

## CHAPTER - III

**T**oday, the educational system, though very expensive and elaborate, has ignored instruction in morals. In the Gurukulas (hermitages) of the past, instruction was provided for right living, spiritual advancement, and moral conduct and behaviour. In those days students were trained to lead lives marked by humility, sense-control, virtue and discipline. Now, these qualities are not recognisable among them. They are not aware of the means or meaning of sense-control. From childhood, they revel in following every whim and fancy. They find pleasure in the free play of the senses and believe in materialism only. As a result, one is filled with alarm when the situation in the colleges is looked into. The Head of the Department of Health in Calcutta has found that eighty out of every hundred students in the Calcutta University are afflicted with poor health. In the Bombay region, the condition is even worse, affecting ninety out of

every hundred. The reason is to be found in the fact that the students are engaged in sensual living, the uncontrolled pursuit of sensory pleasure and evil habits. Can these be counted as gains from education? Or are they to be called “riches” accumulated through perverse ignorance?

Teachers have to identify their role and their responsibility. They have to bear a major share in fostering and preserving the mental and physical health of their tender, innocent wards.

Every living being looks at the world around. But, each one looks uniquely in one’s own special way. The same object is looked at by ten persons with ten different feelings. One individual is looked at by the son, with the feeling that he is the father. The wife looks on him as the husband. His father looks upon him as a son. His companion has the feeling that he is a dear friend. Being the same individual, why does he not evoke the same reaction in all? Those who visualise him differently are affected differently. That is the truth.

Once, a guru, residing in Brahmam Mutt, while in a happy mood, chewing betel with great relish, asked his disciple, “Dear fellow! How is the world?” The disciple answered, “Guruji! For each one, his own world.” Though all are in one world, each one lives in his own world, shaped by his own actions and reactions. This is the reason why Sankaracharya declared, “Fill your vision with Wisdom; all

that you see will then be God.” When Drshti (vision) is filled with Jnana, Srishti (creation) is filled with Brahman.

In the vocabulary of education today, *Dhana* (riches) is Dharma. The pursuit of riches is the “right” path. *Dhana* is the *Karma*. Every activity has the acquisition of riches as the goal. *Dhana* is the most sublime Padam. There is no ideal more desirable than getting rich. Here is a short story as illustration: Narayana (God) has sixteen manifest aspects and yet, He is the latent immanent Reality. So too, the material Narayana, the Rupee, has also sixteen annas as parts. When men worship the Rupee as the Visible God, Narayana becomes unreachable for them. Few try to estimate the vastness of the loss they sustain therefrom.

One day, in the midst of conversation, Lakshmi, the Divine Consort and the Goddess of Wealth, addressed Narayana, “Lord, the entire world is adoring Me; not even one in a hundred, why, not even one in a million, is worshipping you.” She teased the Lord by this statement. She put forward a plan to test the sincerity of man. She said, “Lord, it is best to discover for ourselves how true the facts are. Come, we shall both go forth into the world and find out.”

Narayana agreed. He changed into a great Pundit, wearing golden bracelets on his wrists as evidence of the appreciation and admiration of famous academic bodies. He had a garland of rudraksha beads round the neck and

thick streaks of Vibhuthi (holy ash) on the forehead. He manifested himself on earth as a redoubtable scholar. He moved from village to village, and began enchanting the people through his enrapturing discourses. His splendorous personality and deep scholarship attracted the people. Thousands gathered to hear him and followed him from place to place. Brahmins invited him to their settlements and honoured him. His arrival was celebrated as a festival, with rich feasting.

While Narayana was being feted thus, Lakshmi too appeared on earth as a great *Yogini* (Female Ascetic). She too proceeded from village to village enlightening the people on the Atma, through her discourses. Women assembled to hear her fascinating speeches in wave after wave, in massive numbers. They prayed that she must honour their homes with a visit and partake of the feast they were most eager to offer. In reply, she informed them that she was bound by some vows which made it difficult for her to accept their request. She would not eat out of plates already in use in the homes. She said that she must be allowed to bring her own cups and plates. The women were yearning so deeply for hosting her that they accepted the condition. Whatever her vow, they were ready to respect it. Invitations came from every woman from everywhere.

The Yogini reached the house where she was to take food the first day and took out from the bag she had with her, a gold plate, a few gold cups and a gold “tumbler”

(*lota*) to hold drinking water. These she spread before herself, for the various items of the menu. When the meal was over, she left the place, leaving the precious golden articles to be taken by the host. She had a new set for each day, she said.

The news spread. The villages where Narayana was holding his delightful discourses also heard the wonderful happenings of the Yogini's gifts. The Brahmins who were staunch admirers of the far-famed scholar also rushed to invite the Yogini to their homes for lunch! The Yogini told them that they ought to drive the Pundit out before she could enter their settlement. She would not set foot there so long as that person continued to stay there! She was adamant on that point. Their greed for gold was so strong that they forced the Pundit, whom they had adored so long and so pompously, to go out of their village.

Thereafter, the Yogini entered the Brahmin settlement, gave discourses, partook of feasts arranged in her honour, and presented the golden plates and cups to each of her hosts. Thus, the Yogini managed to get the Pundit driven out of every place where he sought recognition and attention. Instead, she secured the worship of people everywhere. Unable to bear the universal insult, the Pundit cast off the role and Narayana disappeared from the earth. The Yogini came to know of this. She too gave up the cast she had assumed and resuming her real Form, She joined Lord Narayana. While talking between themselves, she told the

Lord, "Now, tell me! What did you discover? Who between us is honoured and worshipped more on earth?" Narayana smiled at her question. He replied, "Yes. What you said is true."

Yes. Today, education and the knowledge gained are being marketed. Money is all in all. Educated people desert their Motherland like mendicants in search of money. Is this the sign of a proper education?