

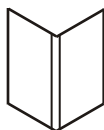
**FROM
IIM-AHMEDABAD
To
HAPPINESS**



VIJAY K. JAIN

FROM IIM-AHMEDABAD To HAPPINESS

Vijay K. Jain



विकल्प

FROM IIM-AHMEDABAD TO HAPPINESS

Copyright © 2006 by Vijay K. Jain.

All rights reserved. Printed in India. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

For information please write: Vikalp Printers, 29 Rajpur Road,
Dehra Dun-248001 (U.A.), India.

ISBN 81-903639-0-5

First published in India by:

Vikalp Printers

Publishing Section

Anekant Palace

29 Rajpur Road

Dehra Dun-248001 (U.A.) India

e-mail: vikalp_printers@rediffmail.com

Cover Design: Mrs. Sonal Chhabra

Printed by: Vikalp Printers, Dehra Dun

I MAKE OBEISANCE HUMBLE
TO THE OMNISCIENT SOULS,
WHOSE PROFOUND TEACHINGS HAVE INSPIRED
THIS FEEBLE EXPOSITION.

— *V.K.J.*

CONTENTS

Preface	ix
<hr/>	
CHAPTER ONE	
Welcome	3
<hr/>	
CHAPTER TWO	
Working Up The Corporate Ladder	7
<hr/>	
CHAPTER THREE	
In Pursuit Of Happiness	13
<hr/>	
CHAPTER FOUR	
Health Is More Than Wealth	23
<hr/>	
CHAPTER FIVE	
Fear Kills; Grief Takes Life	37

CHAPTER SIX	
The Hygiene Of Food	45
<hr/>	
CHAPTER SEVEN	
Everything Revolves Around Faith	59
<hr/>	
CHAPTER EIGHT	
Knowledge Is The Key	67
<hr/>	
CHAPTER NINE	
The Logic Of Prayer	81
<hr/>	
CHAPTER TEN	
Virtuous Living – For That Spring Of Life	91
<hr/>	
CHAPTER ELEVEN	
Blossoming Of The Love Buds	105
<hr/>	
Epilogue	113
<hr/>	

PREFACE

The present book is not about academics, not even about success; it is about happiness which we all, in the ultimate analysis, are striving for. All our efforts, since childhood, have been directed toward obtaining that elusive happiness and to make it as lasting as we could.

Abraham H. Maslow in 'A Theory of Human Motivation', *Psychological Review* (1943) had argued that human needs are organized in a hierarchy of importance. Once one need has been at least partially satisfied, another emerges and demands satisfaction. The top rung of the ladder of human needs is self-actualization need which he defines as, "A healthy man is primarily motivated by his needs to develop and actualize his fullest potentialities and capacities." Further he says, "Musicians must make music, artists must paint, poets must write, if they are to be ultimately at peace with themselves," and, "What man *can* be, he *must* be."

Maslow gave examples of people who met this criterion using biographical analysis. People who met this standard of self-actualization included: Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, Albert Einstein, Eleanor Roosevelt, Jane Adams, William James, Albert Schweitzer, Benedict Spinoza, and Alduous Huxley.

Some authors have further suggested that a man tries to satisfy his self-actualization need in many ways: by playing music, involving oneself in social service, learning computer, getting an entry in the *Guinness Book of World Records*, and so on.

A highly commendable description of human needs, indeed. But,

unfortunately, the theory itself and its interpretations fell short of comprehending what man *can* be, and, more importantly, the method of achieving it, if it can be achieved at all by all.

We may say at once, without fear of contradiction, that man's only want is happiness, and that he seeks happiness first and foremost and above all other things, however vague and hazy be his idea of it. This understanding will make things absolutely clear and would make a very elaborate investigation or preparing a learned thesis on the subject of self-actualization entirely redundant.

Those who have achieved success in worldly affairs have been able to search for happiness in many objects and places. In each new object and place they found a sense of enjoyment for a while but soon they were back to square one. As soon as the novelty is over and the force of contrast dulled, it no longer remains charming, and one has to search for something fresh. The fact of the matter is that happiness comes not from without; it depends on ourselves, as will be shown in greater detail in the pages of the book. For the moment it is sufficient to note that we ourselves are responsible for our happiness and really no outside help or device is needed to get it, and that worldly success is not the same as happiness.

As regard what man *can* be, the highest aspiration of man can only be to attain Divinity for his soul which gives rise to unalloyed bliss and happiness, and freedom from pain and suffering. The realization of this supreme status is possible with one's own exertion, never by favour or grace of another. The reason for this is that Divinity is the essential nature of the soul, which, in the condition of impurity, or imperfection, is not manifested by it owing to the bondage of different kinds of *karmas*. These *karmas* are forces of different sorts which arise from the union of soul with matter, and which can only be destroyed by self-exertion. So long as a soul does not have faith in its own true nature, it cannot exert itself to realize its natural perfection and joy. And therefore an understanding of the forces which cripple the natural powers of the soul is essential. True knowledge, accompanied by right conduct, that is, exertion in the right direction for the destruction of the *karmic* bonds is the sure way which leads to the attainment of the goal of supreme bliss. The concepts of right faith, knowledge and conduct are discussed in some detail in chapters seven, eight, and ten, respectively, of the book.

Many illuminated works and teachings of great thinkers and sages of the

past have repeatedly told us that we need to be able to distinguish between valuable gems and valueless stones, both of which are scattered along our way. One such valuable gem that I could lay my hands on, about a decade ago, was that amazingly comprehensive yet precise treatise *The Key of Knowledge*, by Champat Rai Jain. The book, first published in 1915, true to its title, has timeless pearls of wisdom in each of its 900-plus pages; one has only to have patience, and develop appreciation and understanding to pick them up. No other work that I know of treats of the great issues that confront humanity with the same simplicity, charm, ease, authority and freedom. As could be expected from a Barrister-at-Law of that era, he was a brilliant grammarian and logician; but more than that, he was a great philosopher. I have taken the liberty of picking up whatever I felt could be appropriate and necessary, within the limited scope of the present book, from *The Key of Knowledge*.

I have merely tried to put down in the book, in a simple, easy way, certain points of interest to a busy and ‘successful’ life, which most of us lead and which is laden incessantly with preoccupations and worries. Study and reflection on these points have brought satisfaction, peace and happiness to me, and I present them with the hope that others who are in a similar position might also get benefited thereby.

Whatever in this book is noble and sublime is attributable, without any doubt, to the wisdom of many great thinkers and sages of the past, who, through their teachings, made us familiar with the true principle as well as the practical method of self-realization. Controvertible statements, if any, keeping particularly in mind our standpoint of happiness as the goal, are simply and purely mine, unintentional and out of my ignorance.

I have to thank three persons.

For my younger daughter Malika, no work, howsoever big, outside the four walls of our house, is impossible; no work, howsoever small, inside the house is possible. She, however, came forward to help me with small favours only and only when I was working on the book. Malika, you are a friend in need. I shared the contents of the book, paragraph by paragraph, with Sonal, my elder daughter. Her interventions – child-like and innocent – were extremely helpful; perhaps, these were the attributes that the book was aiming at. As a result of her inputs, two chapters, ‘The

PREFACE

Hygiene of Food’ and ‘The Logic of Prayer’ got particularly enriched. My wife Manju was happy the days I spent with her, not working on the book. She was equally happy the days I worked on the book and not spent with her. That is equanimity!

The process of writing the book has been extremely rewarding for me as contemplating about the vital issues involved in making one’s life happier has actually made me feel better. I hope that the readers will also feel spirited as they go through this slim volume.

– Vijay K. Jain

FROM
IIM-AHMEDABAD
TO
HAPPINESS

CHAPTER ONE

Welcome

Getting into IIM-A is considered to be a privilege, and the ultimate test of your abilities – analytical and others. On the basis of the ratio of the number of applications that the institute receives for admission to its Post-Graduate Programme (PGP) to the seats offered, IIM-A is considered to be the most difficult management institution to get into, in the whole world. Once there, naturally, you are on cloud nine.

It was in July 1974 when, while welcoming the fresh batch of PGP students, the then PGP chairman, Suresh A. Seshan, had said, “...We are aware that there might be some amongst you who do not deserve to be here but are here because of the possible shortcomings in our screening process for admissions. But we are not too much concerned about that. We are sure that we would be able to bring them to the level of our expectations during the course of their two-year stay in the institute. We are more concerned about those aspirants who, otherwise deserving, have not been able to make it due to our shortcomings. It is, therefore, our constant endeavour to make the screening process as sound and foolproof as we can.” A hush silence followed as each one of the

‘cloud nine’ students started some serious soul-searching trying to satisfy oneself that he or she did not belong to the group that was not supposed to be there.

Getting into IIM-A does mean that, in respect of certain skills that the Combined Admission Test (CAT) is testing you for, you have scored better than many others. These are the skills that the management institutes think are essential to your becoming a sound decision-maker, a good manager. Nothing more than that. You certainly have not been tested for your aptitude for other numerous professions – medicine, architecture, scientific research, modelling, acting, painting, politics, entertainment, music and singing, teaching, sports, and so on.

Just as it is naive, bordering on stupidity, to assume that ‘Femina Miss India’ is the most beautiful woman in the country, it is similarly unbecoming of a student of a premier management institute to carry with him the thought that he is the ‘best brain’ or the ‘cream’ of the country. A ‘Femina Miss India’ is certainly gorgeously beautiful, yet, in our own interest, we should drive our minds away from the comparative mode, else, we are going to not only unnecessarily undermine many millions of other women, but also preparing ourselves for a terrible compromise at the time of our marriage and thereafter.

Consider this apocryphal story:

A religious scholar once boarded a boat to cross a river. Just the boatman and the scholar were on the boat. After the boat had travelled some distance, the scholar asked the boatman, “Have you read *this* scripture?” “No, sir,” replied the boatman with utmost humility. Encouraged by the expected answer, the scholar fired another question, “Have you read *that* scripture?” “No, sir,” replied the boatman, again with humility. “How old are you?” asked the scholar. “I don’t know exactly but I suspect about 50 years, sir,”

the boatman said. “You have wasted half of your life...” the scholar quipped. But before he could complete his sentence, he noticed that water was gushing into the boat through a crevice in its bottom. Both the boatman and the scholar got extremely worried. Suddenly the boatman asked the scholar, “Do you know swimming?” “No, I don’t,” came back the quick reply. “Then you *have* wasted the whole of your life.”

Falling into the trap of the prevailing rat-race, management education has been reduced to, as one B-school itself has been claiming in its advertisements, “making big dreams come true, achieving more in life, and making big money.” For many of us, this is perhaps the primary, if not the only, objective in life. There is a certain class of people who do not care to think on the vital problems and issues of life for themselves and are ever content to be guided by the thoughts of others. For these people, the story ends when their friends and neighbours start considering them as successful and tell them that they would like their sons and daughters to emulate them. They never fail to compare themselves with some of their friends and acquaintances who have not been able to rise up the corporate ladder as high and as fast as they have. No more does a fire exist in their belly which drives a man to constantly aspire for higher and more adventurous goals in life. They are not likely to find the perusal of this book interesting.

Fortunately, there are other ‘learners’ of management who take a more holistic view and believe that managing a corporation is, at best, a part of their being and certainly not the whole of it. They hold that their role in life is much bigger than just pushing figures, making strategies, and managing men. Hitherto, they have excelled in their chosen fields and have achieved and acquired whatever they wanted to. But, they raise the bar for themselves a bit higher no sooner than they achieve a particular height. They are like a long-distance runner who is testing his

strength, will-power, endurance, and courage against life itself and not actually competing against others. They would like to explore for themselves what ultimately they were meant for, their potential, and true goals in life.

The use of the words 'IIM-Ahmedabad' in the title of the book has a definite purpose. They are intended to connote that the reader has a craving for knowing the Truth, and that his soul is panting for a breath of fresh air. He has a frame of mind that is ever ready to analyze an important situation threadbare, from all angles, so that the right decision could be taken. He has the ability to think beyond the superficial challenge of competitiveness as he knows that, in the end, his yardstick is not the performance and achievement of others but his own God-given potential in this majestic challenge of life. Hopefully, he has been grinded enough to bring to the fore his true mettle.

Without wasting any more of our life, let us try to know the Truth.

CHAPTER TWO

Working Up The Corporate Ladder

Thanks to your own inherent strengths, significant contributions from the distinguished instructors and peers at IIM-A, and the sheer ambience of the institute, you are a much sought-after person in the corporate world. You have really worked long and hard to reach this stage.

As you move ahead in life you have to keep on proving yourself, in new environments, to new people. The assignments and challenges keep on changing; their significance and consequence being always on the rise. Professionally you are growing at an enviable pace.

A stage is reached when not only during the office hours that you are in search of moments that you may call your own, but the load of work creeps into your home as well. Your mind becomes awash with work. But you do it willingly, as you are not cut for doing things against your wishes. You earn the reputation of a man allowing no nonsense and trivialities. You are a successful corporate executive.

To be able to better understand the life of a successful corporate

executive, it is felt necessary to have a peep into his routine. An account of his typical day in office:

Ensnconced in his regal corner office, situated on the nth floor of some steel and glass monolith, he is draped smartly in an expensive three-piece suit. Maturity and responsibility is writ large on his face and all his five senses are working in perfect unison.

One ear is in seemingly endless contact with the earpiece of his telephone, and the other listening to the sounds emanating from his computer speakers, or from the mouth of the person sitting across the table. His two eyes are shifting their gaze, seemingly at random, from the monitor to the keyboard to the papers lying on the table and to the other person in the room. One hand is busy scrolling and clicking the 'pointing' device, and the other in so many things simultaneously – moving the cup of coffee from the table to his lips, sifting papers, and gesturing. Regular sips of coffee are helping him keep his tongue moist; the anxieties of office environment seem not to allow the salivary glands function to their optimum. Room fresheners and deodorants are providing him with scented air to breathe.

All day long his mind has been working on a thousand and one things.

And, a peep into his evening, till the morning next, revealed:

He reaches home late in the evening, at around 8:30, after having an exhausting drive through the crowded streets of the metropolis. The home, with wife and two children, looks like heaven. He would hate to go anywhere now, but there are other demands on his time. He has to attend a business-cum-dinner-meet, organized at an expensive French restaurant. During the meet, while talking business he indulges in excessive drinking and eating, the most expensive drinks and delicacies though.

He comes back home past mid-night, does what is usual for a man of his age and state at that time, and steals a sleep of few hours.

Since his first placement after graduation, he has switched a couple of jobs, each switch-over meaning more responsibilities, status and compensation. As management *gurus* have taught us, he has always worked with extreme ‘sense of ownership’ toward each organization he has worked for. He truly believed in what Tom Peters and Nancy Austin had to say in their introduction to *A Passion for Excellence*:

What are the basics of managerial success? Two of the most important are pride in one’s organization and enthusiasm for its works. A quick check of the twenty-five leading textbooks on management find neither in any index. Nor does one find much about such concepts as “naive customer listening,” customer perception of service/quality, employee commitment and ownership, internal corporate entrepreneurship (sometimes called intrapreneurship), championing of innovation, trust, vision and “leadership.”

That last, the concept of leadership, is crucial to the revolution now under way – so crucial that we believe the words “managing” and “management” should be discarded. “Management,” with its attendant images – cop, referee, devil’s advocate, dispassionate analyst, naysayer, pronouncer – connotes controlling and arranging and demeaning and reducing. “Leadership” connotes unleashing energy, building, freeing and growing.

Our man epitomizes managerial success. He takes extreme pride in his organization and doesn’t mind working, if it comes to that, twenty-four hours a day. He has been responsible for working out several innovative strategies for its growth and consolidation in the market. His own values, family, and interests always took a backseat when it came to advancing the core values of his organization. He has been a leader by example, ready to unleash all his energies in favour of his organization.

And the routine has continued for many years now. If at all, it

has become more rigorous and, at times, monotonous. But the rewards are also there for everyone to see. He owns a house as well as a penthouse, a compact car as well as a luxury car – Audi A4/S4 or BMW 3-Series – and a fat bank balance as well as substantial investment in stocks and bonds. He has travelled around the world, many times over. He is soon going to become a millionaire, in dollar terms, if not one already.

But, in the core of his heart, a feeling of unease has been sprouting, over the past few years. No more willing to gloss-over the matter, he started to put his mind on the reasons for his anxiety and restlessness.

All along, for the sake of his organization, he had been readily adopting growth-based and, often, greed-based business practices, with money and profit as the bottomline. All his professional skills were being used toward furthering the goals and objectives of his organization. Ruthless, predatory, uncompromising and uncaring competition had become the means to that end. And the competition had not only been with other firms but also with other people. The sole aim had been to try to profit at the expense of others; even if it meant climbing over his peers on the way to the top. In his competitiveness and ruthlessness, he had become impervious to the feelings of those who he was trampling. He started taking shady and dubious decisions as part of his job. At some point, somewhere, he had become untruthful, for the sake of his organization. Giving tacit or explicit approval to deceitful advertising, using statistics as a tool to distort facts to suit one's own viewpoint, and using vague, confusing and imprecise language, out of deliberation or compulsion, in order to further the interests of his organization, were a few things he had to do as part of his job. All this was not to his inner taste.

After much deliberation, realization dawned on him that his organization and he himself were two different entities; while the former was basically a non-living human creation, he was a living being. The aspirations of the two are different, the goals are different. He is characterized by emotions, heart and soul. The concept of the life-cycle of a product or firm is absolutely different from that of his own life-cycle. When a product or firm dies, he does not die, and, conversely, the firm might continue to exist and prosper after he dies. Similarly, the growth of the firm does not necessarily signify the growth of the individual.

He started wondering if real growth and success actually meant having those qualifications that have already been spelt out – ownership of house, car and bank balance. He wondered how all these years he failed to take a lesson out of the basic principle in accountancy, learned by him many years ago, that even in the case of a proprietorship firm, the owner and the firm have to be treated as two separate and distinct entities.

He realized that true growth of an individual is more of an inward process. One has to go inward to know the truth. As one practices being quiet, going within, taking time to listen, that one starts to hear. One must start to shed away one's intensity of passion and to learn the virtues of detachment – to rise to a higher level, eventually.

Each day we fall into a never-ending stream of ruts and crevices. We pretend to be extremely busy and have no time to attend to the more earthly chores like walking in the woods, taking a stroll in the fresh air of early morning, and going to the temple, church or mosque. As the night falls, each day we become more disenchanted, unhappy and unfulfilled. Somewhere, down the road, we have lost sight of the bigger picture and lost the way.

