to remain peaceful in circumstances that we don't like or don't find suitable. Not only that, but we also get the understanding of how these unfavorable circumstances are beneficial to us and how they help us to progress. Lastly, we get the solution for how not to lose courage and get diverted to the wrong path when unfavorable circumstances surround us from all directions.

It is our heartfelt intent that through this issue, may every youth receive such an understanding that they can remain strong and continue to progress in any circumstances.


- Dimplebhai Mehta

Far From the



Yes... we are very lucky! We don't have to make any effort for water.

We are so lucky. On the riverbank, we don't have to worry about water, air, or sunlight!



We are so unlucky. We have to go so deep into the ground for water.

How is that unlucky? You'll see, this hard work will not go in vain.

Friends, who likes difficulties in their lives? You would like it if everything were easily obtainable, wouldn't you?

Shore...

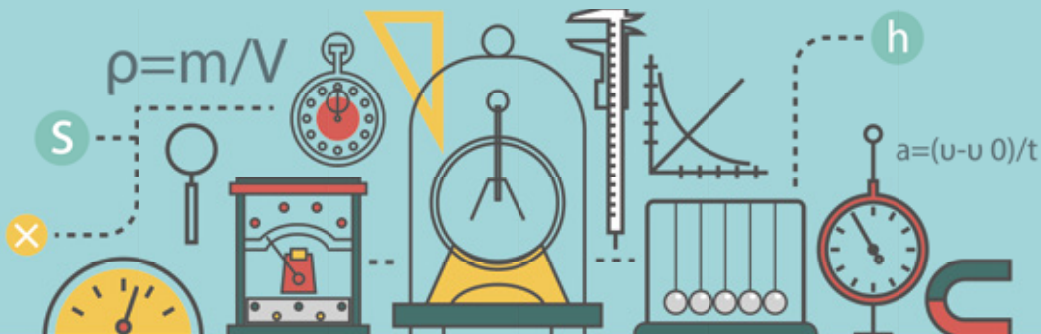
Save...Me...!

Oh no... This is a big storm. I am being uprooted...

Such a big storm came, but nothing happened to us. Why?

Didn't I tell you? Our hard work will not go in vain. Our roots were going deeper and deeper every day in search of water. Because of the strength of our roots, we survived!

But as you saw in this story, difficulties provide us with inner strength. They give us the fortitude to withstand unexpected situations. If you look at the lives of any great men, struggles and adversities are at the foundation of their success.



Let's Do An Experiment



Dip a pencil in oil and then write on paper. What happens?

Light a matchstick. But the condition is that instead of scraping it on a box, you have to scrape it on a steel plate. What happens?



Instead of wearing shoes, if you wear smooth plastic bags on our feet and then walk, what would happen?



(Note: If you try to do this, be careful!)

If you step on a banana peel, you will slip, won't you! What's the reason for that?



What if the brakes fail when you are driving a scooter or a car?



If you are swinging on a swing and you want to stop it without touching the ground with your hands or feet, what would you do?



These experiments help us understand the importance of friction. The graphite tip of a pencil writes on a rough paper by scraping against it. However, when the tip is dipped in oil, it becomes slippery and prevents friction with the paper, so you can't write. In the same way, friction between two surfaces helps in lighting a matchstick and in walking. Friction also works when bringing a vehicle or a swing to a halt.

Through these scientific experiments, we can understand that if everything is smooth, work does not get done. Similarly, in life, if there are no struggles or challenging situations, we do not grow and progress.



The Thermometer of Life

Rushabh was staring at his flight ticket to Bangalore. His dream was about to come true. On one side, his heart was filled with excitement, and on the other side, his eyes were filled with tears of joy. He was lost in the thoughts of the ups and downs he had to face before reaching this stage of his life. That's when someone knocked on the door of his hotel room.

"Come in!" Rushabh said.

Kinnar entered the room. "Hi Rushabh! I wanted to talk to you. Do you have some time?"

"Hey Kinnar! Glad to see you here. Of course I have time. Have a seat." Rushabh got a chair for Kinnar.

