

CHAPTER - V

Education must determine and delve into the nature and characteristics of spiritual search for the Absolute or the Overself, or Paramatma. It must prove its true character by manifesting as a spring of morality, laying down axioms of virtue. Vidya is its own visible proof. It is the root of faith in every Faith. It prepares the mind of man to appreciate and adhere to the Faith and to direct man's living along that course. This has been named Philosophy.

Philosophy means love of knowledge. Knowledge is a treasure of incalculable richness. Education is the relentless pursuit of knowledge, urged by love for its value and undeterred by difficulties. Vidya tries to probe behind the forms assumed by things and the appearances they put on and discover the reality that alone can explain them. The

Truth has to be known and lived by. The Truth has to be visualised; this is the function of Vidya.

Vidya is the effulgence that permeates a full life. In the West, Vidya deals more with concepts and conjectures. In the East, Vidya deals more with Truth and Totality. The Principle sought by Vidya is beyond the field of the senses. Man is a triune composite of body, mind and spirit (Atma). As a consequence, he has three natures in his make up; (1) a low, animal nature, (2) a human nature, replete with worldly knowledge and skill, and (3) the genuine nature of man, namely, the divine, Atmic nature. Being aware of this third nature and establishing oneself in that—this is Vidya.

The body is a machine with the five elements—space, air, fire, water and earth—as its components. God is playing with it, Himself unseen.

The body is a tree; love of the Self is the root; desires are the branches it sends forth. Qualities, attributes, modes of behaviour based on basic nature are the flowers issuing therefrom. Joy and grief are the fruits it offers.

The human body is a world in itself. Blood flows through and animates every part of the body. God is flowing in and through and activating every spot in the world.

There is only one Law guiding and guarding this world—the Law of Love. Each nation or community has the joy or grief, good life or bad, decided by and derived

from its activities. The “bad” too is in fact “good” in reverse. It serves to teach what has to be avoided. It would not be “bad” for all time; it is ever short lived. Neither “bad” nor “good” can be pronounced as “absolutely unrelieved” states. Vidya reveals and makes clear that “good” and “bad” are only the reactions caused by the failings and feelings of the mind of man.

One must be able to judge the difference between one “good thing” and another that seems to us to be “better.” If one cannot do so, one will hold on to the first thing that strikes him as good, discarding the rest. But it must be understood that the “better” is not harmful to the good. Just as “unrighteousness” prods man to cultivate “righteousness,” troubles induce man to manifest compassion and charity. Compassion has as its inevitable seed, suffering. If there were no wrong and no suffering, man would have become either stock or stone. One who has no capacity to weigh and to respond to the call of agony and pain is like a blind person who cannot distinguish between what is good and what is bad. Discriminationless people behave in this blind manner.

Desire breeds wishes. Wishes cause birth and also death. When man is devoid of desire, he need not go through birth and death. The next birth is the result of unfulfilled desires in this life and is determined by them. Those who have no trace of desire for material objects can achieve the awareness of the Atmic reality.

In fact, the desire to know God, to love God and be loved by God is not a desire which binds. When awareness of God dawns in all its splendour, every worldly, sensual desire is reduced to ashes in the flames of that Awareness. The individual self will turn towards the Universal Self, as soon as desire comes to an end, and delights in supreme Peace, Paramasanthi. The self must break off all contact with non-self, so that it can earn immortality.

Your thoughts play a vital role in shaping your life. That is why you are advised to watch your thoughts and to welcome only good ones. Man is a heap of thoughts. Vidya stabilises good thoughts in the mind of man, and thus rises to the status of Atma Vidya. For example, a chair evokes an idea in your mind of a certain form having a certain name. The word wood does not produce that idea and that name-form. The value of that name-form is dependent on the usefulness you attribute to the wood. The relationship between you and the material world must be such as to make desires flee from you, not to make desires more intensive and extensive.

Really speaking, no one loves or desires any article or thing, appreciating it *as* itself. One loves it at all times for only selfish reasons, for one’s own sake. No move is indulged in by man, without a specific purpose. But the learning derived from Vidya will reveal that the individual is not entirely responsible for even the motive which prompts him. The Karma or Activity is not fully one’s own! It is one’s Karma that elevates or degrades one’s status.

Death involves certain developments that weaken and extinguish life. It does not affect the Atma. The Atma has no death. It cannot be destroyed. Therefore one should not fear death. Death is but another stage of life. However long one suffers from illness or however severe the injury, death can happen only when Time signals the right moment. When the yearning for living ends, there can be no more birth.

It is the same single energy (Sakthi) that activates all hands, sees through all eyes, and hears through all ears. In fact, all mankind is made of one divine substance. The human body, either in America or China, Africa or India, has the same components of flesh, blood and bone. The instinctive urges and awareness are common to all living beings. When investigation is done through scientific means, the truth that there are signs of awareness of life in stone and tree and metals can be demonstrated.

The Atma is a spark of the Divine. Its latent existence can be known by inquirers. God is ONE. Whatever one's nationality, whichever religion one professes, one can realise the Universal Absolute (Brahma) if one masters the science of spiritual advancement (Atma Vidya). Faith in the ONE God is the crux, the central point. Other beliefs, concepts and conjectures revolve as the rim, on the periphery.