

VIDYA VAHINI

(Stream of Thought Which Illumines)

by
Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba



PRASANTHI NILAYAM

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THIS BOOK

Baba has clarified that the word Vidya used for this Vahini (Stream of Thought), means (Ya) that which (Vid) “illuminates.” It is this sense that is highlighted in expressions like Atma Vidya, *Brahma Vidya*, etc., or even the name Vidyagiri given to the campus of Prasantha Nilayam which comprises the Institute of Higher Learning. Baba makes us aware of the comparatively less beneficial lower learning which deals with theories, inferences, concepts, conjectures and constructions. The Higher Learning hastens and expands the universal urge to know and become Truth, Goodness and Beauty, Sathyam Sivam Sundaram. Baba has come as Man among men on a self-imposed mission to correct the wrongs inflicted on mankind through the fanatically blind pursuit of lower learning. The human race has to voyage on an even keel; it is leaning too alarmingly towards the briny grave; the lower learning is lowering it into the bottomless pit. Vidya alone is the remedy.

From His childhood days, Baba has stood forth as an educator, a Guru as the villagers loved to address Him. He warned, without hesitation, elders at Puttaparthi, teachers in the schools, and headmen of castes against cruelty to animals and exploitation of labour, usury and gambling, pedantry and illiteracy, hypocrisy and pomp. Through gulps and jests, parody and satire, songs and plays, the young teenager Teacher ridiculed and reformed the society which honoured or tolerated such evils. Through Bhajans sung in

chorus by groups of men and women, He reminded them of the universal human values of Truth, Morality, Peace, Love and Non-violence as early as 1943, when he was barely seventeen. These were the basic acquisitions that Vidya, the Higher Learning, can confer on votaries.

As Lord Krishna, He said to Arjuna, “Adhyaatma Vidya, Vidyaanaam” “Among all the Vidyas, I am Atma Vidya,” the search for Atmic Truth. The world can be saved from suicide only through this Vidya. The search for Truth and Totality, for Unity and Purity is the means; the Awareness of the One is the consummation of the process. This Message is the sum and substance of every Discourse of His, during the last five decades.

This precious Book provides us the chance to peruse nineteen essays He wrote in answer to appeals for the elucidation of the principles which must guide us while rehabilitating Education as an effective instrument for establishing peace and freedom in us and on Earth.

N. KASTURI
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CHAPTER - I

That which has no origin knows no beginning. It was before everything or anything was. There was nothing prior to It. For that very reason, It has no end. It expands as far as It wills, progresses as diverse as It feels, and through Its Fullness, It fills the Universe, too. Knowledge of this supreme Principle is known as *Vidya*, Knowledge, Wisdom, Awareness.

Many seers with manifold experience of this unique Awareness have visualised in their illumined hearts the sovereign secret underlying the captivating Beauty of the Cosmos. Compassion towards humanity has prompted them to communicate the vision through human language to arouse the innate thirst in the soul for immersion in that Bliss. *Vidya* causes this urge in the hearts of the seers.

Sound is the very core of the Veda. Sound is associated with harmony and melody and hence the Veda

has to be heard and ecstasy derived therefrom. It is not to be analysed, commented upon and judged. This is the reason why the Veda is called Sruthi (That which is heard). Through listening alone to its recital, the awareness of the *Atma* and of the Bliss it confers can be earned. The Bliss thus acquired manifests in words and deeds that confer bliss on all around.

The term Vedantha is generally used by many to indicate a school of philosophical thought. But Vedantha is only a special section of Vedic literature. All the Upanishadic texts form part of Vedantha. Vedantha is the consummation of Vedic thought. The Vedas themselves are invaluable guides towards the Highest. The *rks* or hymns of *Rig Veda* are ecstatic effusions from the spirit of man extolling the delight derived while contemplating the orderliness and beauty of Nature outside them. The *Sama Veda* is the precious verbal treasure which enables man to praise in song the Creator and His Creation. The mystery of this world and of the worlds beyond is elaborated in the texts which are comprehensively called *Atharvana Veda*. The formulae for rites and ceremonials either beneficial or merit-yielding or sacrificial, have been collated as the *Yajur Veda*.

The Vedic literature grouped into these four collections—each under a different name—has four more branches—the Mantras, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads. The Mantra texts are also called Samhithas (Collections); all sacred formulae are therein grouped together. The texts which describe the means and methods

of utilising them and benefiting by their proper recital are known as Brahmanas. The word Brahma has many meanings. In the expression, Brahmanas, it means Manthra. The Brahmanas deal mostly with ceremonials and kindred external activities. The Aranyakas, however, deal with the inner significances and internal disciplines like withdrawal of senses and elimination of attachments. The Upanishads attempt, by philosophical analysis, to harmonise the two paths. They form the final phase of Vedic studies, and are called Vedantha. They can be considered as even the essence of Vedic teachings. They are the cream of the entire Vedic scriptures. When the Vedas are assimilated by scholarship, these emerge as butter does when milk is churned.

All forms of Vedic literature mentioned thus far form the most ancient body of knowledge, Vidya “Upa-ni-shad”—the word is formed by the root ‘Sad’ getting two syllables ‘Upa’ and ‘Ni’ as prefixes. ‘Sad’ means ‘sitting.’ It has also another meaning ‘destroying.’ ‘Ni’ means ‘steady,’ ‘disciplined.’ ‘Upa’ means ‘near.’ The pupil has to sit near the Guru (*Acharya*) or Preceptor, paying steady attention to what is being communicated to him. Then only can he learn the fund of knowledge and the skill of discrimination.

The Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita—these are the basic roots of Indian philosophical thought. They are together known as Prastana Thraya, the Authentic Triad.

This material objective world is what becomes visible to our eyes, what pleases our senses, what fascinates our minds and what informs our brain. But in and through this very world, there is one reachable non-material subjective world. When that is known, both worlds reveal themselves as partial expressions of the same indivisible Consciousness (*Chaitanya*). The two supplement each other into the One Fullness, (*Poornam*). From the *Parabrahma*, (the Full) the *Jiva* (the Individual, that is the Complement) arises. When the *Jiva* sheds the material corpus in which it is encased, the eternal Universal Consciousness is again the One Fullness, the Parabrahma Principle. *Poornam Adam* (That is Full); *Poornam Idam* (This is Full); *Poornaath Poornam Udachyathe* (From the Full arose the Full); *Poornasya* (From the Full) *Poornam Aadaaya* (when the Full is taken) *Poornam Eva* (the Full only) *Avasishyathe* (remains).

Vidya or the Education Process teaches one that the Cosmos is a manifestation of the Lord’s sport and nothing else. The Upanishads declare this Truth thus: *Isaavaasyam Idam Jagath*. This world is the residence of the Lord. Therefore, no one can entertain a sense of personal possession or even a trace of egoism. Renounce the feeling of attachment; feel the Presence of the Lord everywhere. Welcome the *Ananda* (Bliss) that the Lord, as the Embodiment of Ananda, confers on you and experience it with thankfulness and without being bound by desire. This is the message of the Rishis, the sages and seers.

Give up the feelings “I” and “You”; then alone can you understand the glory of that which is neither “I” nor “Mine.” This does not involve your renouncing everything. The Real Teaching (Vidya) directs that the world be dealt with, as duty demands, in a spirit of detachment, avoiding entanglement. The acid test by which an activity can be confirmed as holy or sacred is to examine whether it promotes attachment or avoids bondage. The acid test to decide whether an activity is unholy or sinful is to examine whether it arises from or promotes greed. This is the teaching, the lesson from Vidya. Intent on fulfilling your legitimate duties, you can pray to God to keep you alive for a hundred years. You will not incur blame. So, Vidya advises you to engage in activities with full understanding of their nature and consequence.

Beasts kill only other beasts. But the blind man who has not acquired the Vision of the Atma that he is, kills himself. And Vidya warns that he who commits this crime goes into fearful realms sunk in thickest night. Vidya, the Supreme Wisdom, attempts to describe for man the “characteristics” of Atma. Atma has no movement but It is present everywhere. Even the gods cannot keep pace with it, however quick they are. It reveals Its Presence long before we anticipate Its Presence. The Atma is immutable and omnipresent. Vidya announces that it is an impossible task to determine It.

When one attains the Supreme Wisdom or the highest level of Vidya, the distinction between the “opposites”—

Atma and *Anatma*, Vidya and *Avidya*, *Vikasa* and *Vinasa* (Growth and Decay) fade away. Mystics and sages have attained that state of Higher Unity and the history of their struggles and successes is enshrined, through the prompting of Vidya, in literature. For such sages, from that level, knowledge is as dangerous as non-knowledge. They are aware of the mysterious origins and consequences of both. They are capable of overcoming death through non-knowledge and achieving immortality through knowledge.

CHAPTER - II

The sublime significance of Vidya or the Higher Learning can be grasped by one or can be communicated to another only when the pure mind sheds its revealing light. Inside a room kept scrupulously clean, no snake, no scorpion, no poison-bearing insect can enter. They will be at home only in dark, dirty places. For the same reason, the sacred wisdom cannot enter hearts which are dark and dirty. Instead, poisonous breeds like anger would find those hearts congenial resorts.

When one desires to rid coal of its colour, what can soap and water do? Nor can washing the lump in milk help. The only means is to put it in a fire. That will turn it into a heap of white ash. In the same manner, when one is anxious to destroy the darkness of ignorance and the dirt of desire, awareness of the Atma (Atmajnana) or, in other words,

knowledge of Brahma (*Brahma Vidya*) has to be gained. Darkness can be ended only with the help of light. We cannot overwhelm darkness by attacking it with more darkness. Vidya is the light that one needs to destroy the inner darkness. Vidya provides the inner illumination. Vidya is the authentic Purushothama Yoga, the Yoga of the Supreme Person defined in the Gita, the knowledge of the Supreme, the Higher Learning, the Vidya. This yoga cannot be bought for money or acquired from friends or ordered from concerns or companies. It has to be assimilated and won by each one for oneself, through steady faith and ardent devotion.

