

CHAPTER - IV

Bharath has been conferring lasting peace and happiness on peoples of all lands, over generations, through the impact of the spiritual principles it has cherished. The ideal for which this land has striven has been, “May all the worlds be happy and prosperous,” *“Lokas Samastha Sukhino Bhavanthu.”*

This has been the highest goal of the people of Bharath. In order to foster and accomplish this holy ideal, the rulers of past ages, the rishis, the founders of creeds, the scholars, the learned, matrons and mothers, have suffered and sacrificed much. They have discarded honour and fame and struggled to uphold their conviction and to shape their lives in accordance with this universal vision.

Rare and costly articles might attract by their external beauty, but to the eye that is illumined by spiritual light they would appear trivial in value. Physical charm and force can

never overpower the charm or force of the spirit. The quality of *Rajas* (passion) breeds egotism and can be identified wherever selfishness and pride are displayed. Until this mode of thought and action is suppressed, the quality of *Sathwa* (goodness) cannot become evident. And in the absence of the Sathwa quality, the divine, the Siva, the supreme power cannot be propitiated, pleased and won.

Parvathi, the daughter of the monarch of the Himalayas, was the very acme of physical beauty. In spite of this, she had to acquire the quality of Sathwa by destroying the pride in personal beauty and her native egotism through intense asceticism. She had to shine in the beauty of the spirit! The legend relates that Manmatha, the God of Love, who planned to project only the youthful charm of Parvathi for the attention of Siva, was burnt to ashes. This incident symbolises the fact that divine knowledge (Vidya) cannot be gained so long as one is caught up in the coils of the ego. When one equips oneself with Vidya, pride disappears.

But, these days, conceit and pride are taken as adding charm to the knowledge required. The attraction conferred on a person by scholarship in matters relating to the objective world has to be given up; only thereafter can the genuine innate Divinity manifest itself. Then alone can the personality of the individual, which is the self, accept the divine. The ego in us is the Manmatha, “the agitator of the mind,” and that has to be turned into ashes through the impact of divine vision. The divine, the Easwara, will not yield Himself to physical charm, worldly authority, muscular or intellectual

or financial power. This is the inner meaning of the Manmatha episode.

Parvathi underwent extreme austerities and subjected herself (that is to say, her ego-consciousness) to sun and rain, cold and hunger, and thus transformed herself. Finally, Easwara (Siva) accepted her as half of Himself! This is the stage in spiritual advance called *Saayujya* (Mergence). This is the same as *Moksha* and *Mukthi*, liberation and release. In fact, Vidya involves humility, tolerance and discipline. It destroys arrogance, envy and all the related vices. Such a Vidya is the real Atmic Vidya.

Moksha means liberation. All embodied beings long for liberation from the limitation that the embodiment connotes. Every living being is perforce a *Mumukshu*, that is to say, an aspirant for liberation, a practitioner of renunciation. One has to be a *tyagi*, versed in detachment. This is the final Truth, the indisputable Truth. Those who give up their body and leave, do not take with them from here even a handful of earth. When one does not himself learn to give up, Nature teaches him, on his death, this great truth about the need and value of detachment and renunciation. So, it is good to learn the lesson even before this happens. The person who learns and practises this truth is indeed blessed.

Detachment is the second valuable virtue that Vidya imparts. Empty a pot of the water that filled it; the sky that

one could see within the pot as image or shadow also gets lost along with the water. But the genuine sky enters the pot. So too, when that which is not Atma is discarded, the Atma remains and liberation is attained. But what has to be discarded is not objective impediment; the renunciation has to be subjective. Many people interpret *tyaga* (renunciation) to mean either giving away, as charity, money and land or performing Yajna or Yaga or other ceremonies, named sacrifices, or giving up hearth and home, wife and children and proceeding to the forest. But *tyaga* does not mean such gestures of weak-mindedness. These are not as difficult as they are supposed to be. If so minded, one can go through these acts easily and give up what the acts proscribe. The real renunciation is the giving up of desire.

This is the real goal of a person's existence, the purpose of all his efforts. The giving up of desire involves the giving up of lust, anger, greed, hatred, etc. The fundamental renunciation should be that of desire. The other feelings and emotions are its attendant reactions. We say "*Kodanda Pani*" (He who has in his hand the Kodanda bow); but the word implies that he has in his hand the arrow also. The bow implies the arrow too. In the same manner, desire implies the presence of lust, anger, greed, etc. These latter are veritable gateways to Hell. Envy is the bolt thereof, pride is the key. Unlock and lift the bolt—you can enter in.

Anger will pollute the wisdom earned by man. Unbridled desire will foul all his actions; greed will destroy his devotion

and dedication. Desire, Anger and Greed will undermine the *Karma*, *Jnana* and *Bhakthi* of man, and make him a boor. But, the root cause of anger is *Kama* (desire) and *Kama* is the consequence of *Ajnana* (ignorance). So, what has to be got rid of is this basic ignorance.

Ignorance is the characteristic of the *Pasu* (animal). What is a *Pasu*? “*Pasyathi ithi pasuh*,” “That which sees is the *Pasu*.” That is to say, that which has the outward vision and accepts what the external vision conveys is the *Pasu*. The inward vision will lead a person to *Pasupathi*, the Lord of all living beings, the master of *Pasus*. He who has not mastered the senses is the *Pasu*. The *Pasu* has harmful qualities born along with it. However hard one may try to eliminate them, they cannot be transformed soon. The *Pasu* cannot get free from them. It has no capacity to understand the meaning of the advice given. For example we may bring up a tiger cub with affectionate care and train it to be gentle and obedient. But when it is hungry, it will relish only raw meat; it will not eat puri and potato! But man can be educated into better ways. Hence, the statement in the scriptures: “For all animate beings, birth as man is a rare achievement.” Man is indeed the most fortunate and the most holy among animals, for his inborn qualities can be sublimated. He who is born as a *Pasu* can elevate himself through self-effort and training into *Pasupathi*. The beast is born “cruel” and dies “cruel.”

A life lived without mastering one’s senses does not deserve the name. Man has been endowed with many capabilities and if, with them, he does not control his senses and direct them properly, the years he spends alive are wasted. *Vidya* or valid education helps man to achieve success in this process of mastery. *Vidya* confers *Vinaya* (humility). Education promotes humility. Through humility, one acquires the right to engage in professions. That authority confers prosperity. A prosperous person has the capacity for charity and right living. Right living can confer happiness here and hereafter.