As a natural consequence, we forget all that we have learned

over the years. Consumed with worry and anxiety, we become unsafe and uncertain and negative thoughts start empowering us. We start calculating the 'loss' and 'gain' in each relationship. We start getting more concerned about the opinions of others rather than our own. We become dependent.

We have forgotten that the true principle is to do whatever work is natural or congenial to one's way of life, and to do it unconcernedly, always remembering that wealth is not the be-all and end-all of existence.

For the first time in his life, the successful corporate executive – as the world would know him – had a deep inquisitiveness to know the meaning of life, to understand the meaning of real happiness.

CHAPTER THREE

In Pursuit Of Happiness

Every one of us is straining and striving for happiness. When we are happy, we do not say, "O God, what have I done to deserve this happiness?" We look on happiness as ours by right. But when pain comes to us we look at it as something foreign and outside ourselves; in spite of our striving for happiness, it has descended, unwelcome, upon us. Therefore, it is true that every one seeks his happiness first and foremost, above all things. The cause of all our thinking and acting, the motor-spring of human activity, is solely and simply happiness.

It is on account of this insatiable thirst for happiness that object after object are tried as means for providing that elusive happiness, adhered to for a time, and then, ultimately, when proved to be insufficient, discarded and replaced by a seemingly better one. The young man seeks it in making money and getting married. Thence it is shifted to status and family. The pursuit of honour and distinction occupies the thoughts of the more advanced in age. And then?

The question arises as to what is the proper object for us to cherish? Money has failed to procure happiness whenever it has

been put to test. There are many millions of people of money who are unhappy. Can it be status, family, children, fame and the like, which are known to have afforded pleasure in the past? Surely not, for they are also only so many means to an end. It can be shown with respect to every worldly object that it cannot be happiness itself.

So, what is happiness? Is it accumulating wealth, surrounding oneself with all sorts of furniture and knick-knacks, eating dinners, holding interviews and meetings, becoming courtiers, giving oneself airs of importance, belittling others, and travelling the world two hundred days in a year? Or is it breaking through the fetters of conventionality, rising above the feeling of impotent helplessness, securing freedom from mundane anxieties and cares, living at peace with each and every person, radiating goodwill and love all round, enjoying natural gifts here and now, being master of your own destiny?

Lord Avebury has hit the nail on its head when he says:

“Money cannot make us happy, success cannot make us happy, friends cannot make us happy, health and strength cannot make us happy. All these make for happiness, but none of them will secure it. Nature may do all she can; she may give us fame, health, money, long life, but she cannot make us happy. Every one of us must do that for himself. Our language expresses this admirably. What do we say if we have had a happy day? We say we have enjoyed *ourselves*. This expression of our mother tongue seems very suggestive. Our happiness depends on ourselves.”

Happiness, thus, resides not in any outside object, but must spring up from within us. Nothing but disappointment is in store if we try to extract it from our material surroundings. Our soul is athirst for happiness and is panting for a breath of pure atmosphere of freedom. Without freedom it is inconceivable how there can be

true happiness. It is our freedom – from all that is the source of bondage of our soul – that can afford us joy.

Man's search for happiness is a search for a lost or hidden article, not of anything new. For, however much we may deceive ourselves with false ideas and conceptions, however much we may drown our real, natural instincts in the intoxication of the transient pleasures of the world, there is no man who does not feel the poignant craving for unalloyed happiness, whenever he gets a moment to himself.

Nature still holds the treasure of happiness in trust for the man and is ready to restore it to him the moment he gives up the pursuit of the wrong path, which leads to suffering.

Taking an Indian ascetic as an embodiment of idleness, an advocate of modern civilization once demanded of *Swami* Rama Tirtha when he was visiting America:

“Why do you import your Asiatic laziness to America? Go out. Do some good.”

The *Swami* replied:

“As to doing good, is not that profession already chokeful, overcrowded? Leave me alone, I and my Rāma (God). Laziness did you say? Oriental laziness? Why, what is laziness? Is it not laziness to keep floundering in the quagmire of conventionality and let oneself flow down the current of custom or fashion, and sink like a dead weight in the well of appearances and be caught in the pond of possession and spend the time, which should be God's, in making gold and call it doing good? Is it not laziness to practically let others live your life and have no freedom in dress, eating, walking, sleeping, laughing and weeping, not to say anything of talking? Is it not laziness to lose your Godhead? What for is this hurry and worry, this breakneck, hot haste and feverish rush? To accumulate almighty dollars like others, and what then? To enjoy as others? No, there is no enjoyment in running after enjoyment. O dear dupes of opinions,

why postpone your enjoyment? Why don't you sit down here, in this Natural Garden, on the banks of this beautiful mountain stream, and enjoy the company of your real blood relations – free air, silvery light, playful water, and green earth – relations of which your blood is really formed? Hide-bound in caste are the civilized nations. They separate themselves from fellow-beings and exile themselves from free open nature and fresh, fragrant natural life into closed drawing-rooms – dens and dungeons. They banish themselves from the wide world, excommunicate themselves from all creation, ostracize themselves from plant and animals. By arrogating to themselves the airs of superiority, prestige, respectability, honour, they cut themselves into isolated stagnation. Have mercy, my friends, have mercy on yourselves. The wealth swept out of the possession of the more needy and added to your property by organized craft will enable you simply to have sickening dinners of hotels and taverns, and furnish you with pallid countenances and conventional looks, will imprison you in boxes called rooms, choked with the stink of artificiality, will keep you all the time in the restlessness of mind excited by all sorts of unnatural stimulants, physical and mental. Why all such fuss for mere self-delusion? In the name of such supposed pleasure lose not your hold on the real joy. No need of beating about the bush; come, enjoy the Now and Here. Come, lie with me on the grass.”

Joy, or happiness, has the element of freedom in it. It is a state of gladness or exultation, and indicates exhilaration of spirits.

A school-boy who hears the news of his success in the annual examination feels joy at the news. The boy feels joyous because something lasting has been achieved, for he is assured that he shall not have to appear for that particular examination in the future. Joy, thus, is a state of exhilaration which is manifested in consequence of some lasting and permanent good, i.e., by removal of some fetters of bondage. The idea of pleasure cannot here keep pace, in any sense, with that of joy. While true joy is the

sense of permanent freedom from some irksome liability or limitation, pleasure is only temporary, and conveys no idea of freedom.

Whether we apply the principle to the case of the scientist who accomplishes a successful research project, or to that of the lover who, after a long, long wait, hears the softly whispered ‘yes’ from the lips of his beloved, the result is the same. In each instance, the emotion of joy springs up in consequence to the belief that never again the same thing be striven for. The sense of freedom from future straining and striving is the direct and immediate cause of joy. Feeling of delight and joy signifies mental ease, i.e., freedom from care, hence the state of buoyancy and light-heartedness, which is a necessary concomitant of release from anxiety.

For us go-getters, however, joy itself has become a short-lived condition, inasmuch as our desires, i.e., ideals and pursuits, seldom leave us time to enjoy the natural joy of being. No sooner than is any work accomplished, we manage to impose two more in its place, by our ignorant and unnatural living. We do not ever feel that, at last, we now have enough; our desires keep on inflating and we keep on striving for more. As a result, the time available for enjoying *ourselves* after each ‘achievement’ shrinks. The question of lasting joy gets lost in our never-ending pursuits.

Man alone, of all beings in the world, is endowed with the capacity, and enjoys the opportunity, to think of his destiny. He alone has the power of shaping his future, for weal or woe, as he pleases. But this capacity is hopelessly crippled by his wrong desires – the sensual desires. It is true that we can boast of our material accomplishments which ultimately reduce to this that we have succeeded in amassing large fortunes, and in devising various means for squandering them in expensive hotels and card-tables, on foods and intoxicating drinks, to say nothing of other degenerate forms of living. As regards nations and societies, the

richest of them may possess enormous amount of wealth, its cities and towns may be very beautiful to look at, and it may boast of all the luxuries of life which the ingenuity of man has ever put at the disposal of wealth, yet the question arises, what real happiness has been conferred upon the people constituting them. It is not to deny the great advantages that the educational institutions, hospitals and old-age homes bring to the society. But it is also true that the education that our institutions, particularly of higher ‘professional’ learning, impart tends not to advance the cause of individual happiness, but leads to atheism, impiety and godlessness. Very little, if at all, of our traditional wisdom – which is of true value to human life – remains in the portals of our educational institutions and whatever is left has lost its lustre and charm in the eyes of the youth. The increasing necessity of hospitals goes to indicate that people do not live in harmony with Nature and, consequently, suffer from poverty and disease. The old-age homes, a concept rather new to our societies, indicates nothing but disintegration of our families and surfacing of our selfish nature. The greatest defect of materialism is that it prevents us from realization of our divine nature, by unduly developing the sensuous side of life.

We have made so much of our pursuit of pleasure that we have lost sight of its actual meaning. Let us try to understand the difference between pleasure and joy. The former is merely a gratification of the senses, thus, fleeting and short-lived (*Chambers 20th Century Dictionary*: From O.French *plaisir* – ‘to please’ – agreeable emotions: gratification of the senses or of the mind; sensuality; dissipation; a source of gratification). The word pleasure, when unqualified, expresses less excitement, or happiness, than delight or joy. Pleasure is an affair of the senses, and its actual experience is confined to the time during which they are engaged with their objects. For example, food is palatable and

toothsome only so long as the glands of taste are in actual contact with it, but not when the act of eating is over.

It can easily be seen that pleasure and pain are both in the nature of an affection or modification of the soul, since nothing corresponding to them has ever been known to exist in the external world, and also since nothing but one's own states or affections can be felt by an individual. Indian classical music can be a source of much entertainment to a connoisseur, and the same music may be repulsive for a glitzy high-flier. Also, the extent of grief that a 5-year old girl would experience at the loss of her favourite doll can be far greater than that experienced by a rich, 50-year old man at the loss of his car. It is clear, therefore, that pleasure and pain both are emotions and depend on our internal state rather than on any outside object.

An agreeable disposition of the soul-substance occasions a feeling of pleasure while an opposite kind of sensation arises from a disagreeable affection. Both pleasure and pain are transient for this reason. The sense of pleasure chiefly depends on two things: first, the capacity to enjoy, which decreases with age, and second, the novelty of sensation which wears off with intimacy and repetition. When both, the capacity to enjoy and the novelty, are gone, the soul, whose thirst for happiness has by no means abated, is plunged into mourning over its lost power to enjoy itself with the objects of the senses. This undesirable experience comes to every one sooner or later in life, and no one is immune from it. Gratification of the senses only goes to augment the craving, and lust invariably leads to anguish on the impairment of the senses, as in old age. Pleasure is essentially fleeting, transient, full of trouble in its procurement, and liable to give birth to suffering and pain. Pleasure and pain are two sides of a coin; neither can be had alone by itself, and the latter being mostly the lot of living beings in the world. Even the little pleasure that is to be had here is obtained

after such a lot of worry and trouble, and is generally productive of so much suffering that it is no exaggeration to say that it is born in pain and ends in tears.

A question – certainly a legitimate one – that is often asked is: why should one ponder over such things as knowledge, wisdom, joy and happiness? In other words, why not go on living as usual in this world, enjoying its pleasures, rather than to renounce them? We must answer this question.

We agree that all straining and striving which is going on in this world is the outcome of a thirst for happiness. Some people spend their whole lives in thus trying object after object in a vain search for happiness and, ultimately, left without having any tangible aim in life, drift like wrecks and die of aimlessness. That is why it is of utmost importance that we must know, as thinking beings, what we are aiming at before we can expect to get it. A mere tickling of the senses, we have seen, provides us with a counterfeit coin of pleasure and pain, both of which are transient in nature, and end in suffering and pain. Incapable of understanding the true principles of life, we spend our working life in the pursuit of sensual pleasures with their associated worries and flurries, and subsequent life, till death, in misery.

A clear understanding of the larger objectives in life that are worth pursuing is the only way that could give us the ability to distinguish between the base imitation and the genuine article. But this process must start when there is still time left, before a feeling of world-weariness and dissatisfaction takes us over. At that late stage, we are generally incapable of understanding the true principles of life and find it extremely difficult to adapt ourselves to the life of physical and moral severity which is necessary to attain to our higher goals in life. We then turn to praying and worshipping in an unintelligible and vague manner, devoid of joy

that should normally appertain to such acts.

If sense-gratification be the only form of enjoyment to be found in Nature, perfection in happiness cannot be thought of in connection with the soul. Fortunately, however, there is another kind of joy which is possible for living beings. This consists in the natural 'pulsation' of pure delight, which becomes an inseparable companion of the soul the moment the individual establishes himself fully in his own pure self.

No longer can we afford to neglect our opportunity for self-realization. If time is money, it is too precious a thing to be wasted in the pursuit of money; pursuit of happiness will be a much better pursuit, any day.

CHAPTER FOUR

Health Is More Than Wealth

From our own experience, let us try to understand what constitutes a disease. It will be observed that disease is neither a function of the organism, nor a state consistent with the natural condition of the body, inasmuch as the organism itself tries to throw it off, unaided by medical skill and medicaments. The natural normal condition of a living organism is health which is regained the moment disease is eliminated from it. The question then is: what is disease, and how and why does it appear in the organism? The answer is that it is a run-down state of health, and its cause is to be found in the low vitality of the system. Whether it be an ordinary malady, such as common fever, or the most virulent form of an epidemic, health cannot be affected where the vitality is strong enough to resist the onslaught of disease bearing elements and germs. Where the vitality is not impaired, germs of malignant disease are powerless to destroy the organism. To what cause(s) is the lowness of vitality itself due?

In order to understand the nature of vitality, it is necessary to bear in mind the fact that health is affected both by mental and material causes. Harmful passions and emotions, such as

peevishness, envy and the like, as well as unhealthy suggestions produce as much harm as unwholesome foods and poisonous surroundings. Accordingly, we find many of the ordinary ailments of life amenable to control by suggestions as well as by proper medicament.

The seeds of desire are said to be the harbingers of vital poverty and decrepitude. The body is subjected to abnormal strains by reckless living. It is easy to desire, but not so easy to gratify the senses, for their objects often lie beyond reach. Besides, every desire, once gratified, becomes a still stronger longing for further gratification. Hence, worry puts in its appearance and becomes an additional tax on the body for which it was never designed. It is this additional burden on the body which is the cause of much trouble in the case of thinking beings. We, given mostly to relying upon our intellect, suffer acutely from both real and imaginary pains, for we not only think of the immediate future, but also of that which is the most remote and might never happen. The amount of energy which is consumed in the operations of the intellect, in calculating and determining the future course of events and actions, is enormous, and directly tells on our health.

The human body is a delicate organism, and not intended to bear, with impunity, the constant pressure of hard work to which it is subjected in many instances. Exposure to inclement weather, harmful and uncongenial surroundings, and want of suitable healthy food, all combine to accelerate the approach of old age. Hardened arteries, abnormal liver, vitiated kidneys and degeneration of the vital organs are some of the effects on our body. Gradually the muscles shrink, making the skin loose and wrinkled; the memory and intellect are enfeebled and the senses are impaired.

Fortunately, vitality is not a fixed quantity which cannot be

augmented or reinforced. When we go sleepless for a night, our body tries to compensate for the lost sleep and after it is able to do so, we are, once again, back to work with the same zeal and vigour. Our infatuation with alcohol makes us intemperate and indiscriminate so long as the unwholesome liquid, along with the spicy and fatty food, is in reaction with our organism; then, the next morning, there is a ‘hangover’ – mental listlessness, exhaustion and fatigue – a sign that our system is in fight with the unwelcome stuff that was imposed on it and ultimately, after a few hours, we regain our senses. Thus, the rallying power of the organism is no less remarkable than its capacity to resist disease, though the power appears to diminish or dwindle away with each trial of strength between the forces of health and the elements inimical to physical well-being. Habitual attacks on our system through overworking, overfeeding and intake of intoxicants and drugs are bound to have their ugly effects on our health and a time may reach when our health is past all hope of cure. No system of treatment, then, is able to afford much relief to the patient, and his existence has nothing in store for him but suffering and pain.

There is every reason to believe that where no heavy inroads are allowed to be made on the resources of the organism, and where the healthful energy of the system is properly husbanded by its occupant, there is hardly any cause to fear the coming into being the conditions which usher ill-health and senescence.

For those who have the power to decide, there are two ways of leading the life. You may aim at perfecting yourself, by bringing into manifestation the good, the true, and the beautiful in your own Soul. Or, you may aspire to acquire dominion over the world and bags of gold and silver. In the former case, knowing the true value of money, you care not to soil your happiness by coming in contact with it, and thus avoid all the worries and flurries and doubts and disappointments of the money-maker. The latter way of leading

the life is dangerous; not knowing where to stop, you go on seeking and piling up wealth, till you kill yourself in its pursuit.

Let us elaborate on the differences between the two pursuits. The money-maker might have a large balance to his credit in one or more banks, he might be able to purchase all the paraphernalia of luxury which constitute the pleasure of the worldly-minded, but all this can he boast of at the cost of health, beauty and youth, to say nothing of true happiness, which, it would seem, is beyond his understanding. For while he has been busy in the pursuit of riches, dyspepsia, gout, hypertension, diabetes and rheumatism have been busy in their pursuit. By the time he lays his hold on money, they lay their hold on him. No one can, with impunity, spend hours of mental torture, or toss, night after night, in bed, in racking his brains for devising newer methods of amassing more gold, or of beating the competition. Mental anguish must leave its visible ugly marks behind, in the shape of a wrinkled forehead, distorted features, and wretched looks. The hair start thinning and losing their colour and lustre earlier than expected. In the longish run, the money-maker becomes a victim to all sorts of ghastly and incurable diseases; he makes his pile, it is true; but it is not in his power to enjoy it. It is true that the man of money sleeps in his mansion, and his couch consists of the most luxurious bed that human ingenuity can devise, but it is no less true that he gets up in the morning carrying with him a hangover of unease.

The money-maker is eager to accumulate all the money he can, forgetting that it is neither the end nor the means for the realization of true happiness, but only a means for the procuring of those luxuries and accoutrements so often mistaken for 'comfort' and 'status'. As the marginal utility of money decreases with its increase, the value of vast accumulation of money is, then, reduced to the satisfaction we feel in the idea of being considered rich by our neighbours and friends. The difference between the

person who is engaged in perfecting himself and the one who is in pursuit of money becomes apparent just in a decade or so; the former possesses radiance of youth and vitality on his countenance, and the latter can easily be mistaken to be at least ten years older than his actual age.