The expression “God is nowhere” can remain unchanged; there is no need to confront or contradict it. The only thing necessary is to read the “w” in “where” in conjunction with the previous “no,” so that it becomes “God is now here”! The negative suddenly becomes positive. Similarly, by merely unifying in one direction the multidirectional vision now directed on the universe, the distinctions and the differences disappear and the Many becomes One.

Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Jayadeva, Gouranga, Tukaram, Tulsidas, Ramadas, Kabirdas, Saradadevi, Meera, Sakkubai, Mallamma—these had not mastered the objective commentaries and elucidations of the many sciences and scriptural texts; yet, this day they are adored by followers of all faiths, adherents of all creeds and natives of all lands. The reason obviously lies in their unshaken faith in the Atma,

won through the purification of the mind. Vidya alone conferred on them the purity and the clarity.

Those holy persons spoke what they had in their hearts, exactly as they felt or experienced. Consider, however, the present day claimants of Vidya. Is it not a fact that not even one in a million among them speaks out exactly what he has in his heart? They perform puja to Sathyanarayana, Narayana or God in the Form of *Sathya* (Truth), one day in the year; the rest of the year, every day, they worship Asathyanarayana, the God of Untruth. The urge for objective scholarship is derived from this type of worship. Can this knowledge deserve to be called Vidya? No, never.

Food on the plate, when not consumed by us or given over to some hungry person, but kept unused, becomes foul. So too, when our faults and failings are not corrected, either by our own efforts or by heeding the advice of those sympathetic souls who have succeeded in the cleansing process, imagine what the fate of our lives will be? Like the plate of boiled dhal kept aside too long, life will stink. It seems a father praised the accomplishments of his son and said in conclusion, "He has only two little faults. They are: (1) He does not know what his faults are and (2) He will not listen if others point them out to him." This happened in the past. But today, not one son but each and every one is in the same predicament. It has become quite natural for every father to complain thus. Is this the value of the Vidya they claim to have?

But children are by nature very good; the fault lies in the system which confers Vidya on them. Of course, this fact is known to all, but everyone shrinks from the task of reforming it. This is the major weakness. It is easy to advise in a million ways but not even one thing is practised. "The system has to be transformed from the primary school right up to the Universities"—this is declared and announced in newspapers; but no one can be seen who transforms it or even points out specifically what are the changes to be effected and how. No one highlights the defects of the system.

The truth that spiritual, moral and behavioural values are the very crown of human achievement is not recognised. When not in office, they write articles and essays on education or indulge in parrot-talks from platforms. When the same persons achieve positions of authority, they legislate measures quite contrary to what they proclaimed earlier.

The magnet can draw iron towards itself but it cannot attract pieces of iron covered with dust and rust. Of course, speeches from platforms are good; only, practice is paralysed. Unless this illness is cured, education and real scholarship cannot manifest its worth. The dust and rust on the pieces of iron have to be washed away, in order that the magnet can attract. When the mind is thus polished clean, the effect will be, as the poet says, "A Mahatma has as his sign, one thought, one word, one deed." These three being in harmony is the best proof of the worth of man. This

unique worth is now being disclaimed by man, through his own volition. For, he is unaware of Atma Vidya, the genuine Vidya that ought to be learned.

As contemporaries of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, there flourished many scholars, pundits and experts. But the awareness of the Atma failed to illumine them to any extent. As a result, the names of the scholars, pundits and experts are not heard today. The name of Ramakrishna, who could not claim scholarship in any material or objective field of knowledge, has alone spread all over the world. What is the reason? Water with which sugar is mixed and plain water, both are similar when looked at. Drink! Then you distinguish the one as sherbet and the other as just water.

The words of Paramahansa are full of supreme wisdom. The words of scholars are soaked in textual scholarship. Pretentious pundits who have only perused the pages go after monetary gains. They do not rush towards the Divine. Match sticks that have fallen into water cannot yield fire when struck, however vigorously you try. Besides, they spoil even the box which holds them. So too, hearts soaked in worldly desires and designs may pour out parrot-exhortations but they can have at best only listeners, not practitioners. They may receive the advice but they would not accept it or act accordingly.

Every event in the world has a special cause that brought it about, namely, knowledge. Of course, without things to

be known, there can be no knowledge. Knowledge itself is of two kinds; patent and latent, direct and indirect, *Prathyaksha* and *Paroksha*, real and apparent. *Prathyaksha* or *Aparoksha*, (the patent knowledge) is gained through the ear and other sense organs and through the words of others. The *Paroksha* (or the latent), the real knowledge knows no plurality; it analyses and understands the attractions and objects which haunt the mind. It purifies the mind and widens the vision of the heart.

CHAPTER - III

Today, the educational system, though very expensive and elaborate, has ignored instruction in morals. In the Gurukulas (hermitages) of the past, instruction was provided for right living, spiritual advancement, and moral conduct and behaviour. In those days students were trained to lead lives marked by humility, sense-control, virtue and discipline. Now, these qualities are not recognisable among them. They are not aware of the means or meaning of sense-control. From childhood, they revel in following every whim and fancy. They find pleasure in the free play of the senses and believe in materialism only. As a result, one is filled with alarm when the situation in the colleges is looked into. The Head of the Department of Health in Calcutta has found that eighty out of every hundred students in the Calcutta University are afflicted with poor health. In the Bombay region, the condition is even worse, affecting ninety out of

every hundred. The reason is to be found in the fact that the students are engaged in sensual living, the uncontrolled pursuit of sensory pleasure and evil habits. Can these be counted as gains from education? Or are they to be called “riches” accumulated through perverse ignorance?

Teachers have to identify their role and their responsibility. They have to bear a major share in fostering and preserving the mental and physical health of their tender, innocent wards.

Every living being looks at the world around. But, each one looks uniquely in one's own special way. The same object is looked at by ten persons with ten different feelings. One individual is looked at by the son, with the feeling that he is the father. The wife looks on him as the husband. His father looks upon him as a son. His companion has the feeling that he is a dear friend. Being the same individual, why does he not evoke the same reaction in all? Those who visualise him differently are affected differently. That is the truth.

Once, a guru, residing in Brahmam Mutt, while in a happy mood, chewing betel with great relish, asked his disciple, “Dear fellow! How is the world?” The disciple answered, “Guruji! For each one, his own world.” Though all are in one world, each one lives in his own world, shaped by his own actions and reactions. This is the reason why Sankaracharya declared, “Fill your vision with Wisdom; all

that you see will then be God.” When Drshti (vision) is filled with Jnana, Srishti (creation) is filled with Brahman.

In the vocabulary of education today, *Dhana* (riches) is Dharma. The pursuit of riches is the “right” path. Dhana is the *Karma*. Every activity has the acquisition of riches as the goal. Dhana is the most sublime Padam. There is no ideal more desirable than getting rich. Here is a short story as illustration: Narayana (God) has sixteen manifest aspects and yet, He is the latent immanent Reality. So too, the material Narayana, the Rupee, has also sixteen annas as parts. When men worship the Rupee as the Visible God, Narayana becomes unreachable for them. Few try to estimate the vastness of the loss they sustain therefrom.

One day, in the midst of conversation, Lakshmi, the Divine Consort and the Goddess of Wealth, addressed Narayana, “Lord, the entire world is adoring Me; not even one in a hundred, why, not even one in a million, is worshipping you.” She teased the Lord by this statement. She put forward a plan to test the sincerity of man. She said, “Lord, it is best to discover for ourselves how true the facts are. Come, we shall both go forth into the world and find out.”

Narayana agreed. He changed into a great Pundit, wearing golden bracelets on his wrists as evidence of the appreciation and admiration of famous academic bodies. He had a garland of rudraksha beads round the neck and

thick streaks of Vibhuthi (holy ash) on the forehead. He manifested himself on earth as a redoubtable scholar. He moved from village to village, and began enchanting the people through his enrapturing discourses. His slenderous personality and deep scholarship attracted the people. Thousands gathered to hear him and followed him from place to place. Brahmins invited him to their settlements and honoured him. His arrival was celebrated as a festival, with rich feasting.

While Narayana was being feted thus, Lakshmi too appeared on earth as a great *Yogini* (Female Ascetic). She too proceeded from village to village enlightening the people on the Atma, through her discourses. Women assembled to hear her fascinating speeches in wave after wave, in massive numbers. They prayed that she must honour their homes with a visit and partake of the feast they were most eager to offer. In reply, she informed them that she was bound by some vows which made it difficult for her to accept their request. She would not eat out of plates already in use in the homes. She said that she must be allowed to bring her own cups and plates. The women were yearning so deeply for hosting her that they accepted the condition. Whatever her vow, they were ready to respect it. Invitations came from every woman from everywhere.

The Yogini reached the house where she was to take food the first day and took out from the bag she had with her, a gold plate, a few gold cups and a gold “tumbler”

(*lota*) to hold drinking water. These she spread before herself, for the various items of the menu. When the meal was over, she left the place, leaving the precious golden articles to be taken by the host. She had a new set for each day, she said.

The news spread. The villages where Narayana was holding his delightful discourses also heard the wonderful happenings of the Yogini's gifts. The Brahmins who were staunch admirers of the far-famed scholar also rushed to invite the Yogini to their homes for lunch! The Yogini told them that they ought to drive the Pundit out before she could enter their settlement. She would not set foot there so long as that person continued to stay there! She was adamant on that point. Their greed for gold was so strong that they forced the Pundit, whom they had adored so long and so pompously, to go out of their village.

Thereafter, the Yogini entered the Brahmin settlement, gave discourses, partook of feasts arranged in her honour, and presented the golden plates and cups to each of her hosts. Thus, the Yogini managed to get the Pundit driven out of every place where he sought recognition and attention. Instead, she secured the worship of people everywhere. Unable to bear the universal insult, the Pundit cast off the role and Narayana disappeared from the earth. The Yogini came to know of this. She too gave up the cast she had assumed and resuming her real Form, She joined Lord Narayana. While talking between themselves, she told the

Lord, "Now, tell me! What did you discover? Who between us is honoured and worshipped more on earth?" Narayana smiled at her question. He replied, "Yes. What you said is true."

