Duty provides an opportunity to human being to repay his obligations towards every member of the society and also towards God. It is very important to discharge one’s duty effectively and sincerely because it is one of the important faculties of his personality. The faculty of will is at center of all the actions. Action is a basic instinct of human nature. It is the root of human progress and prosperity and an integral law of life. None can ever remain inactive, even for a moment. Inaction leads to decay and disintegration. Even the very survival and maintenance of human body is dependent upon some or the other form of action.

That is why to discharge duty is a prime subject of ethical discipline. It is on the basis of duty that various doctrines are propounded by different religions. For instance, ten commandments, Wheel of Dhamma, five Anuvratas and doctrine of Swadharma of Hinduism are theories directly or indirectly related to the observance of duties.

One of the well-known doctrines among the all the philosophers of Western world is the doctrine of categorical imperative put forward by German philosopher Immanuel Känt (1724-1804). This doctrine discusses the concept of duty and at the same time teaches the art of performing action. Känt is the first philosopher to put the concept of ‘duty’ at the very center of ethics. Känt extends the concept of duty from specific to general. Ethics of Šiksāpatrī resembles the principle of categorical imperative to some extent.

Känt built his ethical ideas and principles on rationality and also accepts it as a standard of morality. Compared to other moral philosophers
Kant's ethics is puritanical in its nature. Therefore, pleasure and pain, interest and utility have no place in his principle of categorical imperative. He opposes both the theories of moral standard i.e. Hedonism and Utilitarianism because these theories believe in the principle of 'duty for the sake of duty'.

**HEDONISM**

Certain *Upanishads* say that without the sense of pleasure it is not convenient even to breathe or live life. Out of five concentric sheaths or chambers (*kośas*) of inner personality of man, bliss (*Ānandamaya kośa*) is the most fundamental and supporting on which all the activities of the human being are centered.

Every individual performs any kind of activity if he is sure to attain certain happiness or pleasure. Pleasure is the motivational force behind every activity. A man would literally do anything to achieve pleasure. According to Freud man seeks pleasure even unconsciously. For instance, the baby sucking the thumb, children making small houses with the sand and breaking them, the labourer working hard, farmers ploughing in their farms, scientists getting deeply engrossed in their work, a drunkard relishing wine, philanthropist serving the social, or a devotee offering worship towards God, etc. Though, all these activities are different apparently, the underlying objective of all these activities is same - pleasure.

Pleasure is the sole motto of our activity. This is the truth propounded by the theory of Hedonism. In ancient Greek, Epicureans and Stoics upheld opposite views in the matter of hedonism. Epicureans advocated sensuous pleasure as the desirable motive of action whereas Stoics advocated reason as desirable motive of action. Theory of Hedonism is based on Epicurean's view. Čārvāka, the staunch exponent of materialistic trend in Indian
philosophy advocated that pleasure is the only goal of human life. According
to him, to enjoy the maximum possible pleasure in this world is the only
purpose of human birth.

J.S.Mill and Bentham are two exponents of the doctrine of Hedonism.
The gist of their doctrine is expressed in the following passage: “Nature has
placed man under the empire of pleasure and of pain. We owe to them all
our ideas; we refer to them all our judgments, and all the determinations of
our life. He who pretends to withdraw himself from this subjection knows
not what he says. His only object is to seek pleasure and shun pain, even at
the very instant that he rejects the greatest pleasures or embraces pains the
most acute. These eternal and irresistible sentiments ought to be the great
study of the moralist and legislator. The principle of utility subjects every
thing these two motives.”

From the above passage it is clear that Hedonism is the theory which
regards pleasure as the supreme end of life. There are two types of
Hedonism. 1. Psychological Hedonism, 2. Ethical Hedonism.

Psychological theory deals with question why do I do a particular
activity? The answer is I do a particular activity because I like it. Men
always seek pleasure, consciously or unconsciously. It is very natural for a
man to seek pleasure. According to the theory, pleasure is the agreeable
feeling or an object of desire. As the theory regards pleasure as feeling, it is
known as ‘Psychological Hedonism’.

