

### 13. Royal road to realisation

*EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love!* Control of the senses should be one of the primary aims of students.

More than the sense organs, the sensory perceptions are powerful. They are sound, touch, form, taste and smell.

Among the sense organs the most important, one is the mouth (or tongue) with the power of *Vaak* (speech). If one can conquer the tongue he will be the master of all the other senses.

The tongue has two functions: speaking and eating. Whoever is able to master these two faculties, will be able to raise himself to the level of the Divine. When the tongue becomes silent, the mind begins to talk. To control the mind's talk, the *Buddhi* (intellect or intelligence) has to be awakened. Then one should strive to turn the *Buddhi* towards the *Atma* (the Divine).

True *sadhana* (spiritual striving) consists in turning the tongue towards the mind, the mind towards the intellect and the intellect towards the *Atma*. While this royal road is available to man, he chooses to immerse himself in worldly pleasures and gets submerged in sorrow.

#### ***Atma* is the basis for the external world**

No one tries to find out what is the base for the senses. Nor does one seek to know who is the enjoyer of the pleasures derived through the senses. Students should recognise the intimate relationship between the external phenomenal world and the world within oneself. Is it the body or the senses or the *Atma* which derives pleasures from consuming food, or seeing a beautiful sight or smelling a fragrant object? It is not the body, much less the sense organs. It is *the Atma*, which fosters, presides and rules over all of them, that is the root cause. The *Atma* is the basis for the external world and is the motivator of the internal world. When the cardinal role of the *Atma* is understood as the root cause of everything, the temporary and transient sense organs will cease to have dominance over us.

The most important sense organ is the tongue. Mastery over it will enable one to master all other sense organs. The *Kathopanishad* has compared the senses to horses. What are the characteristics of a horse? It can run fast. But once a bridle is put in its mouth, its entire movement can be controlled. How is it that a small bridle is able to control such a large animal? For the horse the mouth is most important. Once the mouth is bridled the entire animal comes under control. In the human context the mouth is the most important among the five sense organs. With a small flame we can kindle a big fire. The power of speech is like the flame. With its fire we can do many things. By controlling speech (and the tongue) you can acquire the capacity to master the world. Using the power of *vaak* (speech) you can achieve something splendid or indulge in something mean. Speech can be employed for blessing one or blaming one. In a dithyramb in praise of the tongue, Jayadeva sings: "Oh tongue! You are pure! You are sweet! Do not indulge in idle talk. Sing the glories of the Lord--Govinda! Damodara! Madhava!"

"A slip of the foot may not cause much harm. But a slip of the tongue may take you to hell," says a proverb. When the tongue is used recklessly, it can cause great pain to the heart. There is no doctor on earth who can heal the wound caused by a harsh word.

### **Free the senses from worldly objects**

When the senses are associated with worldly objects, they can give rise to pleasure as well as pain. For instance someone outside is abusing you; as long as the abuse is outside the range of your sense organs, you are not affected by what is said. But if the abusive words reach your ears, you get excited and enraged. What is the reason for this excitement and anger? As long as there was no contact between the external happenings and the sense organs, the individual was unruffled. It is the contact with the sense objects that provoked the strong reaction.

To take an opposite example: some one is praising you, expatiating on your great qualities. As long as the words of praise have not reached your ears, you derive no joy nor do you feel a sense of endearment. But once you have heard the words of praise, you rejoice in them and develop a love for the speaker.

What is the reason for disliking one or loving another? It is the contact with the things in the external world. The senses will be able to get on peacefully only when they have minimised their contacts with the world outside. In the alternative, if the individual is able to treat good and bad, the pleasant and the unpleasant, with equanimity, he will remain unaffected by the impressions received by the senses.

It is not so easy to control the sense organs. The easier path is to develop an attitude of equipoise. You have to enquire how to achieve equal-mindedness, without giving way either to elation or agitation. You have to develop the conviction, "I am not the sense organs. I am not the body. I am the *Atma*." When you have acquired this conviction the sense organs will cease to be a bother. By constant contemplation on the idea that you are the *Atma*, you can transcend the human limitations and experience the Divine.

