Secret of Success

The boy that defeated an empire



Siva Nellori



Testimonial from a Vice Chancellor

" This is a very beautiful and priceless creative work. We rarely get such books. The author has written this book with lot of knowledge, practical experience and studying many reference books. I believe that every reader will get inspired by this book and become successful in life."

With best wishes

Professor Pudur Vishwanadh Arunachalam

Founder Vice-Chancellor, Dravida University, Kuppam, Andhra Pradesh

Visiting professor to Florida University, USA

Fulbright Scholar, University of Wisconsin, USA

About the Author

Siva Nellori (E. Siva Kumar) is an auditor based in Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Commerce (B. Com) from Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh. He has passed the Chartered Accountancy examination in India and also the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) examination conducted by the Texas accountancy board in the United States.

His mission is to serve God, nation and mankind by blending philosophy with practicality**.** Through his writings, he seeks to inspire readers to combine spiritual wisdom with practical action. His work emphasizes that true success goes beyond material achievement. It lies in the harmonious development of character, knowledge, disciplined action, service, and self-realization.

Index

Prologue 6

PART 1: MATERIAL SUCCESS

1. The boy that defeated an empire 7

2. A man becomes what he thinks 11

3. Iccha Sakti (the power of desire) 12

4. Faith can move mountains 21

5. Jnana Sakti (Knowledge is power) 27

6. Kriya Sakti (crystallization of desire into action) 38

7. Cosmic Mind, 1 + 1 = > 2 48

8. Leadership (inspiring and guiding people towards goals) 53

9. Subconscious mind (the link between man's finite mind and Infinite Cosmic Mind) 57

10. Fearlessness 65

11. Persistence (nothing is impossible) 70

PART 2: SPIRITUAL SUCCESS

12. What is the purpose of life? 77

13. This world is a Divine play 84

14. Raja Yoga (Path of self-control) 92

15. Bhakti Yoga (Path of Love) 101

16. Karma Yoga (Path of Action) 107

17. Jnana Yoga (Path of Knowledge) 115

18. From death to Immortality 123

Epilogue 131

Prologue

Dear brothers and sisters,

What do you want in life? Is it a job, money, power, fame or happiness? Having problems and failures in life? Is life clueless about what to do and how to do?

No matter whether rich or poor - we all have one asset that is equally distributed among all – Time! Every one of us has precisely only twenty four hours in a day. But, some people achieve wealth, power, fame and so on, with very little effort; others with great difficulty; still others fail altogether to reach their goals and ideals.

Why is this so? Why should some people realize their ambitions easily, others with difficulty, and still others not at all?

In a recent survey conducted by cell phone manufacturers it is found that 97 % customers know about and use less than 7 % features of a cell phone. If that is the case with a tiny gadget, we can imagine the situation about the most complicated gadget in the universe, mind. Most people don‘t know about mind‘s capabilities and how to use it properly. When the power of mind is fully understood and applied, its effect will be seen to be marvellous.

Over ages many teachers and authors have contributed to a knowledge bank. Their contributions have been used in this book. But no part of this book is meant to promote or criticize any religion, race, community or nation. For the sake of convenience, words such as ‘man’ and ‘he’ are used. But this book is equally intended for both men and women.

Our mind-set is a product of parents, teachers, society, environment etc. They shape our beliefs and influence how we understand and either accept or reject new information. Some concepts of this book may sound unbelievable or old fashioned. But don’t reject anything too early. Be more patient with unfamiliar words. Allow new concepts to sink in mind and expand you into new ways of thinking. They have survived the tests of time, and remain amazingly ever new, practical and universal.

This book is the result of author’s education and experience over fifty years in India and the USA. This book aims at blending philosophy with practicality. This book can also be described as a combination of the Science of Life and the Art of Living. You are given the principles that have worked for many successful people. Using those same principles you too can make a

beautiful picture of your life.

We cannot satisfy our stomach by mere reading about delicious foods. We must eat to satisfy hunger. To know food only theoretically means remaining physically hungry. Similarly this book won‘t be of much use if you just read it for entertainment and put it aside. It will be more useful if you make it a practical guide in daily life. You need to absorb the principles and apply them in everyday living. Individual topics may seem incomprehensible in the initial reading. But you may understand the whole book in perspective, eventually. This book is about your life!

Life is a game similar to chess. Knowingly or unknowingly we all are playing against a great opponent – Time. Whether we make a move or not, soon all the pawns will be removed and the game will be over. Time flies away.

The secret of success has been indirectly mentioned several times throughout this book. If it is directly named, it may deprive you of the benefit and joy when you find it on your own. Hence it has not been directly named but merely uncovered and left in sight for those who are ‘ready and prepared’ may find it.

Will you find the secret?

PART 1: MATERIAL SUCCESS

Chapter 1

The boy that defeated an empire

Mohan was a dull student in school. He used to be very shy and avoided all company. He used to be haunted by the fear of thieves, ghosts, and serpents. He did not dare to venture out of doors at night. It was almost impossible for him to sleep in the dark, as he would imagine ghosts coming from one direction, thieves from another and serpents from a third.

Those were the days when India was still under the British rule. Mohan was convinced by a close school friend that eating meat would make Indians strong enough to defeat the British.

Mohan was born into a strict vegetarian family and meat-eating was forbidden. But he went with his friend to a lonely spot by a river and tried eating goat meat. He found the meat as tough as leather and could barely swallow it. He felt sick and stopped eating. That night, he suffered from a terrible nightmare. He felt as though a live goat were bleating inside his stomach, causing him to wake up in deep remorse.

Later when Mohan was around the age of 15, he stole a small piece of gold from his brother’s gold armlet and sold it, to settle a personal debt.

The guilt of stealing weighed so heavily on Mohan that he lost his peace of mind. But he lacked the courage to speak to his father directly, who at the time was bedridden with a severe illness. So Mohan wrote a confession letter and handed it over to his father. Then Mohan sat silently by his father’s bedside, prepared to receive harsh punishment.

Mohan’s father sat up, read the note in silence as tears rolled down his cheeks. He tore up the letter, closed his eyes and lay back down without speaking a single harsh word. Seeing his father's silent agony and sublime forgiveness instead of anger deeply moved Mohan's heart. He later said that these "pearl-drops of love" completely cleansed his heart and served as his first lesson in his experiments in life. He kept his promise to his father, and never stole again.

Later Mohan studied Law, but fared no better in his legal career. He did not know how to apply legal principles to practical situations. His book-learning left him without any clue about how to help a client. No one would dare to

give him a case. His fellow advocates used to make jokes about him.

Having nothing else to do, he used to attend court every day to gain experience. But he had trouble following the cases and often dozed off in the middle of them. His first and only case was a routine, small claim. Following is an account what happened to that case, in his own words.

> *"This was my debut in the Small Causes Court. I appeared for the defendant and had thus to cross-examine the plaintiff's witnesses. I stood up, but my heart sank into my boots. My head was reeling and I felt as though the whole court was doing likewise. I could think of no question to ask. The judge must have laughed, and the lawyers no doubt enjoyed the spectacle. But I was past seeing anything.*
>
> *I sat down and told the agent that I could not conduct the case, that he had better engage Patel and have the fee back from me. Mr. Patel was duly engaged for Rs. 51. To him, of course, the case was child's play.*
>
> *I hastened from the Court, not knowing whether my client won or lost her case, but I was ashamed of myself, and decided not to take up any more cases until I had courage enough to conduct them."*

After few such attempts to succeed in life, Mohan was exasperated. It was at that point that his life took one of those mysterious turns that some observers like to ascribe it to "fate" or "chance."

Through his brother, a local firm offered to help him out with a year's contract with its office in South Africa. It was a minor clerical position, well below the salary and prestige his education deserved. And it also meant separation from his wife, who had just borne them a second son. At the time it did not seem like much of an opportunity. But he jumped at the offer. It was, at least, a job, a chance to gain some experience and maybe an opportunity to send some money to his brother.

After a lengthy sea voyage, he landed in Durban in a frock-coat and turban and was received by his client Abdulla Sheth. Providence had lured him to what he later described as 'that God- forsaken Continent where I found God'.

Although the British and Dutch were altogether a small minority of the total population in South Africa, they treated both native Africans and Indians as less than human. Indians had been originally brought in 1860 at the request of the European settlers to help build their plantation economy. They had been lured as indentured labourers on a five-year contract with the right to stay on as free residents on their own.

In their path had followed merchants and other professionals. They were all looked down upon by the Europeans as outcastes and were contemptuously called ‘coolies’ or ‘samis’, irrespective of their occupation or status in society.

After about a week's stay in Durban his client arranged for Mohan to leave for Pretoria, where his presence would be required for the lawsuit. Europeans in South Africa always travelled in first class whereas Indians were expected to travel in third class. But Mohan’s firm had reserved a first-class seat for him.

When the train reached Pietermaritzburg at about nine in the night, a white passenger boarding the train objected to the presence in the compartment of a 'coloured' man. Following is an account of the life-changing event in his own words.

> *The train reached Pietermaritzburg station, at about 9 in the night. A passenger came in, looked me up and down. He saw that I was a 'coloured' man. This disturbed him. Out he went and came in again with two officials.*
>
> *They all kept quiet until another official came to me and said, 'Come along, you must go to the freight compartment.'*
>
> *'But I have a first class ticket,' said I.*
>
> *'That doesn't matter,' joined the other. 'I tell you, you must go to the freight compartment.'*
>
> *'I was permitted to travel in this compartment, and I insist on going on in it.'*
>
> *'No, you won't,' said the official. 'You must leave this compartment, or else I shall have to call police to push you out.'*
>
> *'Yes, you may. I refuse to get out voluntarily.'*
>
> *The police came. He took me by the hand and pushed me out. My luggage was also taken out. I refused to go to the freight compartment and the train steamed away.*
>
> *I went and sat in the waiting room, keeping my hand-bag with me, and leaving the other luggage where it was. The railway authorities had taken charge of it.*
>
> *It was winter, and winter in the higher regions of South Africa is severely cold. Pietermaritzburg being at a high altitude, the cold was extremely bitter. My over-coat was in my luggage, but I did not dare to*

ask for it lest I should be insulted again, so I sat and shivered.

There was no light in the room. A passenger came in at about midnight and possibly wanted to talk to me. But I was in no mood to talk.

I began to think of my duty. Should I fight for my rights or go back to India? Or should I go on to Pretoria without minding the insults, and return to India after finishing the case? It would be cowardice to run back to India without fulfilling my obligation. The hardship to which I was subjected was only a symptom of the deep disease of colour prejudice. I should try, if possible, to root out the disease and suffer hardships in the process.

But more was yet to come. The next evening Mohan continued the train journey - this time without any hindrance. But a bigger obstacle lay in wait on the journey from Charlestown to Johannesburg which had to be covered by stage coach. Mohan was made to sit with the coachman on the box outside, while the white conductor, or 'leader' as he was called, sat inside with the white passengers.

Mohan had pocketed the insult for fear of missing the coach altogether. On the way the 'leader' wanted to smoke and therefore made a seat on the box covered with a piece of dirty cloth on the foot-board and ordered Mohan to sit there instead. Mohan refused.

The 'leader', wild with rage, swore vilely and rained blows on Mohan, trying to throw him down. Mohan clung desperate to the brass rails, refusing to yield his seat and refusing also to be provoked to retaliate. Some of the white passengers protested at this cowardly assault, and the 'leader', crestfallen, was obliged to let Mohan remain where he was.

Thus Mohan learnt to say ‘no’, in the face of danger to his life. Earlier too he had learnt to say ‘no’ to wine and women, in the face of temptation to his virtue and in loyalty to the vow he had made to his mother. But this was a more dynamic ‘No’, which became the rock bed of fearlessness on which all his other virtues were to rest.

Faced with many failures and obstacles in life, instead of looking for solutions in the external world, Mohan started a life-long journey of self-discovery. He was none other than Mohan Das Karamchand Gandhi, famously known as Mahatma Gandhi or simply Gandhiji. He led his people towards Indian independence and thrown out the British during his very life time. We too can learn from him and walk in his footprints. He coined his autobiography as ‘My experiments with Truth’. Seeking Truth shall liberate us too.

Chapter 2

A man becomes what he thinks

Gandhiji was not just a thinker and arm-chair philosopher but a man of intense action. Almost every human being can think. But only those who understand the creative power of thought and properly apply it, accomplish their purpose in life. Through this basis we can construct an ideal home, business, ideal life and ideal environment and so on. Thoughts can become words and actions. Hence we should have control over our thoughts.

Years later when an American missionary visited Gandhiji at his Sevagram ashram, and asked "what have been the most creative experiences in your life?" Gandhiji replied "Such experiences are multitude. But as you put the question to me, I recall an experience that changed the course of my life." He then related the Maritzburg incident as below.

> "*Now the creative experience comes there. I was afraid for my very life. I entered the dark waiting-room. There was a white man in the room. I was afraid of him. What was my duty, I asked myself. Should I go back to India, or should I go forward, with God as my helper, and face whatever was in store for me? I decided to stay and suffer. My active non-violence began from that date".*

Gandhiji could see an independent India in his very lifetime and also rose to the status as father of the nation. But his achievements did not happen in one sitting. They happened little by little, beginning with a burning desire to have the right for dignity.

The position of Indians in Transvaal was worse than in Natal. They were compelled to pay a tax of three pounds per each individual. Their weddings under Hindu traditions were not recognized by the law and declared invalid. They could not own land except in a specially allotted location, a kind of ghetto. They had no voting rights. They were not permitted to walk on the pavement or be out of doors after 9 p.m. without a special permit which they had to carry all the time.

One day Gandhiji, who had received from the State Attorney a letter authorizing him to be out of doors at all hours, was having his usual evening walk. A guard suddenly and without any warning pushed him off the pavement and kicked him into the street. An Englishman, who knew Gandhiji, happened to pass by and saw the incident. He advised Gandhiji to proceed against the guard and offered himself as witness. But Gandhiji politely refused the offer saying that he had made it a rule not to go to court in respect of a personal grievance. But he wondered as to how a person can feel great by causing suffering to another person.

After getting thrown down from train in Maritzburg station, instead of running away from problems Gandhiji started thinking of his duty. He realized that he will be tested by the trials until he fights them head-on. He understood that the hardship to which he was subjected was only a symptom of the deep disease of colour prejudice. He resolved to root out the disease and suffer hardships in the process.

And when this impulse of thought first flashed into his mind, two difficulties stood in his way. First, he was facing the British, a force, feared and respected as the most powerful empire on the earth. Second, the people on his side were divided and fighting among themselves based on caste, religion, language and so on. The British were further playing 'Divide and Rule' politics to cause Indians fight among themselves based on religion and caste. You can learn in latter chapters, how he overcame these obstacles.