Yes. Today, education and the knowledge gained are being marketed. Money is all in all. Educated people desert their Motherland like mendicants in search of money. Is this the sign of a proper education?

CHAPTER - IV

Bharath has been conferring lasting peace and happiness on peoples of all lands, over generations, through the impact of the spiritual principles it has cherished. The ideal for which this land has striven has been, “May all the worlds be happy and prosperous,” “*Lokas Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu.*”

This has been the highest goal of the people of Bharath. In order to foster and accomplish this holy ideal, the rulers of past ages, the rishis, the founders of creeds, the scholars, the learned, matrons and mothers, have suffered and sacrificed much. They have discarded honour and fame and struggled to uphold their conviction and to shape their lives in accordance with this universal vision.

Rare and costly articles might attract by their external beauty, but to the eye that is illumined by spiritual light they would appear trivial in value. Physical charm and force can

never overpower the charm or force of the spirit. The quality of *Rajas* (passion) breeds egotism and can be identified wherever selfishness and pride are displayed. Until this mode of thought and action is suppressed, the quality of *Sathwa* (goodness) cannot become evident. And in the absence of the *Sathwa* quality, the divine, the Siva, the supreme power cannot be propitiated, pleased and won.

Parvathi, the daughter of the monarch of the Himalayas, was the very acme of physical beauty. In spite of this, she had to acquire the quality of *Sathwa* by destroying the pride in personal beauty and her native egotism through intense asceticism. She had to shine in the beauty of the spirit! The legend relates that Manmatha, the God of Love, who planned to project only the youthful charm of Parvathi for the attention of Siva, was burnt to ashes. This incident symbolises the fact that divine knowledge (Vidya) cannot be gained so long as one is caught up in the coils of the ego. When one equips oneself with Vidya, pride disappears.

But, these days, conceit and pride are taken as adding charm to the knowledge required. The attraction conferred on a person by scholarship in matters relating to the objective world has to be given up; only thereafter can the genuine innate Divinity manifest itself. Then alone can the personality of the individual, which is the self, accept the divine. The ego in us is the Manmatha, “the agitator of the mind,” and that has to be turned into ashes through the impact of divine vision. The divine, the Easwara, will not yield Himself to physical charm, worldly authority, muscular or intellectual

or financial power. This is the inner meaning of the Manmatha episode.

Parvathi underwent extreme austerities and subjected herself (that is to say, her ego-consciousness) to sun and rain, cold and hunger, and thus transformed herself. Finally, Easwara (Siva) accepted her as half of Himself! This is the stage in spiritual advance called *Saayujya* (Mergence). This is the same as *Moksha* and *Mukthi*, liberation and release. In fact, Vidya involves humility, tolerance and discipline. It destroys arrogance, envy and all the related vices. Such a Vidya is the real Atmic Vidya.

Moksha means liberation. All embodied beings long for liberation from the limitation that the embodiment connotes. Every living being is perforce a *Mumukshu*, that is to say, an aspirant for liberation, a practitioner of renunciation. One has to be a *tyagi*, versed in detachment. This is the final Truth, the indisputable Truth. Those who give up their body and leave, do not take with them from here even a handful of earth. When one does not himself learn to give up, Nature teaches him, on his death, this great truth about the need and value of detachment and renunciation. So, it is good to learn the lesson even before this happens. The person who learns and practises this truth is indeed blessed.

Detachment is the second valuable virtue that Vidya imparts. Empty a pot of the water that filled it; the sky that

one could see within the pot as image or shadow also gets lost along with the water. But the genuine sky enters the pot. So too, when that which is not Atma is discarded, the Atma remains and liberation is attained. But what has to be discarded is not objective impediment; the renunciation has to be subjective. Many people interpret *tyaga* (renunciation) to mean either giving away, as charity, money and land or performing *Yajna* or *Yaga* or other ceremonies, named sacrifices, or giving up hearth and home, wife and children and proceeding to the forest. But *tyaga* does not mean such gestures of weak-mindedness. These are not as difficult as they are supposed to be. If so minded, one can go through these acts easily and give up what the acts proscribe. The real renunciation is the giving up of desire.

This is the real goal of a person's existence, the purpose of all his efforts. The giving up of desire involves the giving up of lust, anger, greed, hatred, etc. The fundamental renunciation should be that of desire. The other feelings and emotions are its attendant reactions. We say "*Kodanda Pani*" (He who has in his hand the Kodanda bow); but the word implies that he has in his hand the arrow also. The bow implies the arrow too. In the same manner, desire implies the presence of lust, anger, greed, etc. These latter are veritable gateways to Hell. Envy is the bolt thereof, pride is the key. Unlock and lift the bolt—you can enter in.

Anger will pollute the wisdom earned by man. Unbridled desire will foul all his actions; greed will destroy his devotion

and dedication. Desire, Anger and Greed will undermine the *Karma*, *Jnana* and *Bhakthi* of man, and make him a boor. But, the root cause of anger is *Kama* (desire) and *Kama* is the consequence of *Ajnana* (ignorance). So, what has to be got rid of is this basic ignorance.

Ignorance is the characteristic of the *Pasu* (animal). What is a *Pasu*? “*Pasyathi ithi pasuh*,” “That which sees is the *Pasu*.” That is to say, that which has the outward vision and accepts what the external vision conveys is the *Pasu*. The inward vision will lead a person to *Pasupathi*, the Lord of all living beings, the master of *Pasus*. He who has not mastered the senses is the *Pasu*. The *Pasu* has harmful qualities born along with it. However hard one may try to eliminate them, they cannot be transformed soon. The *Pasu* cannot get free from them. It has no capacity to understand the meaning of the advice given. For example we may bring up a tiger cub with affectionate care and train it to be gentle and obedient. But when it is hungry, it will relish only raw meat; it will not eat puri and potato! But man can be educated into better ways. Hence, the statement in the scriptures: “For all animate beings, birth as man is a rare achievement.” Man is indeed the most fortunate and the most holy among animals, for his inborn qualities can be sublimated. He who is born as a *Pasu* can elevate himself through self-effort and training into *Pasupathi*. The beast is born “cruel” and dies “cruel.”

A life lived without mastering one’s senses does not deserve the name. Man has been endowed with many capabilities and if, with them, he does not control his senses and direct them properly, the years he spends alive are wasted. Vidya or valid education helps man to achieve success in this process of mastery. Vidya confers *Vinaya* (humility). Education promotes humility. Through humility, one acquires the right to engage in professions. That authority confers prosperity. A prosperous person has the capacity for charity and right living. Right living can confer happiness here and hereafter.

CHAPTER - V

Education must determine and delve into the nature and characteristics of spiritual search for the Absolute or the Overself, or Paramatma. It must prove its true character by manifesting as a spring of morality, laying down axioms of virtue. Vidya is its own visible proof. It is the root of faith in every Faith. It prepares the mind of man to appreciate and adhere to the Faith and to direct man's living along that course. This has been named Philosophy.

Philosophy means love of knowledge. Knowledge is a treasure of incalculable richness. Education is the relentless pursuit of knowledge, urged by love for its value and undeterred by difficulties. Vidya tries to probe behind the forms assumed by things and the appearances they put on and discover the reality that alone can explain them. The

Truth has to be known and lived by. The Truth has to be visualised; this is the function of Vidya.

Vidya is the effulgence that permeates a full life. In the West, Vidya deals more with concepts and conjectures. In the East, Vidya deals more with Truth and Totality. The Principle sought by Vidya is beyond the field of the senses. Man is a triune composite of body, mind and spirit (Atma). As a consequence, he has three natures in his make up; (1) a low, animal nature, (2) a human nature, replete with worldly knowledge and skill, and (3) the genuine nature of man, namely, the divine, Atmic nature. Being aware of this third nature and establishing oneself in that—this is Vidya.

The body is a machine with the five elements—space, air, fire, water and earth—as its components. God is playing with it, Himself unseen.

The body is a tree; love of the Self is the root; desires are the branches it sends forth. Qualities, attributes, modes of behaviour based on basic nature are the flowers issuing therefrom. Joy and grief are the fruits it offers.

The human body is a world in itself. Blood flows through and animates every part of the body. God is flowing in and through and activating every spot in the world.

There is only one Law guiding and guarding this world—the Law of Love. Each nation or community has the joy or grief, good life or bad, decided by and derived

from its activities. The “bad” too is in fact “good” in reverse. It serves to teach what has to be avoided. It would not be “bad” for all time; it is ever short lived. Neither “bad” nor “good” can be pronounced as “absolutely unrelieved” states. Vidya reveals and makes clear that “good” and “bad” are only the reactions caused by the failings and feelings of the mind of man.

One must be able to judge the difference between one “good thing” and another that seems to us to be “better.” If one cannot do so, one will hold on to the first thing that strikes him as good, discarding the rest. But it must be understood that the “better” is not harmful to the good. Just as “unrighteousness” prods man to cultivate “righteousness,” troubles induce man to manifest compassion and charity. Compassion has as its inevitable seed, suffering. If there were no wrong and no suffering, man would have become either stock or stone. One who has no capacity to weigh and to respond to the call of agony and pain is like a blind person who cannot distinguish between what is good and what is bad. Discriminationless people behave in this blind manner.

Desire breeds wishes. Wishes cause birth and also death. When man is devoid of desire, he need not go through birth and death. The next birth is the result of unfulfilled desires in this life and is determined by them. Those who have no trace of desire for material objects can achieve the awareness of the Atmic reality.

In fact, the desire to know God, to love God and be loved by God is not a desire which binds. When awareness of God dawns in all its splendour, every worldly, sensual desire is reduced to ashes in the flames of that Awareness. The individual self will turn towards the Universal Self, as soon as desire comes to an end, and delights in supreme Peace, Paramasanthi. The self must break off all contact with non-self, so that it can earn immortality.

Your thoughts play a vital role in shaping your life. That is why you are advised to watch your thoughts and to welcome only good ones. Man is a heap of thoughts. Vidya stabilises good thoughts in the mind of man, and thus rises to the status of Atma Vidya. For example, a chair evokes an idea in your mind of a certain form having a certain name. The word wood does not produce that idea and that name-form. The value of that name-form is dependent on the usefulness you attribute to the wood. The relationship between you and the material world must be such as to make desires flee from you, not to make desires more intensive and extensive.

