Chapter: v

ŚIKSĀPATRĪ
AND ITS CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

India has witnessed and undergone tremendous attacks from different races like Arab, Muslims, Britishers, Portuguese etc. in the past. They all tried to demolish temples, palaces, forts and many other structures which were considered to be the most valuable monuments of India. But it is a matter of surprise that they failed in their attempt to damage the fort of Indian culture. As it had a very sound footing, cultural heritage, religious feelings & the Indian culture remained untouched.

CONTEMPORARY TRENDS AND TRIBULATIONS

If we closely scrutinize last few decades, we can see that there has been a drastic change at all the levels of life. On one hand the progress in technology eased the human life with luxuries and comforts but on the other hand it also brought with it an era of problems, puzzles and perplexities. Scientific discoveries and inventions have no doubt made a person’s life smoother, but it has also greatly affected and disturbed the inner purity and tranquility of an individual. As the sphere of science is confined only to materialistic world, it has gifted the mankind only with the products that brings transitory, temporary and relative amusement. It has somehow failed to bring mental peace and everlasting or absolute happiness. Thus, the contemporary age, suffering from the disease called materialism is badly in search of remedy that is effective and everlasting.
As we step into the contemporary era, the evil contents of the proverbial Pandora’s box seems to dominate. The scenario of modern life is corroded by degeneration of moral and ethical values, while the mental peace is torn by the evils of ego and envy. In every aspect of life there are battles for possession and power, conflicts in societies, disputes within families. Humanity seems desperately in need for a solution to rise above the vices and passions that have reduced a man to a gross existence. It is said that we have more educated people than at any time in the history; yet what we lack is spirituality.

In agreement with this Rādhākrṣṇan states, “Those who are born in this age feel the loss of faith; they are the spiritually displaced; they are the culturally uprooted; they are the traditionless. The only hope for man is a spiritual recovery, the realization that he is an unfinished animal and his goal is the Kingdom of God which is latent in him. Without a spiritual recovery, the scientific achievements threaten to destroy us.”

Today, we are passing through an era of contamination and deterioration. This degradation is seen and experienced in all walks of life. It is widespread from an individual to all the nations of the world. The consequences of spiritual ignorance are predominant at individual level, social level, national level and international level too.

**INDIVIDUAL DISINTEGRATION**

Today, a human being is facing intolerable crises like terminal diseases, economic insecurity, mental turmoil, intellectual illness and hypocritical religion. The most concise definition of modern man is
‘extrovert man’. David Rissman in his book ‘The Lonely Crowd’ calls such an extrovert man as ‘other directed’. In spite of living in the society, whenever a man loses the contact with himself, he feels lonely and alienated.

_The Katha Upanişada_ says, “Man is turned outward by his senses and so loses contact with his own deepest self. His soul has become immersed in outer things in power and possessions. Man must turn inward to find right direction, meanings and realities that he has missed.”

For such ‘other directed’ or extrovert man, _Lord Swaminarayan_ says,

“The _jīva_ which resides in this body looks at beauty and ugliness, he looks at his childhood, young age and old age. He looks at innumerable such trifling things. He looks at all other objects with his eyes directed outwards but does not look inwards at himself. He enjoys the sight of innumerable objects with the help of organ of sight, as well as other sense organs like hearing, touching, testing and smelling but he does not care to enjoy the bliss that is lying latent within him. He does not try to realize his own self. Such a person is the most ignorant of all the ignorant persons. He is the craziest of all the craziest persons. He is the greatest fool among all the fools. He is the lowliest of all the lowliest persons.’”

This has happened because he has placed undue importance on matter at the cost of the spirit. Materialism is the mark of the day. The man on earth is restless today and our civilization is becoming more and more complex. Although the standard of living is rising higher, it does not bring peace and contentment. Man is living in the state of continuous mental turmoil. Today’s man, due to lack of proper spiritual guidance and understanding
carries forward his cartload of unsolved problems, dissatisfaction and unlimited desires. Materialism that is not governed by religion has always proved to be dangerous for mankind.

Today, man has overlooked the kernel and stuck to the shell. His body is a vehicle to reach the ideal of God realization but due to lack of proper insight, he gives undue importance to the vehicle than to the inner self. He constricts his vision to body and bodily attachments. Thus, the crises arise because he forgets his inner-self and runs madly after the physical comforts and contentment.