Many people believe that they are victims and always blame other people or situations. They keep repeating 'if I was born under right star', 'if I have got the right job', 'if my family members understood me', and so on. But this approach is a path to disaster. It is like making others responsible for our problems. Instead, the correct approach is to accept own responsibility, even if the problems were created by others.

Viktor Frankl was an Austrian psychiatrist. Because he was of Jewish religion, he was imprisoned by the Nazis in extermination camps and subjected to cruel tortures. There he lost his parents, wife and brother. But he continued his psychiatric research even under such unbearable circumstances. He used to dream about escaping from the prison and teaching again about his findings to his students.

He observed that some prisoners chose to work as spies for Nazis to escape tortures or to get more food. They caused more suffering and damage to fellow prisoners. On the other hand some prisoners went about comforting and aiding fellow prisoners, sacrificing their share of food or even bearing

tortures on behalf of others.

He found that there is a kind of ultimate freedom, namely spiritual freedom, which cannot be stolen, even by the most ruthless tyrants. People may lose their political or economic freedom, physical or mental freedom. But the spiritual freedom, how a person responds to a given situation, cannot be taken away. He said that between stimulus and response, a human being has freewill to choose his response. This is the greatest gift only we human beings are endowed with, unlike other creatures.

Stimulus	**Response**
Hunger	Eating Vs. Fasting
Tiredness/sleep time	Sleeping Vs. Remaining Awakened
Threatening with weapon	Running away to save life Vs. Challenging death face to face
Failure in exams	Ending studies or life Vs. Getting ready for exams again

Freewill is the greatest blessing we human beings possess because it lets us challenge our limitations and climb the heights of human potential. All of us have the potential to control our own lives but many of us are too afraid to do so. As a result we give up our freedom and allow our lives to be governed by other people and circumstances.

Our upbringing and social influences shape our thought process and this is called ‘samskara’ (habitual process). Thus our behaviour and choices are subject to hereditary or social influences. We have a general understanding of what we like, what we dislike, what is good for us and what is not. Based on this we choose our friends, objects, activities and so on. The source of this understanding is called ‘Vasanas’ in Sanskrit and ‘Sub-conscious mind’ in English.

Like a computer which is fed with information and brings out answers, we feed ourselves with vasanas and bring out corresponding thoughts and actions. If the vasanas are good, the thoughts and actions are good. If the vasanas are bad or mixed, the thoughts and actions also will be bad or mixed.

Great joy awaits the man who succeeds in improving his input of vasanas because he gains immense strength. Hence it is very essential to be in the company of good natured people and also devote time to study epics such as

Ramayana and Mahabharata.

Mahabharata shows an example of how Duryodhana‘s hatred and jealousy of Pandavas and his association with wicked people such as Sakuni, Dussasana, Karna brought his downfall. This epic also tells us how Dharmaraja‘s weakness for dice brought suffering for Pandavas. Ramayana shows an example how a great ruler and devotee such as Ravana perished because of lust and pride.

Gandhiji explained about few books that had great impact on him and these include Sravana Kumar Charitra, Satya Harischandra and Unto the Last.

> *“Two other incidents belonging to the same period have always clung to my memory. As a rule I had distaste for any reading beyond my school books. The daily lessons had to be done, because I disliked being taken to task by my teacher as much as I disliked deceiving him. Therefore I would do the lessons, but often without my mind in them. Thus when even the lessons could not be done properly, there was of course no question of any extra reading. But somehow my eyes fell on a book purchased by my father. It was Shravana Pitribhakti Nataka (a play about Sharavana's devotion to his parents). I read it with intense interest.*
>
> *There came to our place about the same time itinerant showmen. One of the pictures I was shown was of Shravana carrying, by means of slings fitted for his shoulders, his blind parents on a pilgrimage. The book and the picture left an indelible impression on my mind. 'Here is an example for you to copy,' I said to myself. The agonized lament of the parents over Shravana's death is still fresh in my memory. The melting tune moved me deeply, and I played it on a concertina which my father had purchased for me.*
>
> *There was a similar incident connected with another play. Just about this time, I had secured my father's permission to see a play performed by a certain drama company. This play-Harishchandra- captured my heart. I could never be tired of seeing it. But how often should I be permitted to go? It haunted me and I must have acted Harishchandra to myself times without number. 'Why should not all be truthful like Harishchandra?' was the question I asked myself day and night. To follow truth and to go through all the ordeals Harishchandra went through was the one ideal it inspired in me. I literally believed in the story of Harishchandra. The thought of it all often made me weep. My common sense tells me today that Harishchandra could not have been*

a historical character. Still both Harishchandra and Shravana are living realities for me, and I am sure I should be moved as before if I were to read those plays again today."

During a long train journey in South Africa, Gandhiji was given John Ruskin's book 'Unto This Last' by one of his friends. About this book, he has written that it brought an instantaneous change in his life. Gandhiji derived the following three messages from this book:

The good of the individual is contained in the good of all‖. The concept of 'Sarvodaya' and 'Antyodaya' were the products of this influence of Ruskin on Gandhiji. Here we note the famous talisman of Gandhiji, which is inspired from the ideal of Antyodaya: Whenever you are in doubt or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test: 'Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and yourself melting away'.

Gandhiji also derived from this book that a 'Lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work'.

The third message Gandhiji derived from this book was that a life of the tiller of the soil and that of handicraftsman / farmer / labourer is the life worth living. This message gave him a teaching that he would live a life of labour.

Power of emotions

It is a well-known fact that people are driven more by passionate emotions than by rational thoughts. Thoughts which are mixed with any of the feelings of emotions constitute a magnetic force which attracts from the vibrations of space, other similar thoughts.

A thought thus magnetized with emotion may be compared to a seed which, when planted in fertile soil, germinates, grows, and multiplies itself over and over again, until that which was originally one small seed, becomes countless millions of seeds of the same nature.

The space is a great cosmic mass of eternal forces of thought-vibrations. It is made up of both positive constructive and negative destructive vibrations. We know that space carries the sound of hundreds of orchestrations of music, and hundreds of human voices, all of which maintain their own individuality, and

means of identification, through the medium of cell phone signals. Similarly, space carries, at all times, vibrations of fear, poverty, disease, failure, misery; and also vibrations of prosperity, health, success, and happiness.

From the great storehouse of space, the cells in human mind constantly attract vibrations which harmonize with that which dominates the human mind. Any thought, idea, plan, or purpose which one holds in one‘s mind attracts, from the vibrations of space, a host of its relatives, adds these ‘relatives’ to its own force, and grows until it becomes the dominating, motivating master of the individual in whose mind it has been stored.

The subconscious mind, (the chemical laboratory in which all thought impulses are combined, and made ready for translation into physical reality), makes no distinction between constructive and destructive thought impulses. It works with the material we feed it, through our thought impulses. The subconscious mind will translate into reality a thought driven by fear just as readily as it will translate into reality a thought driven by courage or faith.

However not just ordinary thoughts, but dominant thoughts (energized by mixing with emotions such as desire, faith, love, hope, enthusiasm) have the potential to become creative. Of these emotions desire, faith and love are explained in detail in later chapters.

*****

Chapter 3

Iccha Sakti (the power of desire)

From time immemorial, man dreamed of flying just like the birds. The Wright brothers dreamed of a machine that would fly. Now we can see aircrafts all over the world proving that Wright brothers dreamed soundly.

Desire is a strong emotion that is the guiding star of all achievements. Every person who wants to win in any field of action must maintain a state of mind known as ‘a burning desire’ to achieve. Your desire may be to succeed in exams and obtain a good job or start a successful business venture. Or you want to make a scientific discovery or do something of great importance. Or you simply want to solve your life‘s problems.

Your desire should be righteous, in accordance with the law of dharma. The desire should be for the benefit of one and all such as serving others or entire human kind. When ‘desire’ is contaminated with selfish lusts and passions and is detrimental to the welfare of others, it becomes evil and self-destructive.

The method by which a desire for an objective can be achieved consists of six definite, practical steps, listed below:

1. Be specific as to what you want.

2. Determine exactly what you intend to give in return in money (as capital) or time (efforts) for what you want to achieve. There is no such reality as ‘something for nothing’.

3. Establish a definite timeline for achievement (for example six months or December 31st).

4. Create a definite plan for carrying out your desire, and begin at once, whether you are ready or not, to put this plan into action.

5. Write out a clear, concise statement of what you want to achieve, set time limit, state what you intend to give in return, and describe clearly the plan through which you intend to achieve it.

6. Read your statement (above steps) aloud, twice daily, once just before going to sleep, and once after arising in the morning. As you read-see and feel and believe yourself already in achievement of your objective.

It may seem impossible for you to "see yourself having achieved" before you actually have it. Here is where a burning desire will come to your aid. If you truly desire so keenly that your desire is an obsession, you will have no difficulty in convincing yourself that you will acquire it.

Only those who become "success conscious" ever achieve success. "Success consciousness" means that the mind has become so thoroughly saturated with the desire, that one can see one's self already in possession of it. There can be no room for self-doubt.

The steps do not require one to look ridiculous. Applying them do not require great amount of education. But successful application of these steps requires sufficient imagination to enable one to see, and to understand that achievement cannot be left to chance or luck. One must realize that all who have achieved great victories first did a certain amount of dreaming, desiring, and planning before they achieved it.

A.P.J. Abdul Kalam from a middle class family became a famous scientist and president of India. Narendra Modi who worked as a tea boy has become the Prime Minister of India.

> *"The heart's earnest and pure desire is always fulfilled,"* Gandhiji said *"In my own experience I have often seen this rule verified. Service of the poor has been my heart's desire, and it has always thrown me amongst the poor and enabled me to identify myself with them. I am indeed a practical dreamer. My dreams are not airy nothings. I want to convert my dreams into realities as far as possible".*

In planning to achieve your ambitions, let no one snub your dreams. You must catch the spirit of the great pioneers of the past, whose dreams have given to civilization all that they have of value, the spirit which serves as the life-blood of generations to come.

Thomas Edison dreamed of a lamp that could be lit without oil, and despite more than thousand failures, he stood by that dream until he made it a physical reality. Practical dreamers never quit!

If the thing you wish to do is right, and you believe in it, go ahead and do it! Put your dream across, and never mind what naysayers say if you meet with temporary defeat, for they do not know that 'every failure brings with it the

seed of an equivalent success'.

Many people often get off to a bad start, and pass through many heart-breaking struggles before they succeed. The turning point in the lives of those who succeed, usually comes at the moment of some crisis, through which they are introduced to their "other selves."

Abraham Lincoln endured many defeats in elections and also failures in personal life. But he finally became one of the great presidents of America.

Helen Keller became deaf, dumb, and blind shortly after birth. Despite her greatest misfortune, she was highly regarded as a great author, political activist and lecturer. She was the first deaf-blind person to earn a bachelor's degree in arts. Her desire to communicate with others gave her the strength to overcome disabilities and her book 'The story of my life' is an inspiration to many people.

Beethoven was a great musician despite his deafness. John Milton was blind, but well known as a great poet for his contributions such as 'Paradise Lost. Their names will last as long as time endures, because they dreamed and translated their dreams into organized thought.

Rabindranath Tagore faced profound personal tragedies such as the early deaths of his mother, wife, and several children. His search for God and a meaning for life led him to channel his grief into creative artistic expression and a spiritual awakening.

His collection Gitanjali reflects this spiritual resilience. He won the Nobel Prize in Literature, making him the very first non-European to receive the honor. He wrote the words and composed music for national anthems of two countries - India (Jana Gana Mana) and Bangladesh (Amar Sonar Bangla). He also built Vishwa Bharati University at Santiniketan, shifting his focus from personal loss to educating future generations.

His life is a testimony to the truth that even in the greatest suffering a man has the spiritual freedom to choose how he responds in a given situation. In our lives we should always hope for the best but be prepared to face the worst. We strive to solve our problems, achieve our objectives and become successful. But life is not fair always. Life is uncertain and ever changing. Throughout history people have lost possessions and beloved ones in natural calamities and also in man-made calamities such as wars, holocausts, partitions and so on.

We know that all earthly possessions and people are temporal and must

perish one day. But we wonder ‘why me?’ ‘What have I done wrong to undergo such suffering?’ It may be impossible to come up with a convincing answer for such questions. But the most logical explanation is to think that we are working out our karma and then decide how we respond to the particular situation.

God probably causes diseases and disasters to awaken us to the realization that we are not this physical body and this world is not our permanent abode.

When we are no longer able to change a situation— for instance an incurable disease such as terminal cancer or loss of a limb —we are challenged to change ourselves. Suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning, such as sacrifice for the sake of family or nation. When we lose or renounce family, we should be ready to embrace a bigger family, which is the world. The best way to face suffering is to lose ourselves in loving and serving others.

Thus we may find the purpose of life even when confronted with a hopeless situation, when facing a fate that cannot be changed. Then we can witness the uniquely human potential at its best, which is to transform a tragedy into a triumph.

Strange and varied are the ways of life, through which people are sometimes forced to undergo all sorts of suffering before discovering their true self, and their capacity to change their own and other’s lives.

Before moving to the next chapter, kindle anew in your mind the fire of hope, faith, courage and persistence. If you have these states of mind, and a working knowledge of the principles described in this book, all that you need will come to you, when you are ready for it.

*****

Chapter 4

Faith can move mountains

Imagine a little child breaks a precious thing. Instantly his mother scolds him. When the child cries the mother immediately hugs the child and pacifies him. The child understands that things are impermanent and his mother‘s moods are impermanent but her love is permanent and unconditional. Love had to be something that is unchanging and survive the human errors and imperfections. What is the source of this love?

What mysterious invisible power causes countless stars, planets and other celestial bodies in endless universe to spin and rotate precisely for billions of years? What power is the source of our lives and deaths?

We see that the universe is not of chaos but of orderliness, following set patterns, seasons and so on. From time immemorial, man has believed in a supernatural power through which, and by which all things are being created, sustained and destroyed. We may refer this great power as Truth or Consciousness. Or, we can simply refer this power as God.

> *Gandhiji said, “there is an indefinable mysterious Power that pervades everything. I feel it, though I do not see it. It is this unseen Power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses. It transcends the senses.*
>
> *But it is possible to reason out the existence of God to a limited extent. Even in ordinary affairs we know that people do not know who rules or why, and how he rules. And yet they know that there is a power that certainly rules. In my tour last year in Mysore I met many poor villagers and I found upon inquiry that they did not know who ruled Mysore. They simply said some god ruled it. If the knowledge of these poor people was so limited about their ruler I, who am infinitely lesser than God, need not be surprised if I do not realize the presence of God.*
>
> *Nevertheless I do feel as the poor villagers felt about Mysore that there is orderliness in the universe, there is an unalterable Law governing everything and every being that exists or lives. It is not a blind law; for no blind law can govern the conduct of living beings, and thanks to the marvellous researches of Sir. J. C. Bose, it can now be proved that even matter is life. That Law then which governs all life is God. Law and the Lawgiver are one. I may not deny the Law or the Lawgiver, because I know so little about It or Him.*

Even as my denial or ignorance of the existence of an earthly power will avail me nothing, so will not my denial of God and His Law liberate me from its operation; whereas humble and mute acceptance of divine authority makes life's journey easier even as the acceptance of earthly rule makes life under it easier. I do dimly perceive that whilst everything around me is ever changing, ever dying, there is underlying all that change a living power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves and re-creates. That informing power or Truth is God

And is this power benevolent or malevolent? I see it is purely benevolent. For I can see that in the midst of death life persists, in the midst of untruth truth persists, in the midst of darkness light persists. Hence I gather that God is Life, Truth, Light. He is Love. He is the Supreme Good".

