

## Sorrow

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What is 'sorrow'? According to Nyāyasutra “दुःखजन्मप्रवृत्तिदोषमिथ्याज्ञानानामुत्तरो- त्तरापाये तदनन्तरापायादपवर्गः”. So, janma or birth is the main cause of dukkha or sorrow. Birth is necessary for a being to go through the result of karmas done by him or her in many many births. Eighty four lacs births are travelled by a single soul. These births are of different beings, rather different species. So bodies of different births are different and the sufferings of the body of one species are unable to occur on the body of other species. It is so said by Santadas Kathiyababa that the suffering of the dog-body is not possible in the insect body ‘सुखस्य दुःखस्य न कोऽपि दाता परौ ददातीति कुवुद्धिरेषा ।’ So, beings go through the cycle of birth and death, when they do bad deeds, as the consequence they have to face punishment, i.e. sorrow, in that birth, another birth or births. The chain of sorrow goes on until the being attains salvation through penance or silent recitation of the name of a deity or singing the praise of God. Everyone should remember—

सुखस्य दुःखस्य न कोऽपि दाता  
परौ ददातीति कुवुद्धिरेषा ।

अहं करोमीति वृथामिमानः

स्वकर्मसुलग्रथितौ हि लोकः ॥

This being is necessarily a human, since no devotion to God, spiritual activity is possible in births lower than humans. That is said in Uttara kanda of Ramacharitmanasa—

‘वडे माग मानुष ननु पावा ।

सुरदुर्लभ सव ग्रन्थन्हि गावा ॥’

The sages say that sins also are done according to God’s sweet will. He makes the man do what he wants. World’s welfare takes place through virtue, as well as through misdeeds, mischievous works.

‘एव एव साधु कर्म कारयति

तं यमेभ्यो लोकेभ्य उन्निनीषते ।

एव एव असाधु कर्म कारयति

तं यमेभ्योऽधो निनीषते ॥’

It was so told by Ramakrishna Paramhansa that all are Narayana— luccha Narayana, bodmas Narayana, again uttam Narayana susmita Narayana etc.

So allegation of oppressed against oppressor, beaten against beater, deprived against depriver, robbed against robber, killed against killer does not stand at all. Again the allegation of God’s cruelty does not stand, as god himself be all beings, the happy man and sad man. In Paramhansadeva’s language the elephant is Narayana and the trainer of the elephant is also Narayana. So an intelligent man should abide by the shouting of the trainer. Narayana’s warning to go away at a safe distance from the elephant; rather to be killed or injured by the elephant Narayana in the belief that Narayana cannot do any harm to his devotee. God plays various roles at one time, so God is the giver of sad men’s plight, is dismissed.

We humble people cannot realise this great truth. We are tired struggling with bad luck, sufferings, sorrow. We try to get rid of all sufferings and perform some ritual to win God’s mercy and remain safe. These rituals are the bratas. Brata means decay of sin and accumulation of virtue. There are bratas of different deities. Bratas take place in different months in different tithis, i.e lunar days.

Results of the bratas are different. E.g. brata of Mother Sasthi is done for the well being of children. Bipattarinibrata is done to be safe from danger. Bhaimi Ekadashibrata is done to be free from sin. Mainly bratas

are done by the womenfolk of the society. Again some bratas are meant for the unmarried girls , e.g. senjutibrata, Sandhyamanibrata etc. Some bratas are meant for married women only. Eg. Tejadapanabrata, Baisakhipurnimabrata etc. Manthanasasthibrata and Lunthanasasthibrata are done by the sons' mothers only. However, other sasthibrata e.g. Neelasasthibrata , Durgasasthibrata, Asokasasthibrata may be done by the daughters' mothers also.

There are some bratas which can be performed by all, married or unmarried, male or female, e.g. Shivaratribrata, Dadhisankrantibrata etc.

Let us discuss about Dadhisankrantibrata. The story of the brata is primarily told by lord Srikrishna to sage Agastya. It is the story of a girl whose wretched condition brought tears into Laxmidevi's eyes. One day Lord Vishnu was lying on anantasayya, goddess Laxmi's tears fell on Lord's feet and he woke up. Asked by lord Vishnu goddess Laxmi told that a weeping girl on the seashore caused her to be sad. Then goddess Laxmi asked lord Vishnu the way out of human sorrow.

All religions are searching ways to get rid of all-pervading sorrow. Sages utter various ways of emancipation from sorrow in various branches of Indian philosophy, yet sarvam dukkham. We can remember the famous lines of the poem 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner by Coleridge—

“Water water everywhere  
Nor any drop to drink”

We can change these lines into-

“Sorrow sorrow everywhere  
Nor any drop to tolerate”.

To get rid of the mountain of sorrow a path is shown by Lord Vishnu – Dadhisankranti brata. This brata starts on uttarayan sankranti, the summer solstice and continues for one year. The idols of Goddess Laxmi and Lord Vishnu are made of gold and silver respectively. Then both idols are showered by curd and then worshipped with flowers, incense etc. In each month of the brata-performance-year the brati or brata-performer will offer curd and eatables to a Brahmin.

At the completion of the Dadhisankranti brata Lord Vishnu will be worshipped with incense, flowers, clothes, food and holy thread. The brati will offer food, curd, sweets, perfume to twelve Brahmins. Performance of this brata will shower earthly success, wealth, happiness, peace etc. on the devotee. Perfect completion of the brata removes females' widowhood, mental strain etc. Even the devotee will be free from sorrow hearing the story of Dadhisankranti Brata. Lord Srikrishna told this brata-story as the path of cessation of human-sorrow.

Most of the bratas present materialistic gain, e.g. wealth, birth of son, physical beauty, beautiful wife, eradication of all enemies etc. Few bratas deal with spiritual world. Performance of अघोरचतुर्दशीव्रत saves the brati from seeing the hell after death. Performance of तुलसीव्रत, जन्माष्टमीव्रत, राधाष्टमीव्रत, तालनवमीव्रत, रामनवमीव्रत, धर्मघटव्रत, सत्यनारायणव्रत promises the brati to take him/her to Baikuntha after death. Performance of श्रीदुर्गाव्रत, ललितासप्तमीव्रत take brati to Kailasa, the दुर्वाष्टमीव्रत takes brati to heaven, But the performer of हरितालिकाव्रत attains सायुज्य मुक्ति, absorption of individual soul into the divine soul and divine happiness at the end of life. Again the woman who respectfully hears or sings the story of ऋषिपञ्चमीव्रत gets salvation after death.

At last we may conclude that maximum bratas can save people from earthly sorrow, they cannot emancipate the soul, the cycle of birth and death goes on.

पुनरपि जनमं पुनरपि मरणं

पुनरपि जननीजठरे शयनम्।

Only the divine knowledge obtainable through श्रवण, मनन and निदिध्यासन can save the soul from endless sorrow of humans. However people of small consciousness and less wisdom cannot go through those difficult paths of thorns.

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