

Next level consciousness



support & donate

- [Magazine](#)
- [Publications](#)
- [Article Archive](#)
- [Glossary/Index](#)

[Article Archive](#)

## Social Relevance of Vandanā

Posted: 07.01.2016

Updated on: 16.12.2017

### ***Vandanā* (Reverence towards Ascetics)**

The third *āvaśyaka* is *vandanā*. Here *vandanā* means paying respect to the preceptor, to superiors who are seniors in austerity or penance, in scriptural knowledge, who are initiated earlier etc.<sup>[1]</sup> It is a kind of ritual, by which respect for ascetics is expressed, egoism is reduced and humility is cultivated.<sup>[2]</sup> Here the term '*vandanā*', is specially used in the sense of *Guru Vandanā*. Gaṇadhara Gautama raised a question, what is the outcome of doing *guru vandanā*? Mahāvīra replied that the person who does *vandanā* eliminates low status determining *karma* and at the same time binds high status determining *karma*.<sup>[3]</sup> The main purpose of the article is to highlight the socio-spiritual relevance of *vandanā*.

### ***Dravya* and *Bhāva Vandanā***

*Āvaśyaka Cūrṇī* describes two kinds of *vandanā*, *dravya vandanā* and *bhāva vandanā*. *Dravya vandanā* is done bereft of devotion and *bhāva vandanā* is done with complete devotion. The canonical text exemplifies the incident of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and his attendant Vīrakaulika, both of them did *vandanā*, i.e. bowing down to all the monks, but Vīrakaulika was imitating his master doing *vandanā*, without any inner feeling. A passer-by perceived such kind of dead activity (*dravya kriya*) and went to *tīrthāṅkara* Ariṣṭanemi and asked that who has gained more and who has gained less? Lord replied, "Śrī Kṛṣṇa has performed *bhāva vandanā* with the highest intensity of feelings and acquired *kṣāyika saṃyaktva* (eternal right-world-view) and has bound *tīrthāṅkara*

*nāma karma*. But Vīrakaulika paid *dravya vandanā*, he did *vandanā* only to please his master and gained his satisfaction and no other gain over and above that. His activity is only mechanical, so he didn't get any spiritual gain. So this incident emphasizes on the importance of feeling behind any action. For better understanding of the concept of *vandanā* the canonical verses are being translated from *Avashyaka Sutra*.

### **The Meaning of *Guru Vandanā***

The monks who are qualified for receiving *vandanā* are of five types, viz., *ācārya*, *upādhyāya*, *pravartaka*, *sthavira* and *ratnādhika* (all elder monks). The ritual passage to be recited by *śvetāmbaras* during the *vandanā* is as follows<sup>[4]</sup>:

"I desire to worship you forbearing monk, with intense concentration (the *guru*: willingly). Allow me to enter the measured space. Allow my bodily contact on the lower part of your body. Please excuse this annoyance. You will have spent the whole day fortunately little disturbed. (The *guru*: yes.) I ask pardon, forbearing monk, for my daily transgressions. Necessarily I make *pratikramaṇa* to you, forbearing monk, for any day to day lack of respect, for any of the thirty three *āsātanās* (disrespectful action), anything done amiss through mind, speech or body, through anger, pride, deceit or greed, through false behaviour and neglect of the sacred doctrine at any time, whatever offence may have been committed by me, forbearing monk, I confess and reprehend and repent for it and cast aside my past self."<sup>[5]</sup>

By paying reverence to *guru through the process of vandanā*, the soul destroys such *karmās* which leads to birth in low families, and acquires such *karmās* as leads to birth in noble families, he wins the affection of people, which results in his being looked upon as an authority and he brings about general goodwill.<sup>[6]</sup> In Indian culture, *guru* has got an important place. He has been, in fact, given a higher place than the God. It is the *guru* who guides the way to God. God resides in the heart of those who give due respect to *guru*. A man cannot attain knowledge without being blessed by *guru*. This ritual of *vandanā* highlights the reverence paid to the teacher or the preceptor by disciple and the affectionate relationship between the teacher and the student. Now let us discuss the social relevance of *vandanā* in brief.

### **Social Relevance of *Vandanā***

#### **i. Teacher: Student Relationship and *Vandanā***

The educational system in Indian culture follows basically the *guru-kula* method. The student has respect towards his teacher to such an extent that the Ekalavya at once cut his thumb-finger and gave it to his *guru* Dronācārya as a *dakshina*. In reality '*guru*' is that person who knows the path of attaining the truth and himself follows that path and preaches as well as he inspires others to follow the same. In the words of Ācārya Mahāprajña, *guru* is one who is capable of solving his own mental and emotional problems and who can show others the way to overcome the emotional and mental problems.<sup>[7]</sup> In spite of the presence of such masters, not everyone benefits from them. To receive them, one is to be in a receptive state of mind. As per my view, the

healthy teacher-student relationship can bring about a drastic change in the attitude, knowledge and life style of the student. "A candle lights the other candles. It never preaches but it simply lights the other candles and thereby inspires others." Ācāryās are like candles. They light hundreds of candle through their enlightened knowledge and pragmatic application. In the present environment, this has to be expressly understood that teaching should be performed not merely by words but by deeds, by the virtues of self-practice, good conduct and behaviour. It is true that whatever is taught by conduct and practice cannot merely be taught by words. So the conduct of a teacher is important. Today centers of education are more commercialized, mere informative, where professional-oriented knowledge is imparted. Due to this, other inner potentialities of the student i.e. discipline, tolerance, humility, and adjustment etc. virtues remain hidden and are being less emphasized.

