

CHAPTER - XVIII

Teachers who teach with the salary paid to them in their minds, and students who learn with the jobs they may procure in their minds are both pursuing wrong paths. In fact, the task of the teacher is to discharge his duty of instructing and inspiring the students so that they develop their latent talents and advance in the perfection of their skills. The task of the student is to unfold the divine in him and equip himself for serving society with his skill and knowledge.

Man has three instruments gifted to him: the mind which involves him in thought, the power of speech which enables him to communicate his thoughts, and the power of action by which he can execute his thoughts, alone or with others, for himself and for others. The mind designs thoughts which are either helpful or harmful. The mind can lead man into bondage, deeper involvement in desires and disappointments. It can lead man into freedom, detachment and desirelessness. The mind is a bundle of likes and dislikes. Manas (mind) is

the seat of *manana* (chewing the cud of sensual and mental experiences.)

The mind is engaged in two activities: *Alochana* or planning and *sambhashana* or dialogue. Both these follow different lines. Planning is intent on solving problems that present themselves before the mind. Dialogue multiplies the problems and confounds the solutions causing confusion and adoption of wrong and ruinous means to solve them. The inner conversation and controversial chatter continues from morning till night, until sleep overtakes the mind. It causes ill-health and the early setting in of old age. The topics on which the chatter is based are mostly the faults and failings of others and their fortunes and misfortunes. This perpetual dialogue is at the bottom of all the miseries of man. It covers the mind with thick darkness. It grows wild very quickly and suppresses the genuine worth of manhood.

The talk that inhabits the mind during the waking stage persists even in dreams and robs man of much-needed rest. And the sum total of all this exercise is, to speak the truth, nil. No man can call himself full and free unless he succeeds in stopping this evil.

The Upanishads announce certain remedial sadhanas to get rid of this obstacle to inner peace. The first sadhana is *Pranayama*, Regulation of Breath. *Pranayama* is no gymnastics, nor a formidable exercise. The inhaling of air is

Purakam; the exhaling is *Rechakam*. Retention in between is *Kumbhakam*. The mind has to concentrate on the period of retention, on the process of inhaling and exhaling. When attention is fixed thus, the inner talk on other irrelevant matters will end and mental strength is acquired.

The second Sadhana is: immersion in Karma, beneficial activity—that is to say, service to people which will help diminish the ego sense, acts that are good and godly. When one's thoughts are engaged in such activities, the mind turns away from the talk it indulges in.

Again, the Sadhanas of *Sravana* (listening to spiritual advice), *Manana* (reflection on spiritual directions), and *Nidhidhasana* (discovering ways and means of confirming faith in the Spirit), also of *Japa* (recital of the names of God) and *Thapas* (withdrawing the mind from sensual pursuits) have been prescribed by the scriptures more for the silencing of this mental chatter, this inner talk, as a preparation for attaining the Reality than for its Realisation. For it is only when the mind is cleansed and clarified that it can achieve such a profound task. Only then can the lessons taught and the experiences undergone be pure and unsullied.

The second instrument that is gifted to man for uplifting himself is speech—the use of words. Speech is charged with tremendous power. When through speech, we communicate to a person something which upsets his balance

or shocks him into grief, the words completely drain off his physical strength and mental courage. He falls on the ground, unable to stand. On the other hand, when through speech, we communicate something happy, or unexpectedly cheering, he gets the strength of an elephant. Words do not cost anything but they are priceless. So they have to be used with care. They must be employed not for gossip, which is barren, but for pure and productive purposes only. The ancients recommended the vow of silence in order to purify speech of its evils. A mind turned inwards towards an inner vision of God and speech turned towards outer vision, both will promote spiritual strength and success.