Really speaking, no one loves or desires any article or thing, appreciating it *as itself*. One loves it at all times for only selfish reasons, for one’s own sake. No move is indulged in by man, without a specific purpose. But the learning derived from Vidya will reveal that the individual is not entirely responsible for even the motive which prompts him. The Karma or Activity is not fully one’s own! It is one’s Karma that elevates or degrades one’s status.

Death involves certain developments that weaken and extinguish life. It does not affect the Atma. The Atma has no death. It cannot be destroyed. Therefore one should not fear death. Death is but another stage of life. However long one suffers from illness or however severe the injury, death can happen only when Time signals the right moment. When the yearning for living ends, there can be no more birth.

It is the same single energy (Sakthi) that activates all hands, sees through all eyes, and hears through all ears. In fact, all mankind is made of one divine substance. The human body, either in America or China, Africa or India, has the same components of flesh, blood and bone. The instinctive urges and awareness are common to all living beings. When investigation is done through scientific means, the truth that there are signs of awareness of life in stone and tree and metals can be demonstrated.

The Atma is a spark of the Divine. Its latent existence can be known by inquirers. God is ONE. Whatever one's nationality, whichever religion one professes, one can realise the Universal Absolute (Brahma) if one masters the science of spiritual advancement (Atma Vidya). Faith in the ONE God is the crux, the central point. Other beliefs, concepts and conjectures revolve as the rim, on the periphery.

CHAPTER - VI

The inescapable destiny of every living being is the attainment of Fullness. By no means can it be avoided or denied. Our present condition of incompleteness is the consequence of our activities during previous lives. That is to say, the thoughts, feelings, passions and acts of past lives have caused the condition in which we are at present. So too, our future condition is being built on the basis of our present deeds and desires, thoughts and feelings. In other words, we ourselves are the cause of our fortunes and misfortunes. This does not mean that one should not seek and secure assistance from others for promoting one's good fortune and avoiding misfortune. In fact, such assistance is very essential for all, except perhaps for a small minority. When one gets this help, one's Consciousness is purified and sublimated, and one's spiritual progress is accelerated. In the end, one achieves perfection and fullness (*Poornathwam*).

This vivifying inspiration cannot be got through the perusal of books. It can be gained only when one mind-element contacts another mind-element. Even when one's entire life is spent in poring over books and thereby one becomes intellectually very talented, one cannot advance to the slightest extent in the cultivation of the spirit. It would be unwarranted to claim that a person who has reached the acme of intelligence has thereby progressed and succeeded in reaching the acme of spiritual wisdom. Scholarship and culture are not related as cause and effect. However learned one is in worldly knowledge, unless one's mind is cultured, the learning is mere junk. The system of education which teaches culture and helps the culture to permeate and purify the learning that is gathered, is the best and most fruitful.

As a result of the study of books, or in other words, as a result of secular education, one's intelligence may be sharpened and expanded. One can even deliver wonderful discourses on spiritual subjects. But, one's spiritual life cannot be taken to have advanced in proportion. The teaching imparted to us by another person might not enter the heart and transform one's nature. This is the reason why learning without intensive culture of the spirit proves barren.

The great one who has the Atmic truth imprinted on the heart is alone to be accepted as the Guru. The individual who can welcome this Truth and is eager to know it, he alone is to be accepted as the Pupil. The seed must have

the life principle latent in it. The field must be ploughed and made fit for the sowing. The spiritual harvest will be plentiful if both these conditions are fulfilled. The listener has to possess a clear receptive intellect, or else the philosophical principles that form the basis of Jnana will not be comprehended. The guru and the pupil both have to be of this stature. Others who have no such qualification or authority can only dabble and play about purposelessly in the spiritual field.

There are Gurus with far higher stature and far deeper capabilities than these learned and cultural masters. They are the *Avatars*, the Human Incarnations of God. They confer, by mere willing, the blessing of spiritual strength. They command and by the very force of that command, the lowest of the low rises to the status of One who has attained the goal of spiritual sadhana (*Siddhapurusha*). Such persons are the Gurus of all gurus. They are the highest manifestations of God in the human form.

Man can visualise God in no other form except the human. God appears in human form in answer to human prayer, since man can experience only that vision as real. When he tries to picture God and visualise God in any other form, he has to contemplate some crooked ugly form and make great effort to believe that form which is lower than the real one as He. One ignorant person agreed to mould an idol of Siva and spent many days preparing it. As a result of his continuous labour, he produced at the end of the

period the image of a monkey! So long as we are humans, we will be unable to picture, through imagination, any form of God beyond the human. So, one has to wait for the chance of perceiving the reality of the Person by oneself reaching a stage above and beyond the human level.

The petty investigation done by ordinary reason, not fed by wisdom, can help us to perceive only nothingness. When such persons deliver lectures condemning Avatars, and you happen to be present and listening, ask the speaker, "Venerable Sir, have you understood the meaning of the words omnolocation, omnipotence and omnipresence?" Man is confined to the objective Nature which he contacts through his senses. So, he is helpless in understanding these ideas. The speaker does not know about these concepts, any more than the common unlettered man. Though they are ignorant of these vast horizons of thought, speakers of this type create confusion and distress through their teachings.

Spiritual education is, in reality, experience of the Truth, awareness of the Truth. Pleasing oratory should not be mistaken as experiencing of the Truth. That experience comes about only in the innermost tabernacle of the self.

As at present created, man is by nature encased and so, he can see God only as man. There is no escape. When buffaloes yearn to worship God, limited as they are by the buffalo nature, they can imagine God as a Cosmic Buffalo. So too man imagines the Divine Principle as a Cosmic Purusha with human limbs and human qualities.

Man, Buffalo, Fish—these can be compared to vessels or containers. Take it that these vessels proceed to the limitless ocean of Divinity to fill themselves with it. Each can have it only in its own shape and size, isn't it? The man vessel will earn and accept God as having the form of man; the buffalo vessel, as having the form of buffalo; the fish vessel, as having the form of fish. All these vessel-forms contain the identical water of the Ocean of Divinity. When men visualise God, they see God as human. Each imposes on God its own Form.

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

CHAPTER - VIII

Work done with no concern or desire for the profit therefrom, purely out of love or from a sense of duty, is Yoga. Such yoga destroys the animal nature of man and transforms him into a divine being. Serve others, visualising them as kindred Atmas. That will help one to progress; it will save one from sliding down from the spiritual stage attained. Service (*Seva*) is far more salutary than even vows and worship (*Puja*). Service disintegrates the selfishness latent in you; it opens the heart wide; it makes the heart blossom.

So, work done with no desire is the supreme ideal for man; and when the mansion of his life is built on that foundation, through the subtle influence of this basis of *Nishkama Seva* (selfless service), virtues will gather unto him. Service must be the outer expression of inner goodness. And as one undertakes seva more and more, one's consciousness expands and deepens and one's Atmic reality is more clearly known.

This ideal of seva and the urge to practise it form the very heart of education. Pure Love, its chief manifestation—that is education. Nothing else can be. God loves those who do good to mankind as His dear children. They are ideal brothers for their countrymen. They deserve and achieve the awareness of the Atma.

Whoever assigns his wealth, strength, intellect and devotion towards the promotion of the progress of mankind is to be considered as a person who is to be revered. They are those who are born for a noble purpose, who are observing the holy vow of service, unsullied by thoughts of self.

Prompted by the urge to advance the progress of others, when a person dedicates his wealth, skill and intelligence, his position and status, he becomes truly great. Such a one is the purposeful seer for the world. He fulfils unfailingly the vow of selfless service. He who is conscious of his basic duties and obligations and spends his days in carrying them out in practice will be in supreme peace, wherever he may be. Through his influence, his neighbourhood, too, will share that peace.

Vidya impels man to pour into the sacrificial fire one's narrow ego and foster in its place universal Love, which is the foundational base for the superstructure of spiritual victory. Love which knows no limits purifies and sanctifies the mind. Let the thoughts centre around God, the feelings

and emotions be holy and acts and activities be the expression of selfless service. Let the mind, the heart and the hand be thus saturated in good. Vidya has to take up this task of sublimation. It must first instil the secret of service. Service rendered to another has to confer full joy in all ways. Vidya must emphasise that in the name of seva or service, no harm, pain or grief should be inflicted on another.

While rendering seva, the attitude of its being done for one's own satisfaction should not tarnish it. It has to be rendered as an essential part of the process of living itself. This is the real core of Vidya. As brick and mortar are to a house that is being built, the activity of seva needs the Vidya that can strengthen our resolve to purify our thought, word and deed in order to carry out our duties. Vidya such as this is the key to the country's progress.

What exactly is the secret of ensuring peace and prosperity for mankind? Rendering service to others without expecting service from them in return. Karma or activity which binds is a huge fast-growing tree. The axe that can cut the roots of this tree is this: Doing every act as an act of worship to glorify the Lord. This is the real yajna, the most important ritual. This sacrifice promotes and confers *Brahma Vidya*. Note that the yearning to do seva must flow in every nerve of the body, penetrate every bone and activate every cell. Those who engage themselves in spiritual Sadhana must have mastered this attitude towards seva.

Seva is the blossom of Prema, a flower that fills the mind with rapture. Harmlessness is the fragrance of that flower. Let even your little acts be redolent with compassion and reverence. Be assured that your character would thereby shine greatly. The highest happiness is contentment. Where there is no harshness, there holiness will thrive and virtue will flourish. Where greed exists, vice will breed thick. One must completely destroy the urge to live an isolated life, like a lone bull. Do not entertain such a wish even in dreams.

Vidya instructs you to remember yourself first. After transforming yourself, try to reform others. That is the advice offered by Vidya. The delusive attachment to the objective world can be uprooted by means of selfless service rendered as worship to the Lord. Devotion to the Motherland, love of the Motherland, these are to be reckoned as far less than love and devotion towards all mankind. Genuine Bhakthi is characterised by love for all, at all times, everywhere.

