

20. Wealth And Authority Do Not Give Peace Of Mind

When clouds gather in the sky, in the vicinity of those clouds, there also appears a lightning. So, also, where there is proper education, in the vicinity of such education, there should appear wisdom.

Students:

If one wants to liberate himself and reach God, or if he wants to bear the burden of life, one should see that his education and his *thapas* become strong. The combination of education and *thapas* makes man strong. *Vidya*, which man will get and *thapas* joined to *vidya* will together make him useful. In this world, *Vidya* is of two kinds. One is the material *vidya* and the other is the spiritual *vidya*. What we call material *vidya* is one which enables you to learn successfully what is taught in the colleges, acquire positions and be successful in the worldly life. This type of *vidya* enables us to move from one position in life to another. This really relates to the present-day world and gives you happiness in the material world. What all people do during their daily life is related and connected with this type of *vidya*. All that they do, from the sweeper upwards to the Prime Minister, is connected and related to this material *vidya*.

This type of *vidya* will help man to acquire comfort, to lead an easy life and to feed himself and keep him going in a smooth manner in this world. It is not appropriate to describe this type of learning by the name of *vidya*. It is not correct to use the sacred word *vidya* to describe this kind of worldly

learning. We should accept that true *vidya* is *Brahma Vidya*. There are two parts in this word *vidya* and they are 'vid' and 'ya.' When the two root parts of this word join together, we get the word *vidya*. 'Vid' means brightness or light. 'Ya' means that which hands you. That which hands you brightness and light and opens your eyes to wisdom is called *vidya*. *Vidya* is not that which hands you darkness or ignorance. *Avidya* denotes darkness. Absence of wisdom means darkness. *Vidya* denotes light. Absence of light is darkness. Darkness covers this light of *Vidya*. So, to some extent, we must use *Brahma Vidya* to remove this cover. Material *Vidya* is really a branch of *Brahma Vidya*. *Vidya* when related to the worldly matters will be used for worldly affairs and comes from *Brahma Vidya* itself. Just like the ash that comes out of fire, covers the fire itself, so also this material *vidya* which comes out of *Brahma Vidya* covers *Brahma Vidya*. Like the green precipitate which comes out of water covers the surface of water as a thin layer; like the frost that gets its origin in ice, covers the ice and makes it frosty, like the clouds that come from the rays of the sun cover the sun itself, in the same manner, this material *vidya* which has its origin in *Brahma Vidya* covers *Brahma Vidya* itself. *Brahma Vidya* is solely connected with the knowledge of *Atma*.

Brahma indicates Omnipresence, *Brahma* also indicates totality and completeness. In its aspect of totality, *Brahma Vidya* deals with the present day material world, the spiritual world and all the ethical aspects of our life. *Brahma Vidya* is one which also enables us to see the true form of creation. Citizens of Bharath today have forgotten the power of this *Brahma Vidya* which can also be referred to as *Atma Vidya*. They have developed faith in *Avidya* or ignorance and they are bringing this into their daily life. We have to make

several concerted attempts to understand the nature of this *Brahma Vidya*.

In man, both divinity and animal nature are co-existent. We should make attempts that will enable us to separate the divine nature from the animal nature in us and experience the divine nature to some extent. Sometimes when matter, which has no value at all, goes and joins with some valuable matter, it also acquires some value.

In this garland, there is a thread. If any one tells you to take this thread and put it in your hair or to put it round the neck of God, you will see no meaning in doing such a thing. Only because this thread is joined and is associated with the flowers having a fragrance, we take it while it is so associated and offer it to the Lord or use it to decorate our hair. So also, because the animal nature in man is coexisting along with the divine nature, the animal nature also gets some elevation. Here we note that this useless animal nature is getting some value. But we must also enquire to what extent the value of the divine nature is being pulled down.

If we offer a tumbler of water and ask any one to pay, nobody will pay half a rupee for the water. But if with half a tumbler of water we mix another half a tumbler of milk, then we will be able to get a good price. Here, the value of water has gone up and the value of milk has gone down. In the same manner, by keeping good company, it will be possible for us to get rid of our bad qualities and acquire good qualities. But if we go and join bad people, we will also have to accept their bad qualities. If we wear white clean dress and if we sit with a person like a goldsmith who works with smoke, our dress will also become dark. Here we see a chance of our strength becoming weak if we go and sit in the wrong place. This is the reason why it has been said that out of good company will

arise detachment. Out of detachment will arise our ability to understand truth.

Sometimes, by the strength of the place and the environment, even a poor and weak thing will acquire great strength and value.

On one occasion, Vishnu wanted to send a message, and He asked Garuda to go and deliver the message to Easwara. On the body of Easwara, serpents are used as a decoration. In view of the enmity between Garuda and the serpents, the serpents would normally run away as soon as they see Garuda. But in this situation, something opposite had happened. These serpents, which are on the body of Easwara, behaved in a different manner. As soon as they saw Garuda, they began to hiss at Garuda and show some amount of superiority. Garuda saw this and said, "You are getting all this strength because of your position. Leave your position and step aside. I will show you what I can do to you."