The Ethical Hedonism, on the other hand concentrates on the criterion
of our activity. Why do I do a particular activity? The answer is because it
gives me the pleasure. If it gives me pain then I would never do it. Ethical
Hedonism propagates that we ought to seek the highest pleasure in all our
activities.
THE PARADOX OF HEDONISM

Sedgwick points out that even when we do desire pleasure, the best way to get it is often to forget it. If we think about the pleasure itself, we are almost sure to miss it; whereas if we direct our desires towards objective ends, the pleasure follows automatically.

Sometimes it happens that because of thinking again and again about pleasure or results one misses it. One has no right to think about results or consequences. More one thinks or remembers pleasure more it gets away from him. This view is somewhat similar to the theory of ‘nişkām karma yoga’ (detached action) of the Bhagavad Gītā. When Arjun refused to fight as he saw his relatives and elders on the opposite side, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says:

“Karmanyevādhikāraste mā falesu kadācan”

(“Don’t think about results & rewards, your right is only to work, only to fight”). You have no right at all to expect rewards. As you are kṣatrya, it is your duty to fight’.

According to Sidgwick this is the ‘paradox of Hedonism’ that when one forget pleasure, automatically pleasure will come to him. The best way to get pleasure is to forget pleasure.

UTILITARIANISM

Prof. Sidgwick classified hedonism into two categories – egoistic hedonism and universalistic hedonism. Egoistic hedonism favours only the sensuous pleasure and subjective feeling of self-interest. This theory holds that each man seeks or ought to seek his own pleasure. But Egoistic hedonism fails to show the impartial character of moral action. Universalistic hedonism does not consider selfish pleasure only, it also considers the pleasure of all sentient creatures. It is also known as utilitarianism.
According to utilitarianism, moral standard of rightness and goodness consists in seeking greatest happiness for others. Shaftesbury, Butler and Adamson are the exponents of utilitarianism. As against hedonism, utilitarianism holds that man by very nature seeks the good of the others. Utilitarians believe that right action is one that bears the best consequences. J.S. Mill says, Actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as tend to produce the reverse of happiness, the utilitarian standard is that of the greatest amount of happiness of the greatest number. John Mackenzie say, “We must be just to ourselves; and Sidgwick interprets this as meaning that we must be impartial in the treatment of all the movements of our lives; and, in choosing our own pleasures, the future is to be regarded as of equal weight with the present. In like manner also, the pleasures of others are to be regarded as of equal weight with our own.”

Here, Bradley criticizes both the theories of Hedonism. According to him, animals also seek pleasure so this cannot be the sole aim of human being. Hedonism has nothing to do with ethics. Because Ethics ask the question of 'ought'. As Ethics are the science of value, it has nothing to do with facts. It is the science of 'should' and not of 'is'.

Moreover, Bradley raises the question, should pleasure be regarded as the only standard to justify the activity? According to him, a man should realize that he is something more than pleasure and pain. Feeling is always the result and not the criterion or standard of any activity. It is merely a consequence of an activity. Therefore, deciding factor is not feeling but intellect. Bradley distinguishes between quality of pleasure and quantity of pleasure. It is correct that at certain stage we may get more pleasure but by mere quantity one cannot decide whether that activity is good or bad for him. Feeling follows feeling and never rises to thought, concept or idea.
Bradley also says that feelings are frequent in nature. Feeling is an endless cycle. It is a natural phenomenal that every now and then, one or the other demand for satisfaction arises in our body. But natural phenomena cannot be the standard of our activity. It is not morality because the factor of feeling is common between man and animals. It is the power of discrimination that distinguishes the man from animal. To do something good, to do something right is morality. So, one has to become conscious of pleasure. Such consciousness decides whether one should continue any activity or not. This consciousness gives us the standard of morality. In other words, it is the 'quality of pleasure' that is more important and not the 'quantity of the pleasure'.