Science and technology have invented amazing comforts and luxuries; yet peace and harmony have remained beyond their reach. This is the point where science fades away and religion comes into the picture. The question of behaviour and action is directly related with one’s aim of life. Today, what is more important is the development of character in young and old. Science has been able to produce luxuries but has failed to produce character. It is only through ethical discipline that one can develop appropriate quality of life, strong character and integral personality.

According to Gādhi Ji, “In fact the end of all knowledge must be building up of character. A chivalrous boy would always keep his mind pure, his eyes straight and his hands unpolluted. If you will have this triple character with you, you will build on a solid foundation.”

Gādhi Ji goes further and says, “I had always given the first place to the culture of the heart. I regarded character building as the proper foundation for their education and if the foundation was firmly laid, I was sure, children would learn all the other things themselves. To develop the
spirit is to build character and to enable one to work towards a knowledge of God and self-realization."  

Character has an intrinsic value in the life of human being. A man of character can prepare himself to face any adverse situation of life. Character cannot be imbibed from outside. It’s an inward process. Neither the books nor the teacher can build a character. Man has to build his character himself.

The question of character building arises in the life of a human being but not in the life of an animal. For those who are being guided by their animal instincts Lord Swaminarayan emphasizes to take five vows to be a human in its real sense. These vows are namely, not to drink wine, not to eat meat, not to steal, not to commit adultery and not to practice gambling. Lord Swaminarayan says in Śikṣāpatri:

"Non shall steal even for benevolent purpose, nor shall take thing like fuel, flower, etc. without the consent of their owners. None of My followers male or female shall commit adultery or practice gambling and similar vices; and they shall abstain from drinking and inhaling intoxicants such as bhāṅga, tobacco, snuff, etc."  

Just as a lame cannot climb the mountain, a passionate man can never tread the path of spirituality. These five vows are mandatory for a human being to get rid of several crises, troubles and tribulations. Observance of these vows brings happiness and peace whereas violation of the same invites problems, pain and polarities in the life of an individual. This requires courageous endeavour and a radical change in our outlook. Lord Swaminarayan says,
“My disciples shall never take medicines which are given by a physician whose conduct and character are not known to them.”

An individual is always recognized not by his caste, status or name but by his character. It is the character that affects the masses. That is why Lord Swaminarayan makes his disciple conscious about this fact and alarms even for medicine from the person of an ill character. He shows the significance of good character. We can say that character building is the first lesson of the school of moral progress.

**PURITY OF MALE - FEMALE RELATIONSHIP**

Today, one of the noticeable evils that has been greatly affecting the purity of relationship in family as well as in the society is immoral and illicit relation of male and female. Modesty, shame, *maryādā*, these words are fast disappearing from the society. The pure land of India ones sanctified by the touch of great sages and visionary seers is contaminated.

Immoral male female relationship has been one of the major reasons of collapse of individual, society, country, culture and civilization. Characterless persons have known to be the cause of degradation wherever they exist. Just as one rotten mango spoils the whole basket, so also single characterless man or woman spoils the whole society.

A man should be vigilant when he is in the company of young woman. Contact of opposite sex is as delicate as the contact of butter and the fire. As the contact of opposite sex excites desire of lust, to maintain the purity in relationship of man and woman, one has to avoid unnecessary and excessive contact of each other.
Due to lack of understanding of such purity, contemporary society is passing through moral and social crises. Evils like adultery, illicit sexual relations, rapes and abortions are very common today. The number of unmarried mothers has been increasing day by day. In this era of darkness, a person does not hesitate even to marry his sister and thus surpasses all the boundaries of morality. People are morally dying every second due to loss of character.

With a view to save His disciple and mankind from this moral danger, Lord Swaminarayan, in Śikṣāpatrī has strictly commanded that,

"In the lonely place, one shall not remain even with his mother, sister or daughter of young age, except in the utmost emergency."  

It is the psychological fact that man is mostly deceived by his mind especially when he is with a woman in solitude. Even a man with strong will power is bound to stumble in such a situation. Keeping this fact in mind, Lord Swaminarayan gives the above prescription that is extremely inevitable and pertinent even today for character building.

Thus, in all our religious scriptures, saints and sages proclaimed that the lofty character of human being is the most valuable thing than any other things of the world. There is no use of plenty of wealth, knowledge, art, skill and beauty, if one is lacking in virtues like brahmaçarya and self-restraint.

