

46. Be human

*YOU can master all knowledge
and win loud applause;
You can be hailed as a king
and rule over the realm;
You can pile vast wealth,
donate gold and land;
You can count all the stars
that shine at night;
You can name without doubt
each living thing on earth;
You can teach the eight-fold skill
to all who aspire;
You can reach the distant moon
and proudly walk thereon.
But you cannot be the master
of the five senses in your body;
You cannot turn your face inward
and still your wayward mind.*

We consider a combination of body, mind, intellect and senses as a human. This is not correct.

Mind is something we possess; body is something which we carry about; the intellect, too, is ours and the senses are dealt with by us. We are not the body, mind, intellect or senses. They are ours; we possess them. They are manipulated by us, we are distinct from all these. The day we recognise this differentiation and live on that knowledge, that day from we become aware of our Reality and our Goal.

Education is the gaining of illumination

Is this body inert or conscious? Of course it grows, declines, acts and undergoes destruction, just as the sweepings of your home, if daily thrown into a heap at one spot, grow into a mound. So, too, when food is daily provided, the body grows, and when food is stopped, it declines. So the body is basically inert matter. The body is consumed by fire when life leaves it and it becomes a corpse. It is also consumed by the flames of worry, fear and anxiety every day of its existence, from the moment of awakening at dawn to the moment of sleep at night. The body is also called *shareera*, which means, that which undergoes destruction. It is also praised as a temple where God is installed. And the word *kshethra*, usually applied to holy spots, is also used to indicate the body. Therefore the body must be used to further Divine purposes and to demonstrate the Glow of the Divine that is installed therein.

The body is cleansed, by soap and water, but true cleanliness can be achieved only from within. The cleansing of the body may keep physical illness away, but the *a-shaanthi* (disease) of the mind requires inner cleanliness. A perfume applied to the body might please the company around, but good thoughts and sweet conversation will please them more and for a longer time. As soap is for the body, truth is for speech; both have a high cleansing effect. The mind has to be cleansed by proper education in the crucible of renunciation. The intellect has to be purified by Universal vision conferred by wisdom. Education does not merely mean the study of books, nor the capacity to write books.

Education is the gaining of illumination; it is the light that dispels ignorance and doubt. It scatters the fog of ego. It confers humility and discipline. The *manas* (mind) must also be subjected to the process of *thapas* (rigorous discipline). The highest discipline is to bring about a unity in one's thought, word and deed. *Thapas* does not mean escaping into the forest and meditating in the loneliness on God.

God is not an alien living in far-off lands

God is close to each, in the heart He shines;

Sin is not an act or fact in far-off lands

Sin is in your mind, polluting word and deed.

Each sense organ has a legitimate purpose

God and the devil, good and bad, are denizens of one's own heart. Where God is, there the devil cannot be. It is like a game of 'musical chairs,' and only one person can occupy the chair. Seat God for ever in the heart, after ridding it of other occupants. Let this inert body be activated by Divine consciousness. The secular curriculum that you master in this college is important so that you may be self-reliant. But this education cannot be the final goal; the Resident of the heart should be given due reverence and homage.

Next, the senses. They serve to provide awareness of sound, tactile feeling, form, taste and smell. They should not be allowed to contribute to ill-health of the body and mind. Each of them has a legitimate purpose, a limited area of operation which should be respected. The tongue knows the measure of salt that can make a dish tasty. In the *Upanishaths*, the senses are called *maathra* (measures). Each one is a measure that can operate only upto a limit. The tongue has to speak softly and sweetly; the eye has to seek and see symmetry, harmony and beauty, the glow of Divine Ecstasy and the splendour of Divine Charm. The uncontrolled tongue indulges in four sins- lying, scandalising, vain gossip and wanton fault-finding. God resides in every one. The Lord has declared, "*Maamaivaamsho jeevaloke jeevabhoothaah sanaathanah*" (all living beings are a part of Me). They are all a part of His *Sanaathana* (Eternal) Self. So every one is an embodiment of the Divine.

Be engaged in developing the good in you

When any person is ill-treated or harmed, it is God who is the target of that sacrilege. We declare that Truth is God and in the same breath, adore falsehood. Resorting to falsehood is a demon that possesses and over-powers the weak. Indulging in unnecessary talk, talk for its own sake, is a morbid habit. It is also a waste of energy. It disperses company, for no one likes to listen to a bore. If he is tolerated for a minute, he will stick to you for days. There are others who spread rumours and gossip and spoil your peace of mind by poisoning the springs of love. You must be

engaged in developing the good in you, weeding out the bad and heightening your purity and holiness.