So, also, ignorance and *avidya*, by joining with *Brahma Vidya* in this world, are trying to elevate themselves and proclaim to us their greatness. We should try and change this *avidya* into a *thapas*. *Thapas* here does not mean standing with your body upside down. *Thapas* here does not mean running away to the forest, closing your eyes and ears and sit-ting in silence. *Thapas* here really signifies giving up your *Thamo Guna* or the quality of *thamas*. This *thamas*, the quality of being idle and lazy, is wide-spread and is dancing on the head of every human being.

Here is one example for this. It is common practice, in Andhra Pradesh and other parts of India, for several people to go on pilgrimages to holy places and offer their hair to the

Lord. What is the meaning of giving this useless hair on one's head and in return seeking God's grace, which is something much more valuable? Is this because God has not got this kind of unsacred and bad hair? It is not so. It is necessary for us to look at the inner significance of this act. The hair on one's head is dark and symbolises this lazy, sleepy quality, or the *Thamo Guna* in him. The significance of this act is to declare, "Oh, God, I want to give up *Thamo Guna* and go back as one who is free from this quality of laziness."

In this manner, ignorance and darkness are growing enormously among people. Mere acquaintance with the contents of several books is being given more importance and the practice thereof being neglected. This must be called *avidya*. This will not give us true *vidya*. The true *vidya* which we have is the *Atma Vidya* and by using this, one should make an attempt to understand his own inner self and the significance of his life. For this, some amount of *thapas* is very essential. *Thapas* here signifies your ability to convert your actions into sacred ones by relating all work with God. We must try and make an attempt to give up the *Rajo Guna* and do *sathwik* work with the body, and also to do sacred service to the community around you. Such a change with the body and also to do sacred service to the community will be valuable. Your body should undertake such work which the sacred thoughts of your mind will direct it to do. If your mind at any time cautions you that what you are thinking is wrong, then you should not allow your body to do that particular work. Also, there are the thoughts which come to your mind, and are connected with the *Thamo Guna*. All your thoughts should be *sathwik* in nature and the words you utter should be synthesised with those thoughts. The meaning of *thapas* is that what-ever thoughts enter your mind, whatever words come out of you, whatever action you undertake to do should all be in

complete harmony. When your *vidya* joins your *thapas* defined in this manner, then, only, your life will become fruitful and useful.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

Whether it is the *Vedas* or the *Sastras* or the *Ithihasas* or *Puranas*, they are always telling us things which are good. They have also some ability to tell you what is on the side of bad aspects. Just as the light, which we use for looking at material things, becomes instrumental in your looking at those material things, so also *Vedas* and *Sastras* are to be used as only instruments by you, which will help you to see the divine aspect. All the *Vedas*, *Sastras*, and *Puranas* are like signposts, which are present in your path. These signposts will only direct you. The signposts will only tell you, if you travel this way, you will reach Madras, if you travel another way, you will reach Bombay or Prasanthi Nilayam. But those signposts are not going to take you to Madras or Prasanthi Nilayam. You have to make the journey and not look at the signposts. Therefore, you must depend upon your human endeavour, and you can only draw from the spiritual knowledge what path to take. But make the journey yourself.

Here, you should undertake the task seriously and realise the objective with patience and with effort. But if we simply use words, it will become a wordy description of the divine aspect and no result will follow. You may hear many things, you may see many things, but it is only when you follow in practice what you have learnt from seeing and hearing, will you be able to get the results for yourself.

On the tree of human life, everyone is bringing out the fruit of *prema*. There is no life of a human being which is without a fruit of *prema*. But if one wants to really enjoy and

experience the sweetness of this fruit of *prema*, he has to remove the skin which is on the surface of the fruit, has to throw away the seeds which are inside the fruit, and then only can one enjoy the fruit. On the fruit of this *prema*, the skin, in the shape of *ahamkara* (ego), is covering it. The bad ideas are like the seeds in the fruit of *prema*. It is only when you throw away these seeds and the skin, will you be able to enjoy the sweetness of the juice in the fruit.

Unfortunately, today we do not take to the easy and clear path. We want to take to the difficult path. We have the ambition to experience it, but we do not take the proper path.

When you listen to *Vedanta*, it looks as if it is quite simple and easy, but to put it into practice is a difficult matter. It is only in this difficult path that you will be able to enjoy and experience the good aspects. In daily life, you always want to take an easy path and reach the destination in a simple manner. But you are not recognising the kind of obstacles in the path which you choose. We are not ready to put our life and our body into the path of spirituality. Whatever wealth we may have acquired, whatever position of authority we may have occupied, whatever great things we may have done in a worldly way, we are not in a position to acquire peace of mind; and this is mostly needed. Dhritharashtra had all the physical strength, had all the wealth, and although he was resting on a soft bed he was feeling that he was resting on fire. This was because he did not have the spiritual strength in him. To understand this aspect of *Brahman*, we should take the necessary care. We can get such knowledge only when we have *sraddha*, or determination. We sometimes think that knowledge is simply the power to discriminate between truth and untruth. That is not so. True knowledge should recognise the oneness of what is present in everyone in this world and we

should experience this oneness. I am hoping that the students will learn this and will also put this into practice.