We have learnt in the previous chapter that a thought should be of emotional nature such as a desire, to turn into action. Now, it is important to note that only desires that have been energized by mixing with 'faith' transform themselves into their physical equivalent.

Have faith in yourself and have faith in God. Faith in God does not mean blind belief. Teachers instruct pupils 'you should believe us and listen to us now so that you may later understand what you have been taught now'. It is the same with faith in God.

Consider the power of faith as it was demonstrated by Gandhiji. He wielded more power than any man lived during his time, despite the fact that he had none of the traditional tools of power, such as guns, forts, battle ships, or soldiers.

Through faith Gandhiji accomplished what the strongest military power on earth could not and never would accomplish through soldiers and military equipment. He accomplished the astounding feat of influencing millions of minds to think and act in unison, as a single force. Faith in God was the guiding star of all his actions in any field. Life without faith in God was unimaginable for him.

As a young boy, Gandhiji was afraid of the dark, ghosts and so on. His family servant maid advised him to continuously chant the name of 'Rama' as a protective remedy from fears. Gandhiji noted in his autobiography that the seed of mantra sown by servant maid grew and stayed with him for the rest of his life. It is said that 'mananat trayate iti mantrah' meaning that a mantra protects the one who chants it.

Is belief in God a superstition?

When a professor came with a question that was troubling him and is troubling many of the present generation, Gandhiji answered as under.

“I am surer of His existence than that of the fact that you and I are sitting in this room. Then I can also testify that I may live without air and water but not without Him. You may pluck out my eyes, but that cannot kill me. You may chop off my nose, but that will not kill me. But blast my belief in God, and I am dead. You may call this a superstition, but I confess it is a superstition that I hug, even as I used to hug the name of Rama in my childhood when

there was any cause of danger or alarm. That was what an old nurse had taught me".

"But you think that superstition is necessary for you?" enquired the professor.

"Yes, necessary to sustain me."

Faith for Gandhiji was not contradictory to reason, but it was the end of reason which led him to the beginning of faith. He said 'there are things where reason cannot take us far and we have to accept things based on a leap of faith. Faith then does not contradict reason but transcends it".

Most people resort to prayer only after everything else has failed! Thus they pray with their minds filled with 'fear' and 'doubt' which are the negative emotions the subconscious mind acts upon, and passes on to God. Or else they pray by a ritual of meaningless words without faith, thereby without any real connection with God.

Faith is the "elixir" which gives life, power, and action to the impulse of thought! Faith is the element, the "chemical" which, when mixed with prayer, gives one direct communication with God. Faith is the basis of all miracles, and all mysteries which cannot be analyzed by the rules of science! How to develop faith? Faith is 'a state of mind' which may be cultivated by prayer.

But does God listen to our prayers and fulfill our desires?

That sounds irrational and ridiculous to an intelligent mind. If that be true, then God is partial towards those who pray. No, that idea cannot be true. There must be some deeper meaning to the power of prayer. It is logical to think that God does not entertain idle beggars. God is love, but He gives divine grace only to those who pray and constantly strive towards achieving their goals.

Gandhiji once said "Why pray at all? Does not God, if there be One, know what happens? Does He stand in need of prayer to enable Him to do His duty? No, God needs no reminder. He is within every one. Nothing happens without His permission. Our prayer is a heart search. It is a reminder to ourselves that we are helpless without His support. No effort is complete without prayer,—without a definite recognition that the best human endeavour is of no effect if it has not God's blessing behind it. Prayer is a call to humility. It is a call to self-purification, to inward search.

I have never found Him lacking in response to my prayers. I have found Him nearest at hand when the horizon seemed darkest — in my ordeals in jails when it was not all smooth sailing for me. I cannot recall a moment in my life when I had a sense of desertion by God."

Once a person questioned Gandhiji “Sir, you often ask us to worship God but never tell us how to and to whom to do so. Will you kindly enlighten me?”

Gandhiji answered, “Worshiping God is singing the praise of God. Prayer is a confession of one's limits and humbleness. God has a thousand names, or rather, He is Nameless. We may worship or pray to Him by whichever name that pleases us. Some call Him Rama, some Krishna, others call Him Allah or Jehovah, and yet others just call Him God. All worship the same Spirit, but as all foods do not agree with all, all names do not appeal to all. Each chooses the name according to his tendencies, and He being the In-Dweller, All-Powerful and Omniscient knows our innermost feelings and responds to us accordingly.

Worship or prayer, therefore, is not to be performed with the lips, but with the heart. And that is why it can be performed equally by the dumb and the stammerer, by the ignorant and the stupid. And the prayers of those whose tongues are nectared but whose hearts are full of poison are never heard. He, therefore who would pray to God, must cleanse his heart. Rama was not only on the lips of Hanuman, He was enthroned in his heart. He gave Hanuman unlimited strength. In His strength Hanuman lifted the mountain and crossed the ocean.

It is faith that steers us through stormy seas, faith that moves mountains and faith that jumps across the ocean. That faith is nothing but a living, wide-awake consciousness of God within. He who has achieved that faith wants nothing. Though bodily diseased, he is spiritually healthy, physically pure and rolls in spiritual riches.

Prayer, therefore, may be done by any name. A prayerful heart is the vehicle and service makes the heart prayerful. Those Hindus who heart-fully serve the untouchables truly pray; the Hindus who spin cotton for indigenous cloths or buy clothes from the poor native spinners truly pray”.

If we truly believe in God and have faith in Him, there is no reason to pray for anything. He knows our needs better than we. To pray for ourselves seems to be a contradiction of our faith in God. A model prayer is given under.

‘Oh Lord. You have blessed me with so many things.

Thank You for all those blessings.

Whatever is Your will for me, I will abide by it.

Please bless me with the strength to pass through life‘s struggles’.

The emotion of love is closely akin to faith, and for this reason love comes very near to transforming one's thought impulses into their physical equivalent. The emotions of ‘faith’ and ‘love’ are powerful of all the major positive emotions. When these two are blended, they have the effect of energizing the vibration of thought in such a way that it instantly reaches the subconscious mind, where it is changed into its physical equivalent or reality.

Chapter 5

Jnana Sakti (Knowledge is power)

From time immemorial people have witnessed fruits falling off the trees. But only Isaac Newton could think of ‘why?’ and discovered the theory of gravity. Many people also wonder why huge trees such as banyan trees yield small fruits while creepers such as pumpkin plants yield huge fruits. But people who sit under them can imagine what would be the result if a huge fruit falls on their head and they wonder at the reasoning in God’s creation.

It can be said that a person who has never seen and heard of fire is ignorant. One who has never seen fire, but studied its properties has knowledge. One who knows how to produce fire and make use of it, has wisdom.

The word ‘education’ is derived from Latin word ‘educo’ which means ‘to develop within‘ or ‘draw out’. The real purpose of education is to let a person know his shortcomings, ways to improvise and bring the best out of himself. The lack of this knowledge is the cause many students struggle in life even after acquiring degrees and ranks. Students who have won gold medal in electrical engineering fail to help others even in fixing problems such as fuse outage. It is unfortunate that a person who has invested lot of time and money to obtain a Ph.D. ends up competing for the jobs that don‘t require any skill.

Unfortunately we still follow the British education system developed by Macauly aimed at producing clerks who memorize rules and work routinely without applying heart and mind. It is also aimed at promoting the superiority of British way of living and making Indians feel ashamed of their own heritage and culture. Our education system only aims at memorizing lessons from the examination point of view and then immediately forgetting them. Creativity for new inventions or analytical thinking for solving problems is not being encouraged.

If we want to be a successful businessman, we should know how to solve other’s problems or provide valuable services or goods. Through wisdom one can understand how to apply knowledge in practical situations.

Neither as a law student in London nor as a briefless barrister in Bombay had Gandhiji acquired much knowledge of the intricacies of legal practice.

Moreover, he was completely innocent of the mysteries of book-keeping and business accounts which are involved in a complicated lawsuit. So he set himself to acquire both. In the process he made two discoveries. One was that facts are three-fourths of the law; the other, that litigation was ruinous to both parties in a suit and therefore the duty of a lawyer was to bring them together in a settlement.

He wrote - My joy was boundless. I had learnt the true practice of law. I had learnt to find out the better side of human nature and to enter men's hearts. I realized that the true function of a lawyer was to unite parties riven asunder. The lesson was so indelibly burnt into me that a large part of my time during the twenty years of my practice as a lawyer was occupied in bringing about private compromises of hundreds of cases. I lost nothing thereby - not even money, certainly not my soul.

In addition to law books Gandhiji studied several spiritual books that helped him in his thought process. Prior to Gandhiji's arrival into Indian independence struggle, many people were fighting the British. But it was Gandhiji's wisdom that made him stand apart from the crowd. He knew the strengths and weaknesses of the British Empire and that of his own people. Prior to his emergence on political field, politics was confined to elite classes. Middle classes and masses were largely unreached. Gandhiji knew that he had to touch the hearts of people by living a simple life and making himself available to the masses. He dressed like them and talked like them.

Gandhiji was also able to apply his knowledge of scriptures and spiritual wisdom to freedom struggle. He knew the source of problem which is a violation of dharma and its consequent karma collectively felt upon by the Indians. If we understand two words - dharma, karma and their relationship we might understand most of the essence of Sanathana Dharma (Eternal Truth) preached by the sages from time immemorial. The crown of all commandments is 'Satyam vadha' (be truthful) and 'dharmam chara' (practice dharma).

Dharma cannot be translated into a single English word because there is no equivalent concept. Generally people refer dharma to right way of living (moral duties, obligations and code of conduct) but it has broader meaning.

Sanskrit adage says 'Dharayete iti dharma'. The word dharma is derived from the Sanskrit root dhṛ, which means 'to hold, maintain, support'. Dharma holds, maintains and supports the entire universe. At gross level, the virtue by which a thing is a thing, and without which it cannot be what it is, is called its dharma.

For instance sweetness is the dharma of honey. Giving light and heat is the dharma of fire and the Sun. Similarly, the dharma of man is his untainted humanity. When this humanity - expressed in terms of truthfulness, love and kindness is absent and there is a preponderance of selfishness, falsehood, hatred and deceit, then that man is said to be violating his dharma. That is adharma, sin.

At a subtle level, dharma is a universal law, to maintain the essential order of things, balance and harmony in the universe so that the affairs of life cannot be disturbed without causing chaos. Underlying this idea is the oneness of life; the discovery by sages that all things are interconnected because at its deepest level universe is indivisible. For instance the oxygen that is essential for our survival is produced by trees. We also know that countless people are involved in bringing food from the fields into our plates. This oneness in the universe bestows a basic balance on the whole of nature such that any disturbance in one place sends ripples everywhere, as a bubble touched lightly in one place, trembles all over until balance is restored or it is burst.

Once a little boy was flying a kite along with his father and wondered as to what keeps the kite up. The father answered “the string, of course”. The boy said “but dad, if the string is not pulling it down, the kite might fly higher and higher”.

The father asked the boy to watch what happens as he snapped the string. Guess what happened. The kite fell to the ground. It is true in life too. Dharma is the string that is holding this universe together. Adhering to dharma may often seem an obstacle in achieving our goals or cause of failures. But it is dharma that helps our progress and indeed the very basis of our existence.

There can be different dharmas such as son’s dharma to support old parents, varna dharma (king’s dharma to rule justly), asrama dharma (grihasdha has to support the world), vritti dharma (providing best service in given profession or duty) and so on.

During the Second World War Nazi soldiers killed 60,00,000 unarmed and innocent Jews, just because they belonged to a different religion, under the orders of Adolf Hitler and generals. During Nuremberg trials of captured Nazi soldiers, they defended their actions saying that it was their duty to follow the orders of superiors and hence the murders were not crimes. However the court held that following an unlawful order is not a valid defence against charges of war crimes. Dharma of a soldier is to protect citizens and fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.

In ethical dilemmas or moral choices we need to follow the "ethic of reciprocity", or the ‘Golden Rule’. It states that one has a right to just treatment, and therefore has a reciprocal responsibility to ensure the same treatment for others. We should treat others the same way we ourselves want to be treated.

Nothing happens in the world by chance or without a cause. The universe is based on laws of order, not of chaos. Everything is arranged upon definite principles, and never at random. People, forgetting this, expect results to drop into their hands out of thin air. Rain and snow do drop from the sky, but not without clouds, precipitation etc. Rain and snow are the mature effects of former causes (such as clouds, precipitation). Equally so are results. They too must have a previous history.

If a mother wants to make a sweet for children, it is the result of a sound recipe, properly applied. She cannot expect a good sweet without mixing the right ingredients and cooking it at the right temperature. It is not she who has created the sweet; it is nature. She brings related things together; sets causes at work; these causes bring about the desired result, a delicious sweet.

So it is in the making of a meaningful life. Certain principles or causes are followed; certain effects are the results. But the effect can never take place without the cause. That is the law of cause and effect, ‗the law of karma‘. To expect effects without causes is to expect good sweets without right ingredients.

If we put our hands in fire, our hands will get burnt. But it will not be because of ‘fate’ and nor will it be a vengeful ‘God’ that burnt our hands. The burning of the hand is simply the inevitable and natural *effect* of the *cause* that we have set in motion. Similarly, we cannot sow tamarind seeds and expect the trees to yield apples. We reap what we sow.

‘Karma’ in Sanskrit literally means ‘action’ or ‘deed’. It is the Law of Cause and Effect, Action and Reaction, Sequence and Consequence. We can also call is as the ‘law of responsibility’. We are always setting causes in motion, every moment, through our every act, our every word, and even our every thought. For every cause set in motion, there is a corresponding and correlative effect which comes back. This is the way the universe maintains its harmony, balance, and equilibrium.

The purpose of ‘law of cause and effect’ or karma is to make the individual to live in accordance with dharma – not to pursue selfish interests at the expense of others, but to contribute and consider the welfare of the whole universe.

Karma and reincarnation (rebirth) are linked with each other. We can't have one without the other. It is obvious that one single lifetime may not be long enough to reap the full effects of every cause we have set in motion during that lifetime. It is also apparent that some of the aspects and circumstances of our current lifetime do not have their origins in the current lifetime but in the seemingly distant past. Physical birth itself is a Karmic effect, since one of the main reasons we are born is in order to deal with our past Karma.