"Are you ready for the next level?" Kinnar asked.

"Umm... I'm getting ready." Rushabh

replied politely. "What did you want to talk about?"

"Let me come to the point, Rushabh. When you came for the audition, I thought that you would not even make the top ten. I felt that I was the one who received training from a top chef, that I was the one who did an internship at a big hotel, that I was the one who knew how to prepare an international cuisine, and that I was the one who had a lot of experience in a professional kitchen. However, it was you who became 'Gujarat's great chef'. And today, you are going to Bangalore to participate in the national competition. How did you do this all?" Kinnar said in a single breath.

"That's enough... don't flatter me too much. I thought that you would win. I have

learned a lot from you on this entire journey. After all, we were together until the finals. My luck may have made the difference in the end. Otherwise, you are too good, my friend!" Rushabh said.

"I'm happy that I got to compete with a person like you. I am happy for your success. Well, I'm also a little jealous. I don't know when we'll meet again. Before you leave, I want to meet with you and hear about your secret to success. You came from a small village without any training and..." Kinnar asked openly.

"But life has taught me a lot, Kinnar...."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that whatever challenges I faced in the competition, it was not the first time that I faced them."

"Really? How?" Kinnar was interested to know more. Rushabh started recalling his past.

"I was seven years old. One day, I went to school for the flag hoisting ceremony and when I came back home, it had fallen down like a house of cards. My mother was buried in the rubble caused by the earthquake. My father somehow managed to get out along with my younger sister, but his right arm got crushed underneath a pillar. The rescue team came and immediately took him to the hospital. But they had to amputate his right arm. I was shocked to see what had happened in such a short time. The responsibility of taking care of my five year old sister fell on me. For months, we received food and shelter from the government. I still get goosebumps thinking about those days."

Rushabh remained silent for a moment. He became choked up with emotions. Kinnar gave him a glass of water and said, "Sorry to hear all this, Rushabh. How is your father's arm now...?"

"My father is not one to give up easily. He learned how to write with his left hand and continued his job as a teacher. Within a year or two, my village which was crushed to rubbles, was up and running again. I started helping my father at home, in the kitchen and taking care of my sister."

"I see. So that's when your interest in cooking began?" Kinnar asked, trying to lighten the mood.

"You can say that. At first, I had to cook to survive. But then I started missing my mother's cooking. One day, I found my mother's recipe book in her cabinet. I started cooking some items from that. My younger sister was my best critic. She would immediately tell me if the dish I made had turned out even a little different from my mother's. I would keep trying until the dish turned out the same as my mother's."

"Oh... So that's why in the first round, after tasting the chef's dish, you were able to make it exactly like his."

"Maybe. Thanks to my sister. Because of her, I developed a habit of reproducing tastes from memory." Rushabh didn't have any pretentiousness for his abilities.

"The kitchen at home is different. However, we had a lot of pressure during the competition. Despite that, you were totally calm. Why is that?"

"My friend, when you run out of food



at home and you don't have any money, the pressure that you feel to fill your stomach; there is no greater pressure in this world! There is no greater teacher than poverty and hunger."

"But your father used to work, so..."

"His job was transferred to another city. We had to change homes as well as schools. We stayed there for about three months and then we found out that my father had to resign. He never told us the reason behind it, but I could tell from the look on his face that people did not accept a handicapped teacher. He tried for months to find another job. His savings were exhausted. We struggled to put food on the table. That's when I got help from one of my classmates who was a farmer, and I started growing vegetables on the small plot of land behind our house. At least we would have something to eat. I also started

teaching. Soon, I started getting more students as well as more fruits and vegetables in my garden."

"Hmm...That's why in the competition you were able to close your eyes and recognize any ingredient by its smell!"

"Yes. You can say that I have grown up alongside ingredients. Now I can see that since I had to teach other students at a very young age, I learned how to communicate with, explain to and convince others. That helped me lead my team in the competition. Didn't I say, poverty teaches you everything? Do you remember the challenge we had, where we had to cook a dish with whatever was available in the fridge? We faced this situation every day at home. There were even days where we could not buy any groceries until we had used up the last drop of milk and the last bit of grains. Well, after that, my dad

also started teaching from home along with me. That's when we got some financial relief.