The concept of 'quality of pleasure' is against hedonism. Sometimes, it also happens that one undergoes pain in order to get pleasure. For instance, a mother undergoes the pain at the time of child-birth, religious persons like Christ and Lord Swaminarayan undergoes the pain of severe austerity for the betterment of mankind, martyrs undergoes the pain of death for the cause of freedom. This is the quality of pleasure. Thus, quality of pleasure is not related with the senses but with intellect. One may find higher pleasure in reading a book, hearing music, serving the people or worshiping God. Aristotle rightly says 'Dianoatic' is the pleasure of intelligence that is outstanding.

J.S.Mill very appropriately says it is better to become Socrates dissatisfied than pig satisfied. Socrates used the term 'divine dissatisfaction' for the same. Because aim of Socrates was examination of life. As Socrates said that it is better to live 'examined life' than 'unexamined' one. One should assess his life with reflective and thoughtful attitude and this is the core characteristic of morality.
Happiness of saint is also of a higher quality of pleasure. It is because his saintliness, despite facing adversities, resistance and insults, remains unmoved and unaltered. It is the higher quality of pleasure that instigates the great personalities to undergo severe pain. Jesus Christ accepted to be crucified on the cross, Mirābāi readily accepted a cup of poison. Many pseudo sects existed at the time of Lord Swaminarayan who inhumanly harassed band of paramhansas. But Lord Swaminarayan emphasized to accept the path of endurance, forbearance and tolerance. Thus, He taught to handle the critical situations with a great spirit. Lord says,

“My saints and Brahmaçāris should always tolerate the abuses, beating of wicked but in return never abuse and beat them instead always wish for their betterment. But never ever think ill of them.”

Thus, the ethics of Śikṣāpatrī shows the exalted position of quality of pleasure.

**FREEDOM IN ACTION**

From the practical point of view freedom is necessary factor in morality, as it is also one of the standard of morality. Question of morality arises only when one has a freedom of choice to do his actions. It aptly said that, “A man’s self on the other hand, is the universe in which he habitually lives. For this reason man is free in a sense in which an animal is not free. His acts are his own only when he is himself in doing them, i.e. when they flow from the center of his habitual universe. He has thus a center of action which has a certain relative permanence; and for this reason his acts are free in a sense in which the movements of a mere animal, though spontaneous, are not free.”

As the faculty of rational thinking is not developed in trees, plants, animals, children or insane, they are not responsible for their immoral acts.
They do not have the power of freedom. That is why rational thinking or freedom of will to do an action is necessary for morality and moral responsibility.

Freedom means a positive will to do an action. What is more important is the willpower. Freedom means exercise of will power. Thus, freedom means freedom of will. Mackenzie says, “The freedom on the other hand, means simply the absence of determination by anything outside the character itself. To be free means that one is determined by nothing but oneself”.

There is a difference between freedom and liberty. Liberty is the freedom of doing something of one's own choice whereas freedom is a law of oughtness. Kānt believes that freedom is not a psychological. Kānt, the Bhagavad Gītā and Śikṣāpatrī propounded freedom but not liberty. Freedom is a connected with knowledge and limitation is one of the integral aspect of knowledge.

Rādhākrśna compares freedom with the game of cards. In the game of cards one has no control over the type of card that one gets. But the cards that one already has is his freedom because he knows the cards. So how to play the card is the knowledge and that knowledge is his freedom. K. C. Bhattačārya, in 'Self as Freedom' has distinguished between bodily, psychical and spiritual freedom and has said that, “True knowledge and freedom belong to pure subject. It is the subjective consciousness which truly cognises real freedom. In the search for true freedom the seeker rises from bodily freedom to psychical and finally toward spiritual freedom.”

Freedom can't be observed. Freedom is to be understood. It is not sense experience but understood by reason. Kānt says that freedom is
internal pressure, from within. Thus, categorical imperative is an internal law. That is why categorical imperative is related to conscience.