From the ethical point of view, righteousness takes priority over all the moral disciplines. According to Lord Swaminarayan to be a virtuous one should cultivate two cardinal virtues, ahimsā and brahmaçarya. In a narrow
sense, *brahmaçarya* is celibacy. In a broad sense it is absolute control over the all senses.

One has to control his senses because of the fickleness of mind and the natural inclination of sense towards worldly objects. To control senses and the mind is as difficult as to control the wind. Even the great *yogīs* and ascetics have been cautious of the senses and conscience and advised not to trust mind and the senses. So for an ordinary man it becomes essential to practice *brahmaçarya* to develop good character.

In this context Sant Tukārām says, ‘*ekānti lokānti striyānśi bhaśaṇa, prāṇa gela karunaye*’ (Avoid talking to a woman in person or in public even if one loses his life.)

One of the aims of *Lord Swaminarayan’s* divine mission is to spread *nīśkāma dharma*. He considers, impure relationship between male and female as one of the great obstacles to the moral progress in the domestic as well as ascetic life. For the same reason, after taking a charge of fellowship, the first and foremost modification He introduced was to close a small hole closed in the wall from where the saints used to exchange fire with women. He explained that, the hole was not in the wall but in the religion as it will certainly cause the down fall of ascetic discipline by and by. Thus, He strictly emphasized on *nīśkāma dharma* at every moment of His life.

Today, even after two hundred years, to plug the hole of illicit sexual relations in the society, the value of the teachings of *Śikṣāpatrī* is as relevant as it was then.
Today, even the sanctity of religious festivals and holy places has been vitiated. Under the banner of religion, though not all but majority of people try to satisfy their passions and lust. To safeguard the sanctity of religion and maintain a strict discipline Lord Swaminarayan says,

"All male and female members coming to the temples of Śrī Kṛṣṇa for darṣan either daily or on days of religious festivals shall keep themselves aloof from the opposite sex."\(^1\)

Hence, Swaminarayan fellowship is also known as 'Ujalo pantha'; an enlightened sect.

Thus, for all the problems of individual disintegration from multi-dimensional crises to materialism, from chaotic life to character building, from the darkness of lust to the light of purity, the effective and perpetual guidance is provided by Śiksāpatrī.

**SOCIAL DISCORD**

Once the symmetry and harmony is disturbed at personal level it tends to extend even to the social level. The spiritual degradation gives ample testimony to the contemporary deterioration of social fabric. The degeneration of youth, rise of militancy, communal disharmony, religious fanaticism are due to lack of symmetry in the society and the lack of harmony in the human psyche. Humans are riddled with problems of all kinds.

Today divorces have become a casual event of the day. Emotional handling among the partners or the members of the family has virtually disappeared. Distrust has become a way of life. There has appeared a sense
of distrust and disrespect on a large scale in the society. Socialbondages are
torn apart bit by bit every day. Person has ceased to be a social animal in a
real sense of the term. The love and compassion have withered to monstrous
level.

Provincialism and casteism are rampantly visible everywhere. In
Government and public offices, law and order are considered to be outdated
while corruption and favouritism has become a way of modern life. Public
interest, national interest, ethics etc. are entirely ignored and money making
at any cost has become the sole objective of all the business houses. The
antisocial elements have established their dominance everywhere right from
the corner of the street to the parliament. Molestation of women and
drunkenness have acquired a form of social prestige and they seem to be a
definite form of value-nihilism in the society.

To all these and other untold endless problems of society today, Lord
Swaminarayan gives a brief and subject oriented way in the following
verses:

"None shall ever utter truth which may cause one’s own humiliation
or of others. They shall give up the company of ungrateful persons.
In social affairs, they shall never accept bribes from anyone." 11

"None shall approach a Guru a deity or a king empty handed." 12

"None shall enter or pass through private passages or put up in a
place without its owner’s permission." 13

"They shall never touch or talk to females if not closely related to
them; nor shall they be cruel to any living being or accept money
from others as deposits." 14
“They shall never stand as surety for others in their general dealings and they shall subsist on alms to tide over periods of difficulty but shall never incur debts.” 15

“My disciples shall never borrow money from the ācāryas or from the temple, nor shall they take any utensils, ornaments or clothes for their use from the temple.” 16

“They shall never keep others’ money as deposits. They shall cultivate patience. They shall never allow a female to tread in their place or residence.” 17

“My disciples shall not enter into business transactions (either for purchase of land or for lending money) even with their sons or friends without a written agreement made out in the presence of witnesses.” 18

“My disciples shall write legible and regular accounts of their daily income and expenditure in their own handwritings.” 19

Thus, anyone residing anywhere in the world, if ponders over and practices these teachings from Śīksāpatrī is sure to achieve a perfect balance and harmony in social life.