The secret of health lies in the removal of the wrong impressions which are guiding our conduct in the numerous walks of life, and which have formed deep-rooted habits of thought with us. One of the most fruitful causes of disease and premature decay, in the case of thinking beings, is the force of unhealthy suggestion, which is responsible to a great extent in shortening life. The same is the case with excessive eating, unhealthy foods and riotous, Bacchanalian living.

As we lose faith in our powers, they soon abandon us. Under the pretext of the weight of age upon our shoulders, we take on sedentary habits. We cease to busy ourselves with our occupations. Little by little, our blood, vitiated by idleness, together with our ill-renewed tissues, open the door to all kinds of diseases. Premature old age attacks us, and we succumb sooner than we need in consequence of a harmful auto-suggestion. We must store up in our brains healthy, serene and comfortable suggestions.

Anyone cultivating the habit of concentration will perceive subtle changes taking place in his nerves, particularly in those of the head and the face. The face becomes calm and shining, features refined and beautiful, and voice melodious and musical. The development of the higher faculties takes place simultaneously. The emotion of love – equanimity and compassion for all living beings – ensures the functioning of the lotus of heart, whose rhythmic pulsation sends the fresh life-blood coursing through the arteries and veins, sweeping and carrying

away all obstructions and accumulation of effete matter, so highly dangerous on account of its suitability, as a breeding ground, for disease-bearing germs.

The relation between the soul and the physical body resembles, and may be likened to, that of a central spring and the fields to be irrigated by it. As regards health, the rule seems to be that as long as the central spring is overflowing with the fluid of life, and its waters reach the vital organs, health and youth are maintained. But when, owing to some cause or other, obstacles spring up which prevent the living waters from reaching the bodily cells, then such of them as reach no supply or an insufficient quantity of it, decline to contribute their share to the general well-being of the organism, setting up all sorts of disease and other forms of unhealthy complications in the system. Complete choking up of the central spring must mean death to the individual. In diseased conditions, such as paralysis, the subjective mind is unable to take control, wholly or partially, over the affected limbs, and the same thing happens in cases of atrophy, in which the affected part dries up, for want of a proper supply of the living waters of life. When a shock of a violent nature occurs in the experience of the individual, and the central spring is affected, there occurs a dislocation in one or more of the many points connected with the channels of communication, and the connection between the central organ and some vital part of the body is cut off. Now, if we can induce the subjective mind, which has full control over the cells of the body, to somehow re-establish the broken communication, the health might be restored.

The law of suggestion works here just as effectively as elsewhere; a suggestion has the potential to bring one to life and can also cause premature death in some cases. A life-long scepticism of the powers of the soul and a constant fear of death must produce their effect, sooner or later, on the body, so that

when some serious illness supervenes, the person grows suspicious of life and believes that the time for death has come. Add to this the effect to be produced on the mind by the visit of specialists, the whispering of anxious relatives and friends, the solemn and sacred looks of the attendants, the consultations with the family lawyer regarding property matters, and it can be easily seen how the combined influence of these depressing and dispiriting events will act as a most powerful suggestion for death which the subjective mind will have no alternative but to adopt. The effect of such a forcible suggestion is that it renders the mind unconscious of its own operations, paralyzes the brain and breaks up the nervous connections.

The cure of the ills and ailments lies, to a large extent, in a reversal of this wrong process. To counteract the evil effects of harmful suggestions, one has to remove the existing evil and then prevent its recurrence. Thus, while the suggestion which is the cause of the trouble has to be removed, we have to be on guard against all possible evil and harmful suggestions in the future. Since ages, the influence of the mind over our body has been recognized. Mark Twain, in his characteristic style, had made this observation:

The mind exercises a powerful influence over the body. From the beginning of time, the sorcerer, the interpreter of dreams, the fortune-teller, the charlatan, the quack, the wild medicine-man, the educated physician, the mesmerist, and the hypnotist have made use of the client's imagination to help them in their work. They have all recognized the potency and availability of that force.

- In *Christian Science*

The suggestion of 'wholeness' may be made by one person to another; it may also be made by the patient himself in which case it is known as auto-suggestion. Other things being equal, an auto-suggestion is more potent than a suggestion from an extraneous

source, for the simple reason that an auto-suggestion is generally backed by the objective convictions of the patient, whereas a suggestion by another may directly contravene the patient's objective reason and experience.

What is true of physical health is also equally true of mental well-being, the rule governing them both being the same, namely, 'as one thinks, so one becomes'.

In a matter as important as health, one cannot afford to ignore the significant contributions that modern medicine has made over the last two centuries. Modern medical researchers have achieved remarkable breakthroughs in their understanding of the wonderful and complex encasement of our souls, i.e., the human body. Medicine in 1800 was a scary combination of chance and quackery; today, with great advances in pharmacology and surgery, and in the fields of pathology, obstetrics, and vaccination, the profession can claim to have remedies for most diseases and ailments that our body is liable to suffer from. In the area of preventive medicine, vaccines have been developed for most deadly diseases including smallpox, tuberculosis, diphtheria, pertussis, polio, measles, mumps, rubella and hepatitis-B. Eradicating the scourge of smallpox on a global scale has been a story of man's determination and scientific endeavour. Surgery has undergone massive changes with access to new diagnostic procedures and technologies.

But it is also true that while many diseases are on the wane – such as polio and cholera – many others, like AIDS, alcoholism and stress, are on the up. It can be safely surmised that medicine has fallen far short of what once seemed a realistic goal of conquering all diseases and bringing health to all.

Technological developments in various fields, especially during the last two to three decades, have provided us with bodily

comforts that could not have been dreamed of earlier. All the glitter and comfort notwithstanding, the modern man is under a far greater threat from ailments arising out of unhealthy auto-suggestions, or, in plain words, out of our own minds. In an affluent society, the origin of many health problems can easily be traced to its degenerating life-style. Take the case of stress, which is one important concomitant of break-neck pace of today's life-style. It is now known that many health problems, often not realized at an early stage, are, in a large part, attributable to stress. These include obesity, heart disease, cancer, depression, anorexia nervosa or malnutrition, ulcers, diabetes, hyperthyroidism, and hair loss, beside affecting our sexual behaviour, digestive system and immune system making us more vulnerable to colds, flu, fatigue and infections. The physical symptoms of stress may include sleep disturbance, migraine headache, acid stomach or irritable bowel syndrome, weight gain or loss, high blood pressure, chest pain, skin problems (eczema, psoriasis, tics, itching), and asthma or shortness of breath. The emotional symptoms may include nervousness, anxiety, phobias, irritability, frustration, lack of concentration and trouble thinking clearly.

Medicine certainly has not been able to address itself, in any convincing manner, to the ailments arising out of unhealthy auto-suggestions. It is, however, not surprising since the control on our will lies squarely in our own Self and not in the hands of any outside agency. Modern science does not know how to control the mind without the aid of drugs and instruments; but a *yogi's* spiritual power renders their use quite unnecessary as he can influence the mind with a mere word of command or suggestion.

Yoga, the ancient science of India, aims at rubbing off the store of unhealthy suggestions from our memory and rearrange our ideas in a fresh and healthy manner so as to start new sorts of vibrations

in our body. Its principle may be taken to consist in the accomplishment of systematic relaxation of the bodily tensions that are obstructing the free functioning of certain powerful nervous currents, e.g., the *kundālīni* (Serpent Power), which is said to be residing in the *muladhāra* (the basic) plexus.

The task ahead, thus, is to first rub off the store of recorded unhealthy suggestions from our memory, and rearrange our ideas in the light of the knowledge of Truth. This, however, cannot be accomplished without enormous labour, inasmuch as memory is not a thing which can be taken out, cleansed and put back in its place. Severe physical and mental drilling, necessitating the closing up of old and deep-rooted tracks in the nervous matter of the brain and spinal column, and the opening up of new paths, in place thereof, is required for the purpose.

Swami Vivekananda, a great *yogi* himself, had observed:

Nerve currents will have to be replaced and given a new channel. New sorts of vibrations will begin; the whole constitution will be remodelled as it were. But the main part of the action will lie along the spinal column, so that the one thing necessary for the posture is to hold the spinal column free, sitting erect, holding the three parts – the chest, neck and the head – in a straight line.

Patanjali, the venerable codifier of the science of Yoga, has pointed out eight steps (*Astāṅg* Yoga), to be followed sequentially, to attain full realization of the Self:

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|------------|
| 1) | <i>Yama</i> | यम |
| 2) | <i>Niyama</i> | नियम |
| 3) | <i>Āsana</i> | आसन |
| 4) | <i>Prāṇāyāma</i> | प्राणायाम |
| 5) | <i>Pratyāhāra</i> | प्रत्याहार |

- | | | |
|----|----------------|-------|
| 6) | <i>Dhāranā</i> | धारणा |
| 7) | <i>Dhyāna</i> | ध्यान |
| 8) | <i>Samādhi</i> | समाधि |

Yama means death; here it implies self-control till one is alive. *Yama* signifies self-restraint resulting in non-injuring, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, and the imposing of limitations on the worldly goods.

Niyama, meaning a rule or canon, involves practice of purity (internal and external), contentment, study, and resignation and self-surrender to God for a pre-determined time and period.

The first two stages are meant for moral purification, without which no spiritual progress is possible.

Āsana signifies the posture to steady the mind, for contemplation. Correct posture is necessary to keep the body motionless, else its restlessness would distract the mind and dissipate the energy of the will. The *āsana* that is generally adopted by the *yogis* is a sitting posture, with legs crossed, after the manner of the images of Jain *Tirthamkaras*.

Prāṇāyāma conveys the idea of controlling the vital force. The primary object is to control the wandering of the mind so as to be able to prevent the uncontrolled dissipation of energy. Apart from this, breathing is also the main source of the absorption of the vital energy. With each breath we inhale a certain amount of *prāṇa* (electricity or vital force) from the atmospheric air. This vital force is absorbed by the blood, and is stored up in the nervous system. The *yogi* aims at controlling the vital force by regulating his breath. He begins by correcting the normal breath. The object of breathing exercises is to remove the condition of passivity from the system and that can be accomplished by (1) inhaling a large quantity of the vital breath from the atmosphere, and (2) by

employing it to energize the nervous centres of the spinal column and brain which control the whole system. The lung capacity increases with practice but it also requires certain other aids. The food must be pure, wholesome and non-irritating, so that the body should acquire purity and elasticity and lightness. After a few months of practice, sufficient control is obtained to 'will' the *prāna* to any particular part of the body. This enables the *yogi* to get rid of many kinds of diseases from his system.

Pratyāhāra means 'gathering towards', that is, checking the outgoing energy of the mind, and freeing it from the thralldom of senses. The soul has to be completely detached from the requirements of the senses. Mind then becomes ready for concentration on one object or one idea.

Dhāraṇā means the holding of the mind on to a point, to the exclusion of all others; on one external object or one internal idea. For example, one can start with the fixing of the attention on the heart. It also signifies a special form of meditation. Repeated attempts will be required to be able to glue the attention on the chosen subject and to empty all other thoughts.

Dhyāna means contemplation. When the mind is freed from the thralldom of senses, and does not wander outwards, it can be easily employed in the contemplation of the *Ātman*.

Samādhi is the state in which the soul enjoys its own inherent, natural bliss; it is the super-conscious state. *Samādhi* is the realization of the ideal of the soul and in that state all taint of attachment for the outside world, together with its concomitants, pleasure and pain, is transcended. Soul is set free to feel its own glory and bliss.

The first five steps are only for preparation of the mind for the higher-order stages, for concentration. The last three steps constitute the application of concentration to achieve Self-consciousness, the goal of existence.

It is quite remarkable to see that in this modern age of fast-paced life, there is a revival of interest in some of the Yoga practices, which are thousands of years old; albeit for health reasons only.

A note of caution: As Yoga practices involve many changes in the arrangement of brain cells and nerve contents, these should be performed under the instructions of a qualified teacher. Otherwise, these are likely to do more harm than good.

CHAPTER FIVE

Fear Kills; Grief Takes Life

Fear, perhaps, is the worst enemy of happiness; in extreme cases, it has the license to kill. As the world is marching ahead, as the means of communication are getting more potent than ever before, as the individual is getting involved in more and more activities, the scope and intensity of fear that we experience each day of our lives is increasing. Try to figure out a day, after your childhood days, which you have been able to spend without a tinge of fear tarnishing your natural happiness. There is the fear of failure, theft, gun, terrorist, accident, earthquake, flood, drought, tsunami, and so on. There is the fear of police, company law, central excise, labour law, income tax and sales tax. Future itself has become one big cause of fear – future health, security, relationships, old age, and, ultimately, death – termed appropriately as the fear of the unknown. We do not stop at thinking about possible mishaps till we are alive; we also entertain the fear of surety of our kin after our death. Even God has become an object of fear rather than of love and devotion. The list is indicative, not exhaustive.

Fear is the creature of ignorance and the cause and forerunner

of death. The psychological effect of fear is terrible, beyond description. It paralyzes healthy action, generates worry, and is exceedingly pernicious to life. Worry corrodes and pulls down the organism; fear and worry will finally tear the body to pieces. Fear is the antithesis of self-composure, and the cause of cowardice and terror. Under its influence the countenance becomes pallid, the face is pulled down, and the chest drawn in. It paralyzes all the bodily muscles and consumes the vital force.

As regards the effects of the emotion of fear, we quote a couple of authorities on the subject:

The frightened man at first stands like a statue, motionless and breathless, or crouches down as if instinctively to escape observation. The heart beats quickly and violently, so that it palpitates or knocks against the ribs. The skin instantly becomes pale, as during incipient faintness. The hairs also on the skin stand erect, and the superficial muscles shiver. In connection with this disturbed action of the heart, the breathing is hurried. The salivary glands act imperfectly; the mouth becomes dry, and is often opened and shut. One of the best marked symptoms is the trembling of all the muscles of the body; and this is often seen in the lips. From this cause and from the dryness of the mouth, the voice becomes husky or indistinct, or may altogether fail. As fear increases into an agony of terror, we behold, as under all violent emotions, diversified results. The heart beats wildly, or may fail to act, and faintness ensues; there is death-like pallor; the breathing is laboured; the wings of the nostrils are widely dilated; there is a gasping and convulsive motion of the lips, a tremor on the hollow cheek, a gulping and catching of the throat. All the muscles of the body may become rigid, or may be thrown into convulsive movements. ...As fear rises to an extreme pitch, the dreadful scream of terror is heard. Great beads of sweat stand on the skin. All the muscles of the body are relaxed. Utter prostration soon follows, and the mental powers fail. The intestines are affected. The sphincter muscles cease to act,

and no longer retain the contents of the body.

Darwin, *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals*

And:

Fear and cold alike cause contraction of the superficial blood-vessels, and, in man, excite the contraction of the minute rudimentary muscles inserted at the roots of the hairs. ‘Goose-skin’ is caused by the contraction of these muscles, the condition being a functional rudiment, no longer serving to warm the skin nor to make the body appear larger... Fear, which is occasionally able to excite the contraction of the involuntary muscles, also stimulates other muscles against the will. Under the influence of emotions that powerfully affect the nervous system, and particularly under that of fear, contractions of the bladder and the intestines may be so violent that it is impossible to prevent the voiding their contents. Accidents of this kind are not infrequent in the case of youthful candidates at examinations.

Metchnikoff, *The Prolongation of Life*

No need to quote further authorities on this simple matter; simple, because we can easily observe the effect of the emotion of fear on ourselves or on others. The victim intoxicates himself with fear; he eats badly and digests even worse. Suffice it to say that the culmination is reached when individual will is completely paralyzed and the organism left at the mercy of its natural enemies, which soon bring about its dissolution.

Doing a wrong and then putting at your disposal all the powerful means of protection cannot possibly take you far. Fear still grips you, in and out. The two most dreaded bandits – Veerappan and Nirbhay Gurjar – of our time, both sporting moustache long enough to put an errant child to sleep out of dread, had to live, notwithstanding their deadly paraphernalia, in thick forests, out of the reach of the police force. Both ultimately got

killed in police encounters; they lived in fear, died in fear. Fear, truly, is the cause of cowardice and terror!

All the energy in the domain of embodied life comes from the forces of attraction or repulsion, which appears as love or hatred, in relation with the will. These forces, in turn, are governed by our desire. Desire to possess a thing is love for or attraction towards it; desire to avoid it is hatred or repulsion of it. All our desires assume one or the other of these two forms. The effect of desire, thus, is either to draw something towards or to drive away something from us. Desire gives rise to emotion, that is, a motion towards an object or away from it, in mind. Fear is a repulsive emotion and gives rise to the traits of character such as servility, lying, treachery, and rebelliousness.

Any relationship based on fear is bound to be short-lived. Fear requires the maintenance of prestige and power and, in order to maintain these, favouritism is resorted to. Under such an environment, mutual trust, goodwill and fellow-feeling cease to exist and the relationship lasts only so long as some sort of binding compulsion, purely out of a perception of personal gain and loss, is present. The emotion of love, on the other hand, gives rise to the traits of character such as confidence, candour, contentment and honesty – ingredients of a free-flowing, lasting relationship. But this will require that your own integrity be above board and that there are no skeletons in your cupboard.

Grief, like fear, is the product of the mind, and is caused by the mind's dwelling on the picture arising from either the association with what is undesirable and undesired or the dissociation with an object of desire. Grief – sorrow or anguish – is dependent on all kinds of mental pictures and trains of thought that we allow our minds to pass through. For this reason, on receipt of a message of failure in an undertaking, e.g., failure in an examination, we are

grieved; the mind at once begins to picture to itself all sorts of unpleasant and distasteful scenes and consequences.

That grief, and other like emotions, is a potent source of unpleasant feelings is brought out clearly in the following scriptural direction:

दुःखशोक्तापाक्रन्दनवधपरिदेवनान्यात्मपरोभयस्थानान्यसद्वेद्यस्य ॥

— Āchārya Umāswami, *Tattvārthādhigama Sūtra*

Suffering, sorrow, agony, moaning, injury and lamentation, in oneself, in others, or in both, lead to the influx of *karmas* which cause unpleasant feelings.