There is no blank freedom. Freedom is always associated with qualities, with care, with working, with rule of ought. Freedom is correlated with the rule of behaviour i.e. imperative. In this sense, verses of Śiksāpatrī are the imperatives. Lord Swaminarayan says,

“My followers who shall observe strictly the rules of ethics (e.g. non-injury etc.) as prescribed by the scriptures shall derive happiness here and hereafter; and those who wantonly transgress them and behave willfully shall suffer great distress here and in the life hereafter.”

It is said that freedom is a political ideal whereas liberation is philosophical and spiritual ideal. Therefore, on one hand precepts of Śiksāpatrī puts check on wantonness, on the other hand it gives freedom for the right and proper choice. Generally the term freedom is misunderstood in its application. The noble meaning of freedom is conveyed by Lord Swaminarayan through Śiksāpatrī. If one wants to liberate his soul from the bondages of the prārabdha and three qualities; rajas, tamas and satva, he should abide himself to the codes and prescriptions of the scripture. To behave wantonly, without any restriction on senses or any control on the conduct, is not freedom. But, to act according to the discipline of scriptures and abiding ourselves to the same is a freedom in a real sense. For instance, glory of river lies in flowing within two banks, glory of tree lies in clinging to its root, and the glory of human being lies in committing himself to the laws of morality. To live, affirming the boundaries demarcated by holy scriptures is the real freedom. Therefore, codes of Śiksāpatrī are the preconditions for the ultimate salvation.
There are many kinds of freedom. The freedom of man is the highest kind of freedom among all the other existing creatures because all the activities of a man are centered at the rational self. One who is enslaved by his passions and acts irrationally is not free but one who keeps his rational self in center and always acts rationally, controlling his passions is truly free.

John Mackenzie says, “It may, in a certain sense, be maintained that there is no other perfect freedom, the only ultimate freedom. The only ultimate self is the rational self; and the only ultimate freedom is the freedom that we have when we are rational.”

**CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE**

In moral philosophy, philosophers deal with many problems such as goodness, reason, rights, reason of moral judgment and the aim of life. Kānt deals with the problem of ‘Categorical Imperative.’ He distinguishes between moral duty and knowledge. Action and knowledge are distinct. That is why he categorizes I) Critique of pure reason. II) Critique of practical reason.

In the Critique of pure reason he deals with the problem of knowledge and science whereas in the critique of practical reason, he deals with the problem of duty and obligations. Later includes the nature of practical standard and the criterion of moral judgment.

In critique of practical reason, Kānt deals with the three postulates of morality; God, Freedom and Immortality. According to him, to develop and justify morality in strict sense, it is essential to believe in God, freedom and immortality. He thinks that the God combines virtue and happiness. He thinks that for a moral progress, virtues should be detached from pleasure. To be free in a real sense is to be virtuous. Freedom is the internal recognition that motivates the individual to follow certain practice. For
immortality, he says that a virtuous person may or may not get happiness as a reward of morality in this life but he is sure to get the necessary field and support in the future life.

Kânt is foremost among the thinkers who think that morality is fundamental, basic, and primary. He differentiates between phenomena and naumena or reality. Normally it is said that naumena cannot be known but Kânt believes that there is an avenue to know the reality either by action or by duty. People call it as faith, trust or testimony. This moral pathway to know the reality is called categorical imperative.

Kânt further differentiates between hypothetical imperative & categorical Imperative. In the case of hypothetical imperative there is a relation of ‘if’ and ‘then’, there is a factor of anticipation and reward. The morality of hypothetical type is relative in nature. If we perform certain good actions we expect good results too. For instance, when we speak politely, we expect some body to admire us, when we invite somebody we anticipate an invitation from him.

In categorical imperative, the factors of expectation, desire, anticipation and reward do not exist. He says that true morality is beyond all these. Categorical means ‘must’ or ‘ought’. According to him, ‘sense of oughtness’ is emphasized in categorical imperative.