Your nature is revealed by your acts, your gestures, your looks, your speech, your feeding habits, your dress, your gait. Therefore, pay attention to ensure that your speech, your movements, your thoughts, your behaviour are all right and full of love, *sathwic*, and devoid of wildness and waywardness.

You have to develop the humility to believe that you have much good to learn from others. Your enthusiasm,

your strong ambition, your resolution, your capacity to work, your store of knowledge, your wisdom—these have to be related to all others and not utilised for you alone. Your heart should take all others in. Your thoughts too should be patterned on those broad lines.

Eating food is a holy ritual, a yajna. It should not be performed during moments of anxiety or emotional tension. food has to be considered as medicine for the illness of hunger and as the sustenance of life. Treat each trouble you encounter as a fortunate opportunity to develop your strength of mind, and to toughen you with greater hardihood.

The characteristic of Nature is “to manifest as manifold.” The characteristic of the Divine is “to absorb into unity.” So, whoever dislikes or hates another or demeans and denigrates another is indeed a fool; for, he is thereby disliking, hating, demeaning or denigrating only himself! Only he is unaware of this truth. Vidya instructs man to establish himself in this Truth and demonstrates the underlying Divinity.

In the garden of the Heart, one must plant and foster the Rose of Divinity, the Jasmine of Humility, and Generosity as the Champak. In the medicine chest of each student, one must keep in readiness tablets of discrimination, drops of self-control, and three powders: faith, devotion and patience. By the use of these drugs, he can escape the serious illness called ignorance (Ajnana).

There are many destructive forces in the world. But, luckily, there are also, along with them, constructive forces. Students of Vidya should not turn into worshippers of bombs and *yantras* (machines). They must transform themselves into active persons worshipping Madhava (God) and Manthras. Authority and power are powerful intoxicants. They pollute and poison man until he is destroyed. They breed misfortune. But, Vidya will confer on them fullness and fortune.

CHAPTER - IX

The 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.

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 *drsyā*). 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.

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 (*chiththa*) 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 Vasishta, Sage Vasishta 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 *Adwaitha 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 *Adwaitha Sthayi* or *Adwaitha 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 Sathvic happiness. Of course, it can be secured only by untiring effort. The scriptures declare: “happiness cannot be acquired through happiness” (*Na sukhath 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 Sathvic 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.

CHAPTER XII

‘**V**id’ is the root from which, by adding ‘ya,’ the term ‘Vidya’ is derived. ‘Ya’ means ‘what’ and ‘Vid’ means ‘Light.’ So, “that which gives Light” is Vidya. This is the basic meaning of the word. Therefore, it is evident that *Brahma Vidya* alone deserves to be known as Vidya. Knowledge was considered Light and Ignorance as Darkness by the ancients. Just as light and darkness cannot coexist at the same time in the same place, Vidya and Avidya cannot be together. So, all who journey along the path of progress have to purify their consciousness and illumine their selves through *Brahma Vidya*.

In the section on Vibhuthi Yoga, the Gita informs us: “*Adhyaatma Vidya Vidyaanaam*,” “I am,” the Lord declares, “*Adhyaatma Vidya* (the *Brahma Vidya*) among all *Vidyas!*” All other *Vidyas* or knowledge systems are as rivers; *Adhyaatma Vidya* is as the ocean. As all rivers find

their fulfilment when they merge in the ocean, even so all Vidyas join the ocean of Adhyaatma Vidya as their ultimate goal. This is not all. When the rivers meet and mix with the ocean they lose their separate names and forms and assume the name and form of the ocean itself. So, too, the varied Vidyas concerned with the objective external world renounce their individual names and forms when they arrive at the confluence with the vast Ocean of *Brahma* Vidya.

“*Vidya thapobhyaam Poothaatma*”—“By means of Vidya and Thapas, man is transformed into a purified soul.” Vidya can be considered as having two aspects: *Baahya* (external) Vidya and *Brahma* Vidya. *Baahya* Vidya provides the wherewithal for human livelihood. Man can study many subjects, earn valuable degrees, acquire higher and higher jobs, and manage to spend his life with no worry and fear. This type of Vidya helps man, whatever the job he is raised to, whether a peon or a Prime Minister. *Brahma* Vidya, on the other hand, endows all human beings with the strength which enables them to discharge successfully the duty they owe to themselves. It lays down the path which leads both to joy in worldly relations and bliss in the life beyond. Therefore, *Brahma* Vidya is far superior to all the Vidyas available on earth to man. *Brahma* Vidya has the divine potency to liberate everyone from bondage. *Baahya* Vidya has no such potency. *Brahma* Vidya makes you aware of the Omniself, the Absolute, the Parabrahman; Thapas enables you to merge with That. Vidya is the process of

acquiring knowledge; Thapas is the known. The first is indirect, it is the means. The second is the goal, the end.

Guru means literally the “big” person, the “great” person. That is to say, the guru must have mastered these two, Vidya and Thapas. When one desires to wash off from the clothes he wears the dirt it has accumulated, he needs both soap and clean water. So too, when one is anxious to remove the dirt that has stuck to the mind, both Vidya and Thapas are essential. Only when both are used can the levels of consciousness be thoroughly cleansed. No vehicle can move without two wheels, nor can a bird fly on one wing. So too, no man can be rendered holy or purified without Vidya and Thapas.

Thapas does not mean positioning oneself upside down, head on the ground and feet held up, like a bat. Nor is it the renunciation of possessions and properties, wife and children, and emaciating one’s body, holding the nose to regulate breath. NO. Physical actions, oral assertions and mental resolves—all three have to be in unison. The thought, the speech and the act all have to be pure. This is the real Thapas. And they have to be co-ordinated not by the compulsion of duty. The effort must be undertaken for satisfying one’s inner yearnings, for the contentment of the self. This struggle is the essence of Thapas.

The Gita depicts the ideal guru and the ideal *sishya*—the pupil is the *Adhikaramurthi* and the Preceptor is the

Avataramurthi. Arjuna has earned the right to learn; Krishna has come as Man to teach man. The pupil is *Narothama* (the best of men); the Preceptor is *Purushothama* (the best among Physical Embodiments). The pupil wields the bow; the guru wields the secret of all skills, Yoga. He is *Yogeswara* (Lord of Yoga). Arjuna is *Dhanurdhar* (wielder of bows). When these two meet, Vidya is transformed into *Brahma* Vidya.

The pupil, Arjuna, after imbibing the teachings of Krishna, said, “*Karishye Vachanam thava,*” “I shall do as you command.” He threw away now, not his bow named Gaandeeva, but his great big ego itself, the *Ahamkara* that was deluding him. The Guru was the *Sutradhaari*—the Director of the play. The Sishya, Arjuna, was the *Pathradhaari* (the character in the play). The sishya should not be proud that he has been entrusted with a duty; for as long as you are conceited, you cannot get a guru. When the guru accepts you, your pride will disappear.

One should not feel great or be proud when he gives his all and boasts of his sense of renunciation. The real renunciation is to give oneself away. Then, the guru will grant him freedom to follow his own will, as Krishna did. “Beloved Arjuna! *Yathechchasi, thathaa kuru.*” “As you will, so you act. Think well. And do as you like,” Krishna told him. He meant that He had given him all the advice he needed and He had also accepted the ego Arjuna had discarded. And so, Arjuna can now be granted freedom to

act as he wills, for his will has become His. The individual who has reached that level has to be given freedom. The guru should not mercilessly order his sishya about simply because the sishya has dedicated himself and his all to him. The greedy guru and the indolent disciple—both fall into perdition. The guru should not turn into *Vitthaapahaari*, a person who steals wealth; he should be a *Hrdayapahari*, a person who steals hearts! The guru has to be an alarm timepiece. He must wake up those who are enveloped in the sleep of ignorance and reward them with teachings on Atmajnana, the knowledge of their Atmic Reality.

A traveller going through the countryside from village to village was confronted by a river in spate. The waters were rising and rushing. He was helpless because he did not know how to cross to the other bank. He cast his eyes all around. He saw two men squatting under a tree at a little distance from where he stood. He walked towards them. He found that one of them was lame and the other was blind. So, he inferred that they would not know where the river was deep and where it was shallow enough to wade across. He went back, without questioning them. He knew their answers should not be acted upon.

The preceptor who has not mastered the *Sastras*, which are the repositories of the experience gained by seekers in the past, is represented in this story by the man. And the lame person represents the person who has not put the knowledge into practice and gained personal experience. In

fact, knowledge of the Sastras and experience gained by its practical application—these two make a full man. Only such a Guru can save the sishya by his instruction and example. This is the conclusion expounded in the *Mundakopanishad*.

Even more difficult than getting a good sishya is the task of securing a good guru. Only when a real guru accepts them can the sishyas become exemplary persons. Pure-hearted students, unselfish students, non-egoistic students—when such aspirants approach them, the gurus exult in ecstatic delight. Parikshith, the Emperor, renounced everything and decided to realise God, and, right at that moment, Maharshi Suka appeared, to guide him straight to his goal. Similarly, when the good sishyas get the good gurus, they succeed not only in attaining Bliss but also in conferring peace, prosperity and joy upon the entire world.

CHAPTER XIII

Students! The Ageless Person, beyond delusion and darkness, has to be cognised by every person through one's own effort. You have taken birth as inheritors of this estate of Eternal Bliss. You are the dearly loved children of the Lord. You are as pure and as sacred as air. Do not condemn yourselves as sinners. You are lion cubs, not sheep. You are wavelets of Immortality, not bodies compounded from matter. Material objects are there to serve you and do your bidding: you should not serve them and do *their* bidding.

Do not think that the Vedas lay down a bundle of frightening rules and regulations and laws. Every one of them has been laid down by the Lord, as lawgiver. All elements in the Cosmos, every particle everywhere, are acting every moment as ordered by Him. This is what the Vedas inform us. No worship can be higher and more beneficial than serving such a Lord. One has to offer Love to Him,

more Love than one bears to anything else in this world and the next. He must be loved as the One and Only. He has to be remembered adoringly with such Love. That is the fruit that real education must result in.

The lotus leaf is born under water; it floats on water; but it does not get wet. Man too, must be in the world likewise—in it, by it, for it, but not of it. This is the special feature of the Higher education, to prepare you for this role.

That is to say, with the heart immersed in the Divine and the hands busy in work, man must live thus on earth. Love should not degenerate into an article of commerce. Love fulfils itself in Love. The Hindu religion does not attempt to establish, through conflict and controversy, any one doctrine or theory. It seeks to evaluate all theories and doctrines by the touchstone of experience.

The tree is judged by its fruits. Codes of behaviour, spiritual practices and manifestation of Love have all enormous virtues which promote the progress of man.

According to the point of view of great men and of the spiritual teachers of India, man advances, not from falsehood to Truth, but from the partly true to the fully True. Each individual Atma can be called a Garuda bird. It soars higher and higher, and gathering supranatural strength, at last reaches the Solar Orb with unlimited Splendour and Majesty.

The basic Truth of Creation is Unity in Multiplicity. This was understood by Indians. All other religions have accepted certain fixed doctrines and built systems on them. They are content with the establishment of such credal groups. They devised methods of worship, prayer and adoration in accordance with the feelings and emotions they laid down as valid and valuable. The service that every religion offers to mankind is to expand the consciousness of man beyond the material sphere and light the spark of Divinity already in him. The Bharathiya mode of worship is based on the awareness that the One manifests through many discrete forms and many discrete attributes, when confronted by many discrete situations and conditions. So Bharathiyas have the intellectual tolerance, among all peoples of the world, to proclaim to all the quarters that God exists and can be found in every religion. This is their unique good fortune.

One of the basic rules of living is not to be ashamed of one's forefathers. As one reads more and more the history of the past, as one visualises more and more the human condition in those ages, your pride is bound to increase. Let faith in the supreme achievements of your forefathers flow in and energise the blood in your veins. Let the strength of that faith render your body, mind and spirit equally strong. The fruit of genuine Vidya is the recognition that every community of people and every religion has, along with a basic unity, something special of its own to offer.

In fact, no country in history has been the target of such dire calamities and has suffered under alien rule for so long, as India. Despite this, Bharathiyas are ready to encounter boldly any new calamitous storm, for their lives are still more or less firmly based on the ancient ideals. This has been the stable foundation for their way of life. Faith in God is faith in Atma. They believe, without any hesitation, that it is that faith that has guided and guarded them.

These guiding principles of Bharathiya life were not restricted by the geographical boundaries of the country. Whether the people of this land desired it or not, they are spreading to other lands. They are transmuting their literature by instilling their values into their thoughts and feelings.

The natural sciences can provide us only food, clothing and such like. Spiritual science alone can add strength and steadfastness to the self. Students should pay special attention to this fact. Consider—of what use are food, clothing and such like, even in plenty, when one has no strength or steadfastness in oneself.

Again, when it is desired to promote the prosperity of the nation, you must, of necessity, gather into yourself all the spiritual resources that you can. In the past, the need was known, and efforts were made to fulfil the need. In future too, this need must be felt and fulfilled. That is to say, all the spiritual inclinations, beliefs and urges which are

now feeble and dissipated have to be united and reinforced, one with the others.

The unique features of the Bharathiya religion form its solid base. They are as wide as the sky and as eternal as Nature. As part of the religion, creeds and cults may exist as branches for a tree. One need not condemn them as wrong. But no branch should fight against another or compete with another. When that happens, the tree will be destroyed and all will end in ruin. When creeds indulge in competitive rivalry, religion is ruined and the world is destroyed. “*Ekam sath; vipraah bahudhaa vadanthi*” (Only One Exists; the wise describe it in many ways.)

We may each have different ideas on the nature and characteristics, the form and attributes of God. One person may believe that God has the qualities and form of humans. Another may believe in a God devoid of human form and signs but yet manifesting in embodiments. Another may believe in God as altogether formless. Every one of these can find in the Vedas declarations supporting their stands. For all have faith in God, that is to say, in a mysterious Power (Sakthi) which is the source, support and sustenance of all, a Power which subsumes all. This is the truth proclaimed and elaborated in the Vedas.

CHAPTER - XIV

Whatever be the teaching about the name or form of Easwara or God is not very important. We need not quarrel over those distinctions and differences. Instruction on God is service enough. Bharathiyas do not accept the view held by others that the world and the Universe of which it is a part came into being some thousands of years ago and will meet with dissolution sometime in the future. Nor do they accept the statement that the Universe was born out of the void (*Soonya*). They believe that *Prakrithi* or the Projection (Nature) is not born of vacuity but has always been full and complete (*Poornam*). It has no beginning nor end; it has only gross and subtle forms. It is no sign of enlightenment to infer that, since there is no evidence of the full and complete, there must be a void in the beginning. There are other levels of existence to consider.

Man, for example, is not entirely the body; he has, in the gross body, a subtle body, the mind, and another body

too, more subtle than the mind, namely, *jivatma*, the Individualised Atma or Self. This last has neither beginning nor end, nor does it have any trace of death or decay. This is the truth that Bharathiyas believe in. This faith is based on the declaration of the Vedas themselves. We close our eyes when we worship God. We do not try to discover God outside us by raising our faces and looking upwards. Others accept that their scriptures were written by Divinely inspired persons, but Bharathiyas believe that the Vedas are the authentic voice of God, emerging from the hearts of sages.

Students! He who condemns himself, day and night, as petty and weak can never accomplish anything. He who thinks that he is luckless and low thereby becomes luckless and low. Instead, when you cultivate the awareness that you are a spark of God, that you have as your reality Divinity Itself, you can become really Divine, and you can have command over all powers. “As you feel, so you become” (*Yad bhaavam, thad bhavathi*). It is how you feel that matters most. That is the basis for all that you are. Have faith in the Atma, the Self. This is a must for man. In its absence, man is being reduced to a monster, revelling in vice and wickedness. Your forefathers achieved prosperity, peace and joy and succeeded in attaining their goals through that faith alone. When people lose that faith, they are certain to fall. For, that faith is the very breath of life. When there is no breath, man becomes a corpse (*Savam*). With the breath of that faith, he becomes Divine (*Sivam*), the same as Siva Himself. Faith in the Self is the expression of the Siva

Principle in man. That faith can endow man with all forms of power and render him full and complete (Poorna). For, the Atma, by its very nature, is self-sufficient and full. No other Sadhana is needed to realise that state.

Purity too is our nature; self-sufficiency (*Paripoornatha*) is also the nature of the self. Impurity and insufficiency are alien to man. Students should not ignore or forget this fact. Real education must arouse this faith and infuse the awareness of this fullness in every activity. This is the essential aim, the core of the right type of education.

There is one other truth that we have to keep in mind, more than every other. For Bharathiyas, religion means experience, nothing less. Our position is that no achievement is worthwhile, unless one earns it by one's own efforts. Everything valuable must be cultivated by oneself. Divine Grace awaits individual striving and sadhana. The doctrines and directives of religion have to be assimilated by means of actual experience. It is not enough if one learns to repeat them parrot like.

The Truth has to be identified; this is the very first step. The sooner we understand the Truth the sooner will religious conflicts and credal dissensions disappear. The *Paraathpara* (Beyond the Beyond), the Omniself, is nearer than the nearest; other entities are all, though near, really far away. Become aware of this fact. Then alone can the knots, in which the heart is entangled, be loosened.

In the vocabulary of the West, man gives up his "life"; but in the language of Bharathiyas, man gives up his "body." Westerners profess that they have bodies and that the bodies have souls. Bharathiyas do not declare so. They proclaim that man has a soul and that the soul is enclosed temporarily in a body. Therefore, they feel that the civilisations and cultures seeking sensual pleasures and secular glory are built on a foundation of sand, and can shine only for a brief period of time before they collapse.

Students! Imitation can never become culture. You may wear royal robes and act the role; but can you, as a result of this imitation, become a King? A donkey clothed in tiger skin does not become a tiger. Imitation is a sign of cowardice. It cannot further one's progress. In fact the tendency to imitate leads man down, step by step, into frightful shape. You must endeavour to uplift yourselves, as yourselves. You must be proud that you are Bharathiyas. You must be proud of your ancestors. Your commendable heroism lies in your joyous assertion that you are a Bharathiya (a child of Bharath, India). You should not imitate others and copy their attitudes, though you may imbibe the good in them.

We have to learn good things from others. We sow seeds in the ground. We provide it with soil, manure and water. The seed sprouts, becomes a sapling and grows into

a huge tree. It does not become soil when placed therein, nor manure when it feeds thereon, nor water when it partakes thereof. It only imbibes from each of them whatever it can benefit from them. It grows into what is essentially IT, namely, a huge tree!

May you too grow likewise. You have to learn much from others. Learn the Supreme and the means of attaining it from even the lowest. Learn from others how to practise progressive spiritual sadhana and saturate yourselves with it. But do not be transformed into those others. This is the normal teaching for man, the Smrithi of Manu. This is the lesson that students have to understand. This is the first and foremost lesson, the crucial lesson.

CHAPTER - XV

You may master a billion fields of study; but if you have not cultivated the attitude of detachment, the mastery is of no consequence.

Sharing with others, serving others, this is the main Sutra of Vidya, its genuine expression. Education is rendered noble when the spirit of service is inculcated. The service rendered must be free of the slightest trace of narrow selfishness. That is not enough. The thought of service should not be marred by the desire for something in return. You have to perform the service as you would perform an important Yajna or Sacrifice. As trees do not eat their fruits but offer them to be eaten by others in an attitude of detachment, as rivers, without drinking the waters they carry, quench the thirst and cool the heat from which others suffer, as cows offer their milk, produced primarily for their calves, in a spirit of generosity born of *Tyaga* (renunciation), to be shared by others, so too should those who have acquired Vidya offer it to others prompted by the motive of service

and without consideration of selfish interests. Only thus can they justify their status as ‘noble men,’ *Sajjana*.

The authentic scholar should not entertain egoism in his thoughts, at any time. However, the misfortune is that scholars as a class are today afflicted with unbounded egoism. As a consequence, they follow wrong ideals and take to wrong paths. They confer the benefits of education only on themselves and on their kith and kin. As a result, they forgo their position among sajjans and the respect it can bring. One must grant generously to others the knowledge, skill and insight that one has acquired. If this is not done, human progress itself is endangered. To promote the best interest of mankind, one has to cultivate the holy urge of *paropakaaram* (service to others) and the attitude of sharing.

The parrot talk, “Service to Man is Service to God” (*Manava seva is Madhava seva*) does not extend to all men. Those who reel off this axiom do not inquire who are the men to be served. They are eager only to fill their own stomachs; for this purpose they restrict their mental horizons to the uplift of their own people. Thus, they lay waste the valuable education they have received. Man forgets the fact that God is in perceptible form in all beings. Service rendered to any being is service offered to God. This has to be the chief goal of the educated.

Nara is Narayana. Man is God. Every single act of Man has to be elevated as an act of service to God. But

students today do not know what exactly is Narayana and what exactly is Nara. How can a person claim to be educated when he cannot identify the Nara-Narayana Principle? They are the entities denoted by the Upanishads as ‘*Thwam*’ and ‘*That*,’ “you” and “That.” He who has not become aware of these two cannot claim to have known himself. The education that does not reveal oneself to one, of what use can it be to reveal anything else? But to our misfortune, the educated who are the educators are engaged, not in promoting our best interests and serving us, but in doing great disservice as much as they need. It is highly strange. For the educated persons must not only serve those who help them but also those who harm them. This attitude makes the service doubly holy. Serving those who do service to us is but a natural reaction. Serving those who harm us is the greater virtue. For this latter course of action involves deeper understanding of one’s best interest and an alert sense of time, place and circumstance. Education must confer and cultivate these qualities.

While dealing with uncultured folk, one has to exercise caution. So too, with ungrateful fellows who forget the good done to them. The law is the instrument the Government uses to punish those who do wrong. But the educated person and the student should not condemn them outright. He must manifest his natural virtue of detachment and practise his characteristic attitude of helpfulness.

Protecting one’s Motherland is a noble duty. It is the primary duty of each student. The student cannot claim to

have learned much unless he is able to discover and discharge what his duty is and what his immediate role should be, when circumstances call for such decisions. The educated man and the student undergoing education must both cultivate simplicity; they must discard ostentation. If they are addicted to ostentation, they lose their genuine nature or individuality. Students must note this point well. Whether a person is a master of all sciences or famous as a great intellectual, he is certain to be counted out of scholars and pundits if he has no humility and discipline in his dealings with others. Such persons will not be honoured by society. They may win respect for some time but that attitude will decline pretty soon. Such respect does not bring credit to the recipient. Artlessness and simplicity alone earn honour. They render the honour enjoyable. Insane parade of scholarship brings in only spurts of reputation and ridicule. When one gives up ostentation, one can get permanent respect from people. Real education imparts a spirit of renunciation, a dislike for ostentation, and the yearning for serving others.

Some persons develop swollen heads as soon as they acquire a little knowledge. They pretend to be experts in every field and boast the whole day about their attainments. They strut about as if they know everything. "The leaf-plate on which a full lunch has been served will lie low on the floor. The leaf-plate on which nothing is placed will hop high with every gust of wind." Thus says the proverb. So too, the person who has much scholarship and many skills

in him will lead an unassuming life. But he who has not derived genuine education and the strength it can confer lives in pomp and pride. He struggles much to hide his defects from being known to others. And in the end, the struggles do not succeed. He meets with double ruin—he does not experience Ananda nor does he impart Ananda to others. He becomes the target of ridicule.

Therefore, do not allow the desire for ostentation to enter the mind. Do not allow egotism to approach you. Be humble and be loyal to high ideals. Then only can you serve the cause of world peace and prosperity. "*Sreyaasthe Viswasreyah.*" It is only when the individual succeeds in being good that the world too can become good. One who is eager to be a real student must place before himself the ideal of world peace and prosperity. He has to be unpretentious. He must vow to be of service to others. This is the essence of true education or Vidya.

CHAPTER - XVI

The student seeking Vidya must possess kindness, compassion and love towards all living beings. Kindness to all beings should be his very nature. If it is absent, he becomes a boor. Vidya means, more than everything else, the quality of compassion towards living beings. If a person bears ill-will against any being, his education has no meaning. The advice given in the Gita, “*Adweshta Sarva Bhoothanam*,” “with no ill-will towards all or any being,” conveys the same message. In the same manner, the Gita warns off and on that any insult or injury or even neglect directed against any living being is an act that insults, injures or neglects the Divine. “*Sarva Jeeva thiraskaaram Kesavam prathigachchathi.*” Love and compassion must not be limited to mankind only. They must enfold every living being.

The Gita says, “*Sunee chaiva svapakecha, pandithah sama darsinah.*” That is to say, the learned man who has acquired humility through Vidya must deal with equal compassion and consideration the cow, the Brahmin, the elephant, the dog and the eater of dog-flesh. Uniform

compassion shown in this manner transforms itself into uniform welfare for the recipients. Wishing well for all is the sign of one who has earned Vidya. The narrow vision that is limited to the community has to be given up. Bharathiya culture emphasises the highest truth, the broadest vision. Imparting this ideal is the purpose of Vidya, as laid down in Bharath. No other country has placed before its people such a lofty all-inclusive, beneficial ideal.

This day, the country is facing ruin because this ideal has been neglected, Vidya has been grossly circumscribed and the educational system is polluting the social organism with narrowness and crookedness. So, marked changes have to be made in the system. At present we have mere book learning. But what is learnt from books has to be confirmed and corrected by practising it in social living. Then only can the knowledge of the kinship between man and man be gained. Thereby learning is transformed into Vidya. Vidya cannot be acquired by merely mastering reading, writing and arithmetic.

Each student must, after intelligent inquiry, decide for his guidance during every occasion which goal is best and which action is best suited to realise it. Both the goal and the action must serve the needs of society and help it to progress. People should not be involved in injustice, violence and immorality. Nor should they deem their own gain as primary.

Students have to pay great attention to another important quality—cleanliness, both outer and inner. When

either of these is absent, that person becomes useless for any task. The clothes he wears, the books he reads and the environment around him must be clean. This is the outer cleanliness. That is to say, every material object one has to deal with for living has to be kept clean. The teeth and eyes, the food and drink, all should be free from dirt. One can be healthy as a result of all this. The body has to be scrubbed and washed every day, or else, layers of dust will cause itching and boils will emerge. They may develop causing infections to others. And one's condition will be rendered miserable. One may possess only one or two sets of clothing. But care should be taken to wash them before wearing. They should not gather dirt.

The books used for study should not be thrown about as one pleases. Scribbling on the pages must be avoided. Paper should be preserved clean and spotless. Those who see them must appreciate the care taken by the student to keep things clean. The room where he resides must be free from stink. The student must be able to draw on himself the love of all. The room where the student resides and the adjacent area must be kept clean. And inside the room, no indecent pictures should be hung on the walls. Only pictures that inspire great thoughts and high ideals should be visible to the eye.

However rich a person may be, he cannot be happy without health, he cannot derive full joy from the riches he owns. A meal makes him exhausted; without a meal, he

feels weak. Thus he plods on without ever being happy. So, external cleanliness promotes health and happiness.

Next, we shall consider inner cleanliness—that is to say, keeping the mind and the intellect free from dirt, serene and sacred. When thoughts and feelings are impure and agitated, one cannot be calm and happy. When the mind is polluted, reactions are polluted. To keep the mind clean, one has to analyse sympathetically situations involving others and their activities, and then decide on how to react to them. One should not rush to draw conclusions. Adopting the reactions of others is not desirable. One must resolve on any action only after intelligent discrimination and inquiry. “Some course of action is being followed, by some who are ours; so, we shall follow that course ourselves.” This attitude is mean and demeaning, it is a sign of weakness. It is the consequence of basic ignorance. Sheep behave in that manner.

Born as men, moving about as educated persons, yet stupidly following others as sheep do and polluting the minds with ideas borrowed from the lips of others are things to be avoided.

The ideas and pronouncements of others may often be personal, or they may induce feelings of hatred between people. Why should we accept them as ours and mould our feelings accordingly? We should not try to shape our feelings and patterns of behaviour to conform to those of

others. We should not relinquish our faith, our experience and our innate holiness.

We may not be able always to know the reasons for our faith. It originates and is shaped by our own personal likes and dislikes, our own dominant feelings. But we must not become the target for anger, hatred, jealousy and the evil deeds they lead us into. A student must cultivate wide, inclusive feelings. Then only is he entitled to acquire the higher learning. Then only can he earn respect in society. He must keep far away from narrow, selfish thoughts, feelings and plans.

CHAPTER XVII

The root cause of all anxieties and calamities of man is ENVY. We can find from the Bhagavad Gita that Krishna warns Arjuna off and on “Arjuna, you have to be envyless. Do not get infected by envy.” Envy is invariably accompanied by hatred. These two are twin villains. They are poisonous pests. They attack the very roots of one’s personality.

A tree may be resplendent with flowers and fruits. But when the inimical worms set to work on the roots, imagine what happens to the splendour! Even as we look on admiringly at its beauty, the flowers fade, the fruits fall off and the leaves turn yellow and are scattered by the wind. At last, the tree itself dries up, it dies and falls. So too, when envy and hatred infect the heart and set to work, however intelligent and however highly educated the man, he falls. He is turned into an enemy of society. He becomes the target of ridicule because he is no longer human. He cannot

be counted as a member of the community. In the end, even his trusted friends desert him and become his foes. He loses the respect of his group and does not evoke even ordinary courtesies from others. He spends his days perpetually in misery.

No enemy can be so insidious as jealousy. When one sees a person more powerful, or more knowledgeable, or with greater reputation or more wealth or more beauty, or even wearing better clothing, one is afflicted with jealousy. One finds it difficult to acknowledge and accept the situation. One's mind seeks means to demean them and lower them in the estimation of people. Such propensities and evil tendencies should never strike root in the minds of students and the educated. These should not pollute their character.

