

CHAPTER - II

The sublime significance of Vidya or the Higher Learning can be grasped by one or can be communicated to another only when the pure mind sheds its revealing light. Inside a room kept scrupulously clean, no snake, no scorpion, no poison-bearing insect can enter. They will be at home only in dark, dirty places. For the same reason, the sacred wisdom cannot enter hearts which are dark and dirty. Instead, poisonous breeds like anger would find those hearts congenial resorts.

When one desires to rid coal of its colour, what can soap and water do? Nor can washing the lump in milk help. The only means is to put it in a fire. That will turn it into a heap of white ash. In the same manner, when one is anxious to destroy the darkness of ignorance and the dirt of desire, awareness of the Atma (Atmajnana) or, in other words,

knowledge of Brahma (*Brahma Vidya*) has to be gained. Darkness can be ended only with the help of light. We cannot overwhelm darkness by attacking it with more darkness. Vidya is the light that one needs to destroy the inner darkness. Vidya provides the inner illumination. Vidya is the authentic Purushothama Yoga, the Yoga of the Supreme Person defined in the Gita, the knowledge of the Supreme, the Higher Learning, the Vidya. This yoga cannot be bought for money or acquired from friends or ordered from concerns or companies. It has to be assimilated and won by each one for oneself, through steady faith and ardent devotion.

The expression “God is nowhere” can remain unchanged; there is no need to confront or contradict it. The only thing necessary is to read the “w” in “where” in conjunction with the previous “no,” so that it becomes “God is now here”! The negative suddenly becomes positive. Similarly, by merely unifying in one direction the multidirectional vision now directed on the universe, the distinctions and the differences disappear and the Many becomes One.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Jayadeva, Gouranga, Tukaram, Tulsidas, Ramadas, Kabirdas, Saradadevi, Meera, Sakkubai, Mallamma—these had not mastered the objective commentaries and elucidations of the many sciences and scriptural texts; yet, this day they are adored by followers of all faiths, adherents of all creeds and natives of all lands. The reason obviously lies in their unshaken faith in the Atma,

won through the purification of the mind. Vidya alone conferred on them the purity and the clarity.

Those holy persons spoke what they had in their hearts, exactly as they felt or experienced. Consider, however, the present day claimants of Vidya. Is it not a fact that not even one in a million among them speaks out exactly what he has in his heart? They perform puja to Sathyanarayana, Narayana or God in the Form of *Sathya* (Truth), one day in the year; the rest of the year, every day, they worship Asathyanarayana, the God of Untruth. The urge for objective scholarship is derived from this type of worship. Can this knowledge deserve to be called Vidya? No, never.

Food on the plate, when not consumed by us or given over to some hungry person, but kept unused, becomes foul. So too, when our faults and failings are not corrected, either by our own efforts or by heeding the advice of those sympathetic souls who have succeeded in the cleansing process, imagine what the fate of our lives will be? Like the plate of boiled dhal kept aside too long, life will stink. It seems a father praised the accomplishments of his son and said in conclusion, “He has only two little faults. They are: (1) He does not know what his faults are and (2) He will not listen if others point them out to him.” This happened in the past. But today, not one son but each and every one is in the same predicament. It has become quite natural for every father to complain thus. Is this the value of the Vidya they claim to have?

But children are by nature very good; the fault lies in the system which confers Vidya on them. Of course, this fact is known to all, but everyone shrinks from the task of reforming it. This is the major weakness. It is easy to advise in a million ways but not even one thing is practised. “The system has to be transformed from the primary school right up to the Universities”—this is declared and announced in newspapers; but no one can be seen who transforms it or even points out specifically what are the changes to be effected and how. No one highlights the defects of the system.

The truth that spiritual, moral and behavioural values are the very crown of human achievement is not recognised. When not in office, they write articles and essays on education or indulge in parrot-talks from platforms. When the same persons achieve positions of authority, they legislate measures quite contrary to what they proclaimed earlier.

The magnet can draw iron towards itself but it cannot attract pieces of iron covered with dust and rust. Of course, speeches from platforms are good; only, practice is paralysed. Unless this illness is cured, education and real scholarship cannot manifest its worth. The dust and rust on the pieces of iron have to be washed away, in order that the magnet can attract. When the mind is thus polished clean, the effect will be, as the poet says, “A Mahatma has as his sign, one thought, one word, one deed.” These three being in harmony is the best proof of the worth of man. This

unique worth is now being disclaimed by man, through his own volition. For, he is unaware of Atma Vidya, the genuine Vidya that ought to be learned.

As contemporaries of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, there flourished many scholars, pundits and experts. But the awareness of the Atma failed to illumine them to any extent. As a result, the names of the scholars, pundits and experts are not heard today. The name of Ramakrishna, who could not claim scholarship in any material or objective field of knowledge, has alone spread all over the world. What is the reason? Water with which sugar is mixed and plain water, both are similar when looked at. Drink! Then you distinguish the one as sherbet and the other as just water.

The words of Paramahansa are full of supreme wisdom. The words of scholars are soaked in textual scholarship. Pretentious pundits who have only perused the pages go after monetary gains. They do not rush towards the Divine. Match sticks that have fallen into water cannot yield fire when struck, however vigorously you try. Besides, they spoil even the box which holds them. So too, hearts soaked in worldly desires and designs may pour out parrot-exhortations but they can have at best only listeners, not practitioners. They may receive the advice but they would not accept it or act accordingly.

Every event in the world has a special cause that brought it about, namely, knowledge. Of course, without things to

be known, there can be no knowledge. Knowledge itself is of two kinds; patent and latent, direct and indirect, *Prathyaksha* and *Paroksha*, real and apparent. Prathyaksha or Aparoksha, (the patent knowledge) is gained through the ear and other sense organs and through the words of others. The Paroksha (or the latent), the real knowledge knows no plurality; it analyses and understands the attractions and objects which haunt the mind. It purifies the mind and widens the vision of the heart.