The categorical imperative says that a certain kind of action is objectively necessary, without regard to any end. The categorical imperative is synthetic apriori. Its character is deduced by Kânt from the concept of law: “If I think of a Categorical imperative, I know at once what it contains. For as the imperative contains, besides the law, only the necessity of the maxim to be in accordance with this law, but the law contains no condition by which it is limited, nothing remains over but the generality of a law is
Duty and Categorical Imperative

general to which the maxim of the action is to be made conformable, and which conforming alone presents the imperative as necessary. Therefore the Categorical imperative is a single one, and in fact this: ‘Act only according to a maxim by which you can at the same time will that it shall become a general law.’ Or: ‘Act as if the maxim of your actions were to become through your will a general natural law.’”

Thus, the first criterion of categorical imperative says that one should behave morally so that everybody should be accordingly in a position to do it. This is the meaning of universal application of the principle of conduct. This principle is normally termed as ‘duty for the sake of duty’. You help your family, you serve your fellow being. He says, true morality is beyond pleasure but to follow this principle, it is very hard and vigorous. True ethics is stoical but if one follows it, his whole personality emerges from within.

Kant says, Moral will is a good will and it is universal. “The meaning of categorical imperative is that obligation to do one’s duty is independent of its affiliation and affection or with scientific cognition and its springs lie in the self of the individual.” Kant recognizes that there is a pure will which is not our ordinary willing. Kant calls it the good and holy will.

The second criterion is, “You should not use others as means but as ends.” According to Kant, every human being is very valuable. He is against slavery and exploitation. He says, we should not use other persons as an instrument. He is against pragmatism and utilitarianism. Everybody is an end in itself. As per second criterion each and every individual should be given proper esteem and value in the whole world to uphold human dignity. Thus, he gives us the foundation of democracy.

The third criterion is, you should become a member of the realm of ends. Kânt is aware of the fact that people are tempted to do evil whenever
Duty and Categorical Imperative

they get an opportunity to do so. It is said that, "Evil is always parasitic upon good. This shows that evil can work its influence when it is accompanied with goodness. Evil never works independently.

Categorical imperative is the absolute law. In morality we want to find out what is absolute. Moral law is something to be followed thoroughly. It is a self-determinism. Do's and don'ts are followed by you without any external pressure but by a will from within. In morality you can't take holidays, it is an absolute law. It is prescribed by your ownself. It is a promise that you give to your ownself.

Kant distinguishes between natural and moral law. As Moral law is prescription, Moral philosophy gives us imperatives: "As imperative is the linguistic form in which a command is expressed. Commands are related to laws as duty is to the good will. Thus, all rational being act according to the conception of laws. Categorical imperative expresses commands which are not conditional on any purpose at all. They are not of the form, 'Do this in order to achieve that', but simply 'Do this' "

Thus, according to Kant, neither pleasure nor happiness, neither utility nor consequence is the standard of moral activity. Hedonism and utilitarianism fails to provide universal moral standard. Only the action devoid of subjectivity and self-interest leads towards complete goodness.

There are some limitations to the criterions of categorical imperative of Kant. He fails to speak about the name, nature and type of duty. He just says, 'do your duty' which is an abstract principle. His first criterion of universal will is theoretical and not practical. Moreover, he ignores the natural psychology of human mind because desired and well-calculated results are a part of human psyche. Lastly, he forgets practical reality of the world. A society cannot progress without distinction. In our practical world,
distinctions are bound to be there. For instance, a boss and a clerk, an owner and a servant and likewise.

Apart from all these limitations, categorical imperative is high teaching of moral philosophy that ‘duty should be performed for the sake of duty’. The aim of moral life is to perform duty. Thus, categorical imperative is a proper principle but it is to be modified in the light of divine surrender, Just as it is said in the Bhagavad Gītā, the fruits of actions gained should be surrender to the God as a humble offering. It is nīskām karmayoga - actions independent of desire and expectation of fruits. So, an individual should look upon himself as an instrument of will of divine.