How can knowledge of the good and bad in others help you in this task? Talkative persons easily slip into scandal-mongering. Too much talk and a tongue addicted to scandal are twins; they work together and in unison. A poet addressed his tongue thus, "O tongue, knower of taste, relisher of sweetness, always prefer the Truth and God." Even when speaking the truth, one should not inflame passion, diminish enthusiasm or inflict injury: "*Sathyam brooyaath, priyam brooyaath*" (Speak the truth, speak pleasantly). "*Na brooyath sathyam apriyam*" (If unpleasant, do not speak the Truth). "*Priyam cha na anritham brooyaath*" (though it may be pleasant, do not speak falsehood).

Practise speech that does not offend

The Lord has said in the Geetha: "*Anudhvega karam vaakyam sathyam priya hitham cha yath*" (Speech that does not offend, that is truthful, pleasant and beneficial, has to be practised). Such speech sanctifies the tongue. It knows and respects the limits. The ear cannot tolerate a false or discordant note. Every one of the senses responds within its own limits of tolerance and protests when that limit is exceeded or disregarded. You must be vigilant that they are put to use with proper attention to those limits. When they stray from the path or overlap their boundaries, reason hides its head and makes you inhuman.

You can master all knowledge and win loud applause

The crowds that gather may praise and proclaim, "Ah, what a wonderful lecture he gave!"

You can be hailed as a king and rule over the realm You can pile vast wealth and donate gold and land.

But what is the benefit gained?

Karna gave away the earrings he wore and even sliced off his Divine suit of armour and gave it away in charity. Wherein lies the key to greatness? Whereto does renunciation lead? The question is, does it purify the heart? Does it help the Divinity within to manifest Itself?.

Three kinds of *thapas* man should practise

The *manas* (mind) is known as *anthah-karana* (inner sense organ). The *manas* is always engaged in *manana* (recapturing, remembering, recalling, reflecting). As a result it receives and rejects wishes. Even when you are alone and silent, the mind may be on a spree---wishing, desiring, planning to do or not to do. And it keeps the tongue busy until sleep silences it. There are no standards which are kept in mind while looking, talking or acting. Since these are done as soon as the thought arises or the Will commands, the power of discrimination becomes weak. One must try to stay a while in order to examine and judge. Develop the quality of fortitude, the strength not to yield to the opinions of others unless you find them to be right and the courage to bear criticism and face slander.

As regards *thapas* (penance), there are three kinds---the *thapas* of the mind, of the body and of the speech. Let me remind you that the *thapas* of the body involves a few disciplines, The first is the process by which you revere and adore elders, teachers and God, serve them and honour their commands, put those commands into practice and earn their Grace. The second discipline is

cleanliness, inner and outer. Outer cleanliness includes the cleanliness of the area surrounding you. The third is *Brahmaacharya*. This does not mean merely desisting from marriage. It means becoming soaked in Holy Love for the Divine, through transparent sincerity, unselfish Will, pure consciousness and holy thoughts.

The true meaning of *Brahmacharya*

You all know that Hanumaan is described as the Eternal *Brahmachari* (bachelor). He was married to Sri Vathsala, yet he earned that description. How? *Brahmaachari* means 'He who moves in *Brahman*.' Hanumaan had no other thought than Raama (who is *Brahman*) and so was ever moving in *Brahman*, living in *Brahman*. Your thoughts, feelings, desires and activities must all move in *Brahman* (the Universal Absolute). That is to say, whatever is spoken, whatever is seen, must be cognised as *Brahman*. That is the real *Brahmacharya* stage, not merely observing certain disciplines to control the senses and the mind.

The next discipline is *ahimsa* (absence of violence). It does not mean merely not injuring a living being. You should not cause hurt even by a word, a look or a gesture. Tolerance, fortitude, equanimity---these help you to be steady in *ahimsa*. They will remove all chance of your causing pain to others. This is called *sahana* (forbearance) or *kshama* (forgiving). Assess the worth of whatever others do to you or say about you, and cultivate fortitude and the understanding to appreciate their behaviour and pardon their faults. This capacity is as invaluable as truth, righteousness, wisdom, non-violence, renunciation, delight and compassion. It is all that one need possess for spiritual advancement.

Living becomes a glorious experience only when it is sweetened by tolerance and love. Willingness to compromise with others' ways of living and cooperation in common tasks, these make living happy and fruitful. Certain modes of behaviour have been laid down and proved beneficial by centuries of practice. These have to be observed with modifications to suit the conditions of today. We are developing in each department of life, but pity it is that we are not developing the unique qualities of human beings. Develop the *Aathmic* awareness, the consciousness of the Divine, the acquisition of Divine attributes. Expand love and understanding. When students consciously and steadily strive to develop these distinct human qualities, education will give them valuable experience, and they shall be equipped to transform society. The nation and all mankind will derive benefit therefrom.

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Practising meditation in silence and solitude, one can in due course establish silence and solitude in the heart, even in the busiest thoroughfares.

Now, the puuja room or domestic shrines are invariably found next to the kitchen, there, the smells of cooking attack the nostrils, the sounds of frying and boiling attack the ear; the mind is distracted by voices and noises. How can concentration grow in such an atmosphere?

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