

## 14. Conquest Of Desire

*Do not go after wealth and possession, Oh Man!*

*With good sense, control your desires.*

*What you get is the result of your actions.*

*With right means, regulate your mind.*

*Chant the name of Hari and Govinda*

*Oh dull-witted man!*

*When Death knocks at the door*

*Kindred and scholarship will avail naught.*

Embodiments of the Divine Spirit! *Thrishna* has two meanings: Desire and Thirst. It is natural in daily life to have a desire for certain necessities and comforts. Among the necessities for daily living, three are most essential food for sustenance, garments to wear and shelter for dwelling. The desire for these is natural for man. Even in this there are two kinds of desires: One is natural. The other is excessive and misdirected desire. "I want a house" is a legitimate desire and one should seek it. But it is greedy to possess two or more houses.

Today greed is more prevalent among men than desire for necessities. With the result that man is afflicted with grief and worry. He has become a stranger to contentment. He is steeped in discontent on account of insatiable desires.

The other meaning of the word *Thrishna* is thirst. Whenever one is thirsty one has to drink water. When will this thirst end? Thirst will not end as long as life lasts. Even at the moment of death people feel thirsty.

How is the thirst (for material things) to be quenched? It is possible through the efflux of time to get rid of iron shackles when they get rusty, but it is not easy to get rid of *thrishna* (desire). *Thrishna* is the cause of limitless desires. If desires are fulfilled, one's *ahamkara* (ego) gets inflated. If they are not realised hatred develops.

### ***Sadhana* constitutes Divine Wealth**

There are three doorways to hell for man! *Kama* (lust), *Krodha* (hatred) and *Lobha* (greed). Desires tend to get out of bounds. Hence it is essential to try to curb them as far as possible. The process of controlling desires is called *sadhana*.

The literal meaning of *sadhana* is the effort you make to achieve the object you desire or to reach the goal you have in view. *Sadhana* is thus the primary means to realise your aim or objective. A second meaning of the term is *Sa-dhana*, that is wealth that is associated with Divinity. *Dhana* is described in three ways as *Aishwarya*, *Sampadha* and *Dhana* (material wealth). All of them refer to the same thing. The wealth will not accompany us when we give up the body. If wealth is lost, it can be regained. If strength is lost, it may be recovered. But if life is lost it cannot be got back. Hence, while life still remains, one must strive to acquire the divine wealth that is imperishable and everlasting. Your conduct constitutes this divine wealth. It is only by the way we live that we can acquire this divine wealth.

### **Cultivate good qualities, character and conduct**

Good conduct alone is our real wealth. Good qualities alone constitute our real *Aishwarya* (treasure). An unsullied character, expressing itself in a pure and perfect life, constitutes the most precious riches one can possess. Good conduct, good qualities and an exemplary character are the most valuable riches one can possess. But men today have given up these three and are seeking worldly goods and, immersed in their own concerns, are imagining that they are leading pious lives. The Divine cannot be attained through such delusions. All the teachings one listens to, the books one studies and the education one receives, are only serving to nourish these delusions and not helping men to seek the Divine.

To realise the Divine, one has to get rid of these delusions. Today education is said to be advancing at giant strides. Students! Nothing much will be lost if we have no education at all. All education today aims only at preparing students for worldly purposes. Think of the great sages and renowned men of the past who did not have this education but who led such exemplary lives! What great things are you going to achieve by pursuing these studies all during your waking hours, merely for earning a living, while forgetting God? The uneducated and illiterate are better than the "educated," who are ruining the country. It is the educated who are responsible for plunging the country deep into the mire of insolvency. The illiterate might not be doing any positive service to the country but they are not doing any harm to it. But the educated are doing more harm than good to the nation. It is better not to have such deleterious education than allow it to cause havoc.

### **Discover your own true nature**

Man today is trying to master every kind of knowledge, but is unable to discover his own true nature. This is what Prahlada told his father Hiranyakasipu when he said that although Hiranyakasipu had conquered all the worlds, he had not conquered his senses. By conquering the worlds one may become the supreme sovereign over them. But one who has mastered his senses is supreme over all rulers. He is the king of kings, the king maker.

True education should induce humility in the student. Without humility education will lack lustre. Humility will bring out the true qualities of an educated man. It will proclaim the virtues of a person. Reverence for elders, loving regard for parents, discriminating between right and wrong, adoring the Lords----these are the hallmarks of humility in an educated person. This is the essence of good character. It is the fragrance of hum an life.

We should realise that one who has given us this human birth may be expected to take care of us in one way or another. It is needless to aspire after wealth, position, fame or power. If you do your duty, all these will come to you of their own accord. Enthroned in your heart the love of God. Once that love is enshrined in you, the whole world will be yours. If you are a slave of desire, you are the slave of the world. If you have conquered desire, the world will be at your feet.

### **Truth and love are the essence of all *Sastras***

Recognise the truth and pursue your studies on this recognition.

*Whatever learning one may acquire,*

*Whatever degrees one may flaunt,*

*Whatever power or position one may wield,  
Whatever japa or worship one may perform,  
One cannot achieve Liberation  
Unless one has deep love of God.*

Therefore, cultivate that love first. Love is everything. Truth and Love should be regarded as the two eyes of every person. If we have these two eyes, we can master the world.

