

## CHAPTER - IX

**T**he benefit we can derive from anything is proportionate to the faith we place in it. From adoration of gods, pilgrimages to holy places, uttering of mantras or resorting to doctors, we derive benefits only according to the measure of our faith. When someone gives a discourse, the more faith we have in him as a scholar and an exponent, the more clearly and directly we can draw the subject into our hearts and understand the discourse deeper and deeper. For the growth of faith and for the fostering of understanding, an essential requirement is purity of the heart, of the very base of thought (the *Kshetra*), of the levels of consciousness (*Chittha*). Because, when self-inquiry or investigation into the self-existent Atma is suddenly undertaken, while in the midst of diverse worldly and material entanglements, the effort would be rendered fruitless, as it would not stem from an eager will.

The consciousness (*Chittha*) must first be withdrawn from the objective world (*Prapancha*) and turned inwards

towards the awareness of the Atma. Seeds can sprout fast only when planted in a well-ploughed land. So too, the seed of Atmic wisdom, of Vidya, can sprout in the Heart-field (*Hridayakshetra*) only when it has undergone the necessary refining process (*Samskara*).

Do not rest content with mere listening to advice. What you have listened to must later be reflected upon, and what has thus been imprinted on the mind has later to be experienced and expressed in thought, word, and deed. Only thus can the Truth be a treasure in the heart; only then can it flow through the veins and manifest in full splendour through you.

These days, listening to lectures and discourses has become just an itch, a disease, a craze. When they have been heard once people imagine they have known all. But the real purpose of the search for Truth is to liberate oneself. The yearning must be deep and persistent. The longing to know and experience the Truth will then become a Yoga, a process of union.

The union in Yoga is between Dharma and Divinity. The more such evils as lust, anger, etc., breed in man, the greater the diminution of the Divinity in him. That is to say, his faith in the Atma will decline fast as the evils develop.

Faith is all important. Faith in one's Reality being the Atma—that is the real Vidya. When lust, anger, etc. diminish and disappear, faith in the Atma and in the rightness of

spiritual inquiry will grow and get confirmed. Non-attachment is the very foundation for attaining *Brahmajnana* (awareness of Brahman, the Universal Absolute). Even for a small structure, the foundation has to be stable and strong, or else it would fall in a heap pretty soon. When a garland has to be made, we want a string, a needle and flowers, don't we? So too, when Jnana (wisdom) has to be won, devotion (the string), non-attachment (the needle) and steady single-pointedness (flowers) are essential.

Everyone in the world desires victory. No one desires defeat. All crave for wealth; no one craves poverty. But how can victory or wealth be acquired? This has to be thought about and discovered. And we need not search long for the solution. Sanjaya, according to the *Mahabharatha*, revealed to King Dhritarashtra the secret, "Where there are both Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, and Arjuna, the Wielder of the Bow, there victory is assured and wealth is won." Why do we need more than this as advice? There is no need to undergo the threefold struggle—physical, mental, intellectual—to achieve victory. Nor need one get perturbed or anxious. There is no need to pine for wealth and prosperity. Take refuge in God; wield the bow of courage, that is to say, hold the heart pure. That is enough. Victory and wealth are yours. But when you pursue victory and wealth, remind yourself that they are shadows, not substantial things. You cannot attain your shadow, with the sun behind you even if you pursue it for millions of years.

For, it flees faster and is always beyond reach. Turn towards the Sun and proceed. Then, watch what happens. The shadow falls behind and follows you, instead of leading you. It walks on your footsteps like a slave. Consider the shadow as the symbol of Maya. So long as you follow Maya, Madhava is being ignored and is out of sight. You cannot win His vision. You will be caught up in the coils of birth and death and be ever in bondage. From this atmosphere of dependence, one must endeavour to release oneself. Or else, if all one's efforts are directed to the acquisition of sensual pleasures, it is a sure sign of rank ignorance.

Those who are in bondage must use all their skill and energy first to free themselves. This is crucial for achieving every other thing; all the rest are subsidiary. But people are now immersed in subsidiary pursuits forgetting the most basic. They must remind themselves every moment that they are Atma and not contraptions put together as bodies.

A king had as a pet a Rama parrot in his palace. It had a golden cage to live in. It had sweet fruits to feed upon. It had nectareous drinks to quench its thirst. Every day, it was richly fed, lovingly petted, fondled and spoken to by the Queen herself. But did the Rama parrot enjoy its life? Not at all. It was always found to be sad. What was the reason? It was not mindful of the golden cage, nor of the sweet fruits and drinks. It had no pride in being nursed and nourished by the Queen of the state. It paid no attention to any of

these. It was yearning for the day when it could sit on the branch of a green tree in the silent forest. Its body was having an excellent time in the palace cage, but its mind was in the thick of the forest from which it had been trapped and brought. It was born in the jungle and it lived on a tree. The parrot felt that it is better far to be free in its native habitat as an insignificant bird, than be in a cage coddled and admired, feasted and flattered by kings and queens. If only man had this awareness, he would assuredly long for his home, which is Paramatma, and turn away from the objective world in which he is an alien.

For political or other reasons, some persons are arrested and kept in detention in order to preserve law and order in the country. They are confined in big bungalows, given special treatment as befits their status, and provided with meals, etc. commensurate with their grades in social and political life. They are given also articles of luxury. But around the bungalow and around the garden policemen will be ever on guard. Whatever the standard of his life and the regard showered on him, the person is a prisoner, nevertheless. He is not a free man. So too, the person confined in the world and life therein should not feel elated when he is able to consume valuable variegated dishes, and other rare luxuries. He should not exult over the sensual comforts he can enjoy. He must not feel proud of his friends and kinsmen. He must recognise and keep in mind the Truth that he is in prison.