"Your story is very inspiring. But tell me, when did you start cooking international cuisines? How did you learn that?"

"That's also due to my sister. She is very fond of eating. When she grew up, she also learned how to cook. She used to find new recipes on the internet and try them out on us. Being with her, I also learned how to make those items. We used to try new recipes on my father and on the students!"

"Nice! The students must have enjoyed that!" Kinnar said with a smile. "But international cuisines are mostly non-vegetarian, and you're a strict vegetarian, so...?" Kinnar asked.

"Yes. The benefit of that was, we started using our creativity to bake without eggs and replace non-vegetarian ingredients with vegetarian ones. When my sister and I entered college, we got more free time. So, we started our own tiffin service. People really liked our food. Now, my father manages it and he has hired some people to help him."

"Wow, you learned how to run a business as well?"

"I didn't learn it on my own. Circumstances taught me."

"You're a genius, yet so down to earth. How is that?" Kinnar asked with disbelief.

"Let me tell you the secret behind that. Kinnar, when we get success in life, we become arrogant. However, to balance

that, we immediately face failure. In my experience, we only learn during the failures. We understand the reality. We are able to recognize our mistakes. Even I had become arrogant. In my first semester at cooking college, my performance was better than everyone else's. I became overconfident. I ran at full speed, but in the wrong direction. Then I faced a setback, which acted as a speed breaker for me. The next year, all my classmates performed better than me. They all got internships at big hotels, and I ended up at a local pizza shop. That's when I realized that my arrogance had gotten the best of me. Now I understand that hardships benefit us in the long term. They alert us like a thermometer. They keep us in normality."

"Wow, what a deep philosophy!" Kinnar said as he put his hand on Rushabh's shoulder.

"It's not a philosophy. It's the extract of my experience. Well, this is just the beginning. I still have a long way to go." Rushabh said smiling.

"Thanks, Rushabh. Today, for the first time, I don't feel bad about losing. Instead, I feel that it was for the best! I got to learn something and meet a friend like you!"

"Well, since we are friends now, I will pick your brain during the competition in Bangalore. I will call you if I become nervous or if I need any tips. Is that okay?"

Kinnar and Rushabh exchanged phone numbers with big smiles on their faces. From that day onwards, they became best friends instead of competitors.

Let's Make What Is Unlikeable, Likeable

Make things that are unlikeable, likable. Make what is unfavorable, favorable. Then you will never be sad!



If you don't like the dorm food, then instead of being sad and saying, "I don't want to eat this," say, "It's very good, it's very good." Then you'll enjoy it.



Unlikeable things remove you from the worldly life and put you on the path to liberation.

When you get things that are unlikeable...



We have to convince our intellect of this. The intellect believes that it is bad. It's just an opinion. If you say, "It is good, it is good," then you will like it.

When you face insults...



When someone is insulting you at home, saying that you are stupid, comparing you with your brothers and sisters, 'swallow' those insults calmly, happily, and by remaining positive! You can 'swallow' all kinds of insults with a positive attitude.

What happens when you 'swallow' insults? Your karma gets exhausted and you don't bind vengeance with the other person. By doing this, you will eventually become like Lord Neelkanth.



Even a mosquito cannot touch you without a karmic account. So, if someone insults you, there must be a huge karmic account. And why did that person insult you twice and not once or three times? Because the two insults you had sent have come back to you.

What is the benefit of 'swallowing' insults? Your ego melts. If someone says, "You're stupid," then he has fractured your ego that believes 'I'm smart.' When the ego is fractured, the Soul is revealed.



In foreign countries, you have to pay fifty pounds for garbage collection. So shouldn't you be happy if someone takes away your garbage? They are taking it for free.