Students:

It is true that the education that you are getting is necessary to eke out your livelihood from day to day or to meet the responsibilities that come to you in your ordinary life, but you should not think that this is the end of education and the aim of all your life. Just to eke out your daily livelihood, it is not necessary to acquire higher education. By doing manual work of some kind, you can eke out your livelihood. We should not feel proud that we have reached the heights of achievements or that we have got higher education. The education that you are getting is not something which you should be proud of. These are very poor qualities. If we can understand and acquire the essence, *Atma Vidya*, then every other *vidya* will become available to you. All these material *vidyas*, that we learn for the sake of the material world are like individual rivers. But the *Adhyatmic Vidya* is like the ocean. These different branches of education, which are like the rivers go and join the ocean of spiritual education, and they lose their individuality. That is why it has been said, “*Adhyatma vidya, vidyanam.*” Amongst all *vidyas*, *Adhyatmic Vidya* is the only true *vidya*. We should try and promote the sacred *prema* in us if we really want to take the spiritual path and enjoy the bliss which the spiritual path will give us. In this process, the first step is to make an attempt to please your parents. There is a very moving story to illustrate this important aspect.

After the battle of Rangoon, it so happened members of each family got separated from each other. Mother and son, husband and wife were separated as a result of the war. They were all having to move on their own. In such circumstances, when the husband took one way, the wife took the two children

and had to take another way. One of the children was two years of age and the second one was five years old. Somehow, or other the mother was looking after these two children and she reached a village on the border with great difficulty. Since that place was filled with refugees who came from the battle area, they were not even able to beg and feed themselves. The mother used to go round and beg for some food. She used to bring the little food that she gathered and feed the two children and used to starve herself. After some time, when things went on in this manner, the mother became very weak and that itself became a disease for her. The mother had no strength to go out and beg for food. One day, the five-year old boy went and took the hands of his mother and said, "Mother, you are too weak to go and beg. You need rest. You sit under the tree. I will go and beg for food and bring it and feed you." When some days went on like that, whatever food this elder boy could get, had to be used for feeding the mother and feeding the younger child; and he himself had to starve. The mother used to insist on knowing what the truth was, but the boy would say that he already had his food. In truth, he was starving. Mother used to believe in his statements and take her own food. After some time, even this boy lost the strength by which he could go and get some food. One day he went to a house, he found that master of the house was sitting in an easy chair and reading the newspaper. The boy said, "I have come for the sake of begging; *"Bhavati bhikshan dehi."* The master of the house recognised the condition in which this boy was asking for food and took pity on him and said, "You come and sit here. I will bring a leaf and some tiffin and you can eat here only." The boy did not agree to that suggestion. The boy said, "I want the food to be given in my hand. I want to take it with me." The owner of the house was very surprised. He said, "You are very hungry and when I want to give you food, you say no, what is the meaning of this?" When the owner of the house was questioning the boy

in this manner, the boy lost all his strength and fell down. When the boy fell down in a swoon, the master of the house went close to him and he found that the boy was uttering some words which were barely audible. The master tried to understand and listen to what the boy was saying. He understood that the boy was saying, "I do not need food. Do not give me food. But give whatever food you can to my mother." So saying, he lost his life.

Look at this! Even at the instant of giving up his life, he said, "Give the food for my mother, not for me." Do you see such a son these days? In this country of Bharath, there have been mothers who were prepared to give their lives for the sake of their sons, and there have been many sons who were prepared to give up their lives for the sake of their mothers. But today, in this age of modern civilisation, we do not find either such mothers or such children. If the mother does not give food to his satisfaction, the son is prepared to ask her to sell her jewels; and he is prepared to make her work or beg; and he will have his own way of life.

In our country today, the students do not recognise and do not understand how much trouble their parents are taking in order to see that their children are properly educated so that they can come up. When the students go home from their colleges and when the mother and the father are taking a lot of trouble, they would simply look at them as if they are not concerned. They would not make an attempt to help them and relieve them at all. If the mother or father is suffering from some sickness and if the son is in the house, he would not hesitate to run away from the house, and go to see a picture.

Students:

The first thing we have to recognise as a part of your education is to know that the father and mother have given you

this birth and this body. We owe a debt of gratitude to them and we should repay this debt. If today you do not respect your father and mother, in due course, your own children will treat you exactly in the same careless manner. The kind of seed that you put in today will determine the fruit that comes out of that seed tomorrow.

If, in future you want to do good, you want to experience peace and happiness, at least once now you must undertake to do good work. In this young age of yours, you must acquire some sacred and good qualities. You must learn to respect elders. You must learn to be useful and do some services to the elders. As days go on, you should try and understand the nature of *Brahma Vidya* and learn its sacred contents. It is even more important to learn how you can put these into practice.

Just as when we want to build a building, we gather the cement, the bricks and we lay the foundation; so also, I have been explaining to you in the past few days the nature of a human being and have been collecting the materials necessary for you to go through your daily life in future. I will explain what the nature of *Atma* is in the following days.