

11. The abode of the Spirit

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Atma! The human body, although it is valueless in itself and is impermanent, has to be carefully protected because it enshrines the Divine *Atma*. This is man's foremost duty.

Without a strong physique, man is subject to numerous ailments. The ancient Romans, who were aware of this truth and who were the forerunners of western civilization, displayed deep concern regarding the development of the body.

The body is a world in itself. It is not merely the outer form. It is the collective embodiment of various organs and limbs. Each organ has its own beauty, which has to be fostered. A body afflicted with disease is incapable of any resolute action. Pure and sublime ideas can emanate only from a healthy and strong body. Men of all faiths are agreed on this.

The Divine Spirit illumines the body though it is compounded of flesh, blood and many impure things. *The Atma* does not grow with the body's strength nor does it decay owing to the body's weakness. The *Atma* Principle is not subject to growth or decay. It is ever pure, precious and immutable.

Body is the temple of the Lord within

People professing different faiths are all agreed on the need to nourish the health and happiness of the body because they regard the body as the temple of the Lord within. Instead of practising right actions and putting the body to proper use, many subject the body to various ordeals in the name of worship and observance of austere penances. Can the Self be realised by starving the body?

Man's primary aim should be to *achieve Atma Jnana* (Self-knowledge). The first step in this quest for Self-Knowledge is to understand the nature of man.

However many lives one many have had, the body he has assumed now is new. Divinity is inherent in man. The discovery of his real Self calls for appropriate enquiry leading to the perception of the Real. Through this perception, man can experience the cosmos in its entirety. Without going through this process, man remains merely human in form, with no realisation of his true Self.

When we regard the body as an instrument, we should realise that the prescribed limits for its use have to be observed. Every object in the world is governed by certain regulations. Likewise this body is also subject to restrictions. In our actions, in our speech, in what we see and what we hear, in our thoughts, we must seek to promote purity and sanctity. When this is not done, all God-given limbs and organs are misused and man ceases to be human and becomes a demon.

As the body is a kind of 'Limited Company', limits have to be observed with regard to food, drink, speech and hearing etc. Excesses in these spheres result in great harm.

Every individual thinks that it is enough if he takes care of himself. He should realise that he is a part of society and that he should be equally concerned about the welfare of society as a whole.

Do not indulge in excesses of any kind

Man today is subject to more maladies caused by mental worries than by consuming bad food. There should be a limit even to intellectual speculation. Excessive cerebration leads to delusions

and mental aberrations. Various mental diseases also arise as a result. A study of university students showed that 80 to 90 percent of the students in several universities were suffering from one or other type of ailment caused by psychological factors. Students should see that in this most precious stage of their lives they do not become a prey to illhealth and disease. They should keep their minds free from worries and not indulge in excesses of any kind. They should not waste money, food, time and energy in any manner.

The country today is faced with grave economic problems. It can progress only when selfishness and self-interest are given up. The spirit of cooperation has to be promoted. A balance has to be maintained between individual interests and national interests. Everything in life depends on maintaining the balance, whether it be walking, riding a bicycle or driving a car. Today this balance has been lost because of excessive knowledge and misuse of technical skills. Through sight, hearing, speech or thought, knowledge is being misused or wasted. Every action involves using of energy. If the energy in the body is properly utilised, then balance will be maintained and the body will be in good shape.

Students! Life is wasted in brooding over the past and worrying about the future. What is the root cause of man's sorrow and sickness? Not being content with what he has and lamenting over what he does not have, man forfeits peace of mind. There is no need to enquire into what is past or what is in store in the future. What is most important is the Present--which contains both the past and the future. Hence make the best use of the present and lead ideal lives. Develop self-confidence. With self-confidence, you can accomplish anything and secure joy. You will be able to face any difficulties and overcome them.

Performing duty confers God's Grace

However long you may live, whatever scientific knowledge you may acquire, whatever positions you may hold, sometime or other you have to know the truth about your Self. Start knowing it from now. You have to be on the alert all the time.