CULTURAL DETERIORATION

At the introduction of rapid industrialization and unplanned urbanization, more and more people from the rural area have flocked to the urban industrial cities and have become alienated from their cultural moorings. On the other hand, some Indians who migrated to the western countries are also facing the problem of cultural preservation. Youth born and brought up in the western world are caught in a web of identity crises,
torn between Indian values and the free atmosphere—culture of the west. More often they chose to identify with the west renouncing their cultural roots.

The other predominant evils that have been contaminating moral and cultural atmosphere are television, food habits, unfiltered imitation and addiction.

Desperate man, today, has fallen victim to the evils and complexities. By living a highly competitive life he has got exhausted and ultimately taken refuge in addictions and other immoral activities for his temporary relief.

The over dose of sex, violence and horror on international medias like television, movies and internet has been greatly affecting lives of children as well as youngsters. All these create turmoil in their mental sphere and distract their creativity and concentration. A child shooting at his parents or a student shooting down his teacher and co-students has become a common news of the day. All the sincere efforts and endeavour for moral fervour, self-discipline done by educational institutions, academicians and parents for their children have miserably failed.

It is rightly said that what you are is what you eat. Today, people have lost the power of discrimination of what to eat and what not to eat. In Taiwan, Singapore, China and other countries, man has crossed all the frontiers of common sense and has reached the extent of eating immature fetus, thus, surpassing the brutality of wild animals. The haphazard and crazy intake of food affects not only their physical health but also their mental and spiritual health.
The great heroes and other luminaries of the recent past have also been totally been forgotten. People read scriptures and go to the temple but for most of them, all these have become merely a formality and a mechanical process. Some people worship God and hang photographs of God and Goddesses in their houses but that too for the sake of social status. Sometimes God is being used as a spare wheel.

Specially focusing on this issue, Lord Swaminarayan elaborately explains,

“If one enjoys objects of the five senses indiscriminately and does not distinguish between good and bad, his intelligence is sure to be polluted even if he is a saint of the category of Nārad and Sanak, then what to talk of ordinary persons who are attached to their bodies. Hence if one lets lose his senses without restrictions, and without thinking about propriety and impropriety, his antahakarana is sure to be polluted.” 20

“None shall ever eat flesh, be it the remnant of offerings in a sacrifice; none shall drink liquor, or any intoxicating beverage even if it has been offered to the deities.” 21

“None of my followers – male or female shall commit adultery or practice gambling and similar vices; and shall abstain from drinking and inhaling intoxicants such as bhang, tobacco, snuff, etc.” 22

“None shall accept an offering made to a deity to whom flesh and wine are offered, and before whom goats, and the like beasts are sacrificed.” 23
"The brahmécarīs and the saints of this fold shall completely abstain from taking betel leaves, opium, tobacco etc."  

Thus, to restrict the cultural downfall and preserve the rich heritage, Śikṣāpatrī shows the pathway for the mankind irrespective of time and space.

**VICTIMIZED YOUTH**

Not only the Indian society but also the whole world is passing through the most unfavourable and adverse circumstances. This unfortunate situation has grossly affected the youth that is the grotesque tragedy of the time. The grip of social and moral evils has taken hold of today's youth. Moreover, as the youth are blindly imitating the western way of living life, they are deprived of cultural heritage of India. Consequently, their potential flow of energy is going astray and not utilized for the progress of the self, the society and the nation.

C. Rājgopālaçārī portraying the picture of today's youth comments: "It is a matter of regret that the young men and women of our universities have very poor knowledge about the Gītā and the principles of Hindu religion compared to the knowledge of the undergraduates of European universities know about the Bible and the principles of Christian faith. Young obviously the men and women of any Western Nation, had they inherited our philosophy would have been proud of it as an empire."  

As youth is the backbone of family, society and the nation, devaluation and degradation of youth obviously means the devaluation and degradation of family, society and the nation.
Today, standing on the threshold of life, youth is often troubled by the sudden flood of passions and desires. With his energy spent on aimless and sensuous pursuits, today’s youth has become a physical wreck. With mind full of anxiety, insecurities and tensions, the youth has also become a mental wreck. With lack of love, care and understanding, the youth has become an emotional wreck. With lack of guidance towards righteous conduct, the youth has become a moral wreck. Finally, due to lack of faith and conviction, the youth has become a spiritual wreck. Such is the distraught picture of today’s youth.