Sindhutai Sakpal

Sindhutai Sakpal is a name that is not well-known, but her life journey is very inspiring. Sindhutai was born in 1948 in a poor family in a small village in Maharashtra. Her father herded cows for a living. Sindhutai enrolled in school, but due to poverty and her household responsibilities, she had to drop out after the fourth grade. At the tender age of twelve, Sindhutai was married to a man who was much older than her and whose occupation was also herding cows.

In the village, in order to produce fuel, some merchants would sell the dung

of other people's cows to earn money. However, they wouldn't pay the people who owned those cows. Sindhutai raised an objection against these merchants. Hearing the truth from her, the district officers were in agreement. However, the merchants did not like this. In order to take revenge, they made false accusations about Sindhutai to her husband. Angered by this, her husband threw her out of the house. Sindhutai was nine months pregnant at the time. Amidst great hardships and sorrow, she gave birth to a daughter.

Sindhutai went to her parent's house in a helpless state, but no one accepted her. Even her mother closed the door on her. In such a situation, anyone else would have given up and considered suicide. But Sindhutai didn't do that. She took shelter in a crematorium. She and her daughter were both hungry. After a corpse was cremated, she noticed some leftover flour. She made rotli from it, heated it on the funeral pyre, and filled her stomach.

She was good at singing. She would visit train stations, temples, and nearby villages to sing songs for alms, and she used whatever money she received to raise her children. During her travels, she encountered many orphaned children. Sindhutai's heart became filled with motherly love for them. Understanding the plight of these helpless orphans, she took them under her care. She taught them to have the same courage that she had when facing hardship. Sindhutai was able to cover the expenses for their food and education after much struggle. Gradually, more and more orphans joined her. The children would call her 'mother'. Sindhutai took responsibility for them until they were grown up. Many of the children ended up completing their PhDs, and Sindhutai even got many of them married.

For her noble work, Sindhutai has received more than 750 awards. She used the money from those awards to establish an orphanage. So far, she has provided support to over 1,500 orphans. In 2021, Sindhutai was honored with the Padmashri award. After Sindhutai became well-known,

Understanding the plight of these helpless orphans, she took them under her care. She taught them to have the same courage that she had when facing hardship. Sindhutai was able to cover the expenses for their food and education after much struggle.



her husband came to see her and asked for forgiveness. At that time, Sindhutai accepted his apology, referring to him as her 'eldest son'. There was not a trace of hatred in her heart. This 'mother' of so many orphans passed away in 2022.

Despite facing numerous difficulties in life, Sindhutai never complained. On the contrary, these tough situations made her stronger so that she could help others. Only those who have had a friendship with adversity can think of eliminating the adversity of others. A documentary film about Sindhutai's life of struggle has been made in order to inspire people.

Inconveniences Are Instrumental in Spiritual Progress!

Dadashri: You will move ahead only when you believe, 'It is good if inconveniences come.' You will progress further if you believe that what you consider an inconvenience is a good thing. Otherwise, if you say that inconvenience is bad, then that inconvenience will obstruct you and stunt your progress. If you transcend the inconveniences, only then will you accomplish your [spiritual] work, otherwise those very inconveniences will obstruct you. And if you develop enmity towards inconvenience, then nothing will be gained.

Questioner: What does binding enmity mean?

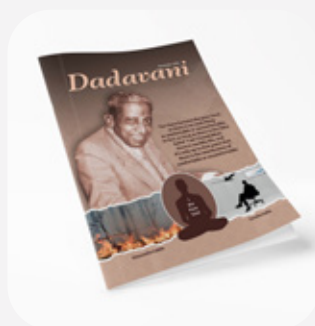
Dadashri: If you feel, 'Why is he acting this way?' towards the one inconveniencing you, or even if you think along this path, then you will not gain anything. You must move forward believing that 'people will create inconveniences.' Not only do we have to move forward believing that people will create inconveniences, but we also have to maintain equanimity towards them. People will create inconveniences; you must transcend the inconveniences and also maintain equanimity; you must move forward on the path of liberation with these beliefs. Nevertheless, the path of liberation that 'we' have given is a very easy one!