Suffering is the feeling of pain. The feeling of sadness at the loss or separation of a desirable or useful thing is sorrow. The feeling of distress owing to disgrace is agony. Moaning is weeping loudly out of anguish. Injury is depriving one of life, the senses, strength or vigour, or respiration. Lamentation is the loud outcry (wailing) of an afflicted person by recalling the achievements of the departed and giving expression to these in order to evoke sympathy in others and secure help to oneself and others.

By entertaining such emotions in our minds we not only make our present unpleasant and distressing but also make our future liable to suffer from the same kinds of feelings due to the influx of *karmas*.

It may be noted here that sufferings caused by internal passions, such as anger or greed, alone can lead to the influx of *karmas* which cause unpleasant feelings. When a compassionate surgeon operates a boil on the body a patient, since there is no evil feeling or wrath or anger involved, even in the presence of suffering, there is no bondage of demerit.

There can be no doubt whatever that emotions affect the

physical body and, ultimately, the health of the individual, for good or bad. Protracted grief affects perceptible changes in one's looks. In grief, the circulation becomes languid, the face pale, the muscles flaccid, the eyelids droop, the head hangs on the contracted chest, the lips, cheeks and lower jaw all sink downward from their own weight. The whole expression of a man in good spirits is exactly the opposite of the one suffering from sorrow.

Negative emotions not only deprive the body of its vital powers, but they are continually preparing a secret deadly poison which can blast the bloom of life, shut up every access to pleasure and enjoyment and change the beautiful stream of life into a stagnated puddle.

There is also the rule of the correspondence of emotions – we tend to excite similar emotions amongst others. It is a universally observed fact that the cheerful company of young persons dispels the gloom of moroseness and sorrow, while the society of those in extreme grief acts as a damper on all who come in contact with them.

Ruskin Bond, the celebrated writer of stories for children has made Mussoorie, a small town in the foothills of the Himalayas his abode. In his introduction to *Everlasting Remembrance* – a collection of poems by Rev. Bro. S.J. Darcy, a Patrician Brother who gave away his life to school education in India – described Brother as:

Bro. Darcy was a gentle soul who saw God in all things – cherry blossom, moonlight, dreams, tempests, a child's laughter. The serenity and calmness of his nature come through in his poetry. He celebrates the miracles of life, with all its joys and achievements; and he shows a calm acceptance of its sorrows and disappointments. 'Fortitude' may seem out of fashion today, but that is what he personifies. I am reminded of that opening line from Hugh

Walpole's novel *Fortitude*: "It isn't life that matters, but the courage you bring to it."

The serenity and calmness of Brother's life are reflected in the following excerpt of a few lines from 'When You Go Down', a poem from the same book:

Life's a vale of tears, they say so,
but I have not found it so,
Rather green and smiling upland,
lit by changing gleam and glow.

Life is full of snares and pitfalls,
but of this you may be sure,
When you stretch a hand in saving,
you, yourself, stand most secure.

Life's exactly what you make it,
base or noble, grave or gay,
And you build the house you live in,
build it stately while you may.

Negative emotions of fear and grief must be swapped with noble sentiments of fortitude and service for that gleam and glow in life.

CHAPTER SIX

The Hygiene Of Food

The food that we allow our body to consume must not only be wholesome, it also needs to be pure, hygienic, aesthetic, and tender; in one word, *sātvik*.

With just a little reflection, we would come to the conclusion that human body, by nature, is designed for vegetarian food. Humans have no physical and mental instincts of a carnivore. But, with his superior mental power, man has devised tools and equipment, not originally endowed to him by the Nature, to capture, breed and kill animals, and then, having not been designed to eat raw meat, to cook various kinds of dainties to satisfy his palate.

Food specialists are concerned only with the health of the body and as long as the food, as per their opinion, adds to the physical health of the body, it is acceptable and recommended by them. But there are other, rather important, issues involved.

Paul Vaughan is 44 years old. He has been a vegetarian for 12 years. Reproduced below is what he says about his reasons for changing over to vegetarianism:

“Originally I became a vegetarian for largely ethical reasons. I had a rural upbringing and have lived on and off in the countryside. I became extremely uncomfortable with the concept of eating the creatures I was being asked to share the countryside with. I also found many farming practices distressing. The decision was reinforced by the many health scares surrounding the meat industry which emerged some years later.

...Since becoming vegetarian I've never felt healthier. At a time when I might expect middle-age spread to be setting in, my diet helps to keep me relatively trim.

...It's nice to be able to eat food knowing that animals haven't suffered or died to produce it. I'm also concerned about the impact that producing animals for food has on the environment. Perhaps the biggest benefit of all, though, is that vegetarian food is tasty and imaginative. For me, being vegetarian means making and eating varied, interesting and delicious food.”

- Excerpted from *The Vegetarian Society*,
source: www.vegso.org

Here are some benefits of the vegetarian food, according to a research:

Vegetarians in the U.S. have a lower incidence of heart disease than the general U.S. population. This may be because most vegetarian diets are low in total fat, saturated fat and cholesterol...

Vegetarians generally have a lower incidence of high blood pressure and a lower rate of Type 2 diabetes than do non-vegetarians. These benefits may also be due to decreased fat and/or increased fiber in the diet...

Vegetarians of the Seventh Day Adventist faith have lower rates of death from colon cancer than the general U.S. population. This may be due in part to increased fiber intake, decreased fat, and/or increased amounts of fruits and vegetables in the diet (which may be protective against cancer)...

Vegetarians, especially vegans, have less incidence of obesity. This may be due to eating less total calories, less fat, more fiber and/or to

increased physical activity, and/or less obesity, often associated with vegans...

There's some evidence that vegetarians have lower rates of osteoporosis, kidney stones, gallstones, and diverticular disease.

- Dr. Alley, H. (1995), *Vegetarianism*, University of Georgia, Cooperative Extension Service

In a survey conducted on behalf of The Vegetarian Society, the majority of people said that they gave up meat and fish because they did not morally approve of killing animals, or because they objected to the ways in which animals are kept, treated and killed for food. It is encouraging to note that starting from Tolstoy, Einstein, Shakespeare, Newton and continuing to Mahatma Gandhi, all were vegetarians. Famous other vegetarians include Sir Paul McCartney and his daughter Stella, and tennis champion Martina Navratilova. Views of a few of them on vegetarianism:

A human can be healthy without killing animals for food. Therefore if he eats meat he participates in taking animal life merely for the sake of his appetite.

- Leo Tolstoy

Nothing will benefit human health and increase chances for survival of life on Earth as much as the evolution to a vegetarian diet.

- Albert Einstein

If slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be vegetarian. We feel better about ourselves and better about the animals, knowing we're not contributing to their pain.

- Paul and Linda McCartney

The only purpose of food is to keep our body in good health and spirit, so that our soul can perform more important tasks that it is striving for, e.g., positive thinking, and self-realization. The

ideas of self-control (*sanyam*) in eating, and renunciation, which may include fasting and taking only limited quantity – less than your appetite – of simple food, it seems, are beyond the grasp of our modern-day food specialists.

The evil consequences arising out of eating animal food furnish us sufficient argument against its use. If we only knew what evils arise out of it, we would shun it as poison. Is not the disgusting, nauseating sight, in its uncooked state, sufficient reason for its discontinuance?

The *Bhagwad Gita* declares:

The food that augments vitality, vigour, health, joy and cheerfulness, delicious, bland, substantial and agreeable are dear to the pure. The passionate desire foods that are bitter, sour, saline, overhot, pungent, dry and burning, and which produce pain, grief and sickness. That which is stale and flat, putrid and corrupt, leavings also and unclean, is the food dear to the dark.

Many people think that the killing of animals is necessary for their living, and on that account harden their tender nature. There is absolutely no justification for this act of wanton cruelty. Nuts, vegetables and cereals contain all the nourishment necessary to maintain life, and, in their purity, constitute more joy-giving food than the dead entrails and carcasses of innocent animals butchered relentlessly and in utter disregard of their mute appeal for mercy. Life is dear and joyful to all. The sight of the pain and writhings of their bleeding and dying carcasses must recoil on our own souls, furnishing us with brutal tendencies. The very idea of killing animals to eat is unaesthetic.

A severe form of avian influenza or ‘bird flu’ – called H5N1 – has affected poultry flocks and other birds in several countries since 2003. At the beginning of 2006, the world was grappling with the threat of a possible pandemic caused by bird flu. According to an

article, reviewed by a medical expert, and published on the official BBC website:

The H5N1 virus was first shown to have passed from birds to humans in 1997, during an outbreak of avian influenza among poultry in Hong Kong. The virus caused severe respiratory illness in 18 people, of whom six died. In the past year or two there have been a stream of cases reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) in Asia. Up to November 2005, worldwide 130 people had caught the infection, as a result of close and direct contact with infected birds. **Sixty-seven of these have subsequently died.** More worryingly, recent research has shown that H5N1 has changed so that it's even more deadly in chickens and mice, and can now infect cats too. H5N1 is also resistant to some of the drugs used to treat flu (such as amantadine).

H5N1 has become common among birds in Asia, who shed the virus in their saliva, nasal secretions and faeces. **Millions of chickens and ducks have been slaughtered across South East Asia in recent months** in an effort to prevent spread of the virus from birds to humans. Work is also underway to make a vaccine against H5N1. But it will take time and that is in short supply. If H5N1 becomes able to pass from human to human then the situation will be even more serious as most people have little immunity to the strain and there will be rapid spread. In September 2004, the first possible case of human-to-human transmission was reported in Thailand.

- Excerpted from Dr Trisha Macnair, *Avian Flu (Bird Flu)*,
source: www.bbc.co.uk
(*Emphasis ours*)

Life of humans is important; in fact, very, very important. But have a look at some of our specific responses to the threat of bird flu, as reported in the media:

- The virus has been spreading steadily westward, killing or forcing the slaughter of more than 200 million birds.

- The last bird flu outbreak in Hong Kong occurred in 1997, when the disease killed six people, prompting the government to slaughter the entire poultry population of about 1.5 million birds.
- The deadly H5N1 bird flu virus has been detected on a large commercial chicken farm in Nigeria. All 46,000 birds on the Nigerian farm have been killed and their bodies disposed of, and Nigerian authorities have banned the movement of birds and people from the farm.
- Iraqi health authorities have ordered mass bird slaughters.
- Indonesia to launch mass bird flu slaughter.
- Turkey's fast-moving outbreak of bird flu prompted villagers across the border in Georgia to slaughter chickens, geese and ducks *en masse*. Turkey's government ordered more than 300,000 fowl destroyed as a precaution.
- In Russia, nationalist lawmaker Vladimir Zhirinovskiy urged men to grab rifles and shoot migratory birds to keep the virus at bay.

And this news item:

WASHINGTON, DC – As experts issue increasingly dire warnings of an avian flu epidemic, President Bush signed an executive order Tuesday authorizing the mass slaughter of “all bald eagles found anywhere within our borders.”

“As president, my first duty is to protect the American people, whether the threat is terrorists or deadly, fast-mutating bird viruses,” said Bush, standing on the lawn of the National Mall before a specially built pyre stacked with recently killed bald eagles. “This proactive initiative will rid our nation of this potentially disease-ridden winged animal.”

Bush added: “I want these birds rounded up, tied down, and their throats slit.”

Executive Order 1342A, which calls for the annihilation of the bald eagle, specifies that each carcass shall be wrapped in a single American flag, doused with gasoline, and burned.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will meet with the Canadian prime minister and Mexican president next week to discuss eradication efforts for bald eagle populations in their countries. The Department of the Interior's deadline for bald eagle annihilation is July 4, 2006.

- *Public Health*, November 2, 2005, Issue 4144

India, the land which gave lessons on *ahimsā* (non-violence) and vegetarianism to the world, is not lagging behind in terms of her response to the disease:

Maharashtra culling: 9 lakh birds: ...of the 12-13 lakh birds in Nandurbar district, nearly 2.5 lakh had been culled since Saturday night, official sources said. Heavy earth movers were being used to bury the bird carcasses, they said.

- *The Times of India*, February 20, 2006
(1 lakh = 100,000)

Some might say, "What is the big issue? Otherwise also these birds would have been killed."

One shudders to think what our response would be towards our own brethren in case, because of some epidemic, a section of them gets infected with a deadly, mutable virus whose anti-dote is yet to be found by medicine! The age-old precept 'live and let live', which shows us the way to live in a harmonious way with all living beings, has been replaced with our new-found wisdom on how to live.

We have been taught to give quadrupeds and other dumb animals water to drink or otherwise show them kindness. If we happen to see our little son doing such an act of kindness out of his natural instinct of compassion, we feel so very happy and proud of him. This is a universal phenomenon. What goes wrong when we grow up? We become slaves of our own senses and in our selfish

pursuits, lose the courage to oppose and discard a wrong path, howsoever immoral it might be, as long as their cravings were satisfied.

Coming back to the topic of food, slaughter of cattle for the sake of filling our stomachs, which can be filled just as well, if not better, with non-animal dainties is an unbecoming act for the soul that aspires for freedom and bliss.

If we would but ponder a little over the matter, we should find that the slaughter of animals is not only sinful, but quite unnecessary as well. Taste, of which we make so much in insisting upon an animal diet, is only an acquired something. When a man takes to smoking, his instincts revolt from the fumes of nicotine, but with each repetition they become more and more blunted, till they lose their natural delicacy altogether, and actually long for that thing which they had abhorred before. The aesthetic pleasure which simple, wholesome, non-animal food affords to the soul on account of its natural purity, cannot be equalled by the most sumptuous and expensive preparations from dead entrails and carcasses of birds and beasts, however much we might endeavour to conceal their sickening stench by condiments and spices. Non-vegetarian food not only vitiates the natural instincts of the soul, but also tends to harden one's heart.

Anyone who would aspire for spiritual unfoldment must break his connection with this curse of civilization – wining and dining. Drinking of wine makes us unconscious and is the cause of error in vision and judgment. A person in whom the craving for liquor has passed the limit of control will readily do anything to obtain the means for procuring it. His moral degradation might start from the self-abasing begging of money as a favour, to theft, and might end up in robbery and murder. Thus the unconquerable longing for the gratification of the senses also deprives one of the power of

judgment, the sense of morality, and the capacity to act in the right way. A drunkard finds pleasure only in the company of men of his own type and his pursuit of sensual pleasure constantly acts as a strain on his body, dragging it into all kinds of unhealthy surroundings and uncongenial environment. One can now easily imagine what the combined effect of eating meat and drinking wine would be on the finer instincts and merciful nature of our soul.

It is a generally accepted negative virtue to not doing unto others what we should not like them to do unto us. Since the Self is characterized by pure goodness, it follows that he alone who actively practices equanimity, in his thoughts and deeds, can be said to practice virtue actively. He then not only tolerates, but actually becomes filled with affectionate sympathy for all living beings. It follows from this that no one who is not prepared to renounce *himsā* (injuring others) can ever hope for salvation or immortality. There are three forms of committing *himsā*: (1) the actual commission of the harmful act oneself, (2) its abetment when done by another, and (3) the encouraging of those who have already committed it independently of oneself. The United States of America, after the 9/11 attacks, vowed to punish the terrorists who committed the crime, those who abetted it and *also* those who, in any way, were grooming and encouraging terrorism. Similarly, those who slaughter animals, they who get them slaughtered, and *also* they who purchase their dead limbs are travelling on the path which leads to suffering and pain.

In our blind materialism we have neglected to consider the only important thing that is to be known, namely, the Soul. We have considered the physical encasement superior to everything else, and are doing our best to enhance its comforts, forgetting that the real enjoyer is not the body at all, but something of which the body is merely an objectified expression. If the body were the

enjoyer, it ought to go on enjoying the comforts even after death, but it is obvious that no dead body is ever anxious to be propped up on cushions, to be clothed in purple and silk, or to relish the sumptuous meal and wine. We should not find it difficult now to comprehend why every one who looks at a woman with lust is as much guilty as if he had actually committed adultery with her. Mere entertaining of a lustful thought suffices to set up harmful vibrations which must produce their full effect, unless countermanded, in time, by more powerful vibrations of holy thought. This is how every thought is punished or rewarded. You entertain evil thoughts, and you suffer for them, here or hereafter. If, on the other hand, your thoughts are healthy, you get your reward in the increase of spiritual vigour and life. As you sow, so shall you reap.

It is true that a vast majority of men in this world are non-vegetarian. The response of such men, when faced with an argument in favour of vegetarianism, ranges from an assertion that since the best part of the mankind is non-vegetarian there could be nothing wrong with it, to that it is 'impractical' to be a vegetarian, to that there is nothing morally wrong with the practice.

The value of Truth does not depend on the numbers that acknowledge its supremacy. The whole world may be ignorant of it, yet it is inconceivable that truth itself be any the worse for the ignorance of men. Numbers are only useful to him who has nothing better or higher to aim at than show. The earth was flat for the whole world until it was established that it was round!

With respect to practicability, it can be shown that all the impracticability lies with the so-called man of the world, and in no sense with the concept of vegetarianism, when properly understood. The question is, what is practical? The meaning of the

word depends on our view-point and the goal. Anything which leads us to the goal, by the shortest path, is 'practical'. The path of non-vegetarianism leads to gratification of our senses and also, ultimately, to engendering brutal tendencies to our soul. The path of vegetarianism, on the other hand, leads to positive thinking, and to cultivating the emotions of love and equanimity towards all living beings, essential for attaining the ultimate goal of self-realization and happiness. There is no man who, in his heart of hearts, does not cherish this great ideal, though there be some who from a superficial analysis of their feelings or from fear of ridicule, might refuse to credit their souls with such noble aspiration. Such being the high aspiration of the soul, it is evident that the path which brings it nearer to the goal cannot be termed 'impractical'. Which is more practical, the path which must invariably lead to pain consequent upon a feeling of guilt, ill-health and disease, or the one which leads to pure, simple and pious life? The practical wisdom of the worldly wise is clearly impracticable here, for it busies itself with the pursuit of means which lead in a direction opposite to that in which lies the ideal dear to every heart. The practical value of vegetarianism is to be judged not from the side of a speculation of what its adoption leads men to give up, but in terms of the actual gain which it brings to the soul. The giving up that is involved in vegetarianism is not of anything worth clinging to, but only of those things which actually play havoc with the higher aspirations of the soul. The clinging to the objects of senses is the creation of delusion; they have to be given up, sooner or later. If we do not renounce them cheerfully, old age and death will sure enough put an end to our enjoyment thereof. It is for us to decide whether we give them up ourselves, or let old age and death tear us away from them. In the former case, power and blessedness result for the soul, and, in the latter, there are only the lamentations and gnashing of the teeth, born of

rage. So, the idea of giving up is not that will make you feel miserable, but the process itself is full of exhilaration and joy.