A Student's dedication towards *guru* and *guru's* inner urge to share the living knowledge without any kind of lust for money will bring about internal faith in a student towards the *guru*. By serving such *guru*, it is said in Sanskrit verse, that the student can increase his life span, knowledge of wisdom, name, fame and energy.<sup>[8]</sup> The teaching and learning process becomes a smooth and enjoyable ride. So the teacher's contribution in the development of the student and society is undeniable.

## ii. Physiological Effect of *Vandanā*

*Vandanā* posture is a posture of modesty, humbleness. When a person pays obeisance, pressure on navel part of the body occurs. There resides our adrenal gland, which secretes many stimulating hormones which are responsible for controlling ones sexual urges, emotions and helps in developing the virtue of meekness, discipline, etc. As per ayurveda, the cause of entire disease is imbalance of naval portion of body, if naval part of the body is healthy, then a person is considered healthy.<sup>[9]</sup> Moreover it is said that *vandanā* is a kind of ritual, which is practiced in the *Jain* code of conduct twice a day to every elder monk and nun which is not only good for physical fitness as well as creates a healthy relationship of care and share. During *vandanā* our energy flow changes its direction from lower portion of the body to the upper part of the body i.e. brain. Our brain needs 20% of the oxygen for its operational efficiency. As per Mahāprajña, *vandanā* makes our muscles flexible, knee pain is removed and our spinal cord's rigidity disappears. Passions are pacified. The digestive and respiratory system if both are working properly, then no disease will occur. So at the gross level *vandanā* leads to physical health.<sup>[10]</sup>

## iii. Remedy for Ego Problem and *Vandanā*

The ego problem is an ever-lasting problem. Right from the origin of civilization, all wars were fought to satisfy ones ego, whether it is *Mahābhārata*, or the war between Iraq and America. Ego and attachment are the two main causes of all the problems.<sup>[11]</sup> Through the process of *vandanā*, one can pacify one's own ego.<sup>[12]</sup> Today families are becoming the center of quarrels due to a clash of egos among the members. This ego problem is all pervading in the present era, in

schools, colleges, universities, religious organizations, offices everywhere. To satisfy one's ego, man can even kill other man, can also cut the chain of blood relationship, can be cruel towards his employers and what not. It is an experienced fact that when somebody attacks on somebody's ego, he becomes angry. In anger, he becomes blind and commits unimaginable social harms. So in order to overcome the problem of ego, one must be respectful towards elders and work under the guidance of any spiritual *guru* and try to confess his own weakness and know the means of eradicating the ego.

A man of humble nature always succeeds in his life. "Pride hath a fall" is a famous saying. The lively incidence of *Bābubālī*'s pride is an illustration. He meditated in a standing posture continuously for about a year, but he didn't attain omniscient knowledge. I have to bow or pay *vandanā* to my younger brothers, this ego stopped him from taking initiation. But, when his sisters awakened him from his dogmatic egoistic view, at once he achieved *kevala jñāna*.<sup>[13]</sup> Even religious organizations are also not free from this devil of ego. In the text *maryādā* and *vyavasthā*, Jeetmalji writes if any *ācārya* wants to choose his successor, many disciples are competent enough to be his successor. Under such a condition, *ācārya* should choose that disciple whose ego is under control and who is placid by nature.<sup>[14]</sup> A humble person not only becomes the apple of an eye of the family but also of the society and the world at large. Thus by paying *vandanā*, we subdue our ego, control our passions, and develop humility, all of which helps us to advance spiritually.<sup>[15]</sup>

## ***Vandanā* and Spiritual Growth**

As already mentioned that *vandanā* is an essential tool for attaining the high status in the society and shedding off of lower status determining karma. In *Bhagavati Sutra*, it is quoted that who does *vandanā* to guru achieves good company. As a result of being in the good company, the disciple acquires the valuable wisdom. In *Thanam Sutra*, the ten advantages of paying *vandanā* and good company is expressed by the Mahavira. The disciple who sits beside the spiritual guru first of all listens, which leads to the acquisition of the scriptural knowledge, it in turn leads to the discretion of right and wrong, again it leads towards the renunciation of wrong, and successively self-discipline-stoppage of inflow of karmas-observances of penance-shedding of karmas-inaction state of self-and finally leads us towards the ultimate goal i.e. liberation. Such a long series of merits is received by disciple under the lap of the true guru.<sup>[16]</sup> So one should sit beside the guru for attaining spiritual guidance and enlightenment. It is said that one should not pay *vandanā* to guru for the benefit of this life or for the next life, for prestige, name and fame etc. but for merely shedding off the eight levels of status determining karmas and for attaining the state of *gotratita*.<sup>[17]</sup>

Thus *vandanā* not only leads to shedding of *karmās*, it is a kind of respect for the *guru* who enlightens the disciple with his precious knowledge. Giving respect to the teachers is a kind of common etiquette in the world. *Tīrthāṅkara* Mahāvīra prescribed *vandanā* as an essential duty for the layperson or householders, 2600 years ago. *Vandanā* highlights the essence of knowledge rendering *guru*, who, if he gets influenced by the humble behaviour of a disciple, awakens the intuitional knowledge which is the ultimate achievement of one's life. The more the healthy

relations between the *guru* and the disciple are, the healthier society of peace and harmony can be established.