### **The story of the noble Englishman**

You may have heard about the great and noble Englishman Philip Sydney. While he was at school his father wrote to him a letter giving some words of advice. He wrote, "My dear Son! Every day offer your heartfelt prayers to God. Strive always to turn your mind towards God. Behave with respect and humility towards your teachers and fellow students. Do not give room for anger, greed or discontentment. Don't take to heart any criticism levelled at you. Don't get elated by the praise of others. Don't indulge in criticism of others." Towards the end of the letter the father described an important warning.

He said, "If you have to make a promise to anyone, make it only to God and to none else. Speech is a gift of God. Hence the plighted word must be offered only to God. You have no right to give a pledge to any one else. You will be guilty of misusing your word. If you follow this rule your glow will shine. Your wisdom will grow. You will stand forth as an ideal student. Always control your tongue. Never allow it to run amuck." Philip Sydney followed his father's advice and achieved great eminence.

Students should note that excessive talk pollutes the mind. Students should not concern themselves with any matters other than their studies. A *Vidyarthi* must be a seeker of knowledge and not a *Vishayarthi*, a seeker of sensory objects.

### **The four vices of the tongue**

The tongue is prone to four types of vices: [1] Uttering falsehood, [2] Talking ill of others, [3] Indulging in scandal and [4] Excessive talk. These four tendencies undermine peace of mind.

Students should try to avoid these four evils and adhere to truth and righteousness. Thereby they will be sublimating their lives.

The five sense organs subject man to different kinds of troubles. In the case of animals each sense perception affects only one animal. For instance, the deer is affected by sound. On hearing certain sounds the deer gets frightened. The elephant is influenced by touch. The touch of the mahout's goad makes it obey him. The moth is a victim of sight. It is attracted by a flame and falls in the fire. The fish is a victim of taste. Attracted by the taste of a worm it swallows the bait and is caught. The bee is attracted by smell and falls a victim to this temptation. Each of these is subject to the power of one of the five sense perceptions. But man is a victim to all the five allurements!

Consider the story of Prahlada. He was unaffected by all ordeals to which he was subjected by his father on account of his unflinching devotion to the Lord. Though he was a young lad he had such control over his senses that every attempt to lure him into the sensual ways failed. He was resolute in his faith in God. Nothing could shake it.

The sense organs are subtler than the body. The mind is subtler than the sense organs. The *Buddhi* (intellect) is subtler than the mind. Subtler than all of them is the *Atma*. They will have to come under the sway of the *Atma*.

### **Students should know how to behave**

Because the sense organs are highly potent, the first task for man is to bring them under his control to lead an ideal life. Because young people today have not developed sense-control all their actions and behaviour are devious. They are unaware of how they should sit in the classroom, how they should walk about, how they should read, how they should sleep or how they should behave towards their parents, elders and friends. They have no concentration while talking to anyone. By constant practice of right conduct they will acquire control over all their senses. Constant practice alone can bring about proper behaviour in every situation walking, talking, eating etc. While walking on the road, students should have their eyes on the ground. They will then have no distractions.

Young people today do not know how to sit properly. They sit with their backs bent. This causes various ailments and leads to premature old age. While walking or sitting, you must be straight like a stick. There is a physiological reason for this. A very important nerve, the *Sushumna Naadi*, runs through the spinal column, from its base in the *Mooladhara* to the top of the head, the *Sahasrara*. If this gets bent the results will be serious. The importance of the *Sushumna Naadi* is known only to those engaged in spiritual *sadhana* such as *Kundalini Yoga*.

Do not interest yourselves in affairs that do not directly concern you. Students have to cultivate self-discipline during this precious period in their lives. The body and every organ in it has to be kept in good trim. The body is the instrument even for God-realisation.

The ancient sages lived long years in good health because of their physical and spiritual discipline. Students should follow their example to make their lives sublime. They should stand out as the inheritors of their great spiritual legacy. Only then they will shine as living exponents of Indian culture. There is no difference between culture and spirituality. In fact the culture of all countries is based on spirituality. The two are integrally related. Dividing cultures on the basis of nationality or religion is a sign of narrow-mindedness. Religion is a much misunderstood word.

Religion really means Realisation. It is the same common experience for all who have realised God.

*Discourse at the Summer Course in Brindavan on 23-5-1990.*