Morality in religion means a God-like attitude of purity and love towards all beings. It means the purification of the inner as well as the outer nature. Let no thought which is not pure and God-like ever enter the heart; let the mind dwell on nothing but what is good, and true, and beautiful. Of all the religions in the world there is none in which perjury, theft, murder, adultery and all other offences are not condemned in strong terms. They differ, however, in degree. In some, for instance, non-killing is enjoined in respect of mankind alone; while in some it is to be practised in respect of all living beings, as far as possible. Every religion teaches the virtues of love and compassion. But there are situations when we seem to define morality in our own ways, depending on what suits our dispositions. A bandit who gives a part of his booty to poor villagers and fellow-dwellers, perhaps with the underlying idea of strengthening his own paraphernalia of protection from the law, might be known to the world as a 'Messiah of the poor'! A '*jehādi*', for some, is a terrorist who mercilessly kills innocent people, but for some others he might be a crusader against the perpetrators of crime against Islam.

There is, thus, no uniform code of morality for the entire humanity but, as individuals, we need to be clear about our own value-system and points of morality that we would like to adhere to, and then be honest about them. How is it that many followers of even such religions which strictly forbid, in plain and simple-to-understand language, animal food, have taken to eating such food? It is because they have become slaves of their senses and the question of morality comes into being only when they are in public view or when a calamity falls upon them. Hypocrite's way is not the way of religion and it is high time that those who are under the impression that spiritual merit consists in the testimony of one's

neighbour, corrected their wrong belief. There are many people, at least in India, who would not eat non-vegetarian food during religious ceremonies and on particular days (say, Tuesdays); proof enough that in the core of their hearts they feel it to be immoral to eat such food. Why not have the courage to shun such food on all occasions and on all days?

No wise man who has understood the laws of nature will ever think of eating meat. We would cry out immediately if a pin pricked us; but we have no thought for the extreme agony which we inflict on another soul, of a poor animal, when tearing off its flesh from its limbs, as if it has no right even to its own body. When man understands that every little departure from the strict code of morality goes to stamp our features with ugliness and misery and renders our system sensitive to infection and onslaught of disease-bearing germs and also to shorten life, he will at once give up animal diet.

As the scriptures teach us, difficult it is to obtain the human form; having obtained it, difficult it is to be born in the best environment for speedy progress; having been born even in the most suitable environment, difficult it is to acquire the truth; and having acquired it, difficult it is to put it into practice. Ignorant, indeed, is he who having obtained the human birth squanders away his time in the pursuits of the pleasures of the world, which can never obtain for the soul the bliss which it is hankering after.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Everything Revolves Around Faith

No prescriptions, based on blind faith, on how to lead a happy life are going to be accepted by a person who has a developed and discerning mind. Any one who has ever undertaken the completion of a major project of any kind knows that the successful achievement of an object of desire depends on (1) the belief in the possibility of its attainment; (2) the knowledge of the means by which it is to be attained; and (3) the actual employment of these means in the proper way, that is to say, the doing of the right thing at the right moment. These three essentials of success give us the *why* and *wherefore* of all scientific methods, and constitute the standard by which we may judge the true nature and merit of each of the several paths.

The object of desire in our case is the attainment of the divine attributes, in fullness and perfection, of our souls. We can reach our goal only through the three-fold path of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. The singular 'path' is used in order to indicate that all the three – faith, knowledge, and conduct – together constitute it. Faith is the foundation on which our progress depends.

Belief in the ascertainment of things or substances – *tattvas* – in their true character is right faith. These substances are seven in number: the soul, the non-living, influx of *karmic* matter into the soul, bondage, cessation of influx, destruction of existing bonds, and, finally, liberation. The soul is characterized by consciousness, and the most important substance in our consideration. Every soul is endowed by nature with a capacity for infinite knowledge and bliss. However, swayed by passions, we allow different types of *karmic* matter to ‘tie down’ our soul. If the soul were an insentient principle, like a balloon, it could never free itself from the captivity, but being an active, conscious being, it has the power, hence the choice, to cut the cords with which it is tied down. Hence, its bondage continues just as long as it does not exert itself to break its bonds. It must, however, be remembered that the power of exertion depends on self-knowledge which arises only when the bondage itself is somewhat loosened. Man alone of all creatures is gifted with the power to free himself from bondage through exertion. That is why, the Scriptures emphasize on the importance and privilege of human birth. Right faith opens the outlook of life to embrace the highest good.

Our soul is the nature of pure intelligence, the substance which knows and feels. The relation between thought and belief is that the latter constitutes a mould for fixing the former’s form. It is for this reason that the soul speedily becomes what it actually *believes* itself to be. If it replaces its sense of identity with the body with one of its Supreme nature, it will actually acquire that status as soon as the right kind of belief becomes fully established in its consciousness. The main thing, then, is to acquire the belief in one’s own identity. One must believe that the soul is quite independent of the body, and is composed of a substance which completely differs from the physical organism which it inhabits. But to acquire this belief is not an easy matter by any means. In

order to achieve the desired result, one must have faith in the divinity and the all-knowing attribute of the soul and that our happiness, therefore, depends upon ourselves, not on any outside substances. The conviction of this truth must saturate the mind through and through; for the least doubt creeping in will neutralize whatever little faith may have been acquired by the soul. We must hold the idea of the Self being the *parmātmān* constantly before the mind, and should, in every possible manner, try to strengthen it by thought, word, and deed, in daily life. A small amount of courage and cheerfulness will go a long way towards success as God helps those who help themselves. If we wish to avoid pain and suffering, if we wish to come into our own and to realize our divine nature, we must give up our evil notions and desires, and replace them with right beliefs and thoughts.

Right faith arises either from innate disposition or from acquisition of knowledge. That type of right faith which arises without teaching by others is the first variety. That which arises on the basis of knowledge of soul and other substances, acquired by the teaching of others is the second variety of right faith. An unwavering mental assent is what is implied by faith. With respect to its quality, faith grounded on knowledge is the best form of faith. Right faith cannot possibly be acquired without a proper use of the intellect, since nothing but reason is capable of destroying our doubts. It is true that testimony is also capable of affording a temporary sort of satisfaction, but since it is impossible for it to cover all possible points, and since its worth, reliability and interpretation have to be determined before its acceptance, it is not within its pale to remove all doubts. Hence, he who depends on testimony is like the man who builds his house on sand. Even the satisfaction which testimony seems to afford is more apparent than real, because knowledge is like food, which must be digested in order to become ours. It is no use to us if somebody else eats the

food, not even if it is done in our name! Same is the case with knowledge. Testimony is not only usually incapable of affording a solid foundation for faith, but also goes to make the confusion more confounded. Let's take a practical instance, related to our own lives, to illustrate the point. We have been told by our parents and teachers, since childhood, that speaking a lie was a sin, and we believe it to be so. When we grow up, we don't fail to teach the same tenet to our children. Yet, how many of us can say that we don't speak a lie? There must be something wrong with our belief. The fact of the matter is that the belief is not founded on the strength of our intellect and, therefore, fails when put to test. The following parable is an excellent example of how our soul becomes a victim of our actions based on skin-deep beliefs:

As a traveller was riding along a solitary road to fulfill an appointment, a stranger met up with him and said, "Friend, have you ever prayed?"

"No."

"How much will you take never to pray hereafter?"

"One dollar."

The stranger paid it over, and then continued on his journey. The traveller put the money in his pocket, and passed on, himself thinking about what had just happened.

The more the traveller thought, the worse he felt.

"Well, now," he said to himself, "I have just sold my soul for one dollar! That must have been the devil I met up with! Nobody else would tempt me so. With all my soul I must repent, or be damned forever!"

Many tend to acquire faith without having the least idea of the difference that exists between the word-of-mouth and the emotion of belief. He, who only hears of a thing and forces himself to put faith in it, is liable to have it destroyed when assailed by doubt, the arch enemy which cannot be killed except with the sword of discrimination. Man must, therefore, build his house on the rock

of reason which alone can withstand the severest storms and squalls of scepticism. Besides, unreasoning zeal often degenerates into fanaticism and superstition, which are the forerunners of the worst types of evil.

Belief cannot be changed except by reason, that is, knowledge. It is clear, then, that knowledge alone is the weapon which can attack our wrong impressions and destroy false beliefs. It is the state of one's belief which has to be affected, so that one may be able to purge the mind of the wrong impression of inferiority, and, at the same time, build up an unchanging, undying faith in the heart.

For long we have been hypnotized into the belief that we are wretched ignorant beings, evil by nature and birth, and doomed to suffer all sorts of rebuffs and disappointments at the hands of destiny and the forces of nature. There is only one way of removing this false and erroneous impression from our minds, and that is to convince ourselves of our strengths which, unfortunately, lie dormant till we ignite that spark of faith and knowledge from within, which alone is able to remove all doubts. Quoting authority, reading scriptures and listening to religious discourses, as well as reading this book, will be of no avail at all. Perfect conviction follows only a total annihilation of doubt, which necessitates an exhaustive investigation to one's own satisfaction. That no outside command or suggestion will be of much use has been brought out clearly in what *Swami Rama Tirtha* says:

“If the sun should say to the mangoes of Bombay, as I revealed my warmth and light to the birch and cedar of the Himalayas, I will not do so to you, you must grow and flourish on my revelations of goodness and power to those beautiful mountainous giants, the Bombay mangoes would be no more. Neither could the lilies of the field live on the sun that shone upon the garden-apples, nor could

Shakespeare, Newton or Spencer live upon a revelation made to Buddha, Christ or Muhammad. So have we to solve our own problems and to begin to see with our own eyes, rather than to continue peeping through the eyes of our most venerable Seers and the Sages of the past gone by.”

Each man has to work out his growth and salvation himself; none may claim support from his neighbour. One must remove one's doubts, one by one, for no one but you yourself know what your doubts are. This is the very first principle. It will, in due course of time, bring its reward, which is self-reliance. Its development is the first sign of success.

Right faith has its eyes constantly fixed on the great ideal of perfection and bliss, and never loses sight of it for a moment. Its function is to determine the direction of the individual activity in the right way, preventing it from becoming self-destructive. Faith is like the man at the helm, always directing and guiding the barge of life, in storm and in calm. He whose heart is not chastened by right faith is like the rudderless ship which is soon dashed to pieces against rocks, for want of proper guidance and control. The necessity for right faith is fully obvious from the fact that people only live up to their beliefs.

If one wants to dwell in a heaven where one can enjoy undisturbed bliss, one must help in its evolution from within. All one has to do is to sow the tiny little seed of faith. If the mental emotion be a happy and blessed one, everything will adjust itself to contribute its share of bliss to the man who puts himself in that attitude. The true nature of the soul is blissful, though it is now lying buried beneath a heap of filth and rubbish of evil passions and desires. As Vivekananda says, the soul is like a prisoner lying in a prison, barred and chained from within, waiting for the arrival of the Liberator. We have called him, prayed to him to come, and are anxiously awaiting his arrival. But there is no redeemer

without; the help really has to come from the soul itself who alone can open it. One has not to go out anywhere in search of happiness but has merely to remove the load of impurity from the precious gem lying within.

It is a spiritual law of universal applicability that whosoever shall save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose it, shall find it. Thus, if a man regard himself as a miserable sinner, he must ever remain so; on the other hand, if he forget his small self, the ego of desires, and *believes* himself to be a God, he will soon actually become the enjoyer of the status of Godhood. Belief in one's own divine nature will counteract the poison of the suggestion of inferiority and evil, and gradually establish a reign of desirelessness and dispassion, which will bring peace and tranquility of the mind. Misery and fear arise from wrong suggestions which are accepted and acted upon by the soul. We must now determine to cure ourselves by auto-suggestion of a counter nature. Faith is the little seed to be sown, and it will do the rest, for belief translates itself into action without fail.

The ignorance of the godly nature of the soul has been the cause of trouble in the past and the change of belief, in the right direction, must bring about the state of oneness with the Self. In practice, however, it will be found that the strengthening of faith is a much harder task than many would imagine it to be. There are thousands, if not millions, of men who know and theoretically believe their souls to be 'all-powerful' and 'all-knowing', yet they are hopelessly involved in delusion and utterly helpless against its temptations and snares. Self-actualization depends on unshakable, unchanging conviction of truth. Such a conviction necessitates a complete saturation of the mind with belief in one's own soul and in the harmful effects on it of the pleasures of the world.

When the mind is steadied and gives up the habit of wandering in the pursuit of the objects of the senses, it becomes quiescent,

setting the soul free to study itself. In consequence of the quieting down of the mind, the soul now presents the appearance of the placid surface of a lake unruffled by storm or waves, and sees itself as the source of all knowledge and power and bliss. Right discernment, or belief, having arisen, it immediately sets knowledge free from the subjection to doubt and dubiousness.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Knowledge Is The Key

Acquisition of the detailed knowledge of the process of self-realization is a must; without right knowledge nothing but confusion can be expected as a result of our actions. It is the chart which is intended to furnish an accurate description of the path to be traversed, of the obstacles to be encountered on the way, and of the means to be employed to steer clear of them. Mastery over one's destiny cannot be acquired except by the doing of the right thing at the right moment. But the selection of the right thing and the right moment is not possible by dependence on chance, that is, without the knowledge of what is right and what is not so. It follows, therefore, that knowledge is a condition precedent to the obtainment of true bliss.

Knowledge exists in consciousness; it really arises from within, and education is merely its drawing forth from the depths of consciousness. Many of the past sages and prophets were quite innocent of the art of reading and writing, and yet some of us still marvel at their knowledge and insight. This definitely goes to show that knowledge needs self-meditation and concentration to rise to the surface. Wherever there is concentration of thought,

wisdom is sure to reveal itself there, sooner or later. आत्मेव गुरुः
आत्मनः – soul is the *guru* (teacher) of the soul.

What is commonly understood by knowledge does not include feeling and mental tendencies within its scope. We are accustomed to apply that word exclusively to ideas deliberately formed or to dry facts and formulae of logic and other sciences and arts. Strictly speaking, though, knowledge is preserved in the modifications of feelings and mental tendencies. Hence, we may say that knowledge exists in two different ways in the soul, namely, in the shape of mental tendencies or feelings, and as ideas. In the former case, it determines our instincts, that is, disposition, and in the latter leads us to conscious deliberation in thought.

It will not be difficult to understand how knowledge can be preserved in the shape of tendencies and feelings if we study the effect of education on ourselves. A child, by nature, is of an inquisitive and explosive temperament, and devoid of scruples and consideration for others. But a grown-up man is generally a very different being, and has little of the savageness of the child about him. The difference between these two states is undoubtedly due to the education received by him as a member of the society. The question now is, what is that faculty of organ which is modified in consequence of education?

Superficially we point to the brain as the repository of education; but that cannot be. For the brain is essentially perishable, while the effects of education linger in the soul, even when the intellect has fallen into decay. In order to be of any service to the soul, education must first modify disposition. But disposition cannot be modified purely and simply by the dry formulae of knowledge; it yields only to experience, since we adopt what is pleasing and avoid the unpleasant. We thus get the clue to the nature of the faculty in which the results of education are retained. It is that which *feels*.

Hence, all kinds of impressions, or states of consciousness lie latent in the soul, and only need removal of the causes which prevent their coming into manifestation to emerge from the sub-conscious state. The existence of a capacity to know is not anything foreign to the soul, or to be acquired from without, but its very nature.

The nature of the soul being pure intelligence, the differences in the degree of its manifestation in different individuals must be due to the influence of some outside force, or agent, whose association or union with the soul has the effect of depriving it of its pure clarity of knowledge. Unconscious matter, known as knowledge-obstructing *karmas*, is just such an agent. It follows from here that the removal of the veil of this matter, by destroying or checking the energy of knowledge-obstructing *karmas*, which interfere with the knowing capacity of the soul, is the real means of increase of knowledge. Our personal likes and dislikes, as well as wrong beliefs and passions and emotions are the causes which interfere with the dawn of knowledge. They make the intellect cloudy, producing the mental fog that is highly inimical to the clarity of conscious thought. Another cause of obstruction is the interest in the physical concerns of life which narrows down the zone of knowledge to what is regarded as the immediately useful for the requirements of the physical body. Attention here acts as a gate-keeper, who admits only the desirable, thus, shutting the door against all ideas other than those presenting themselves in response to the invitation of the desiring *manas* (lower mind, the seat of desires). We can therefore conclude that the functioning of the consciousness is obstructed by certain kinds of energies springing into being from personal likes, dislikes, interests, passions, emotions and desires.

Now we are in a position to understand that true knowledge is

much beyond what we normally get through education and our experiences.

According to the scriptures, knowledge is of five kinds. It may be pointed out here that we have no option but to turn to the wisdom of the ancients on this important subject as the much-boasted knowledge of the moderns is a mere smattering.

मतिश्रुतावधिमनःपर्ययकेवलानि ज्ञानम् ॥

– Āchārya Umāswami, *Tattvārthādhigama Sūtra*

Knowledge is of five kinds – sensory knowledge, scriptural knowledge, clairvoyance, telepathy and omniscience.

That which knows its objects through the senses and the mind is sensory knowledge. Through our senses and mind we get knowledge in four stages – appreciation, speculation, perceptual judgment and retention. Sensory knowledge is what we generally refer to as intelligence and includes remembrance, recognition and inductive as well as deductive reasoning.

Owing to the destruction-cum-subsidence of the knowledge-obstructing *karmas*, that which hears, or that through which ascertained objects are heard, or hearing alone is scriptural knowledge. Scriptural knowledge is acquired through the faculty of mind. Scriptural knowledge is preceded by sensory knowledge. While sensory knowledge acquaints us with the object of knowing, scriptural knowledge provides us its description.

The next three kinds of knowledge are direct knowledge as they do not depend on our senses or mind.

The capacity of clairvoyance ascertains matter in downward range or knows objects within limits. Clairvoyance knowledge enables a person to know things or objects even at a distance of time or space, without their coming into the effective range of the sense organs. Clairvoyance, thus, includes the knowledge of some of the past lives of the soul.

