

Chapter IV. Promote the Welfare of All Beings

The meditator (*dhyani*) considers the realisation of *Atmic* bliss as important, but the promotion of the welfare of the world is also an equally important aim. For carrying out that aim, one must bring certain physical, verbal, and mental tendencies under control. These are usually known as the tenfold sins: the three physical, the four verbal, and the three mental. The physical tendencies are: injury to life, adulterous desire, and theft. The verbal sins are: false alarms, cruel speech, jealous talk, and lies. The mental attitudes are: greed, envy, and denial of God.

Eschew the tenfold “sins”

The person intent on following the path of meditation must take every care that these ten enemies do not even approach. They have to be eschewed completely. The person needs tendencies that will help progress and not those that drag back. One must speak and act only good (*subha*), for good alone is auspicious (*mangala*) and the auspicious alone is Siva. This is what the scriptures (*sastras*) also say. The good is the auspicious. The auspicious is the spiritually helpful. The good is the instrument for merging in Siva.

Through the good, the meditator can achieve this world and the other; the meditator can promote their own welfare as well as the welfare of others. Welfare is the fruit of knowledge; illfare is the fruit of ignorance. Through welfare alone can peace, joy, and progress be attained. One’s very basic duty is the welfare of all beings! Promoting it and contributing to it is the right task. Living out one’s span of life in discharging this task is the ordained path.

Be unaffected by illusion

The intellect (*buddhi*) in us is the witness of all things in this objective world. These worldly things limit and colour the intellect; they affect it and mould it into consciousness (*chaitanya*). Illusion (*maya*) is only the intellect as affected by everything, as warped and twisted by the impressions of everything. Therefore, the spiritual consciousness that is unaffected by illusion —i.e. upon which the world has failed to produce any impression— is the Lord (*Iswara*).

Therefore, the person who is striving to reach the stage of the Lord must be unaffected by illusion, unimpressed by the world! How can one remain so unaffected? Through analysis, ratiocination, fearless inquiry, and pure reason. To acquire this analytical reason (*viveka*), sharing in the task of promoting the welfare of every being in nature is essential.

First, good qualities; later, the absence of qualities

The passing show, this world (*jagath*), is based on illusions (*maya*). That is why it is branded “false”. But do not conclude that mere recognition of the falsity of the world or an awareness that one has certain shortcomings will lead one on the higher path and take one to the highest truth. Without a good character full of sterling qualities, one can never achieve progress in the spiritual field. Progress depends on the worth and quality of the individual, just as the harvest depends on the fertility of the field. Upon such a worthy piece of land, sow the seeds of sterling qualities and irrigate with the waters of reason and analysis; the plentiful harvest will be ready in due time! On lands where the seedlings of good qualities are not planted and tended, useless weeds multiply; and

where orderly gardens could have been formed, thorny bushes create a jungle of impenetrable confusion.

Even if a person, through perversity or blind conceit, has thus far not cultivated good qualities, the person can at least make a try or make efforts to secure them! If this is not done, the excellence of life cannot be tasted and life is a waste; its worth is nil. The mind, by sheer force of these opposing forces, gets lost in false values and is unable to develop along the right lines. Such a mind, turned away from good, might cause indescribable evil. All progress won by the spiritual aspirant might be destroyed by such a mind in an unguarded moment, like a spark falling on a keg of gun powder because of a moment's negligence!

Some try to be devoid of qualities, but they achieve only living death. Their pale faces reveal only lack of zest and interest. This is the result of unreasoned haste in spiritual discipline. Though becoming quality-less is ultimately needed, there should be no hurry to reach the goal. Even though a person may have the ardour, it very often leads to dilemmas, which many solve by means of suicide! First, one must accumulate wealth of character. Many stalwart aspirants have lost their way and not regained it in spite of years of effort because they evinced no interest in earning this qualification! Others have slipped into the morass through which they were wading!

You can see that the path of “achieving the absence of qualities” is strewn with dangers. One cannot exist without activity, so one must of necessity act through “good” qualities. One must put down all desires and become free. The mind filled with good qualities will help in this process, for it will bear other's prosperity gladly. It will give up doing injury; it will seek opportunities to help, heal, and foster. It will not only suffer; it will also pardon. It will not incline toward the false; it will be on the alert to speak the truth. It will remain unruffled by lust, greed, anger, and conceit; it will be free from delusion. It will always seek the welfare of the world. From such a mind will flow an uninterrupted stream of love.

The placid, calm, unruffled character wins out

When this mind matures and attains fruition, it easily becomes free of all qualities: placid, calm, and pure. It easily merges in the one *Atma* without a second.

Each person has the unique chance to taste the inner peace that such a mind can grant, but, unfortunately, most are strangers to the unshakable joy and equanimity that is their birthright. Meditation is the only island of refuge in the ocean of life for all beings tossed on the waves of desire, doubt, dread, and despair. This *Vedantic* truth must be present in the mind even while the world of objects (*vishaya*) is being attended to!

Consider the condition of this world hundreds of thousands of years ago. At that time, this globe was the scene of only two things. On one side was the fiery lava, which poured forth from the volcanoes and crevices that scarred the surface of the earth. The flood of destruction descended on all sides and spread fear and death in the regions around, as if the end of everything had come. On another side, the scarcely noticeable molecules of living matter, the microscopic amoeba, floated on the waters or clung to the crevices among the rocks, keeping the spark of life safe and well protected.

Upon which of these two—one boisterous and bright, the other quiet and secluded—would you have built your trust? At that time, surely no one would have believed that the future was with the amoeba or the animalcule! Who could have foreseen that these minute specks of life could hold out against the gigantic onslaught of molten lava and earth-shaking upheaval? Nevertheless, that speck of life-consciousness (*chaithanya*) won through. Unheralded by fire and dust, by swooping gale or swallowing floods, the amoeba, in the process of time and by the

sheer force of the life-principle it embodied, blossomed into goodness and strength of character, into art and music, into song and dance, into scholarship and spiritual discipline and martyrdom, into sainthood and even *Avatars* of Godhead! In all these, the history of the world is found summarised.

In the confusion of overpowering events, we see people sometimes placing faith in loud and noisy men who are enslaved by their own passions. But this is a passing phase; it will not last. When things are placid, calm, and unruffled, people can merge themselves in the atmosphere of delusionless consciousness, which is the highest they can reach. The peace (*santhi*) they taste there is subtler than the subtlest. They must ascend to it through effort guided by reason, through meditation. When the enjoyment is full and complete, it is no other than the divine status, the coveted goal of life. People do not generally strive for it, because they know nothing of its supreme attraction. Meditation gives them the first inkling of that bliss.

Meditation is the basis of spiritual experience

Therefore, everyone must now strengthen the mind and make it be aware of the happy moment of bliss. Otherwise, there is a likelihood of the mind discarding all effort to reach what is now dismissed as “empty” and “useless”. But once the mind is convinced that the moment of attunement with divine consciousness (*chaithanya*) is a moment of complete power, suffused with divine power (*sakthi*), then the effort will not be slackened; the spiritual aspirant can reach the *Atmic* realisation without further interruption.

With this as the ideal, carry on meditation and mental repetition of the divine name from now on. The step immediately after meditation (*dhyana*) is total absorption (*samadhi*). Meditation is the seventh of the eight-fold *yoga*. Do not give up this royal road that leads you on to that sacred goal. Meditation is the very basis of all spiritual practice (*sadhana*).