

## I-12. Independence for Survival

Independence is about sustainability of an entity as an individual as well as the class to which it belongs. It depends on the individual and social health assured by the environment for sustainable growth, development and evolution. Starting from the functions of sense organs sustainability is the sum total of the interplay of the internal abilities, genetic attributes, environment, and the forces of the external world.

The term *pajatta* (#A34-100) relates to the survival needs addressed by responses to sense inputs to retain one's own identity as an entity as well as the group. The range of necessary and sufficient criteria and conditions is covered by the six attributes for independence for food, body, sense organs, awareness of the environment (*aanpan*), language and *man* or sensibility to put it all together and make suitable choices for independent existence. By negation these become the attributes for dependence. In the Euro-centric context such ideas have been celebrated piece-meal as freedom from want and freedom of choice.

### **Independence and Interdependence**

*Pajata* is part of interdependence of all the survival needs for a sustainable existence. It is not fully appreciated even in the enlightened social and political contexts. It is worth reviewing some of the implications of #A34-100 in order to develop the argument further. Concept of independence and interdependence is intertwined with responsibility for the consequences of actions (*karm*). It is not a matter of direct causality: All those who are capable of being independent bear responsibility for the chain of

consequences. And certainly it is not *niyati* (fate or destiny).

Can you one have independence without interdependence? When do goals become rights? What do you get from other living beings and what do you get in return? Such concerns motivate our interactions. These are all the more important for sustainable existence. Interdependence also holds for the more immediate *pajjata* criteria for food, health, safety and shelter, environment and movement, communication and decision-making.

**What is needed for independence?** The necessary and sufficient condition(s) for independence depends on what criteria are used. Clearly, basic needs for the body and food are shared by all beings. Safe habitat with freedom of movement comes next. These are interpreted as "freedom from want and hunger" and sufficiency from "all the four sides."

Independence is relative in the hierarchy of the interdependence of living beings. With the view of *live, let live, and thrive* consider the attribute of sensibility for sustainability. It is not just another dictate, but a reality-based paradigm for sustainability. Dependence of an organism on its own kind is obvious for the reproductive purposes and to provide diversity of the gene pool. Development of shared knowledge also benefits from the diversity of experiences. Plurality of inputs also increases the chances of successful decisions.

The attribute of language relates to the freedom of information, communication and expression. It is the major if not the only way in which we share and transfer knowledge through generations. It is for the evolution and development of social institutions that guard against encroachments. It is not a coincidence that virtually all modes of subjugations, ranging from missionary to colonial and dictatorial, target, attack, and

undermine the language communication. Also, virtually all movements towards independence of nations try to undo such damage by reverting to the language of the common people. Modern biology is beginning to realize the importance of language communication among the birds, insects, and mammals. Survival value of communication through chemical senses of bees, ants and other insects is also beginning to be appreciated.

Beyond the naturally endowed abilities to communicate, humans also rely on *sanni* (Chapter I-11) or the ability “to put it all together.” As an integral part of behavior, the domain of *sangii* is within the bounds of existence to survive and thrive.

Ability to nurture sensibility is an attribute for survival that provides the drive for the accomplishments of civilizations and cultures. Sustainable independence is built on the action and consequence evaluation of behaviors. With a defined trajectory of acts, actions cohere into desirable outcome including shared knowledge for individuals and groups. It places a greater emphasis on making choices through which value is created and a greater number of beings realize their potential.

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