Some people are born with beauty, wealth, health, intelligence and so on or in rich countries while other people are born with ugliness, poverty, ill health, ignorance and so on or in countries ravaged with famines and civil wars. We cannot say that the God, who has so much inequality in His creation, is a just God. So, it would be logical to assume that people are born again and again in suitable conditions and surroundings to work out their good and bad karmas.

In this sense life is like a school; one can learn and graduate or one can ignore karmic lessons and stay behind. However, as long as a debt of karma remains, a person has to keep coming back to reap them.

For every effect, there must be a cause and for every cause, there will be an effect. For instance if a person commits crime, that is the effect of his ignorance and in turn becomes cause of his punishment.

There are below three divisions of Karma:

1. Sanchita Karma – It is the Karmic account or accumulation of all our karma from past lives that has not yet been dealt with.
2. Prarabdha Karma -it is the specific portion of that Sanchita Karma which has now become ripe and we are destined to experience the results in the present lifetime. If successfully dealt with, that portion of Karma will then be exhausted and wiped out.
3. Agami (also known as Kriyamana and Vartamana) Karma - it is the fresh Karma we are creating for ourselves right now, as we live this present lifetime. It becomes added to our Sanchita Karma and will bear results as our Prarabdha Karma in future lifetimes.

Looking from another angle, there are three possible explanations as to why things happen, the way they do, or the way they are.

1. Everything is due to chance or accident and has no actual reason, purpose, or cause behind it whatsoever…or
2. everything is due to the will and whim of some old man up there in the sky; the God we created in our image and likeness…or
3. the universe and everything in it is governed by immutable laws; unfailing,

unerring, impartial and impersonal.

We can explain the answer, as to why things happen the way they are, through the help of below Indian national flag.

	Truth, Consciousness governing universal laws to ensure order of things and balance in the universe
	Wheel of dharma, past, present and future karmas determining our life
	Random happenings in life, (or) life predetermined by God, (or) Living life as per our freewill and God has nothing to do

If we focus on the bottom green part alone, it gives impression that everything happens at random or everything happens as per our own freewill and God has nothing to do. It may also make us believe that everything is predetermined by God and we need not put our own efforts. Such state can be attributable only to creatures that live as per natural instincts. It cannot be attributed to human beings that are endowed with reasoning power.

If we focus on the wheel of dharma above, we can understand that life is a combination of past, present and future karmas. Factors such as the family we are born into, our living conditions depend upon Sanchita Karma which is a result of past good actions. However we have the freewill to choose between present good or bad actions which determine our future Agami Karma. We cannot change the past karmas but can choose present karmas and build good future. Thus freewill enables us to shun bad karmas and do good karmas to avoid rebirth and achieve liberation. The wheel is a symbol for constant practice of dharma, and resulting karmas that determine death and rebirth.

If we focus on the saffron colour above, we can understand that Truth, Consciousness is the Supreme. We can reach and be one with this Power, but cannot rise either above or beyond it. It was emphasized earlier that a desire should be righteous and not detrimental to the welfare of others. That is because evil may temporarily win but ultimately dharma prevails. Indian national anthem hails and salutes this Truth, ‘Bharata Bhagya Vidhata’, the Dispenser of India’s destiny.

As well as individual Karma, there is also family Karma, national Karma, and so on. We can reason that India‘s Sanchita karma through caste discrimination played a part in Gandhiji getting thrown out of train and his

freewill and Agami Karma played part in how he reacted to that incident.

Even though the theory of karma could logically explain the ups and down of human life, it also caused great misunderstanding. Few people may argue that the downtrodden people should suffer the consequences of their bad karma and we should not interfere with it. But thinking so means the suppression of our finer qualities such as love, compassion and kindness. Instead of being indifferent to others sufferings, if we venture out to help the people in need, that gesture helps us to do good karmas and thereby reduce our past bad karmas.

Mahabharata teaches "Ahimsa Paramo Dharma, dharma himsa thadivacha'. The highest dharma is ahimsa, non-violence, universal love for all living creatures. Violence can only be justified in the defense of righteousness (establishing dharma). Every kind of unjust violence, in thought or word or action, is a violation of dharma, because as sages discovered in meditation, there is Oneness in universe. Untouchability is also a form of violence towards fellow human beings.

By middle ages of history, there was caste system based on birth and untouchability well established in India. Even though the Upanishads and other sacred texts teach that everyman is a personification of Brahman, in practicality there is a rigid social ladder of castes without any chance of upward growth. Acharyas, rulers, merchants and so on started occupying high positions just because of the caste they were born into, even though they lacked required merit. Slowly the country disintegrated spiritually, physically and economically. It could not fight the invaders and yielded to slavery and exploitation.

Gandhiji believed that there could be no meaning of independence without eradicating untouchability and accordingly he guided the people to live in accordance with dharma. He reasoned that we have no moral right to demand equal rights from the British when we ourselves are not extending the same to lesser fortunate people. He pleaded that people of oppressed communities should be allowed to enter into temples, schools, villages and be treated as equals. He pleaded that they should be given access to drinking water from village wells and also allowed to eat along with people of so called 'higher castes'. He declared that untouchability is a great sin that must be eradicated from the society. He worked hard to bring all people under one umbrella irrespective of caste, religion, language and so on.

Gandhiji also knew the causes behind the economic and political strengths of British Empire. He aimed his battles at weakening the empire through boycotting goods made in Britain, and through Indian's non-cooperation with

British administration.

Knowledge will not be effective, unless it is organized and intelligently directed, through practical plans of action, to the definite end of a goal. Lack of this understanding has been the reason why millions of people earn degrees believing that "knowledge is power", but are clueless about how to succeed in life. The power is, not in mere ‘accumulation’ but in the ‘application’ of knowledge.

An educated man is not necessarily one who possesses vast knowledge. It is not essential that he has this knowledge in his own mind. An educated man is one who has the wisdom to know how to achieve his goals, if necessary with the cooperation of other people.

The previous paragraph should give hope and encouragement to the man with ambition to achieve something, who has not possessed himself of the necessary education to supply such knowledge as he may require. Men sometimes go through life suffering from inferiority complexes because they are not men of "education."

The man who can organize and direct a "Cosmic Mind" team of men who possess knowledge in achieving objectives, is just as much a man of education as any man in the group. Remember this, if you suffer from a feeling of inferiority, because your education has been limited.

First of all, decide the sort of knowledge you require, and the purpose for which it is needed. To a large extent your major purpose in life and the goal will determine what knowledge you need. With this question settled, your next move requires that you have accurate information concerning dependable sources of knowledge. The more important of these are:

(a) One's own experience and education

(b) Accumulated information (through books and internet, in which may be found the knowledge collected by the civilization through ages)

(c) Knowledge and experience available through cooperation of others (Cosmic Mind team). This topic will be explained in depth in a later chapter

As knowledge is acquired it must be organized and put into use, for a definite purpose, through practical plans. Knowledge has no value except that which can be gained from its application toward some worthy end. Knowledge does not apply itself. We as individuals must make the application, and the application consists in fertilizing the thought with a living purpose.

The time and thoughts which most people waste in aimless effort would accomplish wonders if properly directed with some special objective in view. In order to do this, it is necessary to focus your mind upon a specific thought and hold it there, to the exclusion of all other thoughts.

Successful men, in all callings, never stop acquiring knowledge related to their major purpose, business, or profession. Those who are not successful usually make the mistake of believing that the period of acquiring knowledge ends when one finishes school or education. The truth is that schooling can only put one in the way of learning how to acquire practical knowledge.

The person who stops studying merely because he has finished school is forever hopelessly doomed to mediocrity, no matter what may be his calling or field of action. The way of success is the way of continuous pursuit of knowledge and its proper application.

We shouldn‘t live in past, worrying about the things that happened already. We cannot undo them. We need to learn from past and be prepared to accept the consequences of our past actions.

We shouldn’t live in future either worrying about what may happen in future. If good things are about to happen, they will come as pleasant surprises. If bad things should happen, we will suffer greatly in present, worrying about their future occurrence.

Our past karmas determine our present by way of Prarabdha. In the same way our present karmas determine our future. If we improve the present, we can have a better future. Thus we are makers of our own destiny.

*****

Chapter 6

Kriya Sakti (crystallization of desire into action)

Desire can be put into action through imagination and planning. Imagination is more powerful than knowledge, because while knowledge is limited to all that we now know and understand, imagination embraces the entire world and all there ever will be to know and understand.

Imagination is the realm of the mind where one can see things that do not yet exist in this world, but which one day might. Generally authors, artists and musicians have great imagination. An author has to create in his mind characters, locations, plot and incidents. A musician has to hear in his mind the interaction of many musical instruments in order to create great music.

Imagination should not be confused with daydreaming or fantasizing, in which many people like to indulge. Daydreaming is a form of killing time whereas imagination is a form of constructive thought followed by action.

Man can create or achieve anything which he can imagine. The imagination is the workshop of mind where all plans are created by man. The thought impulse, ‘the desire’, is given shape, form, and ‘action’ through the aid of the imaginative faculty of the mind.

Through the aid of his imaginative faculty, man discovers, and harnesses forces of nature. Man has conquered the earth, water and air so much that the animals, fish and birds are no match to him in running, swimming or flying. Inventions such as wheels, vehicles, telephones, Internet are the examples of ideas or imagination that have transformed the world.

The imagination functions in two forms; synthetic imagination and creative imagination.

1. Synthetic imagination: Through this faculty, you can transform old concepts, ideas, or plans into new combinations. This faculty creates nothing new. It merely works with the material of experience, education, and observation with which it is fed. It is the faculty used most by common men.
2. Creative imagination: The faculty of creative imagination is one which the majority of people never use during an entire lifetime, and if used at all, it usually happens by mere accident. The great leaders, writers, musicians, and poets become great, because they acquire the habit of relying upon the "still

small voice" which speaks from within, through the faculty of creative imagination.

When ideas or answers flash into one's mind, they come from one or more of the following sources:

1. One's subconscious mind, wherein is stored every sense impression and thought impulse whichever reached the brain through any of the five senses

2. From the mind of some other person who has just released the thought, or picture of the idea or concept, through conscious thought, or from subconscious mind

3. Inspirations

For instance Benzene is a natural constituent of crude oil. The empirical formula for benzene was long known, but it‘s highly polyunsaturated structure, with just one hydrogen atom for each carbon atom, was challenging to explain. After several years it was explained by a chemist, Friedrich August Kekulé. He claimed that he had discovered the ring shape of the benzene molecule after having an imagination of a snake seizing its own tail.

In Gandhiji’s life too there were many instances that he received inspirations. By January 1930 Gandhiji was clueless as to what to do next in the freedom struggle. He spent many sleepless nights and was restless. By the middle of February his struggle came to an end and there was an idea in his mind. The next battle has to be through salt sathyagraha.

Salt can be easily made near sea shore and many Indians are dependent on this business. In addition, because of the weather in India even poor people must use salt every day. So the monopoly and taxation on the manufacture and trade of salt is a symbol of the British authority over India.

Gandhiji thought that by refusing to pay taxes on salt, people could demonstrate their opposition to the British rule. He visualized multitudes of people standing in lines making, selling and buying salt. If the government arrested and punished the volunteers, more and more people would fill their places and thus the sathyagraha would become stronger.

Gandhiji wrote a letter asking the British Government to remove the salt tax, but it refused to do so. Gandhiji wrote another letter to the Viceroy saying ‘On the eleventh of this March I shall proceed to break the salt law. It is open to you to arrest me. I hope, there will be tens of thousands ready to take up the work after me.’ But there was no reply from the British authorities.

On March 12th, at 6.30 in the morning, Gandhiji started on foot from his Ashram at Ahmedabad, with a band of carefully selected volunteers, on a march to break the salt-law. His steps were firm. His look was peaceful and fearless.

The whole world watched with wonder and curiosity and thousands of people joined the march on the way. At last, after 24 days, the march ended 241 miles away, on April 5th at Dandi a village on the west coast. Gandhiji spent that night in prayer. In the morning, he went to the sea-shore and bathed in the sea. Then he bent down and picked up a lump of salt and thus broke the salt-law. He issued an appeal to the world in a simple note 'I want world sympathy in this battle of right against might.'

The sathyagrahis wouldn't harm the police but would just continue their work of making salt and willing to be beaten down on the heads with cracked skulls as they fall down. As one row of sathyagrahis fell down, the next row of sathyagrahis would come and offer their skulls to be broken. That was a different form of resistance that the British had ever faced.

The representatives and media from all over the world had come there to witness the great event. They praised the spirit of courage and dedication of the Satyagrahis. In the eyes of the world the British Empire suffered a serious blow to its moral authority. All over the country, even in distant villages, men and women came out in processions, held meetings, observed protests and manufactured salt without paying any tax. The Government brutally beat the demonstrators, even resorted to firing. Yet the struggle didn't stop. More than a hundred thousand Satyagrahis were imprisoned. The jails were so full to overflowing that barbed wire jails were created in the open.

The British Government had called a Round Table Conference in London to draft a future constitution for India. But they couldn't move on without Gandhiji, so they released him from the prison. The Viceroy talked with him in terms of equality and entered into treaty with him. This treaty is known as Gandhiji-Irwin Pact. It was a great victory of Satyagraha. Gandhiji suspended the movement and the Government released all the political prisoners. Then Gandhiji went to England as an honoured guest of the British Government to attend the Round Table Conference. When somebody in London pointed out that his clothes were not appropriate for a meeting with the King, Gandhiji humorously replied 'the King has enough clothes on him for both of us'.

Gandhiji could move people into a kind of action called passive resistance. He showed that breaking the cycle of violence isn't about weapons. It's not about fight or flight. When we cower from conflict, we empower those who

desire to inflict violence on us. On the other hand, when we respond to

violence with violence, we escalate the cycle. This is the meaning of the saying ‘if someone hits you on one cheek, turn the other cheek’. When someone hits us, we don‘t hit them back, and we don‘t run away either. We should turn our cheek, forcing them to look into our eyes before hitting again.

> Gandhiji said, *“My claim to hear the voice of God is nothing new. Unfortunately there is no-way I can prove the claim except through results. God will not be God if He allowed Himself to be an object of proof by His creatures. But He does give His willing slave the power to pass through the fiercest of ordeals. I have been a willing slave to this most exacting Master for more than half a century. His voice has been increasingly audible as years have rolled. He has never forsaken me even in my darkest hour. He has saved me often from myself and left me not a vestige of independence. The greater the surrender to Him, the greater has been my joy”.*

Gandhiji’s ideas such as non-cooperation, boycotting foreign clothes, Quit India movement also originated from inspirations or imaginations. The British government used to send cotton and other raw materials from India to Britain. Textile mills in Britain manufactured cloths and then these were imported back into India and sold at high prices.