Activities should always be result oriented. The results that are beneficial to mankind, to nation, to family, to surroundings and to the cosmic welfare. This is expected of virtue, responsibility and moral act. In the principle of Kānt there is an absence of yoga, whereas, in Indian ethics there is an emphasis on yoga, Indian ethics can also be said as ‘spiritual categorical imperative’ or ‘transcendental categorical imperative’.

Categorical imperative as it is, is not sufficient in providing moral standard. Its moral, i.e. ‘duty for the sake of duty’ is good but ultimately duty should be done for the sake of something more, i.e. love of God, or devotion of God. If one wants to implement categorical imperative in one’s day to day life, one has to depend on God because, God alone is karmafalapradātā.

GOODNESS – SUMMUN GENUS

According to G.E.Moore, goodness is a predicate. It is the ultimate effect of the activity. Goodness is the measurement or evaluation of the activity in the light of rightness or wrongness. He says, goodness is an ideal, or an aim. Here Moore is rectifying the mistake of J.S.Mill. Mill says that
goodness is audible, visible and desirable. Audible means it can be heard, visible means it can be seen and desirable means it can be desired but Moore says it's a mistake. Desirable does not mean it can be desired but it 'ought to be desired'. Virtuous man is not the one who can but one who acts rightly because virtue exists in activity. Goodness is not capacity or potentiality but an activity. Moore is complains that philosophy has confused 'is' with 'ought', 'actual' with 'ideal'. He wants to point out that desirable is a quality and not a property. He remarked it as 'naturalistic fallacy'.

Thus, goodness is the aim of life. Goodness does not consist in collecting something but in inquiring for what is it being collected. T.H.Green has also said that aim of moral activity is not to collect money, fame and popularity, it is to realize a higher quality.

Goodness is indefinable. Definition always implies a class; that is called in logical language as 'Genus'. For example, man is an animal, rikshaw is a vehicle, a triangle is a figure. All these are 'Genus'. Genus is wider class in which subject is included. Moore wants to say that goodness has no genus, has no class. All the qualities like nobility, virtue, kindness are included in goodness itself. In logical language it is called Summun Genus; means the ultimate or the final.

Goodness simply as a word has no meaning but when it is accompanied by practice it becomes an ideal. Virtuous activity is the essence of Goodness. Moral law puts necessary check on our actions. But by mere restrain, moral progress is not possible. It requires cultivation of virtues. Our deeds should be backed by virtues.

Kedarnath in his book Vivek ane Sadhana rightly says, “Even though it is dynamic, life lacking discipline fails to follow the path of virtue and goes astray. As a consequence, it becomes the cause of our own downfall as
well as that of others. There should be in our life and appropriate combination of work and discipline. He further adds, man cannot be steadfast on any virtue with determination. Virtues are not generated or developed from mere wishing. That process requires the catalyst of moral conduct.” 13

ŚIKŚĀPATRĪ – A MODIFIED CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE

Sir Monier Williams says, without doubt the tendency of the doctrines inculcated by Swaminarayan is towards purity of and conduct. Salvation is to be attained not merely by devotion but by a faithful discharge of the duties of religion and by control of passions and purity of conduct.

We can appreciate the categorical imperative in the light of truth according to which we have framed our life. We have to act in accordance with such an imperative. Śikṣāpatrī is a moral and divine imperatives because it is revelation, a divine inspiration by the greatest visionary saint of India - Lord Swaminaraya. His inspiration is not only moral but also spiritual.