It is rightly said that, ‘The course of human history is determined, not by what happens in the skies, but by what takes place in the hearts of men.’

The hearts of the most of the men have forgotten their true religion and duty. If the heart is filled with hatred, fanaticism, the course of history would be written with blood; yes! Our own blood!

What is the solution? It is the heart full of love and compassion, the actions full of rhythm, senses perfectly synchronized with each other and harmony with the self and the surrounding – a true saint.

Youth is the reservoir of energy and talents that could change the course of history if channelized towards positive avenues. When the abundant energy and dynamism of youth is guided into constructive channels, it gives birth to healthy family, healthy society and the healthy nation. Śīkṣāpatrī fulfils this urgent need of the time by giving them proper direction.
Śikṣāpatri has a power to transform devastated figures of youth into an ideal human being. It can sculpt him into character of substance. Sincere observance of its codes would create a youth with a positive destination, a youth with patience and courage, a youth of confidence and dignity, a youth with faith in God and true love, a youth who ultimately rebuilds family, society and the nation. All these qualities and virtues are acquired by a submissive association with a true saint. This is the principle depicted in Śikṣāpatri in which it is said,

“One should constantly keep the company of saints.”

It is clearly evident that Śikṣāpatri effectively focuses for the well-being of society, conservation of culture and channelizing the tremendous energy of youth for re-building the nations.

NATIONAL CHAOS

It is said that to build a powerful and ideal nation, it requires powerful spiritual masters, dynamic and dedicated rulers, visionary educationists as well as literate and educated mothers are required. But unfortunately, if we cast our sight at the national scenario, none of the above mentioned faculties seem to be actively contributing to the cause.

In the above context, the contemporary Indian situation is most appalling. In the political field, the people from top to bottom are crazy after their status, power and more significantly in exploiting the masses and generating funds for their selfish motives. Mutual relationship and affinity between the rulers and the citizens has become a past. S. Rādhākrṣṇan rightly says that “The social pathos of the age are exploited by countless...
individuals in different parts of the world who pose as leaders and proclaim their foolishness as wisdom." 27

On the other hand, if we turn back to the field of education, we mostly come across the people who talk about the high ideals and morals like liberty and equality but at times their actions are faltering and misleading. They often tend to forget their responsibilities and liabilities towards the students community in specific and nation's future as a whole. A big gap exists between the educationists and the students as a result, what is being taught and what should be taught seems to be the mark of the time.

The social and the family fabric have worn out to such an extent that personal interests supersede national interest. People in the same family feel so unsecured that they madly run after acquiring absolutely selfish motives. People try to meet their person needs by any means whether fare or foul. They do not hesitate even for a moment to kill their conscience and sell their character. In such a messy picture it's hard to find mothers who are value oriented and education loving in the true sense of the term.

Due to all the above reasons and many more, the national and social wealth is misused for the satisfaction of the personal intentions of few. Thus, it is the nation that ultimately suffers.

It is rightly said that every cloud has a silver lining. So even in this time of turbulence and turmoil Lord Swaminarayan has offered prasāda to the mankind in the form of miniscule scripture, powerful enough to put an end to all the social and national evils and direct the nation towards the enlightened path and that is Śiksāpatrī.
Siksapatrī teaches how to establish the affinity between the ruler and the subjects. Only this affinity brings order and amity in the state. Lord Swaminarayan says,

“My disciples of the royal families shall in conformity with the scriptures, extend full protection to their subjects and treat them as their own children. They shall righteously consolidate religious tenets over the area within their command.” Further He enunciating the responsibilities and duties of an ideal king, He says, “My ruler disciples should be fully aware of the seven different constituents for successfully governance of the state, the four experience necessary for a victorious conquest of the enemy state, the six diplomatic qualities, and the important places to send the spies.”

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Scriptures proclaim that ‘yathā rājā tathā prajā’ means ‘as the king is, so are the subjects. If the king is passionate, the people would be passionate, and if the king is religious minded so also the subjects. Thus, king plays a vital role in moulding character and life of his citizens.