The British Government imposed such restrictions that it was impossible for Indian manufactures to import machinery for factories or do business because of heavy duties. Such measures completely destroyed Indian industries, employment and people’s purchasing power. Gandhiji imagined that the way to oppose British exploitation was through boycotting British clothes and by encouraging Indian manufacturers and homespun clothes.

Imaginative faculty may become weak through inaction. It can be revived and made alert through its constant use. For now, let us focus our attention on the development of the synthetic imagination, because this is the faculty which we will use more often in the process of converting desire into achievement.

Things are always created twice: first in the workshop of the mind and then, in reality. We can call the process 'blueprinting' because anything that you create in your outer world began as a simple blueprint in your inner world. When you learn to take control of your thoughts and vividly imagine all that you desire from this worldly existence in a state of total expectancy, dormant forces will awaken inside you. You will begin to unlock the true potential of your mind to create the kind of magical life that you deserve.

From now onwards, forget about the past. Dare to dream that you are more than the sum of your current circumstances. Expect the best. You will be astonished at the results.

"The future depends on what we do in the present" Gandhiji said. Planning helps us to chart a course for the achievement of goals. The process begins with reviewing the current situation and identifying what needs to be improved operationally in the next week or month or year, as the case may be. Through planning one can achieve optimum use of time, money, manpower and other resources. In planning execution is the key for success.

The plans designed by Gandhiji during 'Quit India movement' are given as an example here.

1. The duties and activities in government offices should come to a halt.
2. People should not pay taxes. If government issues orders to seize properties, people should protest such orders.
3. Government employees should not enforce government orders and they should resign from their positions.
4. Students should boycott schools and colleges and should not join again until independence is achieved.
5. Those who believe in violence and hate other religions should stay away from the movement.

Gandhiji designed many more such plans to lead people in freedom struggle. His way of leading movements was very methodical. First he used to write a letter to the authorities asking them to take appropriate action on the issue that he had raised. When they failed to do so, he used to write in the media about the issue and gather public support around it. Then he used to train and place suitable volunteers in charge of the movement until it becomes a successful event. In the same manner, we should design appropriate plans to achieve desires or solve problems, and implement them.

To succeed, you must have plans that are faultless. You must have the advantage of the experience, education, ability and imagination of other minds.

No individual has sufficient knowledge and power to achieve what he wants, without the cooperation of other people. Every plan you adopt, in your endeavour to achieve, should be the joint venture of yourself and every other member of your team. You may originate your own plans, either in whole or

in part, but make sure that those plans are reviewed, and approved by the Cosmic Mind team.

We design plans based on the information we know. But life doesn‘t always go according to your plan. Life is so complex and vast that no one can ever plan to that extent. If you don‘t have a plan at all, you may not know what to do tomorrow. So keep a plan as insurance, but be prepared for all possibilities. Always dream that everything will work out beyond your plans and imagination.

If the first plan which you adopt does not work successfully, replace it with a new plan. If this new plan also fails, replace it with another, and so on, until you find a plan that works. Right here is the point at which the majority of men meet with failure, because of their lack of commitment in creating new plans to take the place of those which fail.

Temporary defeat should mean only one thing, that there is something wrong with your plan. Millions of men go through life in misery, because they lack a sound plan through which one can achieve what he wants.

No man has ever failed, until he quits - in his own mind.

We see men who have achieved great successes, but we often recognize only their triumph, overlooking the temporary setbacks which they had to surmount before succeeding.

When a setback occurs, accept it as a signal that your plans are not sound, rebuild those plans, and set sail once again towards your goal. If you give up before reaching your goal, you are a quitter. A quitter never wins and a winner never quits.

Decision making is an important factor in choosing plans and executing them. It is a process of selecting the best course of action from many alternatives. While considering the alternatives, the following issues should be taken into account.

a. Consequences of doing or not doing a thing
b. Long term effect: an act may be beneficial in the short term but detrimental in the long term
c. Listening to the heart

Gandhiji‘s non-violent struggle was going peacefully throughout the nation but it turned violent in a town called Chouri Choura. Angry mob burnt a police station and caused death of police constables. Immediately Gandhiji called off the movement citing that Indians are not yet ready for non-violent

struggles. He was firm in his decision in the face of strong opposition from his followers.

He believed that even if such a movement triumphs temporarily, it may bring long term evil consequences. He used to say that truth is truth even if uttered by one man and that one man with conviction is majority. Hence it is very important to adhere to a decision after it has been made.

Quantity Vs. Quality

> *Gandhiji said "There is no doubt that workers in a cause are as a rule tempted more by quantitative than by qualitative results of their labours. And though the volume of work done throughout India as a result of anti-untouchability movement represented by the servants of untouchables society is not by any means unsatisfactory as a whole, it looks insignificant when it is distributed over the respective provinces and when it is considered relatively to the goal which is complete removal of untouchability, that is, of the high- and-lowness mentality that pervades Hinduism. There was, therefore, despondence markedly reflected at the meetings of anti-untouchability workers that were called during my convalescence after the recent fast. I did not share the despondence myself.*
>
> *For, I had only quality in mind whereas I saw that the co-workers had consciously or unconsciously quantity in mind. I would have one good teacher in preference to fifty indifferent ones. I would be satisfied with the constant attendance of five children instead of the sporadic attendance of fifty. I would have five workers concentrating their attention on Compact, small, selected areas rather than having them to cover large areas to which they could never give concentrated attention. If this preference for quality is good, as it is for any movement, it is especially so, for an essentially religious movement like that of anti-untouchability. In religion indifference to quality may even lead to disaster".*

How to overcome procrastination?

Procrastination is a weakness which everybody must conquer. Analysis of men and women who experience failure, discloses the fact that 'inability to take decision' stands near the head of the list of the major causes of failure.

Analysis of successful people, discloses the fact that every one of them has the habit of taking decisions promptly and of changing these decisions slowly, if and when necessary.

People who fail have the opposite habit of taking decisions slowly and of changing these decisions quickly and often.

The majority of people who fail are generally easily influenced by the opinions of others. They permit the newspapers and the gossiping neighbours to do their "thinking" for them. Opinions are the cheapest and abundant commodities on earth. Everyone has a basketful of opinions ready to be distributed to anyone, because they don‘t use them anyway. If we are influenced by "opinions" before taking decisions, we may not succeed in any field of action.

It is a characteristic of people who have just shallow knowledge to try to give the impression that they have much knowledge. Such people generally do too much talking and too little listening. Keep your eyes and ears wide open--and your mouth closed, if you wish to acquire the habit of prompt decision. If you talk more than you listen, you not only deprive yourself of many opportunities to accumulate useful knowledge, but you will also permit people to influence you.

Close friends and relatives, while not meaning to do so, often handicap one through "opinions" and sometimes through ridicule, which is meant to be humorous. Thousands of men and women carry inferiority complexes with them all through life, because some well-meaning, but ignorant person destroyed their confidence through "opinions" or ridicule.

No two people are alike. What seems possible to you may seem impossible to another person. Only Wright brothers believed that human beings can fly by using aircraft, while the ―knowledgeable people‖ ridiculed them.

Keep your own counsel or team, when you begin to put into practice the principles in Guide. Take no one into your confidence, except the members of your team. Be very particular in your selection of this team, that you choose only those who are positive and will be in harmony with your ambitions and ideals.

Reach your own decisions, based on the information given by your counsel. If you need facts or information from other people, to enable you to reach decisions; acquire these facts or secure the information you need quietly, without disclosing your purpose.

The value of decisions depends upon the courage required to execute them. The great decisions, which served as the foundation of civilization, were reached by assuming great risks, which often meant the possibility of death.

The men who reach decisions quickly and firmly, know what they want, and generally get it. The world usually makes room for the man whose words and actions show that he knows where he is going.

Fear of failure and indecision is a habit that usually begins in young age. The habit takes on permanency as the youth ages, without definite purpose. Hence it is very important to defeat this habit, at the earliest.

In your pursuit of goals, do not look for a ‘break’, because you will not find it. You will find only the eternal laws, to be complied with. They may be used for great causes such as bringing freedom to a nation, or just to make a better living. There is no price except the time and effort necessary to understand and apply them.

*****

Chapter 7

Cosmic Mind, 1+1 = > 2

We have learnt about ‘planning’ in the earlier chapter. Plans are useless, without sufficient power to translate them into action. Power is essential for any achievement.

The method by which Gandhiji attained his stupendous power may be explained in a few words. He accumulated power by inducing millions of people to work, with single mind and body, in a spirit of harmony, for a definite purpose. Gandhiji accomplished which many people believe a miracle that could not be done by any other human being.

After being thrown out of the train and having seen for himself the plight of his countrymen in South Africa, one of Gandhiji’s first actions after he had reached Pretoria was to make necessary contacts with his client's agents, and call for a meeting of the Indian community. His speech at that meeting may be said to have been the first public speech in his life. This time he did not fumble, nor falter nor sit down in shame. He had unconsciously struck the well of courage within him, the perennial well whose waters would henceforth never fail him.

During the years that he stayed in South Africa Gandhiji made contacts with many Indians, Africans and the British who actively helped him in his efforts to fight racism. Through Natal Indian Congress he fought for the rights of Indians living in Natal. He conducted regular meetings for free exchange of ideas. His participation in Boer war also enabled him to gain association of many British friends. His friendship with people of various religions gave him a chance to understand thoroughly his own religion.

After Gandhiji moved back to India in 1915 he made acquaintance with many freedom fighters such as Gopala Krishna Gokhale, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sardar Vallabhbai Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru and continued his efforts in Indian freedom struggle. Through their help he conducted many movements such as Indigo movement at Champaran and Kheda Sathyagraha. It was his association with great minds that helped him to reach public through newspapers and publications such as Indian Opinion, Young India and Navajivan.

Gandhiji’s real journey in Indian freedom struggle started in Champaran district of Bihar. European plantation owners used to put pressure on local farmers to grow indigo against their wishes. If local farmers refuse to grow indigo their lands were seized and had to undergo severe hardships.

Gandhiji camped in Champaran for several months studying the difficulties of farmers and this experience helped him in several ways.

1. Until then Gandhiji was limited by his European education, habits and contacts in upper class. His touring in Champaran district enabled him to understand the daily life of Indian farmers.
2. He got acquainted with many associates such as Rajendra Prasad, J. B. Kripalani who would later work with him in Indian freedom struggle.
3. He could obtain the confidence of people of Bihar state who reside far away from his home state Gujarat. He refused to bow down to British orders that he should stay out of Bihar. This in turn had great impact on his followers in Gujarat.
4. Gandhiji used to frequently meet British administrators and discuss with them about the issues of Champaran farmers. His acquaintance with those administrators helped him in later years in events such as Irvin pact, London round table conference.

Cosmic Mind is not a mere idle gathering of few people for time pass. Cosmic Mind may be defined as "coordination of efforts, in a spirit of harmony, between two or more people, for the attainment of a definite purpose." According to Cosmic Mind principle the combined energies of two or more like-minded persons is several times greater than the sum total of their individual energies.

Cosmic Mind group meetings may be conducted in a home, business place, or any other agreed-upon location that provides a certain amount of quiet and privacy. Usually it is sufficient to meet once a week. In fact, there are no strict rules and the meetings can be conducted during morning or evening walks or anytime through technological means such as cell phones and internet.

One member serves as leader and conducts the meeting with the help of the agenda, which may vary based on the intended purpose. Establish an atmosphere of excitement by encouraging the members to discuss progress reports, goals achieved, experiences, future plans etc.

Every human brain is both sending and receiving instrument for the vibration of thought. Through space, in a manner similar to that employed by the cell phone broadcasting principle, every human brain is capable of picking up vibrations of thought which are being released by other brains.

In connection with the statement in the preceding paragraph consider the description of inspirations, as outlined in the chapter on Imagination. The

Imagination is the "receiving set" of the brain, which receives thoughts, released by the brains of others.

When stimulated or "stepped up" to a high rate of vibration, the mind becomes more receptive to the vibration of thought which reaches it through space from outside sources. This "stepping up" process takes place through either positive emotions or negative emotions.

Vibrations of an exceedingly high rate are the only vibrations picked up and carried, through space, from one brain to another. Thought is energy travelling at an exceedingly high rate of vibration. Thought, which has been modified or "stepped up" by any of the major emotions, vibrates at a much higher rate than ordinary thought, and it is this type of thought which passes from one brain to another.

Thus, you will see that the broadcasting principle is the factor through which you mix emotions with your thoughts and pass them on to your subconscious mind. The subconscious mind is the "sending station" of the brain, through which vibrations of thought are broadcast.

Whether a person believes in electricity or not, it yields its power. Similarly, the greatest forces in the universe are intangible. They cannot be perceived through the sense organs or mind. It would be suffice for now to accept that there may be powers that are beyond our comprehension. They can be tapped into through Cosmic Mind.

The desire to awaken the divinity in every individual and make the world a better place to live has taken the form of a seed and is in front of you in the form of a book and an organization. This movement also is being conducted through the principle of Cosmic Mind and other principles mentioned in this book.

There are two characteristics of the Cosmic Mind principle, one of which is economic in nature, and the other spiritual.

Economic advantages may be created by any person who surrounds himself with the advice and cooperation of a group of men by compensating for their time’s worth. This form of cooperative alliance has been the basis of nearly every great business success.

The spiritual phase of the Cosmic Mind principle is much more abstract and difficult to comprehend, because it has reference to the spiritual forces with which men are not well acquainted. You may catch a significant suggestion from this statement: ‘When two minds come together, an invisible, intangible

force which may be compared to a third mind is created.’

Cosmic Mind enables a person to gain access to knowledge, experience, time money and resources of other associates. When two or more people coordinate in a spirit of harmony, and work toward a definite objective, they place themselves in position to absorb power directly from the great universal storehouse of God. This is the greatest of all sources of power. It is the source to which every great person turns (whether he may be conscious of the fact or not).

Make a list of all your relatives, friends, colleagues and all other acquaintances who can help you in your endeavors. You can also ask them to refer other people who can help you. You will be surprised to see how many people are kind hearted and happy to lend a helping hand.

*****

Chapter 8

Leadership (inspiring and guiding people towards goals)

A leader is a person who is able to set direction for a group of people, and mobilize them towards that goal. Broadly speaking, there are two types of people in the world - leaders and followers. Decide at the outset whether you intend to become a leader in your chosen field, or remain a follower. The choice will make huge difference in your life.

It is no disgrace to be a follower. On the other hand, it is no credit to remain a follower. Most great leaders began in the capacity of followers. They became great leaders because they were intelligent followers. An intelligent follower has many advantages, among them the opportunity to learn from his leader.

There are two forms of Leadership.