The thought-object located in the mind of another is called *manah* (mind) due to its association with the mind. Ascertaining the thoughts and ideas of others as well as of their past lives, is telepathy. Telepathy is far more potent than clairvoyance in terms of its purity and regions of space and time.

When all the perception- and knowledge-obstructing *karmas* are destroyed, omniscience is attained. An omniscient comprehends all substances and their modifications. Omniscience, full and perfect, is the highest kind of perception, which knows all things, unlimited by time and space. Attainment of omniscience is possible and is possessed by purified souls of very high order, who have freed their souls from the bondage of all destructive *karmas*. We can only presume its glory, which is beyond description.

It may be mentioned here that sensory knowledge, scriptural knowledge, and clairvoyance can also be erroneous knowledge, especially when these are associated with wrong beliefs. To give an analogy, the taste of milk kept in an inappropriate container becomes unpleasant; the defect lies with the receptacle and not with milk. A person who has such wrong knowledge acts in a whimsical manner, unable to distinguish or discern between the right and the wrong. Even when his statement is correct, it does not carry much weight because it is not grounded on right belief and discernment. The last two types of knowledge – telepathy and omniscience – can be acquired only by the purified souls and, therefore, there is no scope for an error.

The foregoing assertion makes it clear that reading of books or listening to others can only help us in getting a minuscule fraction of the extant knowledge; the main source lies in our own power to meditate and concentrate. However, this power of ours has dwindled to a great extent as we have hardly any time left from the pursuit of sensual pleasures and riches.

There were neither books, nor computers, nor research laboratories available to our pre-historic men. Whence could they have gained their profound knowledge, if not from within – the only source from which we all learn anything. Sir Isaac Newton learnt the law of gravitation not from the falling apple, but from meditation and deliberation. All knowledge comes from these two sources. With the help of the torch of the intellect and reason, the sages applied themselves to the study of the open book that Nature is, and the Truth revealed itself to them in full glory.

In a previous chapter, we had mentioned about the existence of seven substances or *tattvas* – the soul, the non-living, influx of *karmic* matter into the soul, bondage, cessation of influx, destruction of existing bonds, and liberation. It is clear that we want our soul to be freed from these *karmic* bonds, as far as possible. No soul desirous of its welfare can afford to remain ignorant of them. The problem of breaking the *karmic* bonds is resolvable into the following seven points, which follow from our knowledge of the *tattvas*:

Jiva – the soul: Gives us an idea of the nature of that which is to be freed.

Ajiva – the non-living: What is the nature of the substance of which the chains of bondage are composed?

Āsrava – influx of *karmic* matter into the soul: How does the second substance approach the first?

Bandha – bondage: How are the bonds forged?

Samvara – cessation of influx: In what way can we stop the forging of fresh bonds?

Nirjarā – destruction of existing bonds: How to destroy those actually existing now?

Moksha – liberation: What will be the nature of the soul once the bonds have been destroyed?

We need to understand, in some detail, the nature of the bonds that our soul is liable to be affected with.

What are these bonds and how to break them to set our soul free? The first thing to understand is that there can be no bondage of pure mental abstractions or purely wordy concepts. The word signifies some kind of real fetters of some very subtle and fine kind of matter. It is well to know that nothing but force, in some form or other, is capable of exercising restraint or of holding living beings in the condition of captivity, and that no kind of force is conceivable apart from a substance of some kind or other. The bondage of soul must, therefore, be bondage of matter, however subtle and fine. The obtainment of freedom must consequently imply the removal of the particles of foreign material from the constitution of the ego.

Our soul is liable to be affected, agreeably or otherwise, by all kinds of actions – mental, physical and those concerning with speech. But the union or fusion of spirit and matter cannot take place unless the soul be first thrown into an attitude of desire, i.e., weakness. It is common experience that we fail to notice even the taste of food in the mouth whenever attention is deeply engrossed elsewhere.

The rule appears to be that the stronger the desire the deeper the penetration of the particles of matter into the soul, and closer the union between them and the soul, so that the worst forms of bondage result from the worst types of desires. Our desires and passions principally assume four different propensities and appear as greed, deceit, pride and anger. In order to gratify our greed, we resort to deceit; pride arises from the possession of what is worldly desirable, while anger blazes up in consequence of being foiled in an endeavour to secure an object of desire, or from wounded pride. These four kinds of passions are the main causes of bondage and their strength or malignity, which will also determine their

duration, is determined by the intensities of our passions. Our wicked activities, of body, speech and mind, engender negative or harmful *karmic* matter to the soul, and virtuous activities are responsible for bringing in positive matter in association with the soul. That is how we earn *punya* (merit) and *pāpa* (demerit) through our actions and behaviour. Wicked activities of the body include killing, stealing and physically torturing someone. Falsehood, harsh and uncivil language are wicked speech activities. Entertaining thoughts of violence, envy, calumny are some wicked thought-activities. In general, where ignorance is not an excuse, any activity performed with evil intentions is wicked and the one performed with good intentions is virtuous.

Our soul is unable to enjoy its natural perfection in respect of knowledge, perception and happiness due to the forces arising from its fusion with matter, engendered by our own actions. The soul, thus, becomes vulnerable by our own inclinations, longings and desires. It is our own longings for the things of the world which go to weaken our native vigour. Our free nature is, however, constantly at war with our evil inclinations and pursuits as our soul is in constant search for that elusive happiness. It is but common sense to say that unless we ourselves desist from the doing of the evil and banish it from our hearts, no one can do it for us from without. With the advent of this wisdom and its concomitant state of desirelessness, the pole of magnetism changes, and the particles of matter, instead of being attracted and held together with the soul, are repelled and dispensed. Giving up of desires which produce the condition of weakness in the soul must necessarily bring about its liberation from the thralldom of matter, called bondage of *karmas*.

There are diverse means prescribed in religions the world over for changing the negative condition of the soul and for ridding it of its harmful desires. They aim at engendering the spirit

of renunciation in the soul, weaken and destroy the bonds of its *karmas*, and enable it to acquire its divine attributes and powers.

No soul desirous of its welfare can afford to remain ignorant of the scheme of things mentioned above. That knowledge which we use as equipment for bread-winning or world-gaining is not true knowledge. Right knowledge means setting man on the road to spiritual growth, development and realization, leading him, ultimately, not to the path of greater glory in the sense-world – wealth, power and pleasure – but to that of lasting inner happiness, satisfaction and joy beyond description.

Enough of theoretical workout. All theoretical speculations must, sooner or later, be replaced by practical achievement for the realization of the great ideal of perfection and happiness. It is clear that the cause of unhappiness, bondage and misery of the soul is purely and simply ignorance. It has been also seen that almost all the Redeemers and Saviours of the race, who have appeared in various ages and countries, have pointed out the primary means of redemption to consist in the knowledge of the Self. But this is true only in a general way, since it is one thing to know the truth and another to realize it; for the very first requisite for realization is a firm, unshakable belief in the truth. It is the state of one's belief which has to be affected, so that one may be able to purge the mind of the wrong impressions of inferiority. But belief cannot be changed except by reason, that is, knowledge. Hence, it is clear that knowledge alone is the weapon which can attack wrong impressions and destroy false beliefs. Let's take a practical instance to illustrate the principle. Suppose a child sees a rope in a dark room, fancies it to be a serpent, and is afraid to go into that room. How will you remove the erroneous impression of the child? Will you not lift him up in your arms, and take him to the fancied serpent, and let him satisfy himself in every manner that

his belief was a mistaken one?

Like the child in the example, man believes that there is, in the chamber of his heart, the black serpent of Evil, and is unhappy thereby. There is only one way of removing the wrong impression from his mind, and that is to convince him that there is no serpent but God Himself in his heart. Quoting best of authority on the subject is not going to convince him; it can be done only when he has been led to think and experiment for himself, to his utter satisfaction. Every individual has to stand on his own legs; none may claim support from his neighbour. You must remove your own doubts, one by one, for no one but you know what your doubts are.

One may believe the conclusions arrived at by others to be correct, but this is merely a second-hand method. Unless we have thought over the point for ourselves, we can never be certain of the result, and the germ of doubt cannot be said to have been killed. The only way of effectively destroying doubt is to revolve the thing, in all its bearing in the mind, that is, to dissect it, to analyze it, to cut it to pieces, from all possible points of view. The opinion formed in this manner will preclude all doubts. This kind of thinking with a purpose is meditation. Meditation is the process of classification and generalization of facts into principles, and it is clear that no sound grounding of knowledge can be possible without it. But meditation depends on concentration, which is the real secret of success. And concentration means the focusing of force on a point.

Stress is laid by all the great scholars of the world, directly or by necessary implication, on mental concentration, described by some as the keynote of success. *Swami Vivekananda* on the power of concentration:

“How has all the knowledge in the world been gained but by concentration of the power of the mind? Nature is ready to give up

her secrets if we only know how to knock, to give her the necessary blow, and the strength and force of the blow come through concentration. There is no limit to the power of the human mind. The more concentrated it is, the more power is brought to bear on one point; and that is the secret.”

The object of concentration should be, firstly, the denial of the imaginary unbridgeable gulf between God and man, and secondly, the positive assertion of the Divinity of the Self. This should be the real aim and object of concentration. Whenever we can find time for it – and the oftener we do it the better – we should settle down to concentrate on these points. If we have faith in the teaching, we would very soon begin to feel that we are on the right path. A few moments’ concentration, with faith, is all that is needed to show one that one’s labour has not been in vain. It is the best proof that one can ask for, or that can be furnished by any system. As we persevere in concentration, we shall realize that what we have considered happiness hitherto is a condition foreign to the very notion of bliss. Real happiness will come to you by the right use of concentration alone. So long as you do not give up your false ideals of bustling worldly life, you stand in your own way and debar yourself from true joy. We must give up the pursuit of the shining objects which has brought us all the ills and unhappiness. It is only a delusion which makes us think that happiness is to be had from the outside. When we ‘wake up’ we shall find the Self to be source of bliss itself, and shall wonder how we could have forgotten ourselves to such an extent as we did. The nervous system of man is made up of ‘polarized’ cells, and the mind is a great ‘steel bar’ in which, under his present condition, the particles are so badly arranged that the psycho-magnetic ‘fluid’ in one is neutralized by the opposite kind of ‘fluid’ in another. Let him rearrange the particles of the mind, let the positive poles of all the cells of the mind-stuff point in the same direction, and let this

direction be that of Life, and there will be no limit to his power and happiness!

The process of rearranging the particles of our mind will entail doing away with the habit of confining our thoughts to what are called *ārta dhyāna* (sorrowful meditation) and *raudra dhyāna* (cruel meditation) forms of meditation. These are inauspicious kinds of meditation as they lead to the influx and bondage of inauspicious *karmas*.

In ‘sorrowful’ meditation, a person thinks, again and again, about his coming in contact with disagreeable objects, events and situations, which cause him pain, and the ways and means of getting rid of them. He is not able to free his mind from the anguish caused by the loss of some agreeable objects, such as wealth or close relative. He is possessed by feelings of pain caused by disease or sickness, and is constantly under fear. He is tormented by the desire for pleasures, wishing always for the pleasures not yet attained by him.

In ‘cruel’ meditation he thinks, again and again, about the delight generated to him in teasing, injuring, hunting or killing other living beings; about taking revenge, planning to beat or kill someone; about fabricating facts to gain undue advantage; about devising schemes for sensual gratification and accumulation of wealth and material comforts.

As against these inauspicious kinds of meditation, the man after Truth, takes refuge in the other two kinds of meditation which are auspicious: *dharma dhyāna* (righteous mediation), and *shukla dhyāna* (pure, spiritual meditation).

‘Righteous’ meditation is thinking, again and again, about God’s revelations; about the ways and means to escape from the cycle of worldly existence; about the fruition of *karmas* and means for dissociation of the soul from them; about the structure and form of the universe.

‘Pure’ meditation signifies self-contemplation in the highest sense and this kind of meditation occurs only in the saints of very high order, who are on the path to liberation.

Knowledge, that is, wisdom, necessitates meditation and concentration and cannot be had without them. Conversely, meditation and concentration lead to wisdom, without anything further being necessary. Wherever there develops the habit of deep concentration and meditation, or thoughtfulness, there wisdom must, sooner or later, come into manifestation.

When meditation has led to the knowledge of identity between the Self and God, it becomes incumbent on the soul to rise itself to the point of belief. Right belief being acquired, speedy realization is possible by combining the path of knowledge with that of proper conduct.

CHAPTER NINE

The Logic Of Prayer

Prayer we must get rid of our impure thoughts and reflect upon the unsurpassable virtues of our object of worship. If nothing else, praying does provide us with a spirit of resignation from the worldly affairs, at least for the duration of its performance. We surrender to the divine virtues of the Supreme Being and therefore experience a sense of relief, a feeling of soothing consolation. Praying reduces our negative emotions and promotes positive feelings.

Praying must not be shedding of tears of helplessness. There is no such thing in Nature anywhere as a department for receiving and disposing of the countless millions of unreasonable and self-contradictory prayers which are poured forth daily by the human race. Unreasonable, because a terrorist might pray, with all the intensity at his command, for success in his next mission of terrorism. Self-contradictory, because two persons, engaged in a bitter court case for the ownership of a piece of land, might both pray, to the same Deity, for a verdict in their favour. It is totally unreasonable to imagine that our sufferings and wants have to be repeatedly brought to the notice of the all-knowing God before he

may be expected to move in the matter. Further, a loving Father must be deemed to grant as much as he can prudently give to the starving and otherwise needy children, without waiting to be pestered by them with petitions of appeal for help.

For some of us, praying means not only singing hymns in praise of God but also offering Him all sorts of material things of the world, including money. We believe that our songs of praise and material offerings will please Him and prompt Him to favour and support us. As a corollary, we also believe that our failure to offer Him such material things might invoke His wrath on us. Those who ascribe anger to their gods forget that anger is not an attribute of Godhood. Since divinity must be presumed to be happy, and since anger is the antithesis of happiness, as it arises when things do not happen as they should, he who is angry cannot be happy at the same time. It would follow that if he be an irritable god, he would hardly ever have a moment of happiness, seeing the full panorama of human wickedness. But a being who himself has no moments of happiness, certainly cannot confer it on others. It follows, therefore, that anger can have no place in the disposition of God.

Prayer, in a large number of cases, thus, is an indication of a lapse from rationalism. And, as a result, it is nourished by superstition and ignorance. Superstition seldom fails to implant itself on the worship of mythological gods, and misunderstood devotion usually turns itself into imploring of favours – “God do this, Lord do that.”

Just a couple of centuries ago, diseases like plague and smallpox were considered to be nothing but God’s fury and in every case of outbreak of such a disease the generality of men and women would rush to ‘please’ their gods in whatever manner they thought was appropriate.

During the dreadful outbreak of the plague epidemic in

Calcutta in 1899, it was Sister Nivedita and her team, among few other social workers, who impressed upon the Bengali youth that the first lesson in fighting the disease was not superstition and helplessness but proper sanitation.

World over, an estimated 300 million people died from smallpox in the 20th century alone. Most people in India believed that smallpox was the result of the wrath of a *Mātā or Devi* (Goddess), and the only way to get cured was her worship coupled with all sorts of superstitious rituals to be performed by shamans – *ojhās* and *tāntriks* – purported to possess powers to drive away evil spirits. The cause of this virulent disease, however, was a virus, called ‘speckled monster’ by Edward Jenner, the scientist who invented (1796) the method for vaccination against it. Global eradication of smallpox was achieved much later, in the 1970s, through mass vaccination drives.

The truth of the matter is that the most essential part of devotion to God is the ‘doing’ or ‘keeping’ of His teachings, to follow His footsteps.

“Why call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say.”

- Luke, vi. 46

“Not every one that sayeth unto me, Lord, Lord shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

- Matthew, vii. 21

The reason of His worship, therefore, is that He is our true guide and His word is the final authority in case of doubt and dispute. He is the living example to guide us in the right way to cross the ‘thorny path’; it is almost impossible to tread the path without His practical instructions and guidance.

We keep the images of our Gods in our hearts and temples to

constantly remind us of our high ideal and to inspire our own souls with faith and confidence. As for Their worship, They have no personal desire to be worshipped by us; Their perfection is immeasurably greater than we can praise; They are full and perfect in Their wholeness, beyond words. We offer Them the devotion of our hearts because it is the most potent means of making steady progress in our journey to attain bliss. We do not worship Them because worship is pleasing to Them, but because it is the source of the greatest good to our own souls.

It is seen that we do not think of praying so long as we believe that we can reach our object of desire through a chain of causes and effects, beginning with an effort on our part and ending at the goal in view. For example, we do not pray that our food may be cooked, project report written, e-mail sent, and so on. A superstitious man will, however, immediately fall on his knees to pray the moment there is a breakdown of the causal connection between the means employed and the end to be attained. We do not pray in time of war that God might send our missiles to a greater distance than the guns are able to fire them, or that a hundred enemies be killed with a single bullet. But we do pray for victory when all we could do has been done and there still are numerous factors beyond our control which will determine the ultimate victory. So, after doing our best under the circumstances, we 'leave' things in the hands of the Supreme Being and get a sense of relief since the outcome, as it is, is beyond our control.

It is clear now that we do not cease to perform our normal work after a prayer has been made, and, therefore, the chances of getting to the desired object still remain intact, which the superstitious seldom fail to attribute to their Deity. The outcome itself was bound to happen and would have happened, whether anyone prayed for its occurrence or not. Its synchronism with

prayer cannot be said to be due to the interference on the part of a prayer-granting agency in heaven.

The true meaning of prayer lies in engaging oneself, with a cheerful mind, in subduing one's likes and dislikes and dissociating mentally from all kinds of worldly interests and undertakings. During the period of engagement in prayer, we, as a consequence of our mind's immersion in God, automatically distance ourselves from the commission of all kinds of sins. The most valuable gain is the cultivation of an ever-growing feeling of equanimity and well-balanced state of mental quietude and serenity.

Prayer, thus, is the submission of our body, mind and speech to the Glory of our object of worship, with the idea of getting inspiration from its divine qualities, and, in the process, getting immersed in divinity. What we have to offer to our God, if we really wish to 'please' Him, is our false, personal self, that is, our own lower nature. All other offerings of material goods may, at best, be just symbolic of this basic principle of offering. The prayer of the ignorant is only for the objects of his desire; the very things he should have left at home before entering the place of his worship.

