

Aratiḥ janasamsadi

absence of craving for social interaction

Aratiḥ jana-samsadi

Rati means love for something or inclination toward it. Adding 'a' to **rati** makes the word indicate a lack of inclination towards something. **Jana** stands for people and **samsadi** means in an assembly or collection.

So, this value means a lack of craving for company, not revelling in company, not courting company.

This is not a value that calls for hatred of company. Company is not bad. It is not that one should dislike being around people. If the people are there, fine, be happy in their presence. But know that you do not require people to be happy.

VIVIKTA-DEŚA-SEVITVA

Love of quietude, **vivikta-deśa-sevitva**, in which one is happily with oneself, and not longing company, **aratiḥ jana-samsadi**, are companion values. They complement each other.

It is not that a quiet place in and of itself is intrinsically something good, or that the presence of company is something bad, but the values are for a happy, non-escaping mind that loves being with itself.

Such a mind is happy with itself in quietude, does not run after escape; neither revels in nor hates company.

These are two beautiful attitudes. With these values, I will never need to seek escape from being with myself, nor will I be disturbed either by the presence or absence of people.

I will have composure whether I am with people or without them.

NEITER AVOIDING PEOPLE NOR COURTING THE COMPANY OF PEOPLE

It is important to see the basis of these attitudes, to see through the values to the value underneath them.

Aratiḥ jana-samsadi is not a value for avoiding people; nor is **vivikta-deśa-sevitva** a value for seeking quietude because one cannot stand people.

Someone who seeks seclusion out of hatred of people is not expressing these values. Such a person is afraid of people, and fear of people is not a desirable thing in life.

Equally, the other extreme, courting the company of people all the time to escape from oneself, is not any more desirable than the fear of people.

INQUIRY, VICĀRA

The attitude that is proper is not hatred of people but a simple love of quietude, because I love to be with myself and therefore do not court company. This attitude establishes the right frame for a contemplative mind, for a mind given to **inquiry, vicāra**.

Inquiry here means inquiry into the basic, profound questions about myself:

Who am I?

What is this creation?

Who is God?

What is the relationship between God, the creation and me?

Inquiry into these subtle questions requires special sensitivity of the mind, sensitivity beyond what is needed to **inquire** into the functioning or description of tangible object or processes.

Inquiry into something tangible, how to make bread, or even the grammar of a language, is aided by having changing objects to see, to watch; one can see the modifications, **vikāra** taking place upon things, whether in a pan of dough or upon the stems of nouns and verbs.

However, when the **vicāra** is inquiry into the self, we are dealing with something that, although fundamental, is not tangible.

THE CONTEMPLATIVE AND SENSITIVE MIND

The self is not a tangible object that lends itself to trial and error methods, checked by gross perceptions. The knowledge of the self must be seen as a whole.

To appreciate the knowledge of the self, to see the self for the non-objectifiable wholeness that it is, requires **a mind that is contemplative and sensitive**.

However, the sensitivity does not imply getting hurt at every turn but it should be backed by healthy attitude and objectivity. Values come when I thoroughly understand my relationship to people, places and things around me.

THE UNDISTURBED, NON-REACTING, FRESH, SIMPLE AND CONTEMPLATIVE MIND

In a factual understanding, those situations, attitudes or events, which I consider hurtful, lose their significance for me and thereby their sting. Pride and pretence, which court hurt, drop away from me; non-harmfulness and accommodation, which soften hurt, become natural for me.

The mind that does not get hurt is **an undisturbed, non-reacting, fresh, simple and a contemplative mind** that can appreciate the whole as it unfolds in the teaching of self-knowledge.

Resorting to a quiet place, **vivikta-deśa-sevitva**, and absence of the need for company, **aratiḥ jana-samsadi**, are attitudes that establish such a contemplative mind, a mind ready for a contemplative life centred on self-knowledge.