1. Leadership by consent of, and for the welfare of the others

2. Leadership by force for one‘s own welfare, without the consent of others

People may follow the forced leadership temporarily, but they will not do so willingly. History is filled with evidences that leadership by force cannot endure. The downfall and disappearance of dictators such as Hitler is significant. It means that people will not follow forced leadership indefinitely. We might find such types of leaders, among other fields such as business and religion, who have been dethroned.

Leadership-by-consent of and for the welfare the followers is the only form which can endure! This form of leadership embraces the below attributes of leadership. The person, who makes these the basis of his leadership, will find abundant opportunity to lead in any walk of life.

Major attributes required for success in leadership:

1. Courage: Some may misunderstand this attribute to be carelessness or running into problems blindly. Courage comes with clarity about one's field of action. No follower wishes to be led by a person who lacks self-confidence and clarity in his field of action. Gandhiji said *"that something in me which never derives me tells me: You have to stand against the whole world, although you may have to stand alone. You have to stare at the world in the face, although the world may look at you with bloodshot eyes. Do not fear. Trust that ‘little thing’ which resides in your heart. It says, forsake friends,*

wife and all, but testify to that which you have lived and for which you have to die."

2. Sense of fairness and justice: A person, who listens only to one side of the arguments and takes sides, will be despised by all. He has to act fairly and give both sides an opportunity of being heard.

3. Ability to take decisions: A man who wavers in his decisions, shows that he is not sure of himself. He cannot lead others successfully.

4. Planning: A leader who cannot plan but moves by guessing will end up like an aircraft without flight plan. An aircraft manoeuvres several times, in several directions and altitudes to avoid unsafe weather. But it will have a plan of where to land and how to get help from the air-traffic controllers on the ground.

5. Humbleness: Successful leaders are willing, when occasion demands, to perform any sort of work which they would ask another person to perform. They accept good advices and constructive criticisms. They are humble to admit mistakes and willing to take corrective actions.

6. Wholeheartedness: A leader puts his heart into everything he does and shows one hundred percent involvement. He shows willingness to do more than the followers: A man who works for fewer hours, but expects his followers to work for longer hours, cannot succeed.

7. Truthfulness: A person who is not loyal to the men, either above or below him, cannot gain the confidence and support of followers.

8. Sympathy and understanding of follower‘s problems and weaknesses. He knows their strengths and limitations and what tasks to be delegated to them.

9. Responsibility – He understands that with great power comes great responsibility. He does not try to escape from his own responsibility. A successful leader assumes responsibility even for the mistakes and the shortcomings of his followers. If one of his followers makes a mistake, and proves to be incompetent, a leader considers that it is he who failed.

10. Cooperation – A successful leader applies the principle of cooperative effort and be able to induce his followers to do the same.

11. There is a proverb saying _familiarity breeds contempt‘. If a leader is very closely mingling and joking with followers, they won‘t respect his orders.

Even though his heart is very soft, he should display and use firmness when orders were ignored.

12. A leader should have even minded-ness. Even if beaten down in failures and troubles, he should not pull down his followers but instead motivate them.

13. It is important to make only those promises that can be delivered. While communicating saying 'Yes' is always easy. But sometimes one has to say 'No' as well. We have to make the other person to know the situation and should be made to participate in finding a solution. If the solution was not possible that will be his psychological preparation for accepting a 'no' without a rancour.

14. A leader should not get influenced by addictions such as intoxication, gambling, hunting and so on. He has to live a good life by cultivating habits such as regular exercise, limited food, association of good people, and so on. A leader who cannot lead his own life, cannot lead others.

15. If a leader naively trusts everyone, there is a possibility of getting cheated by crooks. On the other hand if he is suspicious of everyone, good natured people get hurt and stay away from him. Hence a leader should appear to trust everyone, but proceed with caution.

16. When a leader puts followers in important positions, he should consider only merit and not factors such a relationships, friendship, community and so on. If unworthy people are promoted by leader they bring disgrace to him through their actions.

17. Win-win approach: Make sure the deal is beneficial to both the parties concerned.

18. Be pro-active instead of being reactive. Reactive people take a passive stance and believe that the world is happening to them. Proactive people, however, recognize that they have responsibility - or response-ability (The ability to choose how to respond to a given situation).

Power comes in many forms including political or economic. Power by itself is not corruption. When people with motives such as greed and dominance get hold of power, it becomes a source of corruption. If people see that power is a means to look after everyone‘s wellbeing, then power can be a great tool to serve people.

Major causes of failure in leadership:

1. Failure to follow the golden rule of reciprocity – This principle says that we

should treat others in the same way we ourselves would like to be treated.

2. Fear of competition from followers - The leader who fears that one of his followers may grab his position is practically sure to realize that fear sooner or later. The able leader trains followers and delegates appropriate tasks. Only in this way a leader can multiply himself and prepare himself to be at many places, and give attention to many things at one time.
3. Selfishness - The leader, who claims all the credit for the work of his followers, is sure to be met by resentment. A true leader claims no honours. He gives credit to his followers, because he knows that most men will work harder for recognition and satisfaction than they will for monetary benefits alone.
4. Intemperance - Followers do not respect an intemperate leader who has no control over his emotions. Moreover, intemperance in any of its various forms destroys the endurance and the vitality of all who indulge in it. A successful leader understands the weaknesses and problems of his followers and improves them by suggestions.
5. Emphasis of title or authority - The competent leader requires no title to gain the respect of his followers. The man who makes too much over his title generally has little else to emphasize. The doors to the home or office of the real leader are open to all who wish to enter, either for help or to fight, and his working quarters are free from formality or grandeur.

These are among the more common of the causes of failure in leadership. Any one of these faults is sufficient to induce failure. Study the list carefully if you aspire to leadership, and make sure that you are free of these faults.

*****

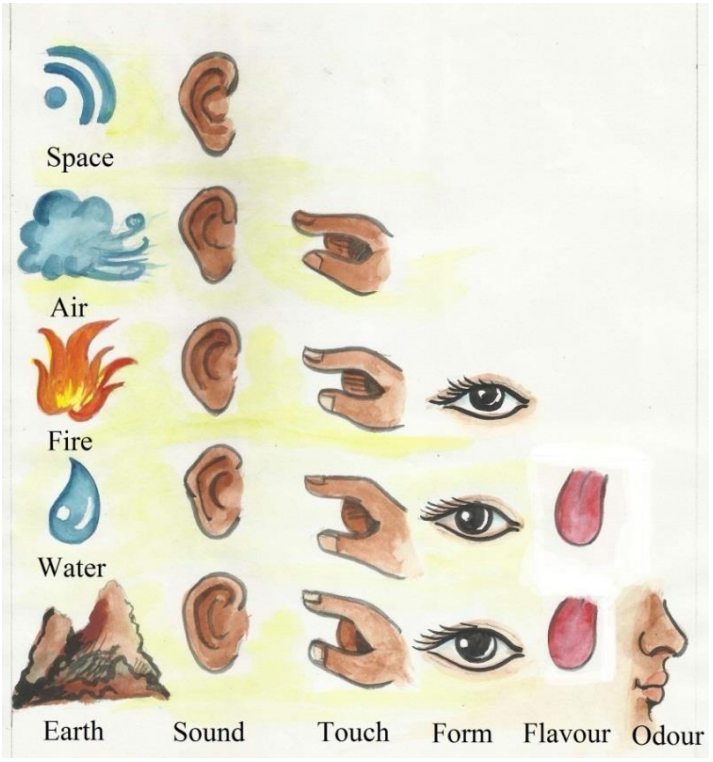
Chapter 9

Subconscious mind (the link between a man's finite mind and Infinite Cosmic Mind)

Universe consists of energy and matter, which can be transformed from one into other. We humans are made of five elements – earth, water, fire, air and space. Thought is a form of energy and hence we can use the words thought-energy and mind interchangeably. Here we can understand the logic about how thoughts have creative power to become things such as aircrafts and computers and events such as wars and freedom. We know the science of converting matter such as fuel and food into energy. Now we are learning how to convert thought-energy into things that we desire.

The functions of mind are produced by the below two parts.

1. The "Conscious Mind": When you say, "I see—I hear—I smell—I touch – I taste," it is your conscious mind that is saying this, for it is the ruler of five physical senses. Perceiving and operating through the five physical senses, the conscious mind deals with the impressions and objects of the outward life. It is the part of mind with which you reason. It discriminates between right and wrong. Thus it carries with it the responsibility of using freewill.



Five Tanmatras

The tanmatras are the ways in which the objective world is sensed by us. 'Tan' means subtle and 'matra' means element. The five elements manifest in the functioning of the five senses. The five tanmatras and their corresponding senses are sound (ear), touch (perception with skin), sight or form (eye), flavour or taste (tongue), and smell or odour (nose).

Each element is related primarily to one tanmatra but can contain a portion of the others as explained below.

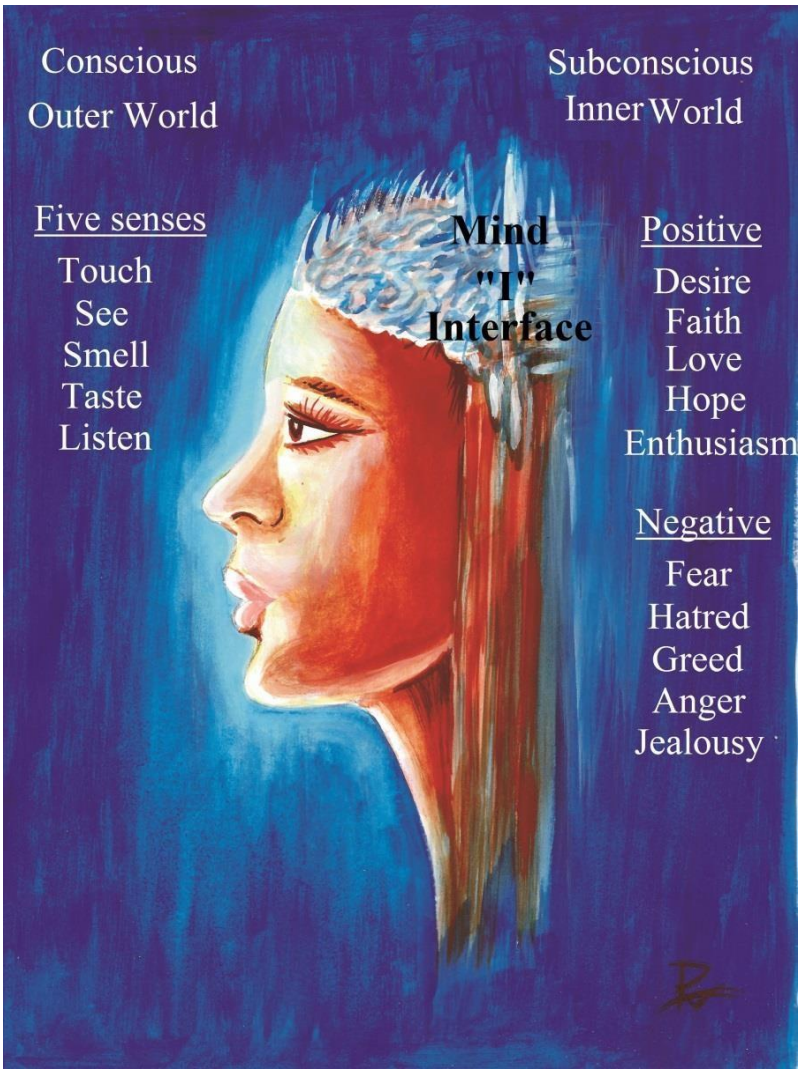
a. Space – sound (ear) tanmatra
b. Air - sound and touch (ear and skin) tanmatras
c. Fire - sound, touch and sight - (ear, skin and eye) tanmatras
d. Water - sound, touch, sight and taste (ear, skin, eye and tongue) tanmatras
e. Earth - sound, touch, sight, taste and smell (ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose) tanmatras

2. The "Subconscious Mind": The subconscious mind does not engage in the process of reasoning or using freewill. It never sleeps or rests, any more than our heart does. It has below three functions:

a. On the physical side, it is the source of regular and vital processes such as breathing, preservation of one's own life, desire to procreate life through offspring, caring for offspring etc.

b. On the mental side, it is the storehouse of memory, habits and emotions.

c. On the spiritual side, it is the source of ideals, ambitions, aspirations, etc



Because conscious mind is responsible to interact with outer world, it is supposed to guard the subconscious mind. Thus the subconscious mind relies upon the conscious mind, "the watchman at the gate", to guard it from impressions and objects of outside world.

The conscious mind or ‘guard’ is supposed to be on duty all the time you are awake. When the ‘guard’ is off duty, or when his sound judgment is impeded, under a variety of circumstances, then the subconscious mind is unguarded and left open to suggestions from all sources. This knowledge combined with techniques such as sleep deprivation, information overload is called brainwashing – and used on captured enemy soldiers, followers of cults etc.

It is important all the times to keep your conscious mind on alert and use your freewill, without being controlled by outward forces. Under severe influence of alcohol and drugs, the conscious mind is off duty and unguarded subconscious mind may cause downfall of its master.

During the wild excitement of panic, or during the height of anger, or the impulses of the irresponsible mob, or at any other time of unrestrained passions, the conditions are most dangerous. The subconscious mind is then

open to the suggestion of fear, hatred, greed, and other negative forces, derived from surrounding persons or circumstances. All this, the trained conscious mind can entirely prevent by its vigilant protective action.

Conscious mind is the general in charge of all your mental forces. It can plan ahead, and get things done as it plans. Or it can drift along haphazardly, a creature of impulse, at the mercy of events—a mere wood stick in the flood of life.

You wouldn't expect much from an army, no matter how fine its soldiers, whose general never planned ahead, who distrusted his own ability and that of his men, and who spent all his time worrying about the enemy instead of planning how to conquer them. In the same way, you can't expect results from the subconscious mind when your conscious mind is full of fears or worry, or when it does not know what it wants.

The one most important duty of conscious mind is to center your thoughts on the thing you want, and to shut the door on every suggestion of fear or negative thoughts. If you once gain the ability to do that, nothing else is impossible to you.

In the thirteenth chapter of the Bhagavadgeta (The field and it's Knower), Krishna explains about the twenty four principles or tattvas (suchnesses) that become manifested as the countless forms of mind, matter and nature that make up the world we live in.

Arjuna, the field is made up of the following: the five senses (touch, smell, sight, sound and taste); the five elements of space, air, water, fire and earth; five sense organs and the five organs of action, the three components of mind (manas, buddhi and ahamkara); and nature (prakriti) from which all these evolved (The Bhagavad Gita 13:5)

In the above, 'manas' means mind consisting of thoughts and emotions; buddhi is the discriminating intellect, aham (I) and kara (maker) is the sense of ego 'I' maker). In a wide sense the field encompasses everything including the body and mind complex except the elusive consciousness or Self that 'knows' the field.

