

CHAPTER - VII

The human being is like a seed. Just as the seed sprouts into a sapling and grows continuously into a tree, man too has to grow and attain fulfilment. Man has to master two fields of knowledge in order to reach this goal. The first is knowledge of the world, that is to say, knowledge concerning the manifested Universe. The second is knowledge of the other world. The first confers the means for living (*Jeevana Upaadhi*); the second confers the goal of life (*Jeevana Paramaavadhi*). The means for living are the things that can satisfy one's day-to-day needs. One has to acquire them and store them, or acquire the capacity to get them when required. The knowledge of the goal of life involves inquiry into problems like: "For what end should one live?", "Who is the Creator of all that we become aware of?", "What exactly am I, this distinct individual I?". This enquiry ultimately reveals the goal. The scriptures of all religions and the many moral codes derived from them are concerned with problems that transcend the

limits of this world like: "Why are we here?", "What really have we to do to deserve this chance of life," and "What are we to become?"

What is for man the most beneficial way to live in this world? The answer is, living a regulated and disciplined life. Real education must train man to observe these limits and restrictions. We take great pains and suffer privations in order to master knowledge of the world. We follow with strict care some one regimen in order to develop the physique. Whatever our objective, we obey an appropriate code of discipline.

What exactly are the gains of disciplined thought and conduct? The rules and regulations are elementary at first. Then they enable one to be aware of regions beyond the reach of the senses. Later, one can voyage beyond the reach of one's mind and beyond even the outermost walls of what is reachable by all powers enclosed in the human body. Finally, one realises and experiences the truth of Truth, namely, one is the One that is immanent in all, that is, in the entire Cosmos. One is filled with Bliss when fixed in this Faith and in this Awareness. This is the Vidya, the acquisition of real Education, the culmination of the best educational process. During that process, Vidya also instructs incidentally about the ideal configuration of society, the most desirable affiliations between man and man, the most beneficial relations between peoples, races, nations and communities, and the best mode and manner for day-to-

day life. Vidya implants these in the heart, as deep as is necessary for human progress.

Of all professions, the teacher's profession has to adhere to the ideal of Truth. When teachers stray from Truth, society meets with disaster. Thousands of tender children, unacquainted with the ways of the world, pass through their hands. The impact of their teachings and their personality will be great and lasting. Therefore, the teacher has to be free from bad habits. For children automatically adopt the habits and manners of elders. This is an ever-present danger. When the evil influence is directed towards the thousands who receive the impact, the society gets polluted. And, in time the social evil contaminates the teacher too in some other way. "This is the lesson you taught me, O Lord!" runs the song. The teacher is laughed at and humiliated one day by his own pupils. So, the teacher must equip himself with virtues. The king is honoured only inside his Kingdom. He is adored only within its borders. But the virtuous man is honoured and adored in all countries.

A person may have outstanding physical beauty; he may have the sparkle of robust youth; he may boast of a high noble lineage; he may be a famed scholar. But, if he lacks the virtues that spiritual discipline (Vidya) can ensure, he is to be reckoned only as a beautiful flower, with no fragrance.

When quite young, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi witnessed along with his mother a drama on "Sravana and

his devotion to his parents" and he resolved that he must also become Sravana. He witnessed a play on Harischandra and that drama impressed him so deeply that he resolved to become as heroically devoted to virtue as Harischandra himself. These transformed him so much that he became a Mahatma. Gandhi had a teacher when he was attending school who taught him wrong paths. But Gandhi did not adopt his advice. As a consequence, he was able to bring freedom (*Swaraj*) to this country. There are in this land of Bharath thousands and thousands of prospective Mahatmas. The examples we have to hold before them are those men and women who have learnt and practised spiritual education (*Atma Vidya*).

The ancient culture of Bharath, the *Sanathana Dharma*, is acclaimed as of supreme value, not merely by Bharathiyas (people of this country) but by people of all lands. The reason for its universal renown is that it is based on the Vedas. "*Vedokhilo dharma moolam.*" The Vedas are the source of all principles of morality or Dharma. Dharma implies all the prescriptions for actions and attitudes that are needed to preserve man in the status he has gained as the highest among animals and living beings. The Vedas are the treasure chests which contain all the duties and obligations, rights and responsibilities that man has to accept and abide by in life.

In the ancient hermitages (*Gurukulams*), after the pupil had finished his studies under the guru, the guru gave him

such exalted advice as no pupil in any other country received from his master: “*Mathru Devo Bhava* (May the mother be your God), *Pithru Devo Bhava* (May your father be your God) *Aacharya Devo Bhava* (May your preceptor be your God),” “*Sathyam Vada* (Speak the truth),” “*Dharmam chara* (Act righteously),” “*No Itharaani* (Do not adopt other ways).” These were the commands. “Stop all acts that are unrighteous. Engage yourselves only in such activities as would promote your progress.” This was the advice. The Vedas and the Upanishads refer to these commands only when they lay down that we should utter *Shaanthi*, *Shaanthi*, *Shaanthihi*, praying for peace on earth.

The advice given to the pupils is, every bit of it, highly powerful. By his devoted service to his mother and father, Dharmavyadha won eternal fame. Through consistent adherence to Truth, Rama and Harischandra made themselves immortal. By means of right conduct, mere men rose to the position of Mahapurushas. Buddha desisted from harm to living beings. He spoke of *Ahimsa* (non-violence) as “*Paramo dharmah*” (the highest morality). So, he was revered as a world teacher.

The real *thapas* or asceticism in life is to observe these disciplines and restrictions as prescribed. The mind is the foremost of the three inner Instruments in man (*Thrikaranas*). We must protect the mind, so that attachment, passion and excitement do not enter. These extremes are

natural to the mind. The waves that rise in fury in the mind are lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride and envy. These six are the inner foes of man. The first two bring in their trail the remaining four. To release ourselves from the first two and thus proceed on the spiritual path, we have to practise Sadhana. Through Vidya we learn these practices