

PATH TO Joyful Living

[Based on Jeeva Yathra of Jnanananda Bharati]



Course material written and dedicated to Swami Omkarananda
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Path to Joyful Living – Part I

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1. The Journey (Life)

When you wake up one day, you find yourself in the lower berth in a moving train. There are many fellow passengers and you wish them, "good morning". It is strange that you do not remember who you are or where you are going. Since everyone around you seem to be normal, you do not want to alarm them by asking them the question 'who am I'.

Maybe there will be some clue. You check your bag and find a bundle of currency. You do not know whether to feel happy or not. This currency bundle will solve the problem of survival, but the problem of where to go still remains.

There should be a ticket showing the destination. There is one. It shows when and where you bought the ticket and the destination. Great! However, there is no name on it. At least, now you know the destination! Your happiness is short lived because you find many more tickets inside the bag. You seem to be a buying ticket everyday and there are countless tickets.

The current ticket shows that you are going to reach the destination in few hours time. The train stops in a station. You get down and get some breakfast. Thanks to the currency notes. You wonder if you should discontinue the journey, but you get into the train and decide to continue the travel until the destination showed in your ticket.

A casual conversation with the fellow passengers reveals that you are not alone. None of the co-passengers around you seems to know who they are. They seem to enjoy the travel without worrying about the 'unnecessary' details. One thing is common in all of them. They all want to get back home and they are sure that this current journey will take them home! You are not so sure.

Finally the destination has come. You get off the train, bid farewell to the fellow passengers and walk out of the station. You sincerely hope that you will recognize it to be your hometown. No. It is yet another strange place. You do not know where to go and what to do. After spending the rest of the day in that place, you decide to continue to travel. You buy another ticket, get into the train and find a berth to sleep.

Next morning when you get up you have no idea who you are. There is absolutely no idea what happened on the previous day. Yet another day follows in the same pattern.

The scenario is the same with respect to our lives. None of us knows our identity. We have no idea when we began the journey. We go on traveling without any end in sight. Nevertheless, everyone wants reach home and that is the reason for traveling. It is time to review the direction, do a course correction, if required, and not to keep traveling blindly.

2. The destination (Goal in life)

You do not know your destination. However, the generic definition of the word 'destination' is known. It is that place, on reaching, which you do not travel any further.

Your own home may not be the destination, if you are not going to be contented over there. In other words, the destination could be defined as a status of complete contentment (or happiness or fulfillment). When you feel that there is nothing more to do and no need to go anywhere else, then you have reached your destination.

That destination is called Joyful Living.

However, most of your fellow travelers are not intelligent enough to find out their ultimate destination. Instead of saying, 'I want happiness' beyond which there is no need to travel, every one names different places as their destination. After reaching that destination, they will spend some time and effort and then realize they are not happy. They will continue their journey with a new destination, hoping they will get contentment over there. Thus, the travel never ends.

Similarly, in life everyone has varied goals. One wants to qualify as a doctor, another wants a job as a sales manager, yet another wants to build a house. There seems to be no end to the variety of goals. On analysis, we find out there is only one goal, which is common to all of them, which is contentment/happiness.

Everyone wants to earn money in order to spend it and gain contentment. They assume that the contentment will come by acquiring name, fame, money, wealth, power, position or people.

Presence/ Absence Logic (P/A Logic) says sweetness is the nature of sugar and it can never be separated from sugar.

We can apply this logic to name, fame, money, wealth, position or people and prove that there is no happiness or contentment in them. Everyone is primarily interested only in contentment and not in name, fame etc.

Example: A girl loves her neighbor very dearly and wants to marry him.

This statement cannot be true. She wants to be happy and she assumes that by marrying him, she will be happy. If it is shown to her that she will not get happiness from him, then she will not want to marry him.

Thus, everyone is highly selfish and the only objective is to be happy and contented. No one really cares for name, fame, money, wealth, power, position or people if he or she cannot get happiness from them.

Example: I love my son.

The word 'my' is more important than the word 'son'. If he runs away with my enemy's daughter, he is no longer my son and I do not love him anymore!

3. The Ultimate Destination (Joyful Living)

Everyone wants to reach the ultimate destination. Wanting to marry a person is the immediate but temporary destination. The ultimate destination is to gain contentment.

There are two types of contentment. One is temporary and another is eternal. Everyone is interested in eternal contentment.

Example: If a music performance is good, we want it to last forever so that we could be happy forever.

However, that does not happen. (Moreover, if it should happen, we will know that the music performance cannot give ever-lasting happiness.)

Our expectation of ever-lasting happiness or eternal contentment is not wrong. However, we do not understand its meaning completely.

'Eternal' means that which lasts forever. 'Temporary' means that which comes and goes. Therefore, what comes cannot last forever. In order to be 'eternal', it has to be present all the time. Happiness has to be the nature of money/ name/ fame etc. We know it is not.

Example: Hot water in a pot kept on the stove.

Hotness is the nature of fire and therefore it is eternal in fire. Hotness is temporary, in the case of the pot and water. It is present in them due to a certain condition (the pot being on the fire) and if that condition is changed the hotness will go.

Similarly, if our happiness comes to us due to some condition, it will go after sometime when the condition is no longer true.

Example: A businessperson is happy because he got lots of profit.

When there is a huge loss, the happiness will be replaced by great sorrow. If he wants eternal happiness, it cannot come from business. The fact is it cannot come from anything/ anybody. In short, it cannot come. One can gain eternal happiness or contentment only through, thorough understanding.

Once such eternal contentment is realized, one has reached the ultimate destination. Without this basic understanding, everyone is living life chasing temporary destinations. It is like buying a ticket for the next destination hoping that they will find contentment there. The whole life is wasted in such a mindless travel and finally one may realize that he has gone nowhere.

This can be verified from most of the retired people. They will have a great sense of disappointment that they could not get a peaceful, happy and content life inspite of working hard throughout their productive life.

Everyone is looking for undisturbed peace, everlasting security and non-diminishing happiness. In short, everyone wants Joyful Living. Nevertheless, they do not know this nor do they know the right path that will take them there.

4. The Immediate Destination (Knowledge)

If we decide to go to New Delhi by train, our immediate destination is the railway station. Our immediate focus is to reach the station on time to board the train. We do not worry whether the train will reach New Delhi on time or what sort of company we will have in the train.

From the time, we get up in the morning; we do all our daily chores like brushing our teeth and drinking coffee with the underlying compulsive thought that we should reach the station on time. If we are running late, we might skip our breakfast. The most important task is to reach the station.

Similarly, our ultimate destination is eternal contentment. For reaching this ultimate destination, our immediate destination is to gain knowledge. Knowledge here means, Self-Knowledge. We need to know about our real identity, who we are and why we are traveling and what is our destination.

To reach New Delhi, there may be many immediate destinations. One can fly or go by road or train. However, for eternal contentment, there is only one immediate destination, namely, knowledge.

May be we are sure about our ultimate destination, namely eternal contentment. We may not be equally sure about the immediate destination. However, as and when we understand that knowledge alone will lead to eternal contentment, we will be in a hurry to gain the

knowledge. Just as we do all our daily chores, keeping in mind that we have to reach the station on time, we will do all the work necessary for gaining knowledge.

There may be many ways to reach the railway station. One can use a taxi, public transport or ask a friend to drop us. Similarly, to reach the immediate destination of knowledge, there are many ways. One can do whatever work one likes and pursue whatever goals in life with proper attitude.

One can gain this proper attitude by understanding these preliminary lessons detailed in this book.

Once we board the train there is a sigh of relief. We get a satisfaction as if we have reached our ultimate destination. Similarly, once we meet a correct travel agent, who will guide us to the knowledge, our job is done.

When we board the right train, we are sure of reaching the ultimate destination. However, we should not get off the train half-way-through. Similarly, if we do not drop out half-way-through the process of gaining knowledge, we will gain Joyful Living

The train journey to New Delhi will take many hours. Similarly, gaining the knowledge will take many years. It is just like gaining knowledge on any other subjects like Math or Physics. If we have flair for the subject and if we do hard work, then may be we will be able to complete the course in couple of years.

5. The Travel Agent (This book)

You do not know who you are and where you are going. You cannot take any help from your fellow passengers since they also do not have any clue. All of them are trying hard to reach the destination, without any idea about where they are going! Therefore, you need the assistance of a Travel Agent, who will give you an idea of who you are and then recommend you a Map and a Tour Guide.

The Map is the Holy Scriptures and the Tour Guide is your personal religious teacher.

The only source, which describes the path to eternal contentment, is the Holy Scripture. Science and technology can never take you to this destination, which is proved by 2000 years of history. The advancements in economics and science have brought about more fear, anxiety and disillusionment.

Since you know that you want eternal happiness, you can take the help of the Map. Most of your fellow travelers have not matured enough to find out that their ultimate destination is Joyful Living. They are still enjoying the travel to their immediate destination. Only when they get tired of their travel, they will think of opening the Map.

The Holy Scriptures reveal the path to Joyful Living. However, one cannot read the Map without the assistance of a Tour Guide. Your guide is one who has reached the destination. Therefore, there is

nothing more for him to do. He may not have the desire to guide you. Therefore, it is your duty to look for a teacher, trust him, serve him and ask for his guidance.

As long as one thinks that the current journey will lead to the final destination, the Travel Agent, Map and the Tour Guide will be of no use. In general, people do not have time to listen to new ideas. They are sure that one day, they will stumble upon the destination. This is not going to happen. Even if they pass through their own home, they will not recognize it and therefore, the travel will never end.

People, who chase material wealth for gaining the everlasting happiness, will find that they are nowhere near the destination. Therefore, they will start working harder than ever before.

Example: A person who lost his key is busy searching for it and has no time to listen to the neighbor who keeps saying 'I have got your key'. Only when the person is tired and about to give up, will he have time to listen to the neighbor who was saying 'stop searching' all the time.

Only when one gets tired of travel, will they turn towards the Travel Agent who will point out the Map and the Tour Guide. To avoid such unnecessary trouble, one should take off sometime from ones busy schedules and explore the possibility of finding alternative paths to the destination.

6. The Map (Holy Scripture)

The Holy Scriptures are the only authority that shows us the path to the ultimate destination. They are not written by any human being but given by God. Just like a User Manual that comes along with a new product, the Holy Scriptures is part of the creation. All facts dealing with the creation, like the nature of the world and of living beings and inert objects are explained in detail in the Holy Scriptures.

The contents of the Holy Scriptures are to be trusted until one understands the logic behind it. The simple rule is; if one cannot understand the logic of the statements in the Holy Scriptures they are to be blindly followed.

Fortunately, we have many Tour Guides who are experts in explaining the contents of the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, the need for blindly following the scriptures will arise only if we are not intelligent enough to understand them.

Holy Scriptures state that the eternal contentment is the goal of all the living beings. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Example: Some one says, "My goal in life is different from yours"

This is a statement made out of ignorance. Every living being has just one goal, which is eternal contentment. It is not possible for anyone to have any other goal.

In addition to showing the destination, the Map also details all the steps that are to be completed in order to reach the destination. There is only one path to the ultimate destination of eternal contentment. There is no choice for the traveler.

Thus, both the destination and the path are fixed and unalterable for all human beings. However, most human beings know neither the destination nor the path leading to it since they are not exposed to the scriptures. As a result, all of them are traveling eternally. The destination is partly clear to them. They want eternal contentment but they assume that their immediate goals will get them that.

Example: A person is waiting in a bus stand for a long time. The nearby shopkeeper took pity and asked him which bus, he is waiting for. He replied that he is new to that place and does not know the bus number. Shopkeeper then asked him where he wants to go (the destination). He replied, "I am not sure. I know where I want to go. However, I am told there is no direct bus to that place. So I have to go to some place from where I can get a bus to my destination!" Shopkeeper replied "OK. It is easy then, any bus will go to some place"

Therefore, the whole life becomes an eternal search. The Shopkeeper is your Travel Agent, who wishes to help you. Normally we do not take such voluntary offer for assistance.

7. The Tour Guide (Your teacher)

It is not within the capability of human intellect to gain clarity on the destination and the path. It may be possible for some, after a long trial and error method, to gain clarity on the destination. However, no human being can ever identify the right and only path that leads to the destination without external help.

The path is described only in the Holy Scriptures and it is not possible for a common person to decode and decipher the path. You will need a Tour Guide, your religious teacher to guide you in the path. The teacher can do this only after you are sure about your ultimate destination.

Enlightenment or liberation is not generally considered as the destination for 'normal' people. However, the actual meaning of these terms is simple, which is 'contentment'. Therefore, if you are keen on eternal contentment, you need to seek guidance. When you understand this, you are ready for the guidance from your teacher.

However, it may be a difficult process for you to identify a religious teacher. It is like finding a private tuition master. It is easy for lower classes, and it becomes progressively more difficult to find one who can guide us in the PG level. Similarly, depending on your mental maturity, it may be easy or difficult to find a religious teacher.

The teacher must be a living person, whom you can approach personally

and seek clarifications as and when you require them.

The teacher should be one who was a student earlier. There can be no self-made teacher. The teacher should be following the Holy Scriptures in his teaching and not give his own thoughts and ideas as truth. Whatever is stated must have supporting statements in the Holy Scriptures. The teacher has the freedom only to decide on the mode of teaching and gives examples from real life, which may vary with time. His important role is to understand the mental maturity level of the student and introduce the relevant and appropriate knowledge from the Holy Scriptures for his advancement.

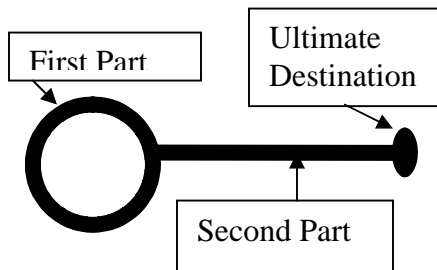
You must respect the teacher for the knowledge he possesses and not for any other reason. The ultimate goal is eternal contentment and you will need a Tour Guide until you reach there.

At any point of time there should be only one teacher guiding you. However, as and when you seem to have grown to the limits of the teacher's teaching capability, you should have the freedom to move on to the next teacher. It is like switching over from a schoolteacher to a college professor, when you move to higher levels of knowledge. Similarly, it is important to have a right teacher for each step, until you reach the top.

8. The path (Your pursuits in life)

There are two parts in the path described in all the Holy Scriptures to the ultimate destination of eternal contentment. The first part of the path gives you temporary contentment. You will continue to travel in the first part until you find out that you are not interested in the temporary contentment. When you seriously desire to gain eternal contentment, you will progress to the second part of the path that will lead you to the ultimate destination.

The path looks like this.



The first part of the path consists of working on the environment. This material-pursuit will bring in name, fame, money, power, position and people. All these will lead to temporary contentment and the pursuit will have its own difficulties and setbacks.

The second part of the path consists of working on the mind. This is a spiritual pursuit, which will bring in eternal contentment (Liberation, enlightenment or Joyful Living)

Most people continue to travel in circle (within the first part) without being aware of the existence of the second part of the path. In other words, they continue to remain in the preparatory path.

Many people do not know what exactly they want. They would like to keep doing something without even bothering what they are achieving through their efforts. Being active is our nature. It will do lot of good if we are active after knowing the purpose. Instead, if we keep traveling without taking the exit, we will be going round in circles all the time.

One has to go through the first part for sufficiently long to realize for himself that he is going round in circles. Once he realizes that, he cannot take an immediate exit to the second part. He has to continue in the first part for some more time until he gains the required mental maturity to enter the second part.

This happens in the lives of the intelligent people. When they observe their life, achievements and fulfillment of the various desires, they will see the futility of the material pursuit. Then they have to continue to work (be in the first part) with the right attitude. After gaining the required mental maturity, they will be qualified to branch off to the second part.

Therefore, the time taken is solely determined by you. The first part of the path is necessary for everyone. However, one should have the right attitude while traveling in it before it is possible to proceed towards the ultimate destination.

When you are ready to branch off from the first part of the path, you may need a different Tour Guide.

9. The field (The world)

The world is a place where good and bad will be present all the time. Even within each person, the good and bad qualities will influence the actions of the person. The proportion of the good and bad will vary from person to person and from time to time.

The world is a place where we need to carve out the path, as described earlier. If we do not mark our path (based on our destination), we will be going nowhere.

Those who do not have any goals in life do not grow. It is necessary to have some goal (right or wrong) and try to achieve those goals.

Everyone wants to be happy. It is not enough to wish for happiness. One has to work towards it.

The world as created by God is harmless. It can give neither pleasure nor pain. There is another world made up of our thoughts, which is superimposed on the God created world.

Example: God has created a woman. Man has created daughter, sister, friend, wife, mother and mother-in-law out of the very same woman. The woman created by god does not give any problems to anyone. Pleasure and pain come only from daughter, sister, friend, wife, mother and mother-in-law.

It is upto us to create a world that gives only happiness and never sorrows. We can do this only when

we reach our ultimate destination of eternal contentment.

Alternatively we can attempt to modify the world in such a way that it gives us only happiness. However, this attempt will never succeed, since as per definition, the world will always be a mixture of pleasure and pain or good and bad.

The teacher may quote the Map and say that it is not possible to change the world. Nevertheless, this teaching will remain as a piece of information. It will be converted as knowledge only after sufficient effort and time is spent trying to correct the world.

Finally, when one realizes the futility of prosperity, he will be ready to abandon this path and pursue the path to eternal contentment.

The world consists of sense objects. These sense objects appear to be the immediate destination, distracting the traveler from his ultimate destination.

Example: You like the breakfast served in an intermediate station and if you decide to stay on for lunch, you will miss the train. It is not the fault of the food or the train.

Similarly, the sense objects in the world do not have any power to attract your sense organs. They are there. Nevertheless, they appear to have a strong pull, detaining us from entering the path.

10. The Chariot (Your body)

The chariot is used by the traveler as a vehicle to travel. Similarly, your body is used by you to perform the travel of life. Although, it is obvious, we need to notice that the traveler is independent of the chariot. Chariot is an inert object and the traveler is conscious. The traveler can abandon the chariot and take a new one if he wishes.

Similarly, you are independent of your physical body. Your physical body is an inert object. You are not.

When we compare a dead body with a live creature, we do see this important difference. Nevertheless, in the absence of proper teaching, we do not seem to realize the cause of the difference.

On death, only the physical body is discarded. You will survive your death.

The chariot moves but it does not have any inherent power to move. Similarly, our physical body does not have any inherent power at all. Our ability to hear, touch, see, taste and smell is independent of our physical body. This can be verified using our dream state. While dreaming we do not have access to our physical body. However, we experience all the sensations during the dream.

For efficient and comfortable travel, the chariot has to be maintained in a good condition. It is true for the physical body as well. It has to be fed with the right quantity/ quality of

food (what it needs and not everything that tastes better!)

Example: A rich man will not fill up petrol in his diesel car, because petrol will harm the car.

Similarly, we should not eat what we want but eat only what the body needs for keeping fit. In addition, we need to exercise regularly. We need to maintain our body in a healthy state so that we can enjoy this life.

All the parts of the chariot can be replaced if they wear out. Almost all physical parts of the body also can be replaced due to the advances in the medical science. However, it is easier and more effective to retain the original equipment.

Horses are different from the chariot. They will run in a field that is comfortable to them not bothering about the safety of the chariot. Infact, chariot is viewed as an unwanted accessory to them. If they pull the chariot through uneven ground, the chariot might be damaged. Similarly, smoking may give pleasure to the sense organs but it damages the physical body.

Normally we are under the impression that the sense organs are part of the physical body and therefore we do not distinguish the difference in the need. Sense organs need sense pleasures and the physical body does not demand anything other than food/ water for sustenance.

11. The horses (Your five senses)

The chariot is an inert object like a car. It may have wheels but there should be a driving force, which enables it to move. Your sense organs provide that driving force, namely the desire.

The five horses that pull the chariot represent our five sense organs. They are our ears, skin, eyes, (tasting) tongue and nose. There are two parts to these five sense organs. One is the visible part located in the gross physical body. The other is a subtle part, which is invisible.

The invisible part of the five organs could be compared to a sales clerk and the visible part of the five organs could be compared to the sales counter. It is possible for you to complete a transaction at the counter without paying any attention to the sales clerk. However, mere counter cannot transact. Similarly, we do not pay attention to the subtle sense organs that function behind the physical parts because they are invisible. However, the invisible part is responsible for the functioning.

Example: Prior to death the subtle sense organs slowly start withdrawing from the gross physical body. This is the reason why in old people ability to see, hear etc. slowly start declining.

The sense organs tend to look externally and go after the sense objects of the world. Sense pleasure is the goal of the sense organs. Such goals are converted as desire by the mind. Such desire is the motive power that drives the chariot.

The sense objects are classified as desirable or otherwise based on the strong sense of likes and dislikes. When the sense organs repeatedly enjoy similar pleasures, it results in strong imprints in the mind. These imprints dictate our preferences (likes and dislikes). Since the subtle sense organs travel across births, we carry our preferences to the next birth too.

It is like the horse pulling the rein and making the rope weak. Due to this, the rein may not be able to control the horse. As a result, the horses will be able to go after the sense objects indiscriminately. Therefore, it is necessary to control the five sense organs through strict observance of religious rituals.

Two out of the five sense organs have special nature. They are the touch sensation and the taste sensation. Unlike the other three, these two sense organs require the sense objects to come in physical contact for enjoyment. As result, when we say we miss some one or some object it will necessarily relate to our touch/ taste sensation. Therefore, greater restraint is required with respect to these two sensations.

A wild horse cannot be controlled by the rein. Therefore, the horse has to be tamed prior to using it in the chariot. Similarly, all our five sense organs should be trained to obey the mind and they should not influence the mind in any way.

12. The rein (Your mind)

It should be noted that the traveler and the rein are different entities. Similarly, we are different and independent of our minds. This can be easily seen since we are aware of our status of our mind.

Example: My mind was agitated a while ago. Now it is calm and cool.

Such statements cannot be made unless we are different from the mind. However, due to ignorance, many people are under the impression that they are the mind.

Rein is the link between the horses and the charioteer. He cannot control the horses directly. He needs to use the rein effectively to direct the horses in the chosen path.

Similarly, the mind is the link between the intelligence and the five sense organs. Although, the intelligence expects the sense organs to behave in certain way, they may not be fully cooperative due to their accumulated preferences. They will tend to run towards the sense objects and the mind has to control them.

Example: A New Year resolution may be to get up early from the bed.

This may not work if the mind is ineffective. The intelligence might have decided that for reaching the destination, it is essential to rise early from bed and consequently made a resolution. However, if the mind is weak, the sense organs can easily win over the mind and make it come up with reasons to break the resolution.

Mind is addictive by nature. Whatever the actions it is engaged in for a length of time, it wants to repeat. As a result, when the five sense organs enjoy the world, they make strong imprints in the mind.

Example: Rainwater tends to flow through the crack in the stones, making the crack wider.

However, the same attribute of the mind could be used to our advantage. The intelligence, using the will power, can train the mind to do good actions. After sufficient practice, the mind will automatically enjoy doing good actions.

It is natural for the rein to swing violently in the direction of the pull. It is the capability of the charioteer to swing it back to the right position. It is a question of who is strong, whether the charioteer or the horses. Rein just plays the role of an effective intermediary.

Rein cannot be blamed if the chariot is taken on the wrong path by the horses. Similarly, it is the nature of the mind to oscillate between the alternatives. On one side, the sense organs seem to be attractive and on the other side, intelligence seems to be logical. The mind cannot conclude. Its nature is to yield to the stronger pressure, whether it comes from the sense organs or from the intelligence, it does not matter to it.

Only a steady and focused mind can follow the direction given by the intelligence effectively.

13. The charioteer (Your Intelligence)

The charioteer is responsible for the journey. He should have clarity on the destination and the path. He should be aware of the ups and downs of the path for effectively steering the vehicle. He should be sharp and alert all the time. He should hold the rein strongly and be able to control the horses through the rein. It is dangerous if he dozes off while driving.

Similarly, our intelligence is responsible for our life. What one does and how well it is done depends on the intelligence. Intelligence should be alert all the time and steer the body clear of any bad habits. The intelligence should have clarity on the destination of the journey of life and should have enough discrimination to choose the right path.

No human being, irrespective of the level of his intelligence, can be aware of the second part of the path leading to the ultimate destination. Service of the Travel Agent/ Tour Guide is essential.

You do not know driving and you need to depend on the driver. You want eternal contentment. However, since your driver assumes that he is too smart he does not enquire on the correct path nor consult the Map. As a result, your driver is hijacking you without your knowledge. When you ask your driver, when you will reach the destination, he keeps saying, "As soon as we fulfill the next desire".

When the vehicle is approaching the exit from the circular path, the driver has to make a decision. He should go away from the circular path (leading to temporary contentment) and choose the direct and only path (leading to eternal contentment). However, often, the driver is not knowledgeable enough to choose the right path. Due to force of habit, one keeps going towards sense gratification. He must have enough determination to go towards the eternal contentment and must have enough knowledge (gained through experience) that there is no point in going towards the sense objects of the world.

Reaching your destination is important to you and you cannot afford to delegate the job of taking you there to the driver completely. It is your responsibility to periodically review the progress made, verify the statements made by the driver, so that you can give stern instructions to the driver accordingly.

You should see that the driver is not taking you in circles, and instruct him to consult a Tour Guide and follow the Map, which shows the destination very clearly.

This struggle normally happens between our heart and head. We do feel a vacuum in our material pursuit frequently. However, we do not take any action either because we do not know what else to do or because everyone known to us is also going in the same (circular) path.

14. The traveler (YOU)

The traveler is different from the charioteer, rein, horses and the chariot. Similarly, you are different from your intelligence, mind, sense organs and the physical body. It will be hard to imagine who you are if you are not any of these.

Example: When you wake up one day, you find yourself in the lower berth in a moving train. There are many fellow passengers and you say hello to them. The strange part is you do not remember who you are or where you are going. Since everyone around you seem to be normal, you do not want to alarm them by asking them the question 'who am I'.

This is the real story too. Atleast in the example you know that you do not know who you are. However, in the real life you have a wrong notion about you. If you do not know who you are, there is a chance of finding out the truth. If you do not have any doubt on who you are, you have a greater problem. First of all you need to understand that you are not whom you think you are. Then you should figure out who you really are. This is an impossible task if there is no external help.

If you surrender to your teacher who follows the Holy Scriptures, he will tell you, your real nature. Depending on your level of maturity, his answer will vary. Ultimately, he may tell you 'You are that'.

This answer will not make sense to you unless you are ready. Holy Scriptures suggest the path to be

followed to make your mind mature. After traveling through that path, you will enter into the path leading to eternal contentment.

This path is the path of knowledge. There is nothing more to do on gaining the knowledge that your very nature is happiness.

Example: Sweetness is the nature of sugar. Where ever sugar is sweetness is. There is no need for sugar to go in search of sweetness.

Similarly, everlasting happiness is your nature. There is no need for you to search for happiness.

Once we know this, there is nothing else to learn. The process of gaining this knowledge is very strenuous, which is being shown in this Path to Joyful Living.

All your sufferings are due to your attachments with the sense objects of the world. So long, you function within the realm of attachment, there is no liberation to you. One has to renounce this attachment, which can happen only after gaining the knowledge of our true nature.

Renouncement means renouncing the attachment and not necessarily giving up the possession or enjoyment of sense objects. Infact you can possess and enjoy as much as you want after mentally renouncing the attachment.

There is no sorrow at all since there is no attachment. That is joyful living.

15. Requirements for performing the journey

The journey towards eternal contentment consists of gaining new knowledge about ourselves. Any contentment that comes from the relationship with the world will be temporary contentment. This is so because no relationship can last forever. What comes will have to go. The eternal contentment is the result of realization and cannot be achieved through any other method.

Eternal contentment is not an experience. Any satisfying experience is temporary in nature.

Example: If you reach a temporary destination after a long struggle (may be a promotion or purchase of a car etc) it will give a sense of satisfaction which lasts for a while.

Eternal contentment is not like this. It is the underlying satisfaction that there is nothing more to be done. It is knowledge based. It is permanent and does not fluctuate. Fluctuation of your mind and body will not affect the real you.

Eternal contentment cannot be achieved by passage of time. There is no specific point in time that can be identified with reaching the destination.

Therefore, this journey is not performed in the space-time zone. The journey represents the travel from ignorance to knowledge. Currently you are under the impression that you are mere body/mind complex. From this wrong notion, you have to travel to the right

knowledge that you are eternal happiness.

The ego, which borrows the consciousness from you, lends it to the body and makes it alive. When you use the word 'I' three items are included

Original consciousness (real you)

Reflected consciousness (ego/mind)

Your physical body

Instead of knowing the true nature, you tend to identify yourself with your body-mind complex due to ignorance. Once this ignorance is removed by the knowledge, the journey ends. However, until this piece of information becomes your own knowledge, you need to perform the enquiry, which is termed as the journey here. To succeed in this journey, there are five requirements as listed below:

Your physical body should be in a fit condition. (Physical Health)

Your sense organs should be tamed (Healthy/socially acceptable desires)

Your mind should be stable (Emotionally strong)

Your intelligence should be sharp (IQ, Curious and Creative)

In addition to the above, all of them should function in a coordinated manner.

16. Preparation for the journey

Once we decide to travel, we need to prepare for the journey. This preparation consists of two steps.

Example: To draw a painting on a cloth, it has to be cleaned and then fixed tautly.

If the cloth is dirty, the paint will mix with the dirt and we may not get the true colors.

If the cloth is not taut, we will not have a steady surface.

The journey refers to moving from ignorance to knowledge. Our mind is the cloth in which new knowledge has to be gained. Therefore, our mind has to be purified through removal of bad qualities. Then the mind should be trained to focus on a specific object without wavering.

Commencement of this preparation means that we are putting a full stop to our mindless travel. The material pursuit should be progressively reduced. (One should not jump out of the train, after realizing that it is taking us in the wrong direction). However, it is necessary to stop the material pursuit before one could prepare for the journey in the right and only path. If one feels that it is not fully possible to stop the material pursuit, for whatever reason, then one should continue it. In such a case, the preparation will be a slow process. It might take a long time to complete the following two steps.

Step 1: Purify the mind

In general, the mind is hosting good and bad qualities. If one has to gain self-knowledge, it is essential that the bad qualities like anger, hatred, animosity, jealousy, and worry be reduced and the mind is purer.

This preparation is done by engaging in action. Initially we engaged in action as a material pursuit with expectation of success in life. After getting the desire to reach the ultimate destination, we need to do the same action but with different attitude. We need to perform the same action more effectively for purifying the mind and without any material expectation. If work is done without expectation of the rewards, the mind will be purified.

Step 2: Focus the mind

Mind is an eternal time traveler. It keeps oscillating between the past and future. It rarely lives in the present. This constant fluctuation of the mind is not conducive to effective learning. Therefore, the mind should be trained through meditation and prayer, to concentrate on a single subject. Ability to focus on a chosen subject for a length of time is an essential preparation, prior to the commencement of the journey.

This is achieved through meditation. One should start concentrating on a chosen name of the God and keep repeating it in the mind. In this way, the mind is trained to stick on to a chosen topic for a length of time.

17. Summary of steps in the journey

The journey can be commenced only when the traveler is confident about the authority of the Map. It is not necessary that one should select the path that leads to eternal contentment. If that path does not appeal to the mind of the traveler, he can select the first path, which takes him to material success. Even this path will ultimately take him to the second path when the time comes.

Time and effort can be spent in the external world working for name, fame, money, wealth, power, position and people. One of the conditions in such search is to be righteous. All the desires are to be legitimate and within limits.

As the traveler progresses in this path slowly, he will realize the problems connected with the material success. It is painful to gain them, it is painful to maintain them and it makes one a slave. Once this experience is gained, the mind of the traveler will be purified enough to understand that the sense objects in the world cannot give eternal contentment.

The next step is to give the ability to concentrate and focus to the mind. This is achieved through prayer and meditation.

The actual journey of gaining the knowledge will commence at this stage. This journey consists of three steps.

Step 1: Inquiry to understand the central message of the Holy Scriptures. This is done through consistent and systematic study, under a competent teacher for a length of time. Inquiry removes the ignorance.

Step 2: Introspection: Validating the central message as understood in the previous step in the light of personal experience and logic, so that one owns up this knowledge as his own. Introspection removes all the doubts / misunderstandings.

Step 3: Inner transformation involves living by the new knowledge for a length of time so that the knowledge sinks in. This step removes the wrong notion on self/God/world.

Successful completion of these three steps signifies the completion of the journey.

There will not be any change in the environment. Nevertheless, we will know the truth – that the problems pertain to the body-mind complex and not to us.

The sooner we reach the destination it is better for us. We can enjoy this life better if we are aware of our identity. Assume our friend in the first chapter finds a letter in his bag, which gives all the details of him, his family and residential address. He will be very happy. The sooner he gets this knowledge, better for him. He can spend the rest of his journey happily.

18. Reaching the destination

We do not claim to have reached the destination as soon as the train arrives in the New Delhi station. True, all along we have been claiming that the New Delhi is the ultimate destination. So long, one is away from New Delhi, it is stated to be the ultimate destination.

However, after reaching the station, there is couple of more steps to be performed. One has to leave the station and arrive at the home.

These two steps are discussed here. After gaining steady knowledge, we need to perform two specific actions.

Step 1: Removal of the past imprints

For countless life times, we have been traveling one place to another in search of our home. Once we gain the self-knowledge, we are aware that our essential nature is happiness we do not have to run around looking for it.

However, due to the force of habit, one will continue to move around as if one is still lost. Wearing out these imprints will take a while. One may continue to exhaust such imprints by actually living through it without any motive.

Previously one does action with a view to earn contentment. Now the action will be done with the sense of fulfillment. There will be no selfish motive in our efforts and actions.

Step 2: Alienation of the mind

Even after obtaining the knowledge about the unreal nature of the world, one has to live in the very same world. There is a strong link between the thoughts, words and actions. When we deal with the world, our words and actions are in the realm of relative reality of the world. Such words and actions will normally influence the thoughts and drag it to away from the absolute knowledge.

We have to learn to treat our mind as our tool. We should not get affected by its problems. Initially, for mastering this art, one has to reduce the worldly activities. Once it is learnt, one can engage in any activities.

Life will be joyful thereafter. All our actions are done using our ego for the welfare of the people around us, in line with the imprints made by our past journey. There will not be any selfish desire.

Prior to gaining the knowledge one used to run after the world in material pursuit. After gaining the knowledge, one will not run away from the world. He may activity involve in material pursuit. It is like playing a game. Life will be joyful.

Mind belongs to the unreal world and we need to use it to deal with the world. However, since we know that we have already reached the destination, we just use the mind to enjoy life.

Exercise – Part 1

Chapter 1 – Journey

1. Journey in the train refers to the journey of _____
2. Not knowing his own name refers to absence of _____
3. Countless ticket represents the countless _____
4. The bundle of cash represents the _____
5. When the journey was commenced?
6. What does traveling blindly indicates?

Chapter 2 – Destination

1. What is the definition of destination?
2. What is the meaning of reaching the destination in life?
3. The Ultimate Destination is called _____
4. What is P/A Logic? (Explain it with your own example)
5. What concept is explained here by using P/A Logic?
6. Is everyone selfish? If not, give examples.

Chapter 3 – Ultimate Destination

1. What are the two types of contentment?
2. Define both the types of contentment.
3. Is it possible to be happy all the time?
4. Joyful Living means (a) _____, (b) _____ and (c) _____
5. Is there any destination other than Joyful Living?
6. For an effective travel, we need to be clear on the _____ and the _____.

Chapter 4 – Immediate Destination

1. What is your immediate destination? Is there more than one way to reach it?
2. List the immediate destination of atleast four people known to you.
3. What is the immediate destination to reach the ultimate destination?
4. Knowledge here means _____
5. Is it difficult to gain this knowledge?
6. Can we reach the ultimate destination, without gaining this knowledge?
7. When will we hurry to reach the immediate destination?
8. Travel Agent means _____
9. After boarding the train, is there anything else that we should do to reach the destination?
10. What do we have to do now to reach the ultimate destination?

Chapter 5 – Travel Agent

1. Is there any option available to us in selecting a Travel Agent?
2. What are the three jobs of a Travel Agent?
3. What is your Map?
4. Who is your Tour Guide?
5. Do you have to follow the Map and Tour Guide immediately?
6. Which is the only source that describes the path to Joyful Living?
7. What is the new idea described in this chapter?
8. Do you agree with the new idea?
9. Ask your parents and elders if they are working harder than before. If yes, do they enjoy doing such hard work? If not, why are they working?
10. What is your suggestion for those people who are working very hard to reach their goals in life?

Chapter 6 – The Map

1. Name few Holy Scriptures known to you.
2. Who is the author of Holy Scriptures?
3. What is the general content of Holy Scriptures?
4. What is the purpose of Holy Scriptures?
5. Should we blindly follow the Holy Scriptures?
6. What is the goal of life according to Holy Scriptures?
7. There is only one _____ and one _____ for all the human beings.
8. Is there a direct bus to the ultimate destination?
9. What is the meaning of "..., any bus will go to some place"
10. Why the shopkeeper is compared to the Travel Agent?

Chapter 7 – Tour Guide

1. What is the difference between the Travel Agent and the Tour Guide?
2. What is beyond the comprehension of the Human mind?
3. What is the role of Tour Guide?
4. What is the meaning of enlightenment or liberation?
5. What are the three essential requirements of a Tour Guide?
6. Is there a need to change your Tour Guide? If yes, when?

Chapter 8 – The path

1. What are the immediate destinations for the two parts of the path?
2. Draw the path and name the parts.
3. Is it required to travel in the first part of the path?
4. Why do people travel in the first part of the path?
5. Preparatory path is the _____ part of the path.
6. When should we branch off to the second part of the path?
7. Who determines which part of the path one should travel?
8. After knowing it is going in circles, can one branch off to the second part immediately.
9. Is there a need to change the tour guide for the second part of the path?
10. Is there more than one way to reach the ultimate destination?

Chapter 9 – The field

1. Is it possible to eliminate all evils from the world?
2. What are the two worlds described in this chapter?
3. Can one change the world and ensure it gives happiness all the time?
4. Is it necessary to aim for name, fame, wealth, power and position in life?
5. Do french fries have power to attract anyone?

Chapter 10 – The chariot

1. Your body is your _____ and you are not your _____.
2. Explain what happens on death.
3. Can our physical eye see?
4. We need to keep our body fit through proper _____ and _____.
5. Explain why smocking is referred in this chapter.

Chapter 11 – The horses

1. Five Horses represent _____, _____, _____, _____ and _____
2. What is the difference between gross and subtle?
3. Why old people cannot hear or see properly?
4. How do we develop our likes and dislikes?
5. Which are the two sense organs that are different from others?
6. What is the significance of a tamed horse in this context?
7. What is the significance of religious rituals?
8. The motive power that drives our body is _____
9. Why we do not miss any particular smell?
10. What are the five action organs? (Not given in the lesson)

Chapter 12 – The rein

1. Mind is independent of your _____
2. How do we know that we are different from our mind?
3. Mind should control _____
4. Mind should be controlled by _____
5. It is the nature of the mind to _____ between alternatives.
6. Mind is _____ by nature.
7. What are the four modes of mind? (Not given in the lesson)
8. Is the mind functioning in the dream? (Not given in the lesson)
9. Is the mind functioning in the deep sleep? (Not given in the lesson)
10. What is subconscious mind? (Not given in the lesson)
11. What is the process of gaining any knowledge? (Not given in the lesson)
12. How do we think? (Not given in the lesson)
13. Is it possible to do meditation? (Not given in the lesson)
14. What are emotions? (Not given in the lesson)

Chapter 13 – The Charioteer

1. Who is responsible for your life?
2. Your intelligence should have clarity on the _____ and the _____
3. Intelligence should control the sense organs through the _____
4. Why does our intelligence need external guidance?
5. The motive power that drives the intelligence is _____
6. How can you review the performance of your intelligence?
7. How will you know that you are going round in circle?
8. Explain the internal struggle.
9. Who is hijacking who and why?
10. To proceed on the right path you will need _____ and _____

Chapter 14 – The traveler

1. Who is the traveler?
2. Traveler is different from _____, _____, _____, and _____
3. There will be no sorrow since there is no _____
4. What are the requirements to understand your real nature?
5. What is to be renounced?

Chapter 15 – Requirements

1. _____ based contentment will not last for long.
2. Eternal contentment is not an _____
3. The word I normally means _____, _____ and _____
4. We identify ourselves with the body-mind complex due to _____
5. What are the five requirements to succeed in the journey.

Chapter 16 – Preparation

1. The two steps in preparing for the journey are _____ and _____
2. Explain the cloth example
3. Journey refers moving from _____ to _____
4. What does jumping off from the moving train signifies.
5. Effective learning is not possible with the mind _____

Chapter 17 – Summary

1. In the chariot example, list what is referred by chariot, horses, rein, charioteer and the traveler?
2. Is there more than one way to reach the immediate destination?
3. What are the three steps in acquiring the knowledge?
4. Why should we reach the destination as soon as possible?

Chapter 18 – Reaching the destination

1. What are the two steps to be taken after reaching the destination?
2. What are imprints?
3. How do we erase the imprints?
4. What is the meaning of alienating the mind?
5. What is the role of mind after reaching the destination?

Practical Exercises:

1. List the emotions that is associated with the word 'Joy'
2. List the emotions that is associated with the word 'Sorrow'
3. Is there anyone who does not want to be happy all the time?
4. Is there anyone who wants to be unhappy anytime?
5. Is it possible to live a Joyful and Sorrowless life?
6. Do you want to live a Joyful and Sorrowless life?
7. Prove that every one wants liberation (contentment) through P/A logic.
8. Prove that everyone is already engaged in the action to reach the goal.
9. Prove that you are not your body.
10. Prove that you are not your mind.
11. Select TWO 'odd' names: Shiva, Krishna, Jesus Christ, Allah and Rama.
12. Name two enlightened persons.
13. Name two persons without any problem or desire.
14. Recall two occasions on which you were very happy.
15. Describe the story line of the movie Total Recall
16. Debate and discuss:
 - a. What will happen after a brain transplant operation?
 - b. Will there be a nuclear war ever?
 - c. Will the divide between rich and poor grow?
 - d. How do we make the world free from hunger/ war?
 - e. Why do people commit suicide?
 - f. Is rebirth is true or fiction?