## Bibliography

### Primary Texts

*Āvaśyaka Sūtra*. Ed. Yuvācārya Mishrimal 'Madhukar'. With original text. Hindi translation. Appendices. Beawar: Shri Āgam Prakāśan Samiti, 2001.

*Dhammapada*. Shrichandji Rampuria. Text in original Pali. With English translation and commentaries. Ladnun: Jain Vishva Bharati Institute, 1997.

*Thāṇaṁ*. Ed. Muni Nathmal. With Prakrit text, Sanskrit Rendering and Hindi version with notes. Ladnun: Jain Vishva Bhāratī. 1976.

*Uttarajjayaṇāṇi*. Ed. Yuvacharya Mahaprajña. With Prakrit Text, Sanskrit rendering, Hindi translation, Comparative notes and Various appendices. Ladnun: Jain Vishva Bhāratī Institute. Vol.-I, 1990, Vol.-II, 1993.

*Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*. Ed. Muni Mishrimalji Maharaj. Trans. Muni Rajendra. Beawar: Āgam Prakāshan Samiti. 1991.

### Secondary Books

Mahāprajña, Ācārya. *Anuśāsana Saṁhitā*. Ed. and trans. Sādhvi Viśrutavibhā. Udaipur: Sarvotam Sāhitya Saṁsthān. 2004.

Ācārya Tulsi. *Candan Kī Cutakī Bhali*. Cūru: Ādarś Sāhitya Saṁgha. 1947.

Ācārya Mahāprajña. *Jaina Dharma Ke Sādhanā Sūtra*. Delhi: Ādarśa Sāhitya Sangh. 2001.

Nathubhai Shah. *Jainism: The World of Conquerors*. Great Britain: Sussex Academic Press. Vol. I-II. 1998.

Ācārya Mahāprajña, *Maryādā aur Vyavastā*, Cūru: Ādarś Sāhitya Saṁgha. 1947.

Sadhvi Kanchan Kumari, *Shadavashyak: Aatma Shuddi Ki Prakriya*, Jain Vishva Bharati, Ladnun, 2011

*You Can Change The World. 'Who is Guru'*. January, 2004.

### Footnotes:

[1] *Āvaśyaka Sūtra*. Ed. Yuvācārya Mishrimal 'Madhukar'. With original text. Hindi translation. Appendices. Beawar: Shri Āgam Prakāśan Samiti, 2001, p. 31.

[2] Nattubhai Shah. *Jainism: The World of Conquerors*, p. 72.

- [3] *Uttaradhyayana Sutra*, 29.11.  
[4] *Navasuttāṇi*. Ed. Yuvācārya Mahāprajña, p. 7.  
[5] *Āvashyak Sūtra*, 3-1.  
[6] *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*.29.10.  
[7] *You Can Change The World. 'Who is Guru'*. January, 2004, p. 6.  
[8] *Dhammapada*, verse 109; Mahāprajña. *Jain Dharma ke Sādhanā Sūtra*, p. 151.  
[9] Sadhvi Kanchan Kumari, *Shadavashyak. Aatma Shuddi Ki Prakriya*, Jain Vishva Bharati, Ladnun, 2011, p.151.  
[10] Mahāprajña. *Jain Dharma ke Sādhanā Sūtra*, p. 163.  
[11] *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, 32.7  
[12] *Āvaśyaka Sūtra*, p. 32.  
[13] Ācārya Tulsī. *Candan Kī Cutakī Bhali.Cūru: Ādarś Sāhitya Saṁgha*.1947, p. 44.  
[14] Ācārya Mahāprajña. *Terāpanth Maryādā aur Vyevastā*, p. 81; Ācārya Mahāprajña. *Anuśāsana Saṁhitā*, p. 189.  
[15] Samaniji. *Pratikramaṇa: A Guide Book*. Ladnun: Jain Vishva Bharati. 2007, p.12.  
[16] *Thāṇaṁ Sūtra*, 10.76.  
[17] *Avashyaka Curni*, 2, p.39. p,49.  
Share this page on:

## Affiliated

► [Magazine](#) ► ... ► [Papers](#)

## Social Networking

Follow us on:

## Newsletter

Stay up to date and get our [Newsletter](#) once a week by E-mail.

© 1997 - 2018 HereNow4U, Version 3.6 (mob)

[Contact Us](#) • [Disclaimer](#)

681 views since 07.01.2016

[Top of page](#)

[ulsex.net](#)

[ulsexvideo.com](#)

[ulporno.com](#)

[scat-slaves.net](#)