In the Śikṣāpatrī the sense of oughtness is stressed throughout from start to end. Therefore the Lord says,

“And those of My disciples male and female who do not follow the tenets of the Śikṣāpatrī are considered excommunicated from this fellowship.” 14

Imperatives of Śikṣāpatrī are not abstract principles but concrete and easily applicable in practical life. Here ‘ought to do’ means practice of morality, virtuous life and good conduct. Ethics of Śikṣāpatrī is ethics of complete goodness. The standard of goodness is the best standard to assess the moral activity. As Ethics of Śikṣāpatrī directs our life towards final goal i.e. liberation, it can be said complete good.
It is therefore, appropriately said that, "A thing is generally said to be good when it is valuable for some end. Similarly, when we speak of conduct as good, we may mean that it is serviceable for the end or ideal that we have in view." 15

Spiritual categorical imperative of Śikṣāpatrī emphatically says that one who 'behaves' or 'acts' accordingly would be happy. So emphasis is laid on the implementation, the application and the practice but for the purity of conduct our actions should be oriented by virtues and Śikṣāpatrī helps one to be virtuous.

For the purification of body, the virtues like cleanliness, awareness of health and hygiene, purity of sanitation are necessary. Lord Swaminarayan says,

"Do not consume food, drink and medicine given by a man or a doctor whose conduct and bona fides are unknown to you." 16

For the purification of thought the virtues prescribed in Śikṣāpatrī are honesty in thought, love for learning and its advancement (vidyānurag), habit of reading good literature and study of scriptures.

For the purification of worldly activities, the virtues like honesty, punctuality in transaction and business dealings, discrimination in the matter of expense, maintenance of human dignity, appropriateness in allotment of the duties are necessary. Lord Swaminarayan says in Śikṣāpatrī,

"Pay the correct wages in cash or kind, according to the contract – to the workers employed by you." 17

For the purification of speech, abstinence from abusive language, vilification, false accusation and self-praising is indispensable. Śikṣāpatrī emphasizes on austerity of the speech consisting truthfulness, benevolence and loving. It says,
“Speak only the truth but do not utter such words that may hurt others.” ¹⁸

As Śikṣāpatrī is epistle of code of conduct, purity of conduct i.e. righteousness is its cardinal teachings. Non-violence, non-stealing, truth, honesty, chastity, charity, harmony, excellency of culture and character, sense of duty, discrimination, discipline, self control, forbearance, fortitude, faithfulness are the intrinsic qualities inculcated in Śikṣāpatrī. Thus, it gives full justice to the maxim of Manu Smṛti, “āśāra parmo dharmah” ¹⁹

All the above virtues lead one towards the purification of soul. Religiosity, theism, sacrifice, renunciation, wisdom, detachment, devotion, upāsanā (worship) good and auspicious company, devotional service, reverence, humility are those divine virtues which purifies the soul and converts all the actions into divine deeds.

Śikṣāpatrī is the treasure of virtues. Whoever lives accordingly is bound to be physically, mentally, economically, socially, culturally, morally and spiritually happy.

Thus, practice of ethical discipline of Śikṣāpatrī purifies the whole being. An aspirant who strictly cultivates and practices these virtues in his life can easily offer his actions as a devotion unto the lotus feet of God. Lord Swaminarayan shows the path of transformation of all over action into divine deeds. He says,

“It is only when a man gives up the desire to enjoy the fruits of dharma, artha and kāma, and thus good deeds simply in order to please God. These good deeds will develop into devotion and lead him to mokṣa.” ²⁰

It is said in Śrīmad Bhāgavat:
Duty and Categoric*

(Oh Suvrat – man of good character, i.e. Vyās, the thing which causes diseases in creatures can not by itself cure the disease. Similarly, all actions of man result in the cycle of births and deaths. These actions lead to self-destruction only. The action can lead to one’s liberation, only when they are performed as part of devotion to God.)

Thus, Ethics of Śiksāpatrī is the ethics of complete Goodness. Goodness is the final out come of pure and elevated consciousness. According to Lord Swaminarayan human Goodness is a part of divine Goodness. Śiksāpatrī turns all the commas of Categorical Imperatives of Kānt into full points. What Kānt has left incomplete, Śiksāpatrī fulfills. Śiksāpatrī modifies the principle of ‘Duty for the sake of duty’ as ‘Duty for the sake of deity’.

Notes & References

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18. Śiksāpatra, 26.
20. Vaćanāmṛta, Gadhadā Middle 11
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