Now you can understand how our thoughts and emotions such as faith and love link our finite mind to the Infinite Cosmic Mind or the great storehouse of God. You can be assured that every one of us have a role to play in the grand scheme of God's creation.

Imagine that there are two worlds existing.

1. The outer world – which we can perceive with five sensory organs of eyes, ears, nose, skin and tongue. We communicate with this world through conscious mind.

2. There is a world inside us - a world of emotions such as love, anger, hatred, desire, greed, jealousy. We communicate with this world through the subconscious mind. It is also through the subconscious mind that we are connected with the Cosmic Mind.

The outside world is a reflection of the world inside. Everything which you find in the outer world has been created by thoughts generated in the inner world. Aircraft was invented from the desire that the humans should be able to fly like birds. New nations were born or wars were waged out of thoughts of a few people.

Every thought therefore is a cause and every condition (such as aircraft or war) an effect. For this reason it is absolutely essential that you control your thoughts so as to bring forth only desirable conditions.

Thought is ‘energy’ and application of knowledge is ‘power’. Thought combined with knowledge and concentrated on a definite purpose becomes a force. This was the force which was used by Gandhiji who did not believe in the virtue of being defeated, oppressed or abused.

It is the understanding of above two worlds and achieving their coordination, which is the great mystery of life. Mastering this complex function can completely alter the conditions in your life and those around you. Your success depends in exact proportion to your ability to discover and use energy, power and force.

A majority of people focus on the outer world; few have found the inner world. Most men try to change effects by repairing effects. They fail to see that this is simply changing one form of problem into another problem. To remove the effect, we must remove the cause, and this cause can be found only in the inner world.

We cannot use a weapon effectively unless we know how to control it. Similarly, we cannot use force, unless we know its existence and applications. Our destiny is entirely within our control of thoughts and use of freewill.

Control over conscious mind helps subconscious mind to develop positive emotions such as faith and love and brings out the best as demonstrated by Gandhiji. Lack of control over conscious mind lets subconscious mind for

influences such as hatred, anger, greed and revenge and brings out the worst as demonstrated by Adolf Hitler.

Thoughts which go out from one's mind imprint themselves deeply in one's subconscious mind, where they serve as a magnet attracting thoughts of similar nature - positive or negative. Here we can understand the truth, why minds with criminal thoughts attract the association of other criminal minds and they become more dangerous criminals after coming out of prisons.

It is very important to be associated with good people and this association is called satsanga'. From Gandhiji's autobiography we can learn how in his early childhood few boys attempted to turn him to bad habits. When a tiny plant is growing, it has to be protected by a fence from animals. But when it grows into a huge tree, it gives shelter and protection to many animals. Similarly people should shield themselves from negative influences in the early stages of development.

Swami Vivekananda beautifully explained the meaning of satsanga. He said: "The rain drop from the sky: If it is caught in hands, it is pure enough for drinking. If it falls in a gutter, its value drops so much that it can't be used even for washing the feet. If it falls on hot surface it perishes. If it falls on a lotus leaf, it shines like a pearl and finally, if it falls on oyster it becomes it becomes a pearl. The drop is the same, but its existence and value depend on with whom it associates. Always be associated with people who are good at heart."

It is also a well-known fact that emotions or 'feelings', rule the majority of people. Only emotionalized thoughts, rather than rational thoughts have more influence upon the subconscious mind. The emotions may be compared to yeast in a loaf of bread, because they constitute the action element, which transforms thought impulses from the passive to the active state.

You are preparing yourself to influence and control the "inner audience" of your subconscious mind, in order to hand over to it the desire, which you wish transmuted into its physical equivalent. Therefore it is essential that you understand the method of approach to this "inner audience." You must speak its language, or it will not heed your call. It listens only to heart, because it understands best the language of emotions or feelings.

Let us, therefore describe here the major positive emotions, and the major negative emotions, so that you may draw upon the positives, and avoid the negatives, when giving instructions to your subconscious mind.

Major positive emotions

- Desire
- Faith
- Love
- Hope
- Enthusiasm

There are other positive emotions, but these are the most powerful, and the ones most commonly used in creative effort. Master these emotions (they can be mastered only by use), and the other positive emotions will be at your command when you need them.

Major negative emotions

- Fear
- Hatred
- Greed
- Anger
- Jealousy

Positive and negative emotions cannot occupy the mind at the same time. One or the other must dominate. It is your responsibility to make sure that positive emotions constitute the dominating influence of your mind.

Here the law of habit will come to your aid. Develop the habit of applying and using the positive emotions! Eventually, they will dominate your mind so completely, that the negatives cannot enter it.

The subconscious mind is the connecting link between the finite mind of man and Infinite Intelligence of God. It is the intermediary through which one may draw upon the forces of Infinite Intelligence. It alone contains the process by which thought impulses are modified and changed into their physical equivalent. It alone is the medium through which our prayers may be transmitted to the source capable of answering prayers.

Remember, your subconscious mind keeps functioning, whether you make any effort to influence it or not. If you fail to plant positive thoughts in your subconscious mind, it will feed upon the negative thoughts which reach it as the result of your negligence.

For the present, it is sufficient if you remember that you are living daily, in the midst of all manner of thought impulses which are reaching your subconscious mind, without your knowledge. Some of these impulses are negative, some are positive. You are now engaged in trying to shut off the flow of negative impulses, and to aid in voluntarily influencing your

subconscious mind, through positive impulses of desire. When you achieve this, you will possess the key which unlocks the door to your subconscious mind.

Chapter 10

Fearlessness

One of the ten principles of dharma is ‘Dhriti’. It means the courage to be steadfast in pursuit of dharma bearing all hardships and trials.

Fear is a survival mechanism developed by nature to protect living organisms from danger. It produces three responses of fight, flight or freeze. Fear is not inherently negative. It is essential for survival, but it can become an obstacle when it operates unnecessarily or excessively.

The majority of people, if asked what they fear most, would reply, "I fear nothing." But few people realize that they are controlled through some form of fear. Most of the fears are induced in early childhood. So subtle and deeply seated is the emotion of fear called phobia that one may go through life burdened with it, never acknowledging its presence.

Considerable courage is required to accept the truth about the presence of this fear, and still greater effort to take corrective measures.

Fear is nothing but a ‘state of mind’ and hence can be controlled. Physicians are less fearful of diseases than ordinary people. The reason is that physicians know how to detect and cure diseases. We too can detect and control fears by knowing what causes them.

There are three major forms of fear as below.

1. Fear of death: Almost every person’s ultimate fear is death - dying and losing the whole self to the unknown. Hence this fear forces him to run away from problems and threats. A wise person does not get caught up in the delusion that he is just body or mind. He realizes that his basic identity is imperishable soul.

In the way a person sheds old cloths and wears new cloths, soul sheds ruined bodies and wears new bodies. (The Bhagavad Gita 2-22)

Weapons cannot destroy soul, fire cannot burn it, water cannot wet and air cannot dry it. (The Bhagavad Gita 2-23)

Soul is ever existing and Omni pervasive. (The Bhagavad Gita 2-24)

This soul is beyond the reach of senses, mind and has no birth, growth and death. Knowing this you should not worry! (The Bhagavad Gita 2-25)

It should be noted here that The Bhagavad Gita does not advocate killing others in the name of dharma. It pleads for a life of dharma and sacrificing one's own life in the pursuit of dharma.

Fear of death also causes people to worry about old age and ill health. The greatest of all remedies for the fear of death is a burning desire for achievement, supported by useful service to others. A busy person seldom has time to think about dying. He finds life too thrilling to worry about death.

Death is the most important motivator in life. It motivates us to understand the value of life and time, and prompts us to make the best of every moment of life.

2. Fear of failure: Man fears failure, criticism, shame etc. Hence this fear forces him to inaction, or resorting to wrong means. But every failure brings a seed of equivalent success. To overcome the fear of failure, a person should strive to attain even-mindedness, indifference to success and failure. This does not mean that a person lives like a robot. He remains in control of contrary emotions instead of being carried away by them.

A student who has passed the exams may become over-confident, neglecting further reading and may fail in future exams. On the other hand, a student depressed by failure may take drastic decisions such as suicide or dropping out of school.

A politician overjoyed with success in elections may become arrogant and alienate his party men and public. On the contrary, a contestant depressed by temporary defeat may give up politics altogether or jump into the party in power, compromising principles and conscience. A person who is not carried away by success or failure stays on steady path of greater successes.

Your right is to work only and never to the results thereof; know that I am the Dispenser of results and do your duty with detachment. (The Bhagavad Gita 2-47)

Let go of selfishness of 'I', 'me', 'mine', and do your work, whether you succeed or not. Such evenness of mind is called Yoga. (The Bhagavad Gita 2-48)

Gandhiji explained the above verses as under.

> *"Do your duty, but renounce its fruit, have no desire for reward. But renunciation of fruit in no way means indifference to the result. In regard to every action one must know the result that is expected to*

follow, the means thereto, and the capacity for it. He, who, being thus equipped, is without desire for the result, and is yet wholly engrossed in the due fulfilment of the task before him, is said to have renounced the fruits of his action.

By detachment I mean that you must not worry whether the desired result follows from your action or not. Things will come right in the end if you take care of the means and leave the result to God. A person who is worried about the outcome of his work does not see his goal; he sees only his opposition and the obstacles before him. Feeling unequal to the difficulties of his situation, he becomes resigned or resorts to violence out of frustration and despair.

But the person who is detached from results and tries only to do his best without thought of profit or power or prestige does not waver when difficulties come. He sees his way clearly through every trial, for his eyes are always on the goal."

While pursuing legal career Gandhiji had no access to the immense storehouse of creativity which lied within. It was only when he began to live for others that he found himself bursting with almost un-controllable power. By the time he was in his sixties his capacity for work was several times what it had been in his twenties. Because he had learned not to worry about success or failure he could give all his attention to the work at hand, without feeling the burdens of anxiety or fatigue.

"Mr. Gandhiji," a journalist asked him once, "you have been working at least fifteen hours a day, every day, for almost fifty years. Don't you think it's about time you took a vacation?" "Why?" Gandhiji said. "I am always on vacation."

3. Fear of poverty: Nothing brings man so much suffering and indignity as poverty! It is no wonder that man fears poverty and tries to do anything to get hold of money to defend from poverty.

But, money by itself is not evil. Man has to earn money to sustain his life, for food, clothes, family and a roof. The greed and lust for money is the evil.

To those who worship Me alone, thinking of no other, to those ever-united devotees, I provide what they lack and preserve what they have. (The Bhagavad Gita 9:22)

The above verse addresses a universal human concern: Will I be taken care of by God? Will my needs be met? Will what I've worked for be preserved? The spiritual seeker faces an additional layer of anxiety: By devoting myself to

God, am I neglecting practical responsibilities? In the above verse, Krishna answered - not only will your needs be met (yogam), but He Himself takes personal responsibility for your welfare (kshemam).

Gandhiji explained his understanding of the above verse as below.

> *"How was one to practice 'aparigraha' (non-possession)? Was I to give up all I had and follow God?*
>
> *Straight came the answer: I could not follow Him unless I gave up all I had. My study of English law came to my help. I understood the Bhagavad Gita's teaching of 'non-possession' to mean that those who desired liberation should act like a trustee who, though having control over great possessions, regards not an iota of them as his own.*
>
> *Do not worry in the least about yourself, leave all worry to God,' — this appears to be the commandment in all religions. This need not frighten anyone. He who devotes himself to service with a clear conscience, will day by day grasp the necessity for it in greater measure, and will continually grow richer in faith.*
>
> *Just as one must not receive, so must one not possess anything that is not needed. It would be a breach of this principle to possess unnecessary foodstuffs, clothing, or furniture. For instance, one must not keep a chair if one can do without it. In observing this principle one is led to a progressive simplification of one's own life".*

It is often said that a family's fortune is lost in the third generation. When people accumulate lot of money, the children lose the motivation to work hard and make money on their own. Often they give into bad habits and addictions, as can be seen from the children destroyed because of drugs and bike races. So a person should provide proper education and moral foundation to children and encourage them to survive on their own.

The important point to be considered here is not romanticizing poverty or live an idle life without earning money. The important thing is the faith that God takes care of the needs of a person who is immersed in serving God in the form of mankind.

Later when Gandhiji had given up legal practice and devoted fulltime for independence movement, many anonymous donors from unexpected quarters used to appear and donate money. Many women and children also used to give all they could, when volunteers were collecting funds.

Fearlessness is a state of mind which may be difficult to achieve at one step.

We need to have faith even though our mind is filled with fears. Then, gradually fears become tamed, and become less and less controlling of our lives.

*****

Chapter 11

Persistence (nothing is impossible)

"I have not the shadow of a doubt that any man or woman can achieve what I have, if he or she would make the same effort and cultivate the same hope and faith." – Gandhiji

To the person who has controlled his mind, it becomes his ally. To the person who has no control over his mind, it becomes his enemy. (The Bhagavad Gita 6-6)

Meaningful accomplishments demand perseverance and hard work, usually in the face of unexpected delays and disappointments. One of the most common causes of failure is the habit of quitting when one is overtaken by temporary defeat. Most people are guilty of this mistake at one time or another. One of the main weaknesses of mankind is the average man's familiarity with the word "impossible." He knows all the methods which will not work and all the things which cannot be done.

Gandhiji too failed many times during his experiments in personal life and freedom struggle. He saw himself as an integral part of the universe and hence if anybody wrongs, he used to punish himself by way of fasting. He also conducted experiments in celibacy because to control the followers one has to achieve self-control first. But they became a source of misunderstandings and criticisms. His support for Khilafat movement did not result in the much hoped alliance between the two religions. His non-violent campaigns turned violent in places such as Chouri choura and had to be called off, citing that people are not yet ready for such campaigns. His idea of Ramrajya (kingdom of Rama) as an ideal state met with strong opposition from various sections of the society.

He repeatedly refused when people insisted on giving him the reverential title of 'Mahatma (Great Soul)'. He publicly confessed his mistakes but kept learning from them and did not give up his goal of indepdence totally.

He once said "a small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history. If I have the belief that I can do it, I can surely acquire the capacity to do it even though I might not have it in the beginning".

Another weakness of man is the habit of measuring everything, and everyone, by his own beliefs and standards. Their thought habits have been so steeped

in ignorance, superstitions, defeat etc that they refuse to believe anything which they do not understand. They foolishly believe that their own limitations are the proper measure of limitations for everybody.

A historian who later became Gandhiji's co-worker couldn't accept the idea that nonviolent fight could bring independence. He said "Mr. Gandhiji, you may know all about the Bhagavad Gita, but you know nothing at all about history. Never has a nation been able to free itself without violence".

Gandhiji smiled and corrected him gently. *"The first thing you have to learn about history is that because something has not taken place in the past that does not mean it cannot take place in the future."*

The below is an account of historic events in Gandhiji's life.

