

21. Listen, contemplate, and sing God's name

Vedas and Puranas deserve to be read and heard. God's name is to be recited and listened to. For some ailments, medicines are prescribed for external application while for others, they are given for internal use. But for this universal ailment of the cycle of birth and death (*bhava-roga*), listening to spiritual discourses (*sravana*), singing God's name (*kirtana*), and other medicines are prescribed for external and internal use. One has to utter as well as hear the Lord's name. An aspirant might win God's grace, the *guru*'s grace, and the grace of devotees of the Lord, but all this grace is of no avail if another grace is not secured, the grace of their own inner consciousness (*anthah-karana*). Without this grace, the aspirant falls into perdition, for all the rest are of no account whatsoever.

The grace of God is not easily attainable. The feeling of I-ness (*ahamkara*), which makes one say "I am the doer", should be plucked by the roots from the heart. Everyone, be they learned or illiterate, should feel an overwhelming urge to know God. God has equal affection toward all His children, for to illumine is the nature of light. Utilising that illumination, some can read good books and others can do their daily tasks, whatever they are. So too, uttering God's name, one can progress in the realisation of God, another can even do wicked deeds! It all depends on how you use the light. But the Lord's name is without blemish, always and forever.

22. Seek knowledge of the Eternal Truth

Haven't people trained themselves in countless skills and arts and sciences? Haven't they devised countless machines? Haven't they accumulated vast tomes of knowledge? Nevertheless, they haven't attained peace of mind, which is so essential for happiness. Instead, with every passing day, this education (*vidya*) drags them into deeper and deeper waters, while peace recedes more and more into the distance.

The reason can be stated thus. These arts and sciences have only transitory value; these machines cater to worldly comfort; this knowledge is all about temporary, transitory things. This education does not reveal the innermost secret of the universe.

There is one secret that, if known, lays bare all secrets. There is one problem that, if solved, solves all others; there is one knot that, if untied, loosens all knots. There is one science that, if mastered, masters all. That key science is spiritual education (*sanathana vidya*).

If a tree has to be destroyed, its tap root has to be cut. There is no use trying to kill it by plucking its leaves one by one, for it takes too long and it may not work. The ancient *Vedic* seers knew this spiritual education (*vidya*), but Indians are becoming ashamed to claim the seers as their kith and kin.

The seers saw God through their ascetic endeavours and won His Grace. They expounded the science that they so boldly discovered. Seekers from other countries perused these books and said that India had blazed a trail for the whole world. This is a well-known fact. The lamp illumines the house, but just at the very foot of the lamp lurks a dark circle. India doesn't know or care for that treasure. Can we ascribe this to the play of fate and keep quiet?