

CHAPTER - XI

Man has to achieve many objects during his life. The highest and the most valuable of these is winning the Mercy of God, the Love of God. The Love of God will add unto him the great wisdom he needs for attaining unshakeable *Santhi* or Inner Peace. Everyone should endeavour to have an understanding of the true nature of Godhead. Of course, man cannot, at the very beginning of his attempt, grasp the unmanifest Absolute phenomenon. He has, at first, to impose a form and some attributes to bring it within reach. Then, step by step, he must try to enshrine it in himself, as the descent of Divine Energy (*Sakthipaath*). The person engaged in the pursuit of success in this effort is not a mere individual seeker entitled to pursue the goal. He has to cultivate also the spirit of service (*Seva*) and be engaged in good deeds which earn the gratitude of people. Thus only can he accomplish the task of cleansing the levels of his consciousness (*chittha*) and become a fit candidate for spiritual victory.

Sanyasa or Monkhood does not mean the mere acceptance of the fourth stage of life and its rights and obligations, retirement into forests after breaking off contacts with the world and leading the austere life of ascetics. The *Sanyasi* must move among people, become aware of their sorrows and joys, and impart the instruction and inspiration they direly need. This is the duty monks should fulfil.

The *Sanyasi* can be likened to a species of fish. The fish moves around in the depth of the lake; it will not be stationary at one spot. And while moving around, the fish eats up worms and the eggs of pests, thus cleansing the water. So too, the *Sanyasi* should always be on the move, journeying into the far corners of the land. His duty is to cleanse society of evil by his example and precept. He must transform it by his teachings into a society free from vice and wickedness.

The tree can spread its branches wide. But the branches can put forth blossoms which yield fruit only when the roots are fed with water. Instead, if the water is poured on branches, fruits and flowers, can the tree grow and spread? Society has as its root of prosperity and peace, the quality of devotion and dedication. Hence the educational system must pay attention to the promotion and strengthening of these qualities among the people. Persons who occupy positions of authority are named *Adhikaris*. That word can also mean *Adhika-ari*, the worst enemy! The true *Adhikari* should carefully avoid that course and use his position for serving the people under his care.

In olden times, when in any region the people were sunk in fear or anxiety, or when the sources of joy and contentment ran dry, they traced the cause for the calamity to some fault or failure in the worship offered to God in the temples of that area. They sought to identify these mistakes and correct them so that they could have inner peace. They believed that the crisis could be controlled through these means. Such acts are now bundled together and labelled as “Superstitions,” to be cast aside. But this is not superstition at all. Modern scientists are in such a pathetically poor state of understanding that they do not recognise these important problems. This is the preliminary stage of confusion caused by the progress of modern types of education.

The ancients grasped the supreme Truth only after personally experiencing its validity. The moderns however dismiss their discoveries. This is the reason for the growth of barbarism in the so-called civilised countries. Many have not recognised this fact. Every living being craves for happiness; it does not long for misery. Some desire the acquisition of riches, some believe that gold can make them happy. Some amass articles of luxury, some collect vehicles, but everyone is set upon obtaining the things one believes can give him joy. But those who know wherefrom one can get happiness are very few in number. Happiness is of three kinds. One type is of the nature of poison in the beginning but turns into nectar later. This happiness is secured through the awareness of the Atma; it is Sathwic happiness. That is to say, the preliminary sadhana of *sama* (control of the

senses), *dama* (control of emotions), etc., which has to be gone through, appears hard and unpleasant; it involves struggle and effort. So, the reaction may be bitter. In the Yoga Vasishtha, Sage Vasishtha says, “Oh Rama, the boundless ocean can be drunk dry by man with great ease. The enormous Sumeru mountain can be plucked from the face of the earth, with great ease. The flames of a huge conflagration can be swallowed with great ease. But controlling the mind is far more difficult than all these.” Therefore, if one succeeds in overwhelming the mind, one achieves the awareness of the Atma. This success can result only when one undergoes many ordeals and denials. The bliss that one earns afterwards is the highest kind of happiness. As the fruition of all Sadhana one is established in the perfect equanimity of unruffled consciousness (*Nirvikalpa Samadhi*) and the Ananda that fills him is indescribable. It is ambrosial, equal to the nectar of immortality. *Nirvikalpa* means the state of consciousness when it is devoid of thought. This state can be reached through appropriate Sadhana. It is of two natures: Non-dual in full experience and the state of non-duality when dual thought ends. The first takes man beyond the triune of Knower, the Known and Knowledge; and he is aware only of the Cosmic Intelligence of Brahman (This is *Adwaita Bhavana*). The second stage is reached when all the attributes ascribed to God and man merge in the ONE which embraces the Cosmos and all its contents (This is *Adwaita Stthayi* or *Adwaita Avastha*).

There is another type of happiness: On account of the impact of external objects on the senses of perception, pleasure mistaken as nectareous is aroused. But in time, the pleasure turns into bitter and unpleasant poison. This is *Rajasic* happiness. When man welcomes this Rajasic sensory pleasure, his strength, awareness, intelligence, enthusiasm to reach the four goals of human endeavour known as *Dharma*, *Artha* (wealth), *Kama* (Righteous Desire) and *Moksha* (Liberation), become weak, for his interest declines.

The third type of happiness is *Thamasic*. It dulls the intellect from the beginning to the end. It finds satisfaction in sleep, slothfulness and faults, and derives happiness therefrom. The Thamasic person ignores the path that leads to the awareness of the Atma; he pays no attention to it, throughout his life.

True education, therefore, is that which directs and counsels the mind and intellect of man towards the earning of Sathwic happiness. Of course, it can be secured only by untiring effort. The scriptures declare: “happiness cannot be acquired through happiness” (*Na sukhat labhyathe sukham*). By undergoing unhappiness alone can happiness be won. This truth has to be instilled through Vidya or education. When man knows of the Ananda that Sathwic happiness can confer, the Vidya too will be found easy and palatable.

Having been born as humans, all efforts must be directed to acquiring this *Amrtha Vidya* (Education for Immortality) along with earth-bound material-centred vidya, for it is only Amrtha Vidya that can reveal the Atma and enable man to experience the Atmananda.