In the prayer, known as the Lord's Prayer, we say, "Give us this day our daily bread." According to our interpretation of these words, they have nothing in common with the idea of an urgent appeal, or that you should be craving, wishing and praying for your daily bread. Even the richest of men, a king or head of a state, who is in no danger of not having his daily bread, is to offer this prayer. Our study of the Christian literature for the interpretation of the Lord's Prayer revealed:

The Lord offers living water. He offers Himself as the 'bread of life.' He says, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and

are life.”

It is not the mere knowledge of His words that is meant by the bread of life. Knowledge is only the raw material from which spiritual food can be prepared. Unless a flame of affection warms the cold words of doctrine into a savory food that rekindles the energies of the spirit, the mind becomes easily satiated and sometimes nauseated with instruction.

The Word often speaks of the food of spiritual life. This is what is meant by the food which Noah had to store in the ark before the great Flood, and by the grain stored by Joseph in the cities of Egypt before the seven years of famine. From infancy the Lord provides it in abundance, as innocence and simple faith, as the seeds of all future happiness and understanding. He stores it so deeply within the mind that man cannot reach in and dissipate it. It comes to the surface only when we are in forgetfulness of self. It is locked up for emergencies which the Lord alone foresees; and released when we begin to feel a spiritual hunger which we know as a love of truth. Then it comes down as manna from heaven.

But those who ‘hunger and thirst after righteousness,’ shall surely be filled. They who long for a better understanding of the purposes and duties of life and for a purer heart may see the sphere of charity reach out towards them from all sides, offering them refreshment of spirit. They discern the bread of heaven in the abundant truths of the Lord’s Word. They see how the Lord prepares a table before them even in the valley of shadow, in the presence of their enemies, so that their cup runneth over. For wherever we live according to the truth and do His will, there charity and use are ours for the seeking, with delight and food for the soul.

But the Lord tells us to pray, not, ‘Give us bread!’ but ‘Give us this day our daily bread.’ A wise father does not give a child their entire patrimony at once. Our heavenly Father grants us spiritual food in abundance, but only as much as we can receive and are able to use. We cannot ask Him for the bread of heaven only to lay it aside unused, or in order to hoard it and hide it. But we ask to be sustained in the tasks immediately ahead, ask for strength and illustration in the state we are commencing to enter, for a clearer perception of the

spiritual uses involved in our earthly duties. For in the spiritual world there is no food given to the indolent or to the evil, except as a remuneration for work done. And angels, who are in the love of uses, receive food and other necessities freely, but always in correspondence with their functions. (SD 6088, Love xii: 3)

But the Lord provides food for the hungry. Hunger comes when the energy stored in the cells of the body has been used up, converted into action. Spiritual hunger, which is a longing for good and truth, arises when man feels the need of spiritual renovation; and each new state must be initiated by a prayer for daily bread as an expression of such hunger. Then, if a person has stored their understanding with the teachings of the Word, this knowledge is converted into food, digested by meditation and assimilated by rational judgment, to strengthen the tissues of the new will.

It appears as if knowledge gave life and sustenance to the mind, even as it appears that material substances built the body. But it is really the soul, which organizes the body; and it is really a spiritual influx from the Lord that organizes the truths from the Word into vessels receptive of life from heaven. These truths are not mere undigested knowledge such as lodges in the memory, but truths of life which go to form a new will that receives the good which truth invites.

It is therefore a law of Providence that the will – the heart of man’s spirit – shall receive such spiritual food only in proportion as the person repents of their evils and removes them from their conscious mind; and that one shall be admitted *interiorly* into the truths of wisdom and the goods of love only so far as he can be kept in them to the end of his life. (DP 232).

What the prayer suggests is the highest level of spiritual hunger for the Truth; leading to repentance for the sins already committed, greater strength in undertaking the tasks immediately ahead, and to renunciation. Renouncing unto God all the wealth and plenty, all the beautiful and attractive objects, all that the man generally thinks to be his possession. He says to God that everything lying upon the table is His; not mine. Praying, as is

generally understood, is not for any material bounties or favours. Anyone who prays without understanding this underlying meaning of the prayer will not be a fit case for reaping the desired benefits.

One important mode of prayer is the chanting of holy *mantras*, i.e., religious formulae, or texts, of which the monosyllabic ‘*om*’, or ‘*aum*’, is the most potent. According to Hinduism, ‘*aum*’ is the most appropriate name of the Deity, because the three letters, *a*, *u*, and *m*, of which the word is composed, denote supremely excellent, supremely high and supremely wise; ‘*a*’ is for bliss or *ānanda*, ‘*au*’ signifies power or ‘*aujas*’, and ‘*ma*’ means supporter or protector. For Jains, ‘*om*’ is indicative of the five orders of spiritually evolved beings – *arhats* (*Tirthamkaras*, Deified Teachers), *aśariras* (Liberated Souls), *āchāryas* (Leaders of Saints), *upādhyāyas* (Professor Saints), and *munis* (Ordinary Saints). It is in the sense of devotion to them that they chant this *mantra*. Let it be clearly understood that chanting of a *mantra* is merely a means to an end, and is done with the sole object of establishing the human mind in divine, godly vibrations.

Chanting the praises of God, done in the aforesaid manner, is a potent means of changing the negative rhythm of the Soul into the positive one. So long as the will is imbued with the idea of powerlessness and impotency, it cannot manifest its divine powers. Prayer purges the individual consciousness of the harmful idea of its supposed weakness, and lifts it out of the slough of despond and negativity. The recitation of holy *mantras* and texts is calculated to divert the attention of the soul from our own worldly desires and passions, suffering and grief, pain and pleasure, to all that is inspiring and good. When the Soul is filled with the idea of goodness and power, it cannot then descend into the regions of pain and suffering.

Prayer must be a tool to rise from belief in, to the experience of, God; to realize God. It is a step in the process of our awakening, as *Swami Vivekananda* points out:

“Arise, awake! Awake from the hypnotism of weakness. None is really weak. The soul is infinite, omnipotent, omniscient. Stand up, assert yourself: proclaim the God within you; do not deny Him...

Teach yourselves, teach everyone, his real nature. Call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come, when this sleeping soul is raised to self-conscious activity.”

- *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. III, p.193

The concept of ‘self-fulfilling prophecy’ is well known to the students of management. It is a prediction that, in being made, actually causes itself to become true. We all form ‘self-fulfilling prophecies’ for ourselves, whether or not we are aware of what we are doing. What we perceive to be true about ourselves eventually becomes true through our own self-induced bias. We have to truly believe that our soul is omnipotent and has the potential to attain divinity, to be able to ultimately rise to that level. We must improve our thinking, changing our outlook on life to be more positive. The way in which we see ourselves has a powerful effect in changing our behaviour. With the strength of conviction in our own inner powers, our prayers are bound to produce much better result than otherwise.

As it is difficult to concentrate the mind on the invisible Godhead, or Self, we make use of the visible, tangible images to assist us in our worship. But the ultimate goal is to reach to the heights of bliss, of perfection, to which we can aspire. The Bible urges: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,” and, “...That ye be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

Those who have attained to perfection themselves are best qualified to instruct and guide others and are, therefore, entitled to the fullest measure of our devotion. It is the devotion to the ideal and our own ability to walk in Their footsteps that is going to cast off the impurities of sin from our soul.

Simply performing an action as a ritual without knowing the right reason and aim, is not going to yield the requisite result; one might devote a lifetime in its performance but the goal will not move an inch nearer. Mere counting of beads, without the knowledge of the real purpose underlying the task, is time wasted away.

CHAPTER TEN

Virtuous Living – For That Spring Of Life

There can be no denying the fact that no one who does not know the method of doing a thing is ever likely to be successful in his undertaking to accomplish its doing. No process which consists in a series of inaction, or things done wrongly, can ever be relied upon to lead us to the desired result. The man who would bake his bread, for instance, must know precisely what bread is made of, as well as the exact method of making and baking it. The acquisition of scientific knowledge, connecting the individual effort with the goal in view by a series of steps each of which carries one nearer the end than the one preceding it is, therefore, an absolute necessity, if we are to succeed in our undertaking. There is no difference in respect of the principles governing the method of realization whether the pursuit is of a spiritual nature or of any other kind.

Without right conduct – doing of the right thing at the right moment – no desired results can ever be achieved by any one. If right faith is the properly directed rudder and right knowledge the chart of navigation, right conduct is the force which actually

propels the barge towards the goal. It is simply inconceivable how success can possibly crown our endeavours where all or any of them is wanting.

With reference to the rules of right conduct, the aspirants after self-realization have been divided into two distinct classes, namely, ascetics, and we laymen. The former are those noble-minded high-soul beings who are determined to reach the goal by the shortest route of purifying themselves through *tapas* (ascetism), but the latter are ordinary men of the world, who, unable to keep pace with their more noble brethren, the *sādhus* and the *munis* (ascetics), seek to perfect themselves in the preliminary discipline of the householder's *dharma* (duty, religion). This right path, however, is not the 'practical' path of millionaires and potentates of the world, but the path of those who are seeking true happiness for themselves. As we cruise on the path of right conduct, many virtues are bound to adorn us; they become part of us. And, the rejuvenating waters of the spring of life start flowing into our whole system, making us feel much healthier and happier, than ever before. The spring of life, as is its nature, never fails to also sprinkle its waters on all those who come in contact with us, making them too feel better.

Dr. A. Besant in *When a Man Dies Shall He Live Again*, gives her idea of life that is worth living:

No life is worth the having which is filled only by selfish thought and cold indifference to the wants of the world around. That life is only fit to grow in the heavenly places which is a life of sharing, of giving of everything that one has gathered. And there is this joyous thing about all the real goods of life: the goods of intelligence, of emotion, of art, of love – all the things which are really worth the having – that they do not waste in the giving; they grow the more, the more we give. These physical things get smaller as we take away from them,

leaving so much less for future use; and so, when it is a question of sharing the physical things, men calculate and say: ‘I have only enough for myself, for my wife, for my child. How can I give any away?’ All that is matter is consumed in the using; but that is not true of the higher things, the things of the intelligence, of the heart, and of the spirit. If I know something, I do not lose it when I teach it. Nay! It becomes more truly mine because I have shared it with one more ignorant than myself; so that you have two people enriched by knowledge, by the sharing of a store that increases, instead of diminishing, as it is shared. And so with all that is worth having. You need not fear to lessen your own possession by throwing them broadcast to your hungry follow-men. Give your knowledge, your strength, your love; empty yourself utterly, and when for a moment you think you are empty, then from the inexhaustible fount of love, and beauty, and power more flows down to fill the empty vessel, making it fuller, and not emptier than it was before.

The lives of all great Teachers illustrate this principle of giving. According to the Bible, Jesus taught his disciples:

Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give.

– Matthew, x. 8

One true function of life is to radiate virtue all round, unceasingly. Health, bodily and mental, peace and joy are the result of this free radiation of life. This silent, steady work, in a spirit of goodwill and love, transmutes enemies into friends, evil into good, disease and sickness into health, and poverty into wealth. The man who is selfish, who loves only himself, who is cruel, vicious or intemperate, interferes with the free radiation of virtue from his being. When such evil thoughts are persisted in for a number of years, the mind and body lose their virility in consequence of the poison of evil, and a process similar to that of winding up of a going concern takes place. Life begins to shut up

shop till gradually the premises are vacated and shutters put up. Just as a businessman must give his best product to the customers, and an employee must put in his best efforts to be able to survive and grow; similarly one must radiate virtues of love, compassion, truthfulness, humility, tolerance, and the like, in full measure to be able to bring to fruition one's inner strengths and glow. The understanding of this basic truth is sufficient to appreciate the wisdom underlying the saying: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you."

The Saviour's teaching about meeting evil with good, anger with kindness, and persecution with prayer for the welfare of the persecutor, is perfectly in accord with the scientific truths about the hygiene of life and attainment of the beatific condition called bliss.

Right attitude towards others has been beautifully summed up in the following scriptural direction:

मैत्रीप्रमोदकारुण्यमाध्यस्थानि च सत्त्वगु णाधिकक्लिश्यमानाविनयेषु ॥

— Āchārya Umāswami, *Tattvārthādhigama Sūtra*

Benevolence towards all living beings, joy at the sight of the virtuous, compassion and sympathy for the afflicted, and tolerance towards the insolent and ill-behaved.

The desire that others should be free from suffering and pain is benevolence. Benevolence must be directed towards all living beings. Fervent affection as well as veneration in the presence of the virtuous is joy. The virtuous are those in whom knowledge and virtues abound. The disposition to render assistance to the afflicted is compassion. The afflicted are those who suffer from anguish and distress. Tolerance, that is, unconcern, is freedom from attachment and repulsion based on desire and aversion. The

ill-behaved are those who don't listen to the truth and don't cultivate virtues.

These virtues can be ours if we truly believe in *ahimsā* (non-violence). *Ahimsā* means not injuring others; without *ahimsā* no real progress whatsoever can be made on the spiritual path. Since we injure others only to satisfy our desires, desirelessness must necessarily lead to *ahimsā*. Furthermore, when one does not show respect to life in another's body, one cannot also regard one's own life as divine, since they are alike in all essential respects. Thus, whether it be love for one's neighbour, friends, relations, other human beings or animals, in loving them, one really loves one's true Self and realizes one's inner divinity. On the contrary, in hating any one, even enemies and animals, one only moves away from the goal, hence, stands in the way of one's own progress, and comes to grief. Wanton cruelty, for which there can be no justification, is the very first thing to be abandoned. The aspirant after divinity and joy must, therefore, give up hunting sport and animal food to be able to make any headway on the path.

There is a significant, almost universally accepted, principle in religion – the principle of non-attachment to the fruits of action. The object is to rid the soul of its worldly desires. Work we all must perform to avoid stagnation, but it is essential that we should not make our happiness dependent on its result. The significance of work, in our sense, is very different from what we ordinarily understand by the word. Work does not mean the plodding drudgery of the toiler after riches, nor the performance of labour, whether mental or physical, for the sake of gain.

It is only a labourer who works for gain to satisfy his earthy cravings. The Master never labours for worldly gain. The object of work is the renunciation of desires, since they keep us entangled in delusion. Desire is a confession of being wanting in fullness.

The natural perfection of the soul remains hidden only so long as we do not renounce attachment to the fruit of action. The moment we stake our happiness on the result of work in hand, mind loses its tranquility, and intellect its foresight. It is also incumbent on the soul, at a certain stage of its spiritual progress, to rise above the sense of worldly duty, to attain to its highest good.

It is true that renunciation appears very unattractive and unpleasant at first, and few, indeed, there be who can or do appreciate its merit. Nevertheless, without renunciation no progress is possible in any department, physical, mental, or spiritual. It is always confined to giving up of such practices and habits as hinder the onward progress of the individual. The child who would acquire knowledge must give up toys and go to school; the young businessman who would make money must abandon the habit of going to the cinema halls; the general who would conquer the enemy must take leave of his hearth and home; and so forth. Similarly, he who would tread the path which leads to bliss, must retrace his steps from that which goes hellward for they lie in opposite directions!

Lord Rāma took to the exile of fourteen years, to forests and other most inhospitable habitats, in the prime of his youth, without any regrets or lamentations, whatsoever, at the slightest suggestion of his father King Dashrath, who was forced to make such an unpleasant demand in order to keep his word, given to wife Kékayee. What Lord Rāma was to leave behind was his kingdom, the majestic splendour and regal comforts of which one can only conjure up in one's mind! Wife Sitā and Brother Laxman accompanied him on this arduous journey most willingly; in fact, notwithstanding resistance from Lord Rāma himself. Brother Bharat, for the sake of whose coronation as King, Kékayee had played the game with King Dashrath, refused to get himself anointed. He was, however, forced to stay back in Ayodhyā in the

interest of the people of the kingdom. But he did something remarkable: seated on the throne of Ayodhya was not he himself, but Lord Rāma's *khadāun* (wooden slippers), an apt reminder to him and to the others, who the actual King was.

The legend epitomizes the spirit of renunciation. This spirit is what made Lord Rāma so venerable; in fact, a God, worshipped by millions. Sitā, Laxman and Bharat are no less venerable; the legend illustrates their greatness in ample measure. By choosing to become poor, they became immeasurably rich!

‘Blessed are the poor in spirit,’ not because of their material poverty, but because of their deliberate acceptance of it on spiritual grounds. It is those and only those who are poor in spirit that will be admitted into the Kingdom of God. Those who remain content with their lot, and those who are poor in spirit, that is, not arrogant but peaceful, not easily offended but humble, and those who are happy and cheerful and virtuous are alone to be blessed. Heaven is to be claimed by the poor, the hungry and the thirsty, only when the hunger and thirst are for righteousness. There is no room there for any one who has a grumbling disposition in the least. The principle illustrated is that if one longs for not material things, and renounces them by choice, not by force of circumstances over which he has no control, he is blessed. The renunciation of wealth in this manner is a means of attaining to the emotion of bliss. This teaching of Jesus is identical with that of the great Indian sages who have not only taught us the same thing in different words but practised renunciation to an extreme level to attain bliss in their own lives. Search for righteousness, provided it is sincere, procures peace and freedom from desire, and enables the hidden state of *ānanda* (bliss) to come into manifestation.

The idea of renunciation is not to decry national growth at all so far as its own sphere of action is concerned. It has its good points, and has gone a long way to improve the living conditions of

the masses in certain areas. But we must not lose sight of the distinction between social and individual interests, nor confound individual happiness with computers, information technology, and biotechnology. National growth will not take its inhabitants into paradise in a body, for its doors are open only for individuals, not for races. Moreover renunciation involves giving up, rather than accumulating or hoarding, of material things.

The arrows of adversity do not penetrate the man of renunciation for he has nothing to grieve for, but they pierce to the core the man of the world, because of his self-centeredness. Virtue is life, and, as such, is truly its own reward. The righteous are ever tranquil and they deviate, in the least, from the strict path of truth and rectitude. Cheerfully do they welcome adversity when it comes.

The notion of superiority over other fellow beings is a cause of much harm to our own system. Let us not forget that the notion of superiority is a form of emotion of hatred, and a piece of hateful falsehood, whether it be of one's physical, mental or moral attainments. By a domineering, supercilious demeanour, all that one can expect to gain is a temporary sense of greatness over certain members of our race, but surely it can mean pleasure only to a degraded intellect. There are others who are superior to us and who can treat us in the same manner. We must recognise that the temporary sense of triumph, or superiority, over one's subordinates is no compensation for the poison wrought in our own system. Real superiority lies in one's understanding of the things, but in that case, it takes the form of humility, not of arrogance or hauteur.

