

Chapter X. Innocence, Purity, and Humility

The realised souls (*jivan-mukthas*) are like lighthouses that point out the way to ships caught in blinding darkness in mid-ocean. The spiritual lighthouses show the way to those who struggle helplessly in the thick night of ignorance.

All are born out of the womb of the one Lord. Just as many varieties of fish and crabs and aquatic creatures move about inside a big tank, multitudes of human beings move about in the sea called the Lord. This is indeed a very awesome scene. Some are undeveloped, some underdeveloped; they swim around, greedy and selfish. In the midst of this crowd of ignorant beings are a few highly developed souls, the wise (*jnanis*) and *yogis*. Since they are mixed up with the ignorant crowd, it becomes difficult to distinguish the wise from the others. A microscope is necessary to identify the red corpuscles in the blood; similarly, a special microscope is needed to find the wise. That microscope is no other than meditation.

This creation, and the wonder with which it is filled, is really a source of amazement. But considering present conditions, there are very few who watch for light and are guided by light. So, instead of following this person and that, and taking devious roads and getting lost, it is best to place full faith in the Lord Himself and rely on Him as the only mother, father, guru, and guide. Then you will never lose the right path. He will never direct you to the wrong path. To have that firm faith and that experience, one must take to meditation; that is the one and only means. It is enough if the name and form of the Lord is meditated upon with love (*prema*) and faith, and you can choose the name and the form that you like most.

Be ever joyful and sweet

For this spiritual discipline, you must cultivate the quality of always being joyful, with a smile on your face; this will give you good distinction. People will also like you more. So, the Lord will also have joy upon seeing you. Therefore, observe meditation with innocence, purity, and humility.

Then, without fail, you can attain whatever you strive for. Do not lose your temper in any situation; do not lose courage in any contingency. Respect everyone, whatever their status. Then the quality of universal love (*prema*) will develop in you. As a result, meditation will progress without disturbance.

For the cure of illness without resort to drugs, meditation is the only remedy. Even the capacity to discriminate and analyse will increase, and by means of that, illness, however serious, can be overcome.

In every word uttered, there are two kinds of senses: the obvious and the innate, the native and the qualitative. The *Upanishads* take up the second kind and elaborate, clarify, and make the Brahman known. One important thing to be remembered is that it is possible and desirable to utilise the full power of words through softness and sweetness. If one is anxious to see God in every object, the sweetness of the word will be of immense help. Sir, Master, Lord: in these words lie the secret of much affection and regard. Through these and such words, how happy you can make others, and how light your minds will become by the practice of softness of expression! When meditation is carried on in that happy atmosphere, how quickly concentration can be attained!

Instead, if in conversation you use words that blame others and despise them, in turn you become the target of blame, and your mind gets agitated by the effect of both; then the object of meditation is not realised because

the atmosphere turns impure. Therefore, if you really wish to be happy through meditation, as a preliminary to the process, you must be engaged either in joyful conversation or in happy thoughts or memories. Sweet and soft conversation helps meditation a great deal.

You must cultivate such a character, for character outlasts the body. Virtues are your strength and glory. Character is power. So train the mind and use it to attain the visualisation of the Lord (*sakshatkara*); hold fast to that goal.

Have contentment and desire only the Lord

You must have contentment, whatever the gain or loss or state. This is essential. Contentment grants and increases happiness. For the contented mind, life is an endless festival, but the mind worried by desire will have no rest. With desire troubling you, concentration is impossible. Desire is the fire in your frame; it reduces you to ashes. Contentment is the effective drug to destroy it. Just as a bath in the cool waters of a stream refreshes a traveller who is exhausted and perspiring in the burning heat of day, the one suffering from the scorching fire of greed will be refreshed by the pellucid waters of contentment.

One should have desire only for the path of realisation. One should not dedicate one's life for the mean desires of the world. Dedicate all to the Lord; that is genuine contentment. That is the result of the acquisition of peace of mind (*santhi*), joy (*santhosha*), and discrimination (*vicharana*). Direct visualization of the Lord (*sakshatkara*) is also possible then.

To acquire these, remembrance of the Lord's name (*smarana*) and meditation (*dhyana*) are the only means. Only they can give you that power. Nowhere else can you get them, nowhere else will you get them.

More than all, if you possess contentment (*santhosha*), the other two will be added to you. Nothing is more profitable than contentment. It is a treasure richer than the three worlds. The contented person can experience indescribable divine glory. Such a person is more joyful than the owner of the wish-bestowing cow, Kamadhenu, and the wish-bestowing tree, Kalpataru. Such a person can immerse themselves within themselves and discover bliss therein. Do not strive for physical joy, discarding the more permanent joy of inner calm and contentment.

Do not get attached to this evanescent body; instead, utilise it as an implement. Consider yourself as separate from this destructible body, which was created out of the conjunction of the five elements. Know yourself as the indestructible *Atma*. Just as the house in which you dwell is separate from you, so the body, which surrounds you for a little time, is separate. The body is the root cause of all this grief, all this calamity, and all this slavery. Understand this well: make the body obey your will, and never bow down to it and follow its whims. Be prepared to cast it away; resolve to control it and keep it under strict control. You have to deal carefully with the body; you have to train it with great attention.

Though all that was said above related to the *Atma*, some activities have to be undertaken by everyone. How should the body be used as an implement, as a boat for example, to cross the stream of life? Until the other bank is reached, or in other words, until the ultimate truth is attained, you must take care to see that it is not damaged or broken or leaky. Do not let the boat fall to pieces; be on the lookout for signs of this. That is to say: take moderate food of pure (*sathwic*) quality at the correct time, and continue disciplined physical activities for the body.

Such activity directed to the spiritual becomes the discipline needed for real spiritual practice. This is what is referred to as meditation, remembrance of the name, ritual worship (*puja*), and devotional singing. When the

discipline is practised, as well as later, you must be joyful and not gloomy. This should not be forgotten; never get tired or timid. However, if you get tired, then you can eat a few ground nut kernels or almond seeds soaked well in water at the end of the day's meditation. These will cool the body and endow it with strength.

In summary, everyone must develop the virtue of contentment through the practice of meditation (*dhyana sadhana*). Contentment is a pure (*sathwic*) quality; it will not transform you into an idler —no, not at all. Instead, it will permit the mind to travel toward the Lord, and it will grant peace. It will also hinder unessential activities that have profit for oneself as the aim. The contented person will be fully pure (*sathwic*) and will lead an inner life, in communion with the *Atma*. That person can do any work without rest and without complaint. The waves of the mind, which sway in many directions, get a single aim.

The sages (*rishis*), religious mendicants (*bikshus*), and *yogis* of the past realised the goal of life by means of the peace that came to them through contentment. Contentment gives all spiritual aspirants the enthusiasm and vigour necessary for treading the path that leads to realisation of God (*sakshatkara*). Contented, the aspirant can ignore the dangers and difficulties of the path. The aspirant treats all the impermanent things of this life as poison and discards them as trash. Discrimination, renunciation, and the spirit of inquiry develop through contentment. The story of Meera is an example of this. Understand well the stories of Radha, Jayadeva, and Gauranga, for they will teach you the truth.