

CHAPTER - X

World problems are now assuming stranger forms and larger proportions. They are no longer individual or local. They are global, affecting all mankind. On one side, science and technology are advancing with cosmic developments. Through plastics, electronics and computer technologies, the wonder has reached even greater heights. On the other side, mankind is afflicted with recurring political and economic crises, national, provincial, religious, racial and caste rivalries, narrow loyalties and outbursts of disturbance in student campuses. These have spread indiscipline and licentiousness all over the world.

This is an unbalanced and mutually contradictory situation. What really is the cause for this? Does it lie in the frightening decline that religion and morals have sustained

in the human mind? Mankind has within its reach many means and methods through which it can earn wisdom and peace! It can secure invaluable guidance from the Vedas and the Sastras, the Brahma Sutra, the Bible, the Quoran, the Zend Avesta, the Granth Saheb and other holy texts whose number exceeds a thousand. There is no dearth in this land (Bharath) of heads of monasteries and religious orders, exponents of spiritual doctrines and disciplines, scholars and venerable elders. They too are propagating and publishing on a massive scale. Nevertheless, man's mind is degenerating in the ethical, spiritual and religious fields of life, continuously and with great speed. What is the reason for this downfall?

Men have now become more vicious than ever. They utilise, much more than in past ages, their intelligence and skill to indulge in cruelty. Men relish and revel in inflicting pain on others so much that, as history reveals, 15,000 wars have been waged during the last 5,500 years. There are no signs yet that this horrid pastime will terminate! The impending atomic war threatens to destroy the entire human race. What exactly is the cause of all this anxiety and fear? It is clear that the beast in man is still predominant. It has not yet been overcome. Only when this is achieved can we, our country and the world, attain peace and joy.

Hatred, envy, greed, desire for pompous display and for comparison and competition with others—these evil traits have to be uprooted. These traits are vitiating not only the

generality of men but even ascetics, monks, heads of religious institutions, and pundits. Among these, envy and greed have grown wild. When these masters and preceptors, who project themselves as embodiments of ideals, exhibit such low qualities, how can they set right the world? They can only intensify the pollution.

What the world needs today is neither a new order, a new education, a new system, a new society nor a new religion. The remedy lies in a mind, in a heart filled with holiness. Holiness must take root and grow in the minds and hearts of youth everywhere, of boys and girls and of children. The good and godly must endeavour to promote this task as the one great Sadhana which they have to undertake.

Success in this task can be achieved only through *Brahma Vidya*. But man today has deep faith only in acquisition and accumulation. He cannot give up or renounce. He has no faith in Truth. He is attracted by falsehood; he finds Truth to be an obstacle. Therefore, he is unable to realise that Death is the happy consummation of a glorious life. He dies in anxiety and misery. People are pronouncing ceaselessly, parrot-like, the words, Truth, Non-violence, Righteousness and Love. They proclaim that there is no religion higher than Truth. But the wonder is, the one thing man has no desire to possess is Truth!

Man yearns to know all things; but he does not yearn to know the Truth. Above all, he does not evince the least desire to know the Truth of his own self. He does not turn his attention in that direction. Even if he does, it is only to justify his fears and prejudices. Therefore, the primary task of man is to discard his weakness and tendency to hurt.

That which is not found at the beginning or at the end, but is manifest only in the interval, the middle period, cannot be really Real. It is *mithya*, not Sathya. The Cosmos did not exist before it emerged, nor can it exist after it is submerged, that is to say, after *Pralaya* (involution, the great dissolution). What is evident in between can only be apparent Truth, temporary and limited Truth. It cannot be the unchanging Truth.

Man has to explore along these lines the value and validity of every object in the universe. The body, for example, was not there before birth; and it is not here after death. Like a pot made of clay, it exists as pot with that form and name for some time and later resumes its clay nature. The “pot” is but clay, with a form and a name added to it by artificial means. Whatever the objects, everything in the Universe is inexorably subject to the impact of Time and it has to face death and destruction. The tree and the soil, the house and the body, the King and the Kingdom—each has to suffer the same consummation. Man ignores the means of becoming aware of the Immortal in him. He is enamoured of the knowledge that is concerned with the

phenomenal world. Those who yield to this facile temptation are like the ones who desert the garden of Heaven and rush into the jungle of poisonous vegetation. They turn away from the original, (the *bimba*), the Atma. They are fascinated by the image, (the *prathibimba*), the visible, the observable phenomena (the *drsya*). By this attitude, they are only proclaiming themselves as ignoramuses not as knowers or seekers of Truth.

Man should know that not even an iota of genuine happiness is derivable from the “three worlds,” the three “divisions of time” and the “three levels of consciousness in daily life” (wakefulness, dream, sleep). Only the foolish among men seek to satisfy themselves from the limited counterfeit happiness through worldly activities. The wise know better. Those who bypass the luscious bunches of sweet grapes and run towards bushes of thorns are “camels.” They cannot be classified under other species.

Mountain peaks are charming from a distance; when approached, they confront us with terror-striking jungles. So too, the world (Samsara) appears charming, when men have not delved into its meaning and value. When discrimination is employed to explore its value, the truth is revealed that the family jungle or the world jungle cannot give genuine happiness. Only the Atma can give that blessing. Can the lake, which strikes us as invitingly charming so long as the mirage is on, quench one’s thirst? If one deludes himself with the belief that it can and runs towards the

non-existent sheet of water, he can only get more thirsty. No other benefit can accrue to him.

Therefore, one should learn Atma Vidya, the process by which one becomes aware of one's Atmic Reality. By learning it and living it, one can quench his own thirst and help to quench the thirst of all mankind.