

13. The Human Destiny

MOST people in the world do not know the true significance of life. Many do not even seem to care about it. One in a million may be concerned about knowing the purpose of life. The concern is the first step in the journey towards the ultimate goal. Most young men are content to regard eating, sleeping, dressing and rearing a big family as the main aims of living. All these doubtless are necessary to some extent. But they alone cannot contribute to peace of mind or fullness of life.

The phenomena of the external world are what the eyes see, the ears hear, and the mind cognises. All these are sensory phenomena. Beyond the *Indriyas* (senses) is the mind and greater than the mind is the *Buddhi* (intellect). The intellect is governed by the *Atma* (the inner Divine Being). The human destiny is to realise the *Atma*.

Among the sense organs the most powerful is the mouth (which has the powers of speech and consuming food). When the mouth is under the control of the mind, all other senses can be controlled. Speech should be restrained as much as possible. Then, the attention, of the mind should be diverted towards the *Buddhi* (which has the power of discrimination). When the *Buddhi* is turned towards the *Atma* (the indwelling Spirit), it begins to realise the all-pervading Spirit.

Only a few enjoy the bliss of the Spirit

The inextricable connection between the phenomenal world outside and the world of consciousness inside eludes the understanding, of ordinary people. Immersed in the desire for enjoying worldly pleasures, they do not attempt to discover the boundless joy to be derived from the inner Spirit. This is because all the sense organs are open only to experiences from outside. It is not surprising that the common man is subject to the outward vision. Only a few develop the inner vision and enjoy spiritual bliss.

Is it the body that derives joy from looking at a thing of beauty? Or is it the *Atma*? What is it that relishes the food that is consumed? The body or the spirit? What is it that enjoys fragrance or is moved by companionship? Enquiring in this manner, it will be found that it is the *Atma* that is the enjoyer and not the physical body. The body by itself is gross and is incapable of experiencing joy. It must be realised that the Spirit transcends the mind and the intellect and pervades the entire cosmos. The Spirit is the basis for the cognition of the external world and experiencing the inner world.

The *Vedas* and *Vedangas* (vedic sciences), music and literature, physics and chemistry, botany and biology---all these different branches of knowledge are related to the phenomenal universe. They belong to the category of "*Apara Vidya*"--the lower knowledge. People devote their lives mainly to these studies. Only the knowledge of the Spirit is "*Paraa Vidya*"---the Supreme Knowledge. "*Apara Vidya*" (worldly knowledge) is pursued mainly for earning a living. But even worldly knowledge exists to point the way to spiritual awareness. Without spiritual knowledge, all other knowledge is valueless.

Experiences of different states of consciousness

Every man has to enquire every moment about the purpose and goal in life. Eating, drinking, sleeping and passing time cannot be the meaning of human life. All these are common to birds

and beasts. What is the uniqueness of man? He is endowed with faculties which can enable him to rise above the animal to the human and divine level.

Vaak (speech), *Manas* (mind) and *Prana* (vital breath) are manifestations of the *Atma*. Each is related to a state of consciousness. They are: *Jaagruti* (the waking state), *Svapna* (dream state) and *Sushupti* (deep sleep). In the *Jaagruti* state man is awake and experiences the outer world through sight, hearing, speech and other senses. The phenomenal universe is what one experiences through the five sense organs. The experience in the waking state is known as *Visva* because experiences are the subtle form of the cosmic principle. *Visva* has 24 constituent elements: the five organs of action, the five sense organs, the five basic elements, the five *pranas* (vital airs), the mind, the *Buddhi* (intellect), the *Chitta* (subconscious mind) and *Ahamkara* (ego sense). In the dream state, only the four internal senses (the mind, the *Buddhi*, the *Chitta* and the *Ahamkara*) function. They constitute the *Antahkarana* (the psycho-somatic agency). In this state the experiencer has *tejas* (an effulgent form) and is known as *Thaijasa*. *Sushupti* is the state of deep sleep. In this state, *Prajna* (intuited awareness) alone remains. Hence the experience in this state is called *Praajna* (the Knower).

Visva, *Thaijasa* and *Praajna* are all different names of the *Atma* (in the different states of consciousness), according to the different forms assumed by the *Atma* in the various states.