Students must learn to be happy and filled with joy when others are acclaimed as good and are respected for their virtues and the ideals they hold dear. They have to cultivate breadth of outlook and purity of motives. They must be ever vigilant that the demon of envy does not possess them. That demon is certain to destroy all that is precious in them. It will ruin their health and damage their digestive system. It will rob them of sleep. It will sap their physical and mental stamina and reduce them to the state of chronic consumptives.

Students must resolve to emulate those who do better than themselves and earn equal appreciation. They should

strive to acquire knowledge and score marks as much as others. That is the proper ambition. Instead, if they wish for the downfall of others, leaving them as the only successful ones, they are revealing their brutish nature. It will lead them to perdition. It is a deadly virus.

Praising oneself and condemning others are also equally deadly. Attempting to hide one's meanness and wickedness and putting on the mask of goodness, justifying one's faults and exaggerating one's attainments—these are also poisonous traits. Equally poisonous is the habit of ignoring the good in others and assiduously seeking only their faults. Never speak words that demean anyone. When we are friendly with another and like him very much, whatever he does is certain to strike us as good. When the wind changes and the same person is disliked even the good he does strikes us as bad. Both these reactions are misconceived. They are not commendable at all. In the *Sumathi Sathaka*, there is a verse which teaches this lesson. “O Sumathi! (Person with good intelligence) Know that wrong is right and right is wrong, when friendship is strong and friendship is lost.”

The student has to transform himself into a Sumathi. He should avoid turning into a *Durmathi* (Person with perverted, polluted intelligence). A huge heap of fuel can be reduced to ashes by a tiny spark of fire. A drop of poison can render a pot of milk totally undrinkable. Envy and hatred are the sparks that destroy the cluster of virtues in man.

Students must exercise constant watchfulness over their feelings and reactions. They must keep out selfishness, envy, anger, greed and other such evil tendencies from entering their minds. These are nets which entrap the person. These vices overwhelm and subdue the holiness of man, so that it cannot influence him any longer. The person will forget himself and behave like another worse individual, an individual caught in frenzy. He will blabber as his tongue dictates, without regard to the effect—good or evil. He will engage his hands in work that the hands favour.

Envy does not stop with this string of mischief. It makes us revel in scandalising others. This evil is widespread among the youth. It comes naturally to them, for, it is a sign of ignorance. To get rid of this habit, one must devote some time, early in the day and before retiring for sleep, in exploring the mind and examining faults that have secured foothold therein. One must pray to God to save him from this tendency. When once we have won the Grace of God, we can rest assured that such absurdities will not deform our character. The discriminating student can be recognised by the good company he keeps, the good works he delights in and the good words he utters.

This is the reason why I am emphasising on many occasions, “Eyes that seek evil, ears that relish evil, tongue that craves evil, nose that enjoys the foul, and hands that delight in evil—these must be totally avoided.” Whoever has any of these must be avoided. Or else, one’s future is

bound to be disastrous. The wrongs of the five *Indriyas* (senses) will result in the destruction of the five *Pranas* (vital energies) and the killing of the five *Kosas* (sheaths). Of course, the senses yield momentary pleasure and joy but, as the saying goes, “senility lies in wait.” Sensual pleasures bring about great grief quite soon.

Students require faith in themselves, more than most other qualities. The absence of self-confidence marks the beginning of one’s decline. Today, the world is facing ruin and disaster because people have lost confidence in themselves. Self-confidence alone is capable of granting peace and prosperity to each person. He receives good, everywhere. He is honoured in all places. Whatever he touches becomes gold. When a person has no faith in himself, how can he place faith in others? Even when he has such faith, it cannot be sincere and firm. It is at best artificial and superficial. Such a person will not have faith in his mother, father, wife and children. He pretends to believe, that is all. So he behaves treacherously and might even injure the parents.

So self-confidence is a must for every student. Students must study books about persons who stuck to justice and led straight lives. They must cultivate faith in moral codes laid down in Dharma Sastras, instead of neglecting them. The Puranas provide foundational ideals for our welfare and progress.

Teachers reveal the direction and the goal. Students lay the road and journey into the future. The skill and strength, the status and stature of mankind are shaped and furthered in proportion to the quality and character of its teachers. Character is the hallmark of man. Teachers must dedicate their learning and wisdom to the great task of uplifting pupils to higher levels of knowledge and action. The virtues which they help to inculcate in their pupils are essential for the uplift of society also. When virtues are rooted in the heart, man shines in full glory. A life without good character is a shrine without light, a coin that is counterfeit, a kite with the string broken.

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 *Nidhidhyasana* (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.

CHAPTER XIX

Of the three instruments used by man for thinking, speaking and action, the third instrument is the body with its hands ready to execute the thought which is expressed in words. The deed, the work, the labour that the hand of man is engaged in are the source of all the happiness or misery that man is involved in. Man asserts that he is happy, or that he is anxious and afraid or that he is in trouble. He attributes the cause of these conditions to some person other than himself. This belief rests on a wrong basis. Happiness and misery are due to one's own actions. Whether one accepts this truth or rejects it, one has to go through all the consequences of one's action. This is the law of nature. One may not believe in summer or winter, in fire or rain, but one cannot escape from heat and cold. Their effect will affect him, nevertheless. Therefore, the best course is to direct our activities along proper lines.

Hands are not the only limbs or agents that are involved in human activity or Karma. Whatever is done, whatever is seen, whatever is heard, one should be vigilant about its purity. Thought, word and deed must be free from pride, greed and hatred. The words that one utters must be free from these faults. Things that one yearns to hear must be free from these superficially attractive qualities; the pleasures that one seeks must not be polluted by evil. Students must first assimilate these mental lessons and demonstrate their effect in their speech. The lessons that are taught by words must be translated by them into action.

Today, however, education does not transform the mind. It stops the listening process through the ear. What enters the ear might not be clear to the mind; it might reach the mind in a hazy form only. So education has to be so imparted that it is received by the mind clearly. To achieve this aim, it has to be transmitted through heads, tongues and hands that are pure, with no blemish that warps. Then only can the learning be clear and the wisdom bright.

Students study only for a few years. But teachers, in order to justify being in the profession, have to be engaged in studies always without stopping. So teachers are to be reckoned as the only genuine students. To the question, who is a real student the answer is, "The teacher." "I shall be the ideal student which my pupils can emulate": this must be the motto inspiring the teacher. Such a teacher has surely

recognised his duty. The teacher must come down to the level of the student. If he does not and still continues to teach, the fate of the student is best left to the imagination.

This is the process called "Descent." It does not mean stepping down from the top to the ground. It means only accepting the level of the person who is to be benefited. The baby on the floor cannot jump to the arms of the mother, when she calls upon it to come up. "I am a great person. I cannot stoop"—if the mother feels like that, she cannot possess the child. Stooping does not make a person small. The teacher too, is not demeaning himself when he comes down to the level of the pupil in order to teach him. It is only a laudable sign of Love.

Many teachers, at the present time, have fallen into the habit of asserting. "Well, I have got ready one lesson on one topic for today. My duty is to speak on that. I will do just that and go." Have the pupils grasped the lesson aright? Which subject has to be taught in which way, through which method? These problems do not seem to bother them. Moreover they should conduct themselves just in the same manner as they advise and expect the students to behave. When they are taught the lessons through love, their reverence for the teacher will also be deepened. Each teacher should strive to encourage the all-round development of the student. He must expand his own heart through Love, and not waste the years of his life in furthering his own interest.

The teacher should not cultivate divisive traits. The Rishis and sages of ancient times treated their own sons and their students with equal affection. Today we have lost faith that our teachers are of this nature. When the principal's son is answering question papers for an examination in one hall, the principal will not be posted as invigilator there, lest he should dictate the correct answers and help his son to get good marks! But in the hermitages of old, there would be no suspicion that the guru would show such preference or partiality. Today corruption has crept into thought, word and deed at all levels. Hence these precautions. Teachers have to adopt the Sadhana of purifying their emotions in order that they may earn the status and authority of gurus. The true guru must lead the pupil into a worthy and happy life. The true pupil must respond with eagerness and adoration.

Teachers are responsible for the nature and quality of the activities and character of students. For they impress the youth by their scholarship and leadership. So they must keep clear of selfish aggrandisement and political manoeuvring and have spiritual enlightenment alone as their ideal in life. The members of the teaching staff must move among themselves as brothers. Students become aware of differences and rivalries between their teachers. Of course, differences are inevitable and may even be useful. But they should not pollute mutual relations, hinder the progress of the institution and affect adversely the processes of teaching

and learning. In these fields, they must consult each other and co-operate with others.

Among students too we do not find this spirit of singleness of purpose and fraternal co-operation. *Sadbhava* and *Sathsanga* have become rare; mutual love and yearning for good company have weakened. "As the ruler (*Raja*), so the ruled (*Praja*)," says the proverb. "As the teacher, so the pupil" seems to be equally true. Teachers, therefore, have to be interested in high thinking and a life steeped in renunciation. The person who is an expert in chemistry or physics may not know as much of biology as an expert in that science. But there is every need for them all to be friendly and work as a team. For whatever the science one specialises in, the science of the spirit, the science that leads to the ultimate Truth has also to be mastered. At the Atomic Research Centre, I said that everything has energy latent in it—a piece of paper has it, a strip of cloth has it. When the latent energy is exhausted, death results; when energy fills, birth happens. Sath-Chith-Ananda is energy. We (Sath) are (chith) happy (ananda). Energy is all and energy is derived from God. That is the very basis of man. Now, we are building superstructures somewhere else, not on the basis. The foundational Divine Principle is being ignored. We are fascinated by subjects and studies that promise to feed our stomachs and make us materially happy and powerful. But the hard truth is the Divine beneath all. Man must either know the supreme Truth of the One Being behind all

Becoming or at least know the practical Truth of Love and Brotherhood. These two points are the limits which education must ever keep in mind—the starting point and the goal.