You will face all kinds of inconveniences. But at that time, you will have the solutions

available to you. There are a lot of people for that!

What is this speed breaker for? It is for your safety. Therefore, these inconveniences that come are for your benefit. If these inconveniences were not there, people would speed ahead without stopping and cause accidents. Inconveniences are there to keep us in normality.

If no living being is troubled or inconvenienced by us, that is the religion of the Self!



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If one were to get only things in this worldly life that he liked, then he would not progress. His spiritual progress would stop. So there should be one or two things that alert him and make him aware.

- Dadashri



What Should I Do Now? _____

“Jhanvi, let us come to the point. I have again received a complaint against you.” the HR department’s senior madam said.

“What...?” Jhanvi asked as her heartrate increased.

“You speak very rudely with your colleagues. You insult them.”

“But ma’am... Those people...”

“Jhanvi! You can tell me your side of the story, but only after Anupam and Poonam tell me their side.”

Jhanvi had started this new job a year ago. This is the second time she had been summoned by the HR department. Jhanvi did have some idea of what had happened in the past six months, but Jhanvi’s boss Anupam and her mentor Poonam were sitting there. Seeing them, Jhanvi’s tension increased.

Anupam and Poonam started describing the events of the past six months. Jhanvi was not listening to a single word they were saying. She started visualizing the past year.

Jhanvi started this job a year ago, after graduation.



The first three months were good. But then her mentor became ill and had to take three months off. So Jhanvi was assigned a new mentor, Poonam. Poonam was senior to Jhanvi and very strict. When assigning work, she would not go over any details. However, if Jhanvi made a mistake, Poonam would get angry with her. If Jhanvi asked a follow up question, Poonam's anger would double. Jhanvi's old mentor used to explain things to her calmly and patiently. The new mentor's nature was not suitable to Jhanvi. Jhanvi started having dislike towards her. She was scared to ask Poonam for help and didn't know who else to ask. As a result, her project kept on getting delayed. The client's deadline came closer and the project was not even halfway done. One day, Jhanvi's boss Anupam called her into a meeting and said,

"Jhanvi, we missed the date that we had promised our client. If the project is not completed before the next deadline, then you will be in trouble."

Before Jhanvi could say anything, Anupam called Poonam.

"Poonam! You need to see to it that Jhanvi completes this project. We will have to deliver this project next month."

"Okay sir, I will!"

Jhanvi didn't get a chance to say even a single word. Both of them left the boss's office. Jhanvi was not able to work with Poonam at all. Another month went by. The HR madam again called Jhanvi and gave her a warning.

"Jhanvi, your boss Anupam and mentor Poonam both say that you are not

able to deliver your work on time. What is the reason for that?"

Tears started to flow from Jhanvi's eyes. In such a professional environment with so much pressure, she didn't know what to say to the madam who she didn't know. She remained silent.

They took away the project from Jhanvi and gave it to another person. They assigned another smaller project to Jhanvi, which she had to complete in six months. Jhanvi decided that she would complete the project by any means. She started asking questions without any hesitation. Instead of explaining things to her, if Poonam got angry with her, Jhanvi ignored that and focused on the work. When Poonam didn't help her, she started asking for help from other colleagues. When Poonam insulted her or taunted her in a meeting, Jhanvi started answering back. Seeing Jhanvi's changed behavior instigated Poonam's ego. She arranged a team meeting with Anupam and deliberately insulted Jhanvi for her work. Jhanvi didn't stay silent and fired back. Poonam had already talked to Anupam in confidence, so Anupam took Poonam's side. No one showed any interest in hearing about the difficulties Jhanvi was facing. Six months passed by. Jhanvi did complete the project, but her behavior was noticed by Anupam. The HR department again called Jhanvi and told her that she was behaving rudely with her colleagues and insulting them. Jhanvi got very angry. She thought to herself, 'I get punished if I do the work and if I don't.' But on the outside, she said,



“Okay, I’ll be careful going forward.” She left the meeting and went back to her desk.

