

# **Krutagnata**

## **Introduction**

All you hear today from every direction is that society has become corrupted and there is nothing left to live for. The world is surrounded with many questions, for which there is no answer.

What is the condition of society today? Man vs. man? Are they meant to cooperate or alienate? Even the developed countries are dependent on nursing homes for their senior citizens and day care centers for their infants. Is this expected in a society? What is the reason behind all this?

The society has been put in this situation because it lacks **character** (sheel) as its main foundation. We know the story of Prahalad where Indra Bhagvan comes to Prahalad's court in the form of a Brahmin and demands character from Prahalad. As soon as he gives character from his own body to Indra, one by one, five different forms come out of his body. Indra asks them who they are. The first was Dharma (Duty), the second Ethics (Neeti), the third was moral behavior/actions (Sadāchār), the fourth Strength (Shakti) and the last was Wealth (Lakshmi). It means that only when we have character, we will obtain these other things that Prahalad had. We simply have to make an effort. When there is a lack of character, a sense of inferiority complex is developed and self-confidence disappears. This leads to immorality in the society. Therefore a poet has shown the importance of character in life by saying: "Sheelam Param Bhushanam" - A man with character is always honored in society. Swami Vivekananda while talking to an American with regards to the difference between the Indian and American culture, said: "In America Tailors make a man perfect, while in India it is the character that makes a man perfect."

We have heard the word character so many times, but what does it really mean? Sheel (character)'s meaning has become very limited in society. For example, it is confined only to "Not stealing", "living a moral life" or "living in a civilized manner". Such a person is deemed to be a person with good character. However, in reality, the meaning of the word "Sheel" is quite deeper and broader than just this. It consists of four elements:

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|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Krutagnata (Gratitude)  | 2. Tejasvita (Brilliance) |
| 3. Asmita (Self Reverence) | 4. Namrata (Humbleness)   |

Let us try and understand one of the above four. Only through good understanding of character can we change ourselves and get closer to God.

## **Meaning of Gratitude**

Kruta = done for you Gnya= to realize

Krutagnata is to realize and remember direct or indirect favors done to us by others, and then to reciprocate in an appropriately manner.

Human being means one who understands a concept (subject) from an intellectual standpoint. This makes us think, and raises three questions.

1. Do we realize the love and favor someone has done to us?
2. Based on this realization, do we act appropriately out of gratitude?
3. Do we know all those who have showered their love and done favors to us?

## ***Whom should one be grateful to***

### **A. Matru Devo Bhava – Pitru Devo Bhava – Gratitude towards our Parents**

Right from the start of our life (childhood), our parents have done so much for us. Also, our very existence is the result of their everlasting love, which continues to be showered upon us at any age. It is our parents who have worked very hard to make us capable of living this life.

Sometimes we get lost in ourselves and we think of all the things we do for others and not even realize what others are doing for us. A teenager may think I do so much at home to help out with the family, like taking care of the younger siblings, taking the trash out, etc. But the teenager ever thinks about what the mother and father have done for him or her. For instance, a frank talk with the mother can enlighten the teenage. A mother can tell him that she carried him within her for nine months, she fed him, raised him, woke him up for school everyday, took care of him everytime he was sick, etc. What cost did she charge him for doing all that.

The point here is that we cannot repay our parents for all their love and things they do for us but if we honestly show our gratitude for them, then there won't be this many nursing homes for the old folks (senior citizens) and we would see a society that is full of – Sheel – Character.

### **B. Gratitude for Society**

Just like our parents, society has done a lot for us. Someone must have saved us when an animal tried to harm us. When we were little, someone might have saved us from getting hit by a car on the street. Also, someone would have put us to ease (comforted us) when we were depressed or in distress or could have saved us from getting in to trouble and so on. Have we realized the favors done and love given to us by the society and acted accordingly (reciprocated it)?

Similarly, our country has done a lot for us. The soldiers on the front lines are protecting our nation regardless of extreme weather conditions so that we could sleep in peace. Also, the nation funds a lot of programs and has the infrastructure in place so that the students could become doctors or engineers. But after becoming a doctor or an engineer, what do we do for the nation?

### **C. Gratitude for our Rishis:**

The thoughts that have made the society stable, the knowledge, the love and the affection that we see in our lives are due to the hard work and efforts of our saints and rishis. That's why we owe gratitude to our rishis as well. Parents gave us birth where as rishis gave us life. After getting birth, it is the rishis who in fact brought us to our senses and made us understand what life is, what its purpose is, where we came from and where we are headed.

We think that a Rishi is the one who is old and with a long gray beard, has a simple diet and always sits under a tree to meditate. But in fact, a rishi is the one who provides us with the way of thinking, outlook towards life and sets us on a path of development, without us realizing it!!!.

If we could follow their path and try to repeat Vedic thoughts in our lives, then it could be said that we have showed gratitude towards them.

#### **D. Gratitude towards God:**

Just as our parents, society, country and Rishis love us and do many so much for us; God loves us and does even more for us. He constantly showers us with love without asking (for anything). God has given us so much. If we think about it, we would realize that for our happiness, we have been given this body, which consists of various senses and emotions. Our heart is the size of a fist that pumps 12,000L (one tanker load) of blood every single day. This is unimaginable. There is someone constantly keeping our tongue wet. The kidneys work constantly to purify our body. We would realize value of kidneys when they fail and we incur a daily cost of Dialysis. God watches out for us 24 hours a day and keeps our daily body running smoothly. Medical bill for maintaining all this on a daily basis would be unimaginable!!! It is mentioned in the Geeta that God is everywhere and He is also with us, in our heart. “Sarvasva Chaaham Hrudisannivishto”

Therefore, it is clear that all the different activities in our body are not performed by us but by the indwelling and omnipotent God. Only if this concept is understood (God is within me and He is Omnipotent) then our heart will be filled with gratitude and our love for God will intensify. If this omnipotent God is within me, then how can I feel inferior, weak and helpless? Because of God’s nearness, ability, intimacy and relationship with us, all different virtues start flourishing within us.

#### ***Our love for God***

In our daily life, if a respected person is with us, we behave our best. For example, if a senior government officer or a saint is with us in our car, our speech and our behavior will automatically change. So once the concept that God is with us becomes clear, virtues like fearlessness, self-confidence, tejasvita, namrata and krutagnata will begin to develop on its own. Once we realize God’s intimacy, our bad habits (vices) will automatically go away, and we will also stop doing bad deeds. The question is how to reinforce this (make this concept strong in society). The best solution to this question is regular practice of Trikal.

As per Trikal Sandhya, God is with us 24 hours a day and He is the Smrutidatā, Shaktidatā, and Shāntidatā (Giver of memory, strength and tranquility). Therefore, everyday during the three times when God is close to us and takes special care of us, if we think of Him with gratitude, we will bring the virtues of character and gratitude in our lives. Only then we can say that we have showed Krutagnata towards God.

Gratitude is the foundation of human life. To show Krutagnata for their parents, the children must do Matru-Pitru puja. For adults, Krutagnata towards God means taking God’s word to others, build relationship with other, try and work on seeing God in others, perform sacrifice while doing God’s work. Devotion to God is not just chanting God’s kirtan or bhajan, but doing actions that please God. If we incorporate some of these actions within us, then little by little we ourselves will realize a change within us. Our character will start changing. This lesson has to be learnt at an early age so there is time to implement it in life and get closer to God.

Points:

- Meaning of Krutagnata
- Gratitude for parents
- For society
- For nation
- For our Rishis
- For God
- Ask children how they can show gratitude.