Modifications of the principle of consciousness

Prajnaanam Brahma declares the Upanishad. *Jnana*, *Vijnana*, *Prajnana*, *Sujnana* and *Ajnana* are modifications of one and the same principle of Consciousness. *Prajnana* comprehends all that is experienced by the *Antahkarana* through impressions received by the sense organs--the eyes, the mouth, the ears, the nose, etc. *Prajnana* is immanent in *Antahkarana* as the principle which absorbs and interprets the messages received through the senses. The eyes, for instance, are like the bulb in a lamp. The bulb cannot emit light. It needs the electric current to make it burn. Likewise the eyes cannot see by themselves. It is the *Prajnana* which sees through the eyes. The same thing applies to the ears and the other organs. They all need power of the inner current to do their work. All the sense organs are insentient by themselves. It is *Prajnana* that animates them and makes them instruments of the *Chaitanya* (Consciousness).

The universe contains innumerable objects. In all of them, the one unchanging, eternal principle is the *Atma*. That is *Prajnaana*. That is *Brahman*. It is the power of this eternal principle which sustains the evanescent and ever-changing objects of the universe. *Asthi*, *Bhaasthi* and *Priyam* (Existing, shining and pleasing) are three indices of the Divine. *Sat-Chit-Ananda* are the attributes of the Divine. *Sat* indicates permanence. *Chit* indicates Omniscience. *Ananda* is the state of unalloyed bliss. These three attributes of the Divine are changeless and have no form or name. When these three get associated with objects which have name and form, we have *Prapancha*---the quintuple phenomenal universe. The cosmos is permeated by the Divine. Even if you are unable to see It, the Divine is present in everything. All our senses function because of the Consciousness that operates in every being. Without that consciousness man would be an insentient creature.

Atma is common to all states of consciousness

The different states of consciousness are mutually exclusive. You cannot experience in one state what you have gone through in another. For instance, in a dream you may weep over the death of a person. But when you wake up, you don't weep for the person who died in the dream. What

happened in the dream is true only in the dream state. In the waking state it is *Mithya* (unreal). Likewise we do not lament in the dream for a person who died in the waking state. Each experience is real only in that state of consciousness. But the one principle that is common to all states of consciousness----waking, dream, and deep sleep----is *the Atma*. *Atma* is not bound by limitations of time, space and circumstance.

The body is impermanent. But it is the abode of the indwelling Spirit. It is a shrine and when it moves, the Divine moves with it. Hence the body should be cared for the same way in which an iron safe which is of little value in itself, is safeguarded for the sake of the valuables kept in it.

What is it that binds man to the illusory world? It is not family or property. These can be given up when one wishes to do so. But what are the most difficult to renounce are *Raga* (attachment) and *Dweshha* (hatred). As long as these are dominant in man, he cannot realise his true self. And as long as man is unaware of his true self, he is in bondage, there is no freedom from suffering or worry.

Rights and duties are two ends of a battery

Students should remember that life is precious and should not be wasted in the pursuit of trivial and temporary things. Together with academic studies they should cultivate spiritual *sadhana*. Even in academic studies, they should not confine themselves to merely transferring to the memory what is contained in the books. They must digest what they have studied and put their knowledge to practical use in the service of society. Try to absorb what is contained in the books and make this knowledge a part of your life. Just as water stored in a reservoir is used for irrigation through canals, the knowledge acquired by you should be diverted to useful channels for the benefit of society.

Today everyone talks about his rights and "fights" for them. But they are forgetting their duties and responsibilities. Rights and duties are like the positive and negative ends of a battery. They go together. When duties are discharged properly, rights will be secured of their own accord. How can rights be ensured without the due performance of duties? Recognise your responsibilities as students. That will make you deserve your rights.

Students should develop largeness of heart

This country has inherited a glorious culture from ancient times. You must preserve this culture, while adapting it to suit modern conditions. Most of our students are totally ignorant of our spiritual and cultural heritage. This ancient culture laid stress on unity and sought to raise the human to Divine level. It aimed at promoting religious and social harmony. Today unity and tolerance are absent and society is riddled with conflicts. The country lost its freedom in the past because of divisions. We should regard Bharat as one nation, with one heart and proclaim the Truth to the world in one voice.

Students! Develop largeness of heart. The heart is not a physical organ. It derives its name "Hridaya" from the fact that it is a seat of Daya (compassion). Develop compassion for all. Go forward from the narrow feelings of "I" and "mine" to "We" and "Ours".

It is not easy to comprehend the formless, attributeless, infinite Divine. The truth of the Divine has to be discovered and experienced by each one. The Divine is omnipresent. You must lead a life of truth and godliness based on this conviction. Strive to make the nation an upholder of truth and righteousness. This is the foremost duty of students today.

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If the eye does not help you to visualise God in everything it sees, it is far better to be blind. If your ears drag into filthy cacophony it is far better to be deaf. The senses should not be encouraged to plunge you into sensual muck. They must serve your real interests and sublimate your appetites. They must help you to dwell on God.

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