Here Lord Swaminarayan wants to say that the king should be religious minded and should rule according to the codes of religious scriptures like Yājnavalkya Sruti. He should treat his subjects as his own children. The king who has such loving and motherly relations with his subjects, shall treat all from Brahmins to śudra, rich and poor, learned and illiterate, with equal justice, without any discrimination. As he is impartial, he neither exploits the poor nor attaches more importance to the rich.

In fact, all the classes and each person of the society have privilege to get equal security and protection from their ruler. The king who is unable to
perform his duties, is not eligible to continue as the king. In *Rājadharma*, Bhīṣmapitāmaha describes the several duties of the king. Good king always rules within the boundaries of religion and also spreads religion everywhere. Lord Rāma, Samrāt Asoka and king Bharthuhari depicted the life of an ideal king and spread the religion during their rule.

There are two types of religions; religion that spreads righteousness and other is *Bhāgavat dharma*. To establish *Bhāgavat dharma* is the work of incarnation and saints but to establish the religion of *sadācāra* that is righteousness consisting of qualities like truth, forgiveness, austerity, purity in his subjects is the duty of ruler. Ultimately, the king is the soul of his subjects. An ideal king with his noble qualities and virtues makes his subjects happy and build healthy and progressive nation.

To put it in a nutshell, if religion and spirituality forms the basis of the thinking and will any society or nation can build dedicated rulers, effective educationalists and many other nation building and promoting faculties. Such principles of religion and spirituality are clearly imbibed in the simple verses of *Śiksāpatrī*.

**INTERNATIONAL UPROAR**

At the international levels, today, the countries are clearly divided into two groups; the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’, The eyes of the haves are blind and stomachs of the ‘have nots’ are empty so there is a great imbalance everywhere. Today every man on earth is panic stricken.

In spite of acquiring the sovereign power of the world, pity to say that even nations like America and Russia are facing the problem of disharmony
and restlessness because they are successful in finding the power of nuclear bomb but have miserably failed in recognizing the tremendous power of true love which is many fold effective than the power of the former. Harmony and peace are the off springs of love. Today world has advanced in technology of speed but has failed to focus on the science of stability.

S. Rādhākṛṣṇan rightly assess the state of contemporary age: "It is an age in which power and speed are held to be more important than comprehension and love, an age of tyranny and the futility of success. All the creeds in their different forms are anxious to save the world are marked by violence and brutality." 29

The root cause of all the problems is the selfishness of man. "All the evil thoughts which compel man to do immoral acts, come from within & not without. To rob, to kill, to commit adultery, to be greedy, and do all sorts of evil things; deceit, indecency, jealousy, slander, pride and folly – all these evil things come from inside a person and make him unclean." 30

Thus, solution as well as the cause of the problem lies within the heart of individual. Lord Swaminarayan realizing the same, in Śikṣāpatrī paved a way which smoothly leads one to a life of a perfect balance between heart and mind. It is the path towards sanctified and self-harmony. It makes us harmonious; it instills sanctity in humans who follow it.

The ethical philosophy of Swaminarayan with its insistence on reverence for all life gave a reorientation to Indian outlook upon life and the world.
“Till the arrival of Swaminarayan in India the charge levied by the late Dr. Scheitwzer in his book ‘Indian Thought and its Development’ that the majority of Indian speculative systems gave birth only to life-negating and world-negating philosophies of life remained valid and vindicated. The life and philosophy of Swaminarayan transformed the Indian outlook into a life affirming and world affirming philosophy of life. Helping the destitute, cooperating with all fellow beings in procuring and obtaining equally the means of earthly existence and living a just harmonious social life was emphasized by Swaminarayan.”

The significance of Śiksāpatrī lies in the enlightenment of individual, society and the nation. Today, scientist says that the world can be destroyed within a few seconds by nuclear weapons. So to safeguard the globe and mankind what is required is moral and spiritual enlightenment. It is religious knowledge that can become a true panacea for eradicating the evil from the world. So Śiksāpatrī is the true medicine for the global illness and light for the betterment of the mankind. To overcome the current crises, UNESCO has also emphasized on moral and religious knowledge. There is an international organization MRA (Moral Re-Armament) that advocates peace, progress and light in the world.

To reach this end, Śiksāpatrī advocates true knowledge for the people of whole world. Lord Swaminarayan has written it by keeping in view the human psychology and human limitations. So in the in one can see the continuity between past and present. That is why it is relevant in all the times and for all the people. The peerless quality of Śiksāpatrī lies in its
relevance in the contemporary era. So the value of miniscule scripture is eternal. Eternity is the virtue of God. It is only labeled to that entity which is unaffected by the crucial ties of the time and remains steady forever in its sanctity, glory, authority, supremacy and applicability. As Śikṣāpatri is the ‘word of God’, its value is immortal and eternal.