1. 1888-91 - Got Barrister-at-Law degree in London.
2. 1893 - Moved to South Africa and started campaign against racial oppression of Indian immigrants.
3. 1915 - Returned to India.
4. 1919 – Amritsar massacre where General Dyer killed countless peaceful protesters and Gandhiji launched non-cooperation movement.
5. 1922 – Sentenced to six years in prison on charges of sedition.
6. 1930 – Led thousands in Salt March at Dandi breaking salt tax laws.
7. 1931 - Attended London Conference and demanded Indian self-rule.
8. 1942 – Launched Quit India movement.
9. 1947 August 15 – India obtained independence followed by partition and communal violence.
10. 1948 January 30 – Gandhiji was assassinated

It can be observed that after returning from South Africa he spent thirty long years in Indian freedom struggle. So the road to success is a long one and requires persistence and commitment.

When Gandhiji came back to India from his student years in London, fully cultured and acutely conscious of his "legitimate rights," the first person he tried to impress was his wife. However, Kasturba was a woman with a will of her own. When Gandhiji began to demand his rights Kasturba, naturally, started to do the same — at the same time. Often their disagreements became so fierce that Kasturba was reduced to tears, which only irritated Gandhiji more.

Once, exasperated, he shouted at her: "I will not tolerate this nonsense in my house!"

Kasturba retarded, "Then keep your house to yourself and let me go!"

In a rage Gandhiji grabbed her arm and pushed her out of the house and closed the door.

"Have you no sense of shame?" she cried. "Where can I go? I have no family in this country to take me in. Because I am your wife, do you think I have to put up with your abuse? For heaven's sake behave yourself and open the door. Let us not be caught in front of others making such a scene!"

At that time Gandhiji thought it was his right as a husband to impose his opinions on his wife. But as the years passed and the storms between them continued, he began to realize what anguish he was causing her by his rigid beliefs. At last it occurred to him that rather than exercising his "rights," he could fulfill his duties.

Immediately, instead of forcing Kasturba's obedience to his newfound beliefs and values, Gandhiji began to try to win her over by his own example. It was a long, painful process, and often he had to ignore his cherished likes and dislikes to see things from her point of view rather than his own. But gradually he began to see that there was no friction between them except what he had imposed, and that Kasturba had always been trying to win him over by love.

By her personal example, Kasturba showed the way to root out the anger and competition eroding their marriage: not by retaliating and inflaming the situation more, but by constantly trying to support him and bear with him through his outbursts and mistakes. She kept her eyes always on what was good in him and encouraging him silently to live up to her respect.

It was one of the most radical discoveries he was to make in a lifetime of experiments: in order to transform others, you first have to transform yourself.

Gradually Gandhiji began to see that she was practicing every day what he himself had been admiring as a theoretical ideal. He learned Kasturba's patience and inspired her with his own fiery enthusiasm in return. She started treating untouchables with love and respect. Each became the other's teacher.

It was a long, arduous exacting discipline, which he used to say required the patience of a man trying to empty the ocean with a cup. But every time they overcame a barrier between them, they found they were not only able to love each other more, they had more love and patience for everyone else as well. By the time Gandhiji had learned to bring this love to bear even on his

opponents, Kasturba too was in prison, gathering other women to her leadership.

After you have begun putting the concepts of this book into practice, you may notice difference in your interaction with the people around you. You may begin to realize that some of the significant people in your life, both inside and outside your home, don‘t seem to like the changes in you – even if the old you was a total disaster! Just when you expect cheerleaders dancing all around you and encouraging your development, you may find yourself faced with firing squads.

The reason is that people around you have become accustomed to interacting with you in a certain way. When that familiar pattern of interaction is disturbed, there can be upset of varying degrees. Even when you understand it, this upset can be very disturbing and impede your progress. Another reason is that your well-wishers wish your safety and are afraid if you venture from the known world to the unknown. They may sincerely worry about your state of mind. Another reason is that family members naturally worry that you may neglect household responsibilities.

Some of the symptoms of transformation you may notice after using the principles of this book:

- Sudden increase in hunger for knowledge
- Disregard for time and absence of mind
- Becoming more generous and loving
- Rejection of previous norms and limitations
- Childlike sense of wonder and joy, and so on.

The symptoms are not important and should not be pursued. They serve as indicators that all these things are normal in transformation from ‘old you‖ to ―new you’.

When we make a resolve to live based on certain principles, the life won‘t be a cake walk but often a road filled with thorns. It is important to remember that other people may not be at the same level of maturity to understand your experiences. Trying to covert others only causes friction and fights. So instead of trying to impress others about your ‘discoveries’ or force your beliefs on them, you may consider sharing this book with your friends and family members. By helping others to improve, you will help yourself, by creating a better world to live in. It is very essential to be associated with other aspirants with similar goals as yours (satsanga) so that you won’t be discouraged by your old associates.

Success comes to those who become success-conscious. Failure comes to those who allow themselves to become failure-conscious. Your subconscious mind works continuously, while you are awake, and while you are asleep. Spasmodic or occasional effort to apply the rules will be of no value to you. You must apply all of the rules until their application becomes a fixed habit with you.

Symptoms of lack of persistence:

1. Failure to recognize and to clearly define exactly what one wants.

2. Procrastination, with or without cause (usually backed up with excuses).

3. Lack of interest in acquiring required knowledge.

4. Searching for short-cuts, trying to get something without giving a fair equivalent in return (gambling, lotteries, theft etc).

5. Fear of criticism, failure to create plans and to put them into action, because of what other people will think or say.

Many people believe that success is the result of favourable "breaks." But those depending entirely upon luck, are nearly always disappointed, because they fail to acknowledge that ‘luck’ is a point where ‘opportunity’ meets ‘preparation’.

Don‘t be discouraged! Persistence is a state of mind, and it can be cultivated. There are four simple steps which lead to the habit of ‘persistence’. They require no great amount of intelligence but little time and effort. If we want to climb Mount Everest our every step should be towards Mount Everest.

The necessary steps are:-

1. A friendly alliance with one or more persons who will encourage you to follow through actions

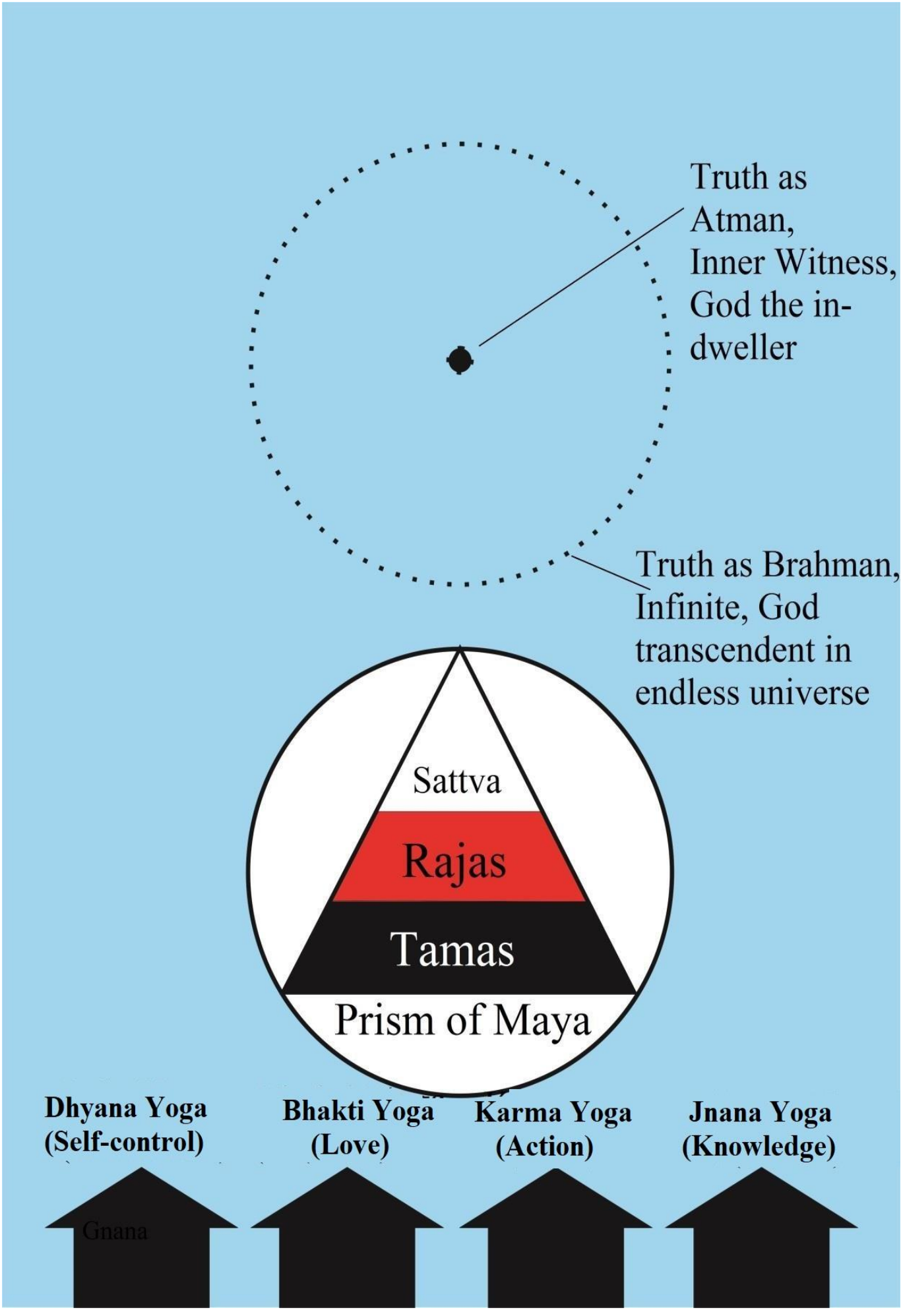
2. A definite and written purpose backed by a burning desire for its fulfillment

3. A definite plan expressed in continuous action

4. A mind closed tightly against all negative influences – self-made and that of outsiders

Gandhiji said “be the change you want to see in the world. First people will ignore you, then they will ridicule you, then they will fight you, and then you win.”

*****


Truth as Atman, Inner Witness, God the in-dweller
Truth as Brahman, Infinite, God transcendent in endless universe
Sattva
Rajas
Tamas
Prism of Maya
Dhyana Yoga (Self-control)
Bhakti Yoga (Love)
Karma Yoga (Action)
Jnana Yoga (Knowledge)
Gnana

PART 2

SPIRITUAL SUCCESS

Chapter 12: What is the purpose of life?

From time immemorial man has asked questions such as under:

- Does God exist? If so what is my relationship with Him?
- Who am I really?
- What happens when I die?
- What is the purpose of my existence or life?

In ancient times king Janaka was ruling the kingdom of Midhila. A certain man named Sukha wanted to know what the purpose of life is. His father sage Vyasa said that only king Janaka was fit to give answers and be a guru to Sukha. Hence Sukha set out to meet king Janaka in Mithila.

Upon entering the king's castle Sukha saw a magnificent person wearing majestic clothes, ornaments and weapons. The room was bustling with activity; visitors came and went, a small orchestra was playing soft music, and there were tables covered with platters of seemingly the most delicious food. The king was busy conversing with visitors. Hence Sukha had to wait for some time before it was his turn to receive attention.

The king listened attentively to the Sukha's question, but told him that he didn't have time just then to give answer. He suggested that Sukha look around the palace and return in three hours. "Meanwhile, I want to ask you to do something,' said the king, handing a lamp to Sukha. "As you wander around, carry this lamp without letting the fire die".

Sukha began climbing and descending the many stairways of the palace through many rooms, keeping his eyes fixed on the lamp. After three hours, he returned to the room where the wise man was.

"Well‖, asked the king, "did you see the beautiful statues in my living room? Did you notice how many books I have in my library? Did you see the exotic plants and pets in the garden that I have collected from all over the world"?

Sukha was embarrassed, and confessed that he had observed nothing. His only concern had been not to let the fire in lamp die.

“Then go back and observe all the marvels of my palace”, said the king. “It would be an honour to the host if you appreciate his taste in decorations and creativity”.

Sukha picked up the lamp and returned to explore the palace again, this time observing the works of art on the ceilings, floors and the walls, gardens and fountains, beautiful maids, servants and so on.

Upon returning to the main room, Sukha expressed his wonder and appreciated the king‘s taste. "But where is the fire in lamp that I entrusted to you?” asked king. Looking down at the lamp, Sukha saw that the fire was gone.

“Well”, said the king, “the purpose of life is to enjoy all the marvels of the creation, and never let the fire in lamp die”.

The above story is from the book ‘Yoga Vasishta”.

Human life is very dynamic and ever evolving. It cannot be lived either through a plan about how to live or without a plan. Other creatures live by instincts and are provided with natural protection from the dangers in the world. Man has no such instincts but has to live by his rational thinking. He also has no natural protections and has to live as a member of society without violating other’s rights.

The communist experiment in Eastern European countries failed because it failed to respect man‘s freewill (freedom to choose). When individual freedom is suppressed for the sake of collective good, it destroys human potential and growth. On the other hand when individual freedom is given utmost importance, it causes problems such as failed family systems, gun culture, use of drugs, depression as in some cultures.

Man has to live a balanced life fulfilling his individual needs in harmony with those of other people. In other words he has to exercise his rights without violating the rights of other people. Recognizing this difficulty the sages have specified four goals so that there is no suppression of his needs or stifling of man‘s character.

For the sake of ease, we can divide the purpose of life into the below four parts:

1. Dharma

2. Ardha
3. Kama
4. Moksha

As was explained in a previous chapter, dharma holds, maintains and supports the entire universe. Manusmriti (6:92) lists the below ten as values of dharma.

1. Dhriti: Steadfastness to bear difficulties in the pursuit of dharma
2. Kshama: Forgiveness and forbearance, the quality of being patient and sympathetic towards people, especially when they have done something wrong
3. Dama: Self-control or restraint of the mind
4. Asteya: Non-stealing or not taking what belongs to others
5. Shauca: Purity of mind and cleanliness of body, home and surroundings.
6. Indriyanigraha: Control and mastery over the physical senses
7. Dhi: Wisdom, intellect, or discrimination of what is right and wrong
8. Vidya: Secular and spiritual knowledge
9. Satya: Truthfulness in word and action
10. Akrodha: Freedom from anger or absence of seeking revenge

Ardha means earning money for a living, food, home and clothes so on.

Kama means desire. It means not just ‘sexual desire’ but the wish to enjoy arts, music, tasty foods and so on. Krishna says “I am righteous desire present in all beings (The Bhagavadgita 7:11).

Moksha means liberation or merging back into God.

The above four are called purushardhas and said to be the main goals of human life. ‘Purusha’ means a person and ‘Ardha’ means purpose or meaning. So these are equally essential to both men and women. All four are important, but in cases of conflict, dharma is considered more important than ardha or kama. Moksha is considