



What you Believe ... You can Achieve

During one of my trips to a rural village in Kutch, an incident happened that sparked my thinking. We were traveling on dirt road and our taxi got stuck in the soft, sandy ditch. Despite of all our effort, we could not get out of the ditch. Suddenly we saw a farmer with a bull, plowing the field at a distance. We called him and asked if he could help. He replied, "I only have one bull named "Dusty" and he is blind but let's try anyway. He hitched Dusty to the car and said, "Pull Junas pull". Dusty did not move. "Pull Stormy pull" he shouted. Dusty just stood there. "Pull Twister pull" he bellowed with no result. Finally he said "Pull Dusty pull" and Dusty pulled the car right out. I thanked him and then asked "I am a little curious, why did you first call the other three names?" He replied softly "you see, Dusty is blind, but if he thought that he had to do all this work by himself, he wouldn't even try"!!!

Even the farmer in that tiny village understood that if you want anything achieved, an individual involved in the effort, must be convinced that it is an achievable task. Jains believe that their ultimate goal in life is achieving Moksha (salvation). And yet, for centuries, we have been brainwashed to believe that in the current time period (and for thousands of more years to come), we cannot achieve it! From the young tender age, we have been taught in pathshalas around the world that we live in the era of 'misery' ("Dukham") with no hope of achieving salvation in this time cycle. I think that it is a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you believe you cannot achieve, you will never achieve.

In my understanding, Jainism gives us hope not discouragement. According to Jain philosophy, every soul large or small is capable of achieving salvation through its own effort. This effort is independent of others, independent of some author or monk's views or the grace of 'God'. Independent of the time or the space we live in. By actively seeking to win over our own passions like anger, ego, deceit and greed thus practicing universal love and non-attachment, as well as through austerities and meditation, we can eliminate our 'Karmas' and thus ultimately achieve Moksha regardless of the time-cycle we are in. In fact Jains believe that 'Arihantas' do exist even today in other sectors of the universe. For example: Simandharswami in 'Mahavideh Ksetra'. How did they achieve omniscience in this 'Ara'? Yes, I am aware of the belief that Mahavideh Kshetra is frozen in time; perpetually in the fourth ara!!! Even then, what is stopping us from transmigrating in other sectors like Mahavideh Kshetra?

Let us look at a related example. Until few years ago it was believed that humans couldn't run faster than a mile in four minutes. The root of this belief goes back to Roman times, where they made tigers run after athletes to see how fast they could run. After several attempts and few dead athletes, it was 'established' that it is beyond human capacity to run any faster than four minute/mile. For centuries people believed in it giving different reasoning like; we don't have enough muscle power, or our lungs are too small; or our physiology is too weak etc...

Then came Roger Banister just a few years ago, who believed in him and completely ignored the old limiting belief. He became the first runner to break the four-minute/mile barrier. What is even more fascinating is that, the following year 37 athletes crossed that limit and the year after, over 300 athletes achieved that distinction. What happened? What could not be achieved for thousands of years was suddenly achievable. What changed? - The **Belief**. Once people believed that this was achievable, and then the task that was earlier considered to be insurmountable; now became easier to achieve.

Modern research in human sciences has proven repeatedly that what a human is capable of achieving, is just incredible and beyond the imagination of ordinary people. However, our belief system works as a thermostat. We can rise only as high as our belief. If we try to go beyond that, our brain starts an opposing mechanism of 'cooling' to push us back to the level of the set temperature (i.e. our belief).

The true qualities of our soul are: Infinite knowledge, infinite perception, infinite energy and bliss. In other words we have within us every thing we need to achieve anything we desire: including the ultimate, 'Moksha' through belief, knowledge and action. So why embrace any limiting beliefs?

Remember, what you believe is all you can achieve: nothing more, nothing less.

Let us understand that anything that is preached or written (including this article) is not absolute. It is just an opinion or the interpretation of the speaker/s or author/s. So scrutinize it before accepting or rejecting it. Happy journey.