The soul, inflated with the pride of personality, i.e., *ahamkāra*, has wound round itself a number of coils of desires, and suffers from the tightness of the cords. And the strangest thing

about that is that although it yells from pain, its pride is not lessened, but goes on increasing, and the cords of passion and desire cut deeper and deeper into its ‘flesh’. Hundreds and thousands of beings suffer from this condition, never caring to know the reason *why* of their excruciating pain; and yet the cure is simple enough the moment the diagnosis is made. The cords cut deep into the ‘skin’ of the soul because it is inflated from within. The cause of this is *ahamkāra*. Take off a little of the air from the *ahamkāra*, and relief will come instantaneously. Remove *ahamkāra* completely, and the pain is gone.

Jesus was one of the meekest of the men of his age. He used to squat down on the ground, eat with his hands, and dress just as the poor people do, but many a preacher of his gospel now looks down upon this simple mode of life, and consider those who live in the way the great Master did as socially and mentally inferior to himself. The difference is that the former preached the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven; the latter preaches that of culture and power, though there is a mechanical repetition of the great sayings of the Master in his speech. The moral standpoint comes in view only when it does not clash with the point of view of the world around.

Truthfulness and honesty are two virtues essential for peace and harmony, from within and with outside. Speaking what is not commendable is falsehood. What is not commendable? That which causes pain and suffering to the living is not commendable. Falsehood directly produces impurity of the heart, perverts and deadens the finer instincts, converts the noble emotion of love into that of hatred. It makes the intellect cloudy, and replaces the serenity of mind with worry and anxiety. The liar wants to be happy, but does the very thing which directly gives birth to unhappiness! Spiritual progress is impossible without peace of

mind, and peace of mind cannot be had till the heart is sullied with impurities associated with falsehood.

The harm caused by untruthfulness even in the material world is no less pronounced. It is easy to see that untruthfulness ultimately leads to ruin. We resort to falsehood to gain a cheap advantage through dishonest means. The taking of anything, out of passion, which has not been given by consent, is stealing. Prompting another to steal, receiving stolen goods, buying goods otherwise than by lawful and just means, using false weights and measures in order to obtain more from others and give less to them, deceiving others with imitation, or spurious goods, giving and taking bribe, and evading the payment of taxes enjoined in law, constitute but some of the dishonest behaviours. Dishonesty never flourishes in the long run, however much may be the immediate advantage to be gained thereby. If it were otherwise, all the thieves, dacoits and forgers in the world would be millionaires in no time; but happily such is not the case. The short-lived triumph, which falsehood and dishonesty secure for their votary, in some instances, is too feeble to recompense for the life-long anguish and fear which inevitably follows in their wake. The liar cannot look an honest man in the face; his features bear the stamp of wretchedness; he loses his self-confidence. Long-term prosperity, even in business, is impossible with such qualifications as these. The health of the body, depending, as it does, on mental strength and purity, suffers in consequence to moral degradation. This is not all; for all those whom the liar defrauds, become his enemies and try to hunt him down sooner or later. Are these conditions worth purchasing in consideration of some temporary gain by falsehood or deceit?

Of all the passions in the world, *kāma*-exciting feminine beauty is the most fatal. Physical contact is not necessary for its action; its

mere sight, even thought, is sufficient to affect the mind. Photographs, videos, songs, paintings and even verbal accounts have been used to excite the sexual passion. Sexual promiscuity, fornication, incest, gay relationships, over-indulgence, and all other abuses relating sex only go to excite and strengthen evil passions and tendencies, and, thus, actually produce weakness of the will. Therefore, so long as sexual passion is not brought under the control of the will, it acts as an impediment to the realization of perfection and bliss. While total control, i.e., strict celibacy is enjoined on the ascetics, for the rest, partial control is instructed. Partial control consists of proper selection of a bride, and in the observance of the nuptial vows. The person on the path of spiritual progress is required to restrict the sexual passions to the married spouse only. The idea of a bedmate other than the married spouse should never be allowed to sully the purity of the heart; sexual fidelity should not be jeopardized even in thought. The Seventh Commandment in the Hebrew scripture specifies “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” *The Westminster Larger Catechism*, still used by the Presbyterian Church (USA), expanded on the scope of the Commandment thus:

Q. 139: What are the sins forbidden in the Seventh Commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the Seventh Commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are:

- Adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts;
- All unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections;
- All corrupt or filthy communications, or listening thereunto;
- Wanton looks, impudent or light behavior, immodest apparel, prohibiting of lawful, and dispensing with unlawful marriages;
- Allowing, tolerating, keeping of stews, and resorting to them;
- Entangling vows of single life, undue delay of marriage; having more wives or husbands than one at the same time;

- Unjust divorce or desertion;
- Idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, unchaste company;
- Lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, stageplays, and all other provocations to, or acts of, uncleanness either in ourselves or others.

A '*stew*' is a brothel. Since sexual fantasies are a normal part of being human, it would appear that the Church would consider adultery to be nearly universal throughout the world.

It will do a world of good to the nuptial partners if they both have the same ideal of life in common; if they share each other's beliefs and aspirations. Diversity of ideas gives rise to friction, not cooperation. Where the selection of the nuptial partner is made solely by physical charm, or some material advantage, e.g., money, success of marriage becomes a lottery in which the likelihood of drawing a 'prize' is remote.

Two elements are involved in the proper functioning of the marital relation, namely, physical necessity, and spiritual need. In most cases the former alone is recognised and as such marriage is treated as a civil contract more or less binding on the parties, according to the rules and requirements of the society to which they happen to belong. Marriage, however, means the union of souls for the uplifting the condition of the participants for their mutual, spiritual advancement. The natural demands of human nature are taken care of but there is no room for brute carnality here. If nuptial partners regulate their conduct on noble and spiritual lines, which will mean discussing and sharing between them the important problems concerning true bliss and happiness, they will find an easy solution to those problems of modern families which have hitherto proved insoluble. They will then be found leading a life together, striving not only for the material happiness but also for virtue and goodness. All their worldly concerns will be subdued with balancing forces – sex with

abstinence, accumulation with charity, and tension with calmness. Who can doubt the efficacy of such a spiritual union of the two souls, when all the most powerful psychic forces of both husband and wife are directed towards one common end, when they both work in one direction for the realization of their most closely connected and united interests? It is in respect of such marriages that one says: “Marriages are made in heaven; those whom God has joined let no man put asunder.” (Mark, x. 9).

Before we close this chapter, a question must be answered, and that is: What benefits would virtues accrue to us?

We have learnt in the previous chapter that our wicked activities, of body, speech and mind, engender negative or harmful *karmic* matter to the soul, and virtuous activities are responsible for bringing in positive *karmic* matter. That makes it clear that we earn *punya* (merit) through our virtuous activities. As per the scriptures:

Virtues such as equanimity, freedom from greed, and rendering help to all, especially the devout, the young, the old and the needy, lead to the influx of *karmas* causing pleasant, joyous feelings.

Natural mildness in disposition – austerity, and feeble emotions and passions – leads to the influx of *karmas* causing birth as human and celestial beings.

Truthfulness, honesty and candour cause the influx of auspicious physique-making *karmas*.

Praise of others and censure of self, proclaiming qualities in others and concealing existent qualities in self, humility and modesty, lead to the influx of *karmas* which bring about high status.

Virtues, thus, lead to happy results in many ways; and vice and depravity to all that is unpleasant, undesirable and painful.

Blossoming Of The Love Buds

Love, as per the translated version of an old work, can be classified into three kinds: (1) where the only motive is to seek pleasure, to take all and give nothing, (2) where there is exchange, and the two states of loving and being loved are mutually supporting – ‘I love thee, because thou lovest me’, and (3) where there is unconditional devotion, the giving everything and seeking nothing – no recognition, no return.

The first is the love of the sensualist and is used solely for own selfish end. Love thrives as long as the object of love has the power to give something – money, sensual gratification, physical help, support of any kind – and it evaporates into thin air no sooner than this power dwindles. The ‘lover’ tries all possible means to win over the heart of the other person. A range of inexpensive but potent means are available to our younger generation for expressing their love – e-greetings, SMS, love-shaped chocolates, bouquets, or having together a soft drink at the nearby hang-out. Love for the elderly, under this scheme, is expressed through various means; from lip service to a pretentious display of concern for them. The ‘lover’ beats hollow an astute businessman, so far as

the skills of analyzing the cost-benefit of his efforts are concerned. He has, in abundance, the qualities of pretension, covetousness and tyranny. His efforts may lead him to a short period of prosperity during which the seeds of disintegration germinate and grow apace. And then, the reverse process begins, which involves the selfish in trouble – quarrels, humiliation, and finally, to destruction. This kind of love is not worthy of any further elaboration here.

The second kind of love is what the generality of men should employ in their life. Love begets love, and it is one smooth, peaceful and joyous existence with an ever-widening circle of friends, ever-increasing power and glory, and with no fear of loss or disharmony anywhere. We may apply this principle of love to small families and societies, or to great nations and empires; its working is uniform throughout. Let there be mutual hatred between husband and wife, and very soon home will cease to be happy; let the feeling of mutual distrust take possession of the hearts of men and it will disperse society; let disunion creep in among men in a nation and there will be civil wars. It is against the law of nature that hatred should be prosperous beyond certain limits, and because in hatred energy is dissipated needlessly, loss of power must ultimately result. History teaches us the important lesson that it is love which builds, establishes, and makes secure, and hatred which disunites, disperses, and destroys.

In the present state of human society it may be somewhat difficult to bring the idea of love and brotherhood into realization all at once, but because it is difficult to do so at once furnishes no excuse for not advancing, however slowly, towards it. The least one can do is to advance it towards those who come in one's direct contact. The benefits will be there to see: love abolishes differences, turns enemies into friends, and unites the several sections and classes of society into one harmonious whole.

In organizations too, we shall find that it is impossible to make any real progress except by working in harmony with the divine laws. So long as the organizations adhered to the principle of love in their dealings with the people, they flourished to their own and their people's advantage; but the moment they allowed the emotions of hatred, pride and self-aggrandizement to take over, they were swept away from existence. It is clear that the failure to observe the law of brotherhood was the cause of their downfall, for pride and self-glorification give rise to the worst kind of hypocrisy and, ultimately, also lead to tyranny, the mother of destruction.

The principle of good governance, based on the same theme, has been laid down by a great poet, many years ago (*originally in Urdu*):

“The people are like the root, and the king like the tree; the strength of the tree depends on the root, my son!”

Wherever this simple principle of good governance has been put into practice, it has never failed to afford happiness and joy to all concerned. It is well to bear in mind that the aim of existence is not to fill our own pockets to the detriment of all others, nor to lord it over others, but to so live in the world as to allow ourselves and all others to attain the fullest measure of peace, harmony and happiness. Since love gives rise to confidence and amity, and hatred to fear and a sense of revenge, it follows that peace and harmony, internal and external alike, are to be had only under the rule of love.

A true believer in the rule of love will necessarily develop in himself the two virtues of humility and modesty. Bowing before the virtuous with veneration is humility. To be free from pride in spite of owning great skills and knowledge is modesty. A humble

man is a good learner and, therefore, is liable to become adept in his chosen field in no time. Modesty gives rise to acceptance of the person by all, making him more effective in whatever he does.

The third kind of love is that of the God's devotee, which needs a little elaboration. The truth is that the nature of devotion has been entirely misunderstood by the generality of men, who, unable to form a rational conception of the kind of love implied in devotion, have been led to confound it with the mad impetuosity of sensuality. Some have even likened it to a moth's fatal attraction for light.

Love is an essential ingredient of devotion. Devotion is always founded on respect. It follows from this that neither the emotion of benevolence which is characteristic of love for an inferior, nor the impetuous ardour of a the hero of a love-tale can be the appropriate form of love for the true God, than whom no one has a better right to our respect. It is clear that no one ever dreams of loving his parents or tutor after a manner of a moth. The fact is that love is a motive power grounded on belief and manifests itself in appropriate, typical forms according to the nature of the relationship in which the object of love stands to him who loves. Thus, we offer devotion and worship to God, reverence to a tutor, friendship to our equals, and protection and patronage to them who are inferior to us. It is now clear that the true significance of love in reference to God really means a devotion to the attributes of divinity, which the devotee wishes to develop in his own soul, and consists in the blending of the fullest measure of love and respect for those who have evolved out those very attributes in perfection.

Love is an emotion, not an exchange of goods or bartering of property; it has nothing in common with the spirit of bargaining. A true lover, in extreme cases of love for God, cheerfully sacrifices everything for the object of his love, and would willingly give up

his home, family, wealth, and all that he might own, to catch but a fleeting glimpse of his love's resplendent, glorious 'face'. He has ears and eyes only for the object of his love, and takes no interest in the concerns of man.

We may call this intense love madness and impractical, if we please, but we must remember that it leads us not to tears and sorrow and darkness in the grave, as worldly and 'practical' wisdom undoubtedly does, but to the land of Joy and Love. Blessed is the madness which ends in bliss; who cares for the 'sanity' that leads to the grave?

In its true sense, love is the noblest of emotions which, free from all kinds of leaning or bias towards any particular individual or community, expresses itself in the form of mental equanimity and compassion for all kind of living beings. It is a libel to call the spasmodic, trickling streamlet of emotion which flows only at the sight of some particular person or persons, and dries up at that of the rest of the race, to say nothing of the other forms of life, by the name of love. Love is not a thing which bubbles up and flows at intervals, or by fits and starts; it is one continuous ever-flowing, ever-bubbling emotion which flows in all directions and towards all beings, human and animal. The former type of emotion only makes the heart cold, but the latter opens its lotus, and keeps it ever fresh and blooming, by constantly irrigating its roots with the living waters of Life. Free activity of the lotus of the heart leads to health and youth; but its obstruction at once converts the vibrations of love into poison of hatred and worry, which soon destroy the organism.

EPILOGUE

Epilogue

During a TV interview, the *tablā* (small, drum-type musical instrument) maestro *Ustād* Zakir Hussain once said, “There is no *tāla* (tune) or *rāga* (melody) that has not been played yet. The challenge before us is to present it in such a way, in such a combination, that it becomes interesting for the audience.”

Similarly, there is nothing new or original in this book. Some of you might even complain that it does not provide any solutions for achieving its purported goal of happiness. Actually there is no simple, straight-forward and universally applicable answer to the vexed question of happiness. A reader who has gone through the pages of the book with avid interest would not have failed to notice that nowhere the book claims that it can help one to get to the goal of lasting happiness. One must find and then tread the path oneself; there is no alternative to it.

However, the beauty of the search for happiness lies in the process itself; in the fact that we have taken time out to reflect upon the basic question of leading a more meaningful and joyous life. We have tried to present a typical ‘case’ in front of you, to

discuss it threadbare. If after going through the case and its discussion, there is a sense of emptiness within you, it is no fault of yours. This is the beauty of the case method of study. No simple solutions are arrived at but, sure enough, in the ultimate analysis, tremendous amount of learning takes place. Moreover, this 'emptiness' is an indication that the spark of exploring the true meaning of life has been lit within you. It is up to you now to prepare your own case and to mark your participation.

We may add here that the only way to do this is to bring your mental energy to focus and concentration. All human achievements are due to concentration. Even knowledge is possible through concentration of thought, that is, meditation, not otherwise. As seed sown on the wayside stray ground or in a plot where it is choked by the weeds, produces little or no harvest, but on good ground multiplies manifold, so does knowledge increase in a thoughtful mind. If we merely content ourselves with saying "how true it is," or "it is quite wrong," and the like, we shall not understand anything. The difference between the adept and the average man lies in the power of concentration. It is a matter of daily experience that even in affairs of earthly importance, a certain amount of concentration of mind is absolutely necessary to bring an undertaking to a successful end. The necessity to stop the wandering of the mind becomes all the more important when it has to deal with such subtle and fine forces as compose the fetters of the soul. You have proved all along that you own the capacity to concentrate; what is required now is a change of its direction.

Long enough you have lived on a daily, high-power dose of worry and tension. Now stop worrying and start your new journey toward happiness cheerfully; Nature stands ready to team up with you:

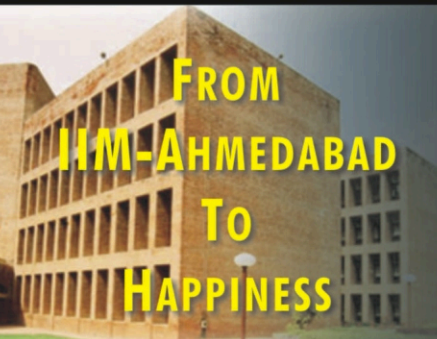
"Look at the lilies of the field; they never worry themselves about what they shall wear, yet the pure white robe in which Nature has

clothed them may well be envied by the great and glorious Solomon.”

– Matthew, vi. 27

E.K. Strong in *The Psychology of Selling* (1925) had suggested a model – the AIDA model – which postulates that a message, to be effective, should get attention, hold interest, arouse desire, and elicit action. This book can, at best, hope to arouse in you a desire to acquire true bliss and happiness.

The action part is entirely yours.



This book is not about academics, not even about success; it is about happiness which we all, in the ultimate analysis, are striving for.

The book is for those who have achieved success in their worldly affairs but hold that their role in life is much bigger than just pushing figures, making strategies, and managing men.

Happiness, the book suggests, resides not in any outside object, but must spring up from within. Man's search for happiness is a search for a lost or hidden article, not of anything new. Each one of us has the power to regain the lost health, vitality and happiness, provided one develops the right faith, attains knowledge and then follows the right path.



PIC: MALIKA JAIN

Vijay K. Jain is an Electronics Engineer from Institute of Technology, BHU, and PGDM from IIM-Ahmedabad. Just about one year's stint with the corporate world was enough to convince him that he *must* be an entrepreneur; and since last more than twenty-five years he is just that – leading his life in his own way, to his own taste.

Mr. Jain is an Ex-President of Dehradun Management Association. He has earlier written two books – *Marketing Management for Small Units*, and जैन धर्म – मंगल परिचय ।



विकल्प

Vikalp Printers
Publishing Section

E-mail: vikalp_printers@rediffmail.com

ISBN 81-903639-0-5

Rs.: 250/-