“Hi Jhanvi! You should drink cold coffee if you’re feeling angry. Will you join me?” Jhanvi’s colleague Mahesh offered after seeing her mood. Jhanvi agreed. At the cafe, Mahesh’s jokes made Jhanvi laugh. Her mood became a little light. Gradually, Jhanvi started meeting with Mahesh every afternoon outside the office for coffee. Jhanvi enjoyed it as it made her fresh. One day, Mahesh took her out for dinner. Then he took her to an open bar restaurant. He ordered a drink for himself

and for Jhanvi as well.

“Sorry, I don’t drink!” Jhanvi said.

“So what? Start from today. You will enjoy it. You will forget everything!” Mahesh said.

Jhanvi found this awkward and started to leave. But Mahesh grabbed her hand. Jhanvi somehow freed her hand and ran away from there. She regretted her friendship with Mahesh. Now she was confused. First, she had a problem with her mentor, then with her boss, and now with this colleague. On top of that, she couldn’t tell anyone at home as well. What should she do now?

Friends, you may also have found yourself trapped in a situation like Jhanvi’s. What should you do? Let’s find out.



Questioner: Jai Sat Chit Anand Pujiyashree! When we are faced with unfavorable circumstances from every direction, how can we remain strong?

Pujiyashree: Nothing. Just ask for strength. These are just circumstances, aren't they? Won't they eventually go away?

Questioner: They will.

Pujiyashree: Then what should we do? Should we run away from them? No, just watch them. The circumstance that has come will eventually go away. Until then, ask for strength, "O Dada Bhagwan! Give me strength to clear it with equanimity. Give me strength to take adjustments. Give me strength to not clash with anyone. Give me strength to not hurt anyone." Ask for strength as mentioned in the Nine Kalams.

Questioner: But when it goes on for a long time...

Pujiyashree: No, no, it never goes on for a long time. We feel that it is going on for a long time because we wait for it to be over. If you ask for strength, then those circumstances will go away in a short time.

Questioner: During that time, I feel that I am going in the wrong direction and I suffer a lot.

Pujiyashree: That's why you must ask for strength! Do things improve by going in the wrong direction? The unfavorable circumstances don't go away and you suffer a loss by going in the wrong direction. So, you incur two losses! Are you a fool? Why should you incur two losses? Why should you go in the wrong direction? You should ask for strength. Recite the Nine Kalams, sing Dada Bhagwan na Asim Jay Jaykar ho, say the Trimantra. Use these tools that you have available to you and set them in your mind.

Definitely read

these issues of Akram Youth



December 2021



September 2022

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Poem

Jo taruvar par tadako pade nahi...
Phal pachi mitha madhur male nahi...

Sanjogo pratikul pan jaruri chhe...
Tapma j sona ni pariksha khari chhe...

Shitaltama to koi moksha jhanke nahi...
Atma male kem, jo sansar danke nahi...

Gyani kahe, pratikulta vastu sari chhe...
Agal vadhava, e bahu kriyakari chhe...

Uparthi harek sanyogno viyog chhe...
Evanu nathi, pratikulta kayami rog chhe...

Shu kam aart-raudra dhyan apaar karo?
Harek pratikulta ne, gyanthi pasar karo...

Shri Gyanine, pratikul koi sanjog nathi...
Gyanthi na jay, evo aa rog nathi...



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See the Benefits Even in Unfavourable Circumstances!

Lord Mahavir taught his disciples that, “If you go out and people hit you with a stick, then understand that, ‘They only hit me with a stick. My hand isn’t broken. At least they spared my hand!’ So consider this as a benefit. If they break one of your arms, then understand that, ‘At least they didn’t break the other arm.’ If they cut off both of your hands, then understand that, ‘At least I still have my feet.’ If they cut off both of your hands and feet, then understand that, ‘At least I’m still alive and able to see.’” The Lord showed them the benefits. He said, “Don’t cry; laugh and be happy.” There’s nothing wrong in that, is there? The Lord saw the world through the right Vision, which shows profit even in loss!

- Dadashri

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