Truth and Love can be regarded as the distilled essence of all the *Sastras*. Love is the quintessence of all the *Dharma Sastras*; it is the goal of all religions. If we drink nectar of Love and Truth, we do not need anything else to sustain us. Love and Truth cannot be taught by *gurus* or learnt from books. They may be set forth in *granthas* (books), but you will not experience their *gandham* (fragrance). They can be acquired only by living them in life. We must endeavour to love all. If we are to earn the love of the Lord, we have to love everyone. The best way to love God is to love all.

### **Fill your heart with Divine Love**

Love all, serve all. Hating everyone, cavilling at everyone, feeling jealous of everyone, if you want to experience grace, how can you have it? Only if there is water in the tank, you can get water in the tap. If the tank is dry, how can you get water from the tap? If you fill the tank of your heart with Divine love, you can have love towards everyone and receive love from everyone.

Whoever it may be, whether he is a devotee or a believer, an aspirant or an unbeliever, his actions will determine what rewards or punishments he gets in life. You sometimes think: "The Lord has protected me in this manner or punished me in this way." It is not the Lord who has protected you. It is not the function of the Divine. It is your prayer that has protected you. Your good actions have saved you. Your good behaviour is your shield. If you have experienced difficulties, calamities or sorrows, they are the consequences of your thoughts and actions.

Hence, whatever happens to man, good or bad, it is the result of his own deeds. God is a witness. Current is flowing in an electric wire. When you switch it on, the light burns, when you switch it off, the light goes. But it is not the light that is coming or going. It is the operation of the switch which brings the light or turns it off. The current is serving you and also punishing you. God is the cause of creation, protection and mergence. Likewise, the current has powers of creation, protection and destruction. How does the current create? Drawing energy from a generator, it provides power for lamps to burn, for fans to work and for various other instruments to function. The current is one, but the uses are many and diverse.

In all these ways it discharges a creative function. It also gives protection to man in various ways through light, fan, etc. But, if out of a mistaken sense of gratitude, you touch a live wire, it will give you a shock, which may even prove fatal. Thus, it has also the capacity to punish.

### **God is present in you as *Prajna***

God acts as creator, protector and destroyer. You must show your gratitude to God by your actions, not by words. You have to learn how to make proper use of the things provided for you. God is omnipresent. He is within you. Your good conduct, in the form of God, gives you

protection. He is present in you as *Prajna* (Constant Integrated Awareness). The *Vedas* have declared: "*Prajnaanam Brahma,*." (Consciousness is Supreme Reality).

If the students ask themselves, "Where is God?" they will get an answer in the prayer that they utter before every meal. You utter the *mantra*, "*Brahmaarpanam*" and recite the *sloka*: "*Aham Vaisvaanaro Bhootwaa Praaninaam deham Aasritah.*" The latter *sloka* means: "I (the Divine) have entered all bodies of living beings in the form of *Vaisvaanara.*" This means that the Lord who is within you is giving you protection (by digesting the food you eat and nourishing the entire body). If you act against the dictates of your heart and conscience, God will punish you.

All that you see outside is only the reflection of your inner being. The good or the bad you experience are the reflection of your feelings. Do not delude yourselves that by merely offering worship in a temple, you have earned the grace of God. If you worship God, but harass the people around you, will you earn the Divine grace? Your prayers earn a plus for you in your spiritual balance sheet. By causing harm to people you earn a minus. The result of this plus and minus is zero. It is, therefore, of primary importance that you should develop a consciousness of the divinity present in all beings.

### **Practise the preachings of the scriptures**

Today the *Bhagavad Gita* is being preached from street to street. It is revered as a sacred book. Similarly the Quran, the Bible and other sacred books are worshipped as spiritual texts. But is anything being done to practice what the sacred books teach?

Many eminent persons have declared their belief in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. The Brotherhood of Man is considered a great ideal. But the *Gita* has presented a higher ideal. Brotherliness is considered as a great quality. But we know how brothers fall out, take their differences right up to the Supreme Court and ruin their families. How can the mere fact of being brothers be considered a great virtue in itself? The *Gita* commends the "*Ekaatma bhaava,*" the feeling that "One spirit dwells in all beings." It declares that the *Atma* residing in all beings is one and the same. "*Eko vasi bhootha antharaatma,*" declares the *Gita* (The indwelling Spirit in all beings is One). Nor is that all. It also declares that all human beings in the world are a fragment of the Divine. How many are aware of this truth and how many are living up to this pronouncement? Very few, indeed. In spite of the prodigious propagation of the *Gita*, how many are practising its teachings? How many are leading exemplary lives? Few. In this situation, it is enough if you adhere to one thing. You have no need to study any books to contemplate on God or earn God's love.

### **Spirituality is the only way to purity**

There is nothing wrong in studying the scriptures. But you have to put into practice the teachings which you value. Continuous study merely clutters up the brain with lumber. Confusion results from studying the views of different authors. The first requisite is to strengthen faith in one's self. Hold fast to one belief and adhere to one path. If you persevere in this manner, divinity will manifest itself spontaneously in due course.

Students have to cultivate along with education, humility and observance of *Samskaras* (right conduct). It is only when the heart is purified through *Samskaras* that education will also get saturated with purity. Spirituality is the only way to purity.

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*Do not hesitate to practice humility and obedience, discipline and compassion. Give up pride of your status, wealth, scholarship, or official position. "Can't a big officer, a rich merchant, a great scholar, a highly respected man in society descend to this level of clubbing with this sorrowing man ?" Do not ask such silly questions. These qualifications of which you boast will disappear with death or sometimes sooner. The Ananda that you give and the Love that you share will be your lasting possessions.*

*Sathya Sai Baba*