You can never know when the Lord's Grace, His Love and Benediction will be showered on you--at what time and at what place and in what circumstances. You cannot see what is happening in the spiritual world, nor can you understand the workings of the Spirit. When you go on performing your duty and enjoying what you do, that itself will confer bliss on you. Only man is endowed with the capacity to discover his Divinity. All other species live on what is provided by Nature. Man alone lives on prepared foods of various kinds. Birds and animals which live on natural foods are not prone to diseases. But man by becoming a slave of his palate cultivates tastes of various kinds and consumes different kinds of non-vegetarian food.

Food, Head and God are inter-related

It is significant that those who live on vegetarian food are less prone to diseases while meat-eaters are subject to various diseases. Man should consume what is in accord with the needs of the human body. Doctors speak about proteins. Are there not proteins in vegetables, milk and curds and pulses? Non-vegetarian food not only affects the body but also the mind. Food, Head, God--these three are inter-related. By consuming animal food, animal tendencies are aroused. As is your food, so are your thoughts.

Men today are behaving in a manner worse than that of wild animals in the forest. They have become cruel, pitiless and hard-hearted. There is no sympathy or understanding between man

and man. The main reason for this condition is the kind of food that is consumed. Students! Be careful about the food you eat. See that it is conducive to your health and happiness. The ancient sages used to eat only once a day. They declared that the man who eats only once is a *Yogi* (God-centred person), the one who eats twice a day is a *Bhogi* (enjoyer) and the one that eats thrice a day is a *Rogi* (a sick man). Today people go on consuming food at all times, not to mention drinks and snacks in between. With the result that indigestion sets in.

Young people should be satisfied with 2000 calories of food per day. This is enough to sustain them. Anything in excess will cause indigestion and sleeplessness. Loss of sleep gives rise to many ailments. Don't worry about sleep. If you go to bed without any worry, you will get sound sleep.

Purity of mind and body bestows *Balam*

Our ancients wished to live long for the sake of a Godly life and for that purpose preserved their health in body and mind. Today people look aged by the time they are 60 or 70. You may have read in the Mahabharata that Krishna was 86 years old and Arjuna was 84 at the time of the Kurukshetra war. They were in the vigour of youth and fought great battles. Bhishma, who was the Commander-in-chief of the Kaurava armies, was 116 years of age. Today very few survive upto that age and many are decrepit long before they reach that age. Bhishma was engaged in fierce battle for nine days. What was the source of his strength? Strength of mind, strength derived from food and, above all, *Atma Balam* (strength of Spirit).

Today spiritual strength is totally lacking among the people. Self-confidence is constantly going up and down. There is no steadiness of mind. When the will is weak from moment to moment, how can there be any firmness in life? Everyone must endeavour to develop the courage to face the vicissitudes of life, joys or sorrows, gains or losses, with equanimity.

There are many today in the country who claim to be believers in God. Because these believers do not conduct themselves properly, many are turning atheists. They talk about *bhakti* (devotion), but in their actions they are *Bhukti* (epicures). Devotion is what the sage Narada expounded after churning the Upanishads and gathering the nectarine cream out of them. It is only when devotion is constant and unchanging that its fruits can be realised.

Students! The body, the sense organs, the mind, the *Buddhi* (intellect) and the *Atma* are the five vital elements constituting man. Students should learn the secrets about each of them. Once they have understood the truth about them, they need no other spiritual discipline. This Summer Course has been organised to give you an insight into the mysteries of these five entities.

Once an old woman came to me and said that her mind was causing her endless trouble by its restless wandering. I asked her, "Where is your mind? Show it to me, I shall destroy it". She said: "I don't know where it is." I told her "If you do not know where the mind is, how do you say it is troubling you? Is it the mind that is troubling you or are you troubling yourself?. When you do not know the cause of your trouble, to blame the mind is meaningless."

You have to understand how the mind and the senses function. All are valuable, as the Divine never creates anything that is valueless.

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