

3. Guidelines for Goodness

THIS land was the nursery of spiritual, moral and ethical ideals as well as stalwarts who embodied those ideals. But, it has become a wilderness where injustice, anarchy, falsehood and corruption are staging, their devil dance. In order to overcome this calamity and restore the reign of basic human values Truth, Right Conduct, Peace and Love---we have to rely on the young who are in schools and colleges. But, they are receiving education only in profitable skills and secular subjects. They become adult citizens with no knowledge of Indian culture, Indian philosophy and the heritage of Indian social ideals.

The *Vedas* form the very foundation of this heritage. Sage Vyasa has collated the voluminous *Vedic* scripture under three headings *Karma Kaanda*, *Upasana Kaanda*, *Jnana Kaanda* (branches of *Vedas* dealing with sacrificial rites, divine adoration and spiritual wisdom). These are three paths that lead from one to the next. Karma is activity, action, deed. *The Veda* insists on rites, rituals, ceremonies, etc., but not as mere reward oriented acts. Such acts are resorted to by birds and beasts. Man, who is endowed with the intelligence to pick and choose, to benefit from the past and prepare for the future, must utilise every Kamsa of his to purify his mind from the dross of low desire. *Karma* has to be for him an act of worship, an offering to God, a fulfillment of duty.

Raising level of consciousness is important

Sri Krishna has declared (Gita 12-18), "He who is the same to foe and friend, because he has no preference or prejudice, He who is unruffled by honour and dishonour, who is unaffected by cold and heat, by pleasure and pain, who is free from attachment, such a man of devotion is dear to Me." India is described as the Karma *Kshetra*, the land where action is sublimated into a holy uplifting *Sadhana* (spiritual effort). The only reward one must look forward to is the victory over selfishness achieved by the development of detachment. Selfish desire, to appropriate for oneself the gains of actions, breeds pride, greed and hatred. Karma as dictated by duty and the higher impulses is the primary step in the journey to one's Reality.

The Karma path can be hailed as the Primary

School stage which equips one for the *Upasana* or *Bhakti Marga*, the High School and the College, the *Jnana* path. *Jnana* alone can help the awareness of Reality. But, present day education has only a means of livelihood as its aim. It is job-oriented, not Truth-oriented, God-oriented. Life has to be lived in love, peace and bliss. Therefore, even while in schools and colleges, boys and girls have to know about the ever-peaceful, ever-blissful, ever-loveful *Atma*. The body, the senses, the mind, reason and intellect, are all 'unreal' in the sense of temporary existence, Raising the standard of living is not as important as raising the level of consciousness.

Accumulation of things is highlighted through education today. But, giving up is equally needed. Renunciation is not a loss; it is highly profitable, for you acquire joy thereby. For, renunciation means freedom, surrender to freedom, surrender to God and love. God. is love. He can be known only through the expansion of Love. When students leave schools and colleges and involve themselves in families, societies, communities and countries, they must set examples of simplicity, humility and mutual service. They must anchor their lives in *Dharma* and *Jnana*.

Cultivate goodness, avoid evil

Practise and preach. Mere preaching will invite ridicule. Cultivate goodness, avoid evil. Now young men relish listening to evil, watching evil, and talking evil. Parents discourage them, when they visit temples, pray or meditate, or read spiritual books. They themselves do not know the value of these practices and habits. These are really positive gains; worldly habits. These are really positive gains; worldly knowledge and interests are negative attainments.

You must learn to master your senses, instead of being enslaved by them. Your mind, reasoning faculty, passions and emotions must be the tools you handle and not the instruments that handle you. The Sanskrit word for man is *manava*, which means, he who behaves as if he has no ignorance. That is to say, he is aware, who he is, where he has come from and why.

The ancient Indian *Dharma* based on the *Veda* and embodying the highest and most lasting wisdom has to be learnt by you, observed and practised. So, teachers and parents must imbibe it in themselves and instruct you. That will help you to lead model lives and lead others to earn peace and calm. You must learn, more than anything else, discipline and patience. Life is an exercise in the *sadhana* of 'give and take.' Do not derive delight from 'taking' only. 'Give' and you get the right to 'take'.

Students must stand on their own legs

I have established schools and colleges, because children receiving true and total education are the hopes for the new era. These colleges are not aimed at providing 'degrees' for students, to be used by them as bowls when they knock at door after door, begging for jobs. Students must stand on their own legs; they should not long for crutches. You must return to your villages and relieve your parents from the hard toils of ploughing, sowing, guarding the crop, and harvesting. Be grateful to the parents, for the love and care, service and sacrifice they have bestowed on you. Do not be proud that you have achieved a degree and seek a comfortable chair at home to spend your time in idleness.

Limits and bounds are essential for smooth social life. So, you should welcome discipline, and not crave for lives that do not honour limits for every facet of behaviour. One reason for indiscipline is the superior role of money in educational institutions. They have become business houses, temples of Lakshmi, the Goddess of Riches, instead of remaining temples of Saraswathi, the Goddess of Learning. The University at Prasanthi Nilayam does not charge fees for teaching or for laboratory and library facilities or for games, etc., from the first standard upto the Ph.D. course. Education is elevated as an act of service to the rising generation. Learning in this atmosphere, the students will become in later life enthusiastic for service. One must be eager to serve others, not eager to be served by them. The sage Vyasa declares that service is a holy act.

No one can deny God or ignore Him

Man may desire something good. That is due to the inner prompting, the *iccha sakthi*, but he cannot fulfill that desire, unless he proceeds according to a plan which can guarantee success. The desire has to be developed into a deed. This requires *Kriya sakthi* or the power of action. Above all, Realisation depends on *Jnana sakthi*, or the force and clarity of Wisdom, the self-confidence that flows from the mastery of the situation. This is a gift of grace from God, God installed in the heart. Whatever one plans and executes must be sublimated as an offering to God. Or else it will degenerate into barren gymnastics. God is Omnipresent. The *Gita* asserts that His hands and feet are everywhere; so are His eyes, head and face. No one can deny God or ignore

Him. When a person denies God, he is denying himself. You must foster faith in God and know that He exists in all. That faith will plant in you, humility, courage and reverence.

Like the electric current which activates the mike, the fan, the bulbs, the unseen God can be inferred through His manifestations and brought closer to the consciousness. In a glass of water, sugar lies at the bottom and so, the water tastes bland. But when the water is stirred well, the sweetness pervades all over. Now, consider the heart as the vessel of glass. Worldly desires and designs form the water. The Divine *Atma* is the lump of sugar. With your intellect as the spoon, if you perform the vigorous *Sadhana* of stirring, you can recognise the manifestation of Divinity in every drop.

Students! Expand your Love so that you recognise God in every being. This is the goal, the purpose and the fulfillment of *Vidya* (education).

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