ŚIKṢĀPΑTRΙ - A DAWN OF NEW ERA

If one closely examines the overall condition of contemporary age, it can be seen that present society is ruled by rajas and tamas; ignorance, inertia, darkness, perishability are the elements of tamas whereas passion, restlessness and hyper activity are the elements of rajas. As long as man is guided by rajas and tamas, he would never progress in the direction of self-fulfillment and realization. So mankind today, needs to follow satva - that which regards spiritual freedom and growth as the chief aim. Man today should be ruled by satva. Light, purity, reality, knowledge and progress are the elements of satva. So instead of being ruled by prakṛti i.e. rajas and tamas, we need to be ruled by puruṣa i.e. new order of consciousness.

Ethics of Śikṣāpatri help to foster the quality of satva and therefore, leads towards light, purity and knowledge. Śikṣāpatri has power to transform the worst to the best. Anyone who practices the precepts of Śikṣāpatri, would be able to win over his prakṛti and enter into the new era of consciousness. Śikṣāpatri is a panacea that can cure the diseased society into a healthy one.

No doubt, the current scenario is heart breaking but it does not mean that there is no hope of the recovery and rejuvenation. Today, many social
and religious institutions are persistently working to cope up with the contemporary problems the world over. What is needed is pure understanding, conscious efforts and disciplined actions for which one has to take refuge in holy scriptures like *The Bhagavad Gītā* and *Śikṣāpatrī*.

*Śikṣāpatrī* harmonizes all the facets of human personality that are fragmented into small bits because of over burden and tensions of today's materialistic trend. It helps to restore one's inner strength, channelize it in a right direction and open one's inner eye toward the ultimate reality.

Rādhākṛṣṇan aptly says, “India has stood for an ideal that does not make man merely a creature of time, dependent solely on his material conditions and possessions, and confined to them. We have proclaimed that the world is under moral law, that the life is the scene of man's moral choice. It is *dharma-kṣetra*. It is never too late for man to strive and attain his full stature. For the Hindu and the Buddhist, religion is a transforming experience. It is not a theory of God; it is spiritual consciousness, insight into Reality.” 32

For a peaceful and graceful existence on earth, one has to commit oneself to the essential checks and codes, prescribed for him by the scriptures. The way out is sharing the wisdom imparted by the scriptures like *Śikṣāpatrī* by inner realization. It leads to the integrity of knowledge. That wisdom must be culminated in spiritual realization. “Different religions ask us to change our unregenerate nature to replace *avidyā* i.e. ignorance, by *vidyā* i.e wisdom.” 33
As long as the holy land of India is endowed and blessed with the scriptures like Śiksāpatrī – the torchbearer of Bhāgavat dharma, India’s moral, cultural and spiritual dignity is secured for the time eternal.

**Notes & References:**

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5. Edited by N. B. Sen, *Wit & Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, New Book Society of India, New Delhi, 1995, p. 34
6. Śiksāpatrī, 17, 18
7. Śiksāpatrī, 31
8. Śiksāpatrī, 136
9. Shri Laksāman Rāmāndra Pangarkar, Translated by Tryambaklal Maneklāl Shukla, *Sant Tukaram*, Sastī Sahitya Vardhak Karyalaya, Ahmedabad, Samvat 1993, Ch. 5th, p. 143
10. Śiksāpatrī, 40
11. Śiksāpatrī, 26
12. Śiksāpatrī, 37
13. Śiksāpatrī, 33
14. Śiksāpatrī, 124
15. Śiksāpatrī, 125
16. Śiksāpatrī, 150
17. Śiksāpatrī, 190
18. Śiksāpatrī, 143
19. Śiksāpatrī, 146
20. *Vačanāmṛtā* Gadhadā First 18
21. Śiksāpatrī, 15
22. Śiksāpatrī, 18
23. Śiksāpatrī, 22
24. Śiksāpatrī, 197
26. Śiksāpatrī, 36
28. Śiksāpatī, 157, 158
30. Mark 7:21, 22
31. *New Dimension of Vedant Philosophy*, Part-I, Bhagawān Swaminarayan Bicentenary Commemoration Volume, Published by Bochasanvasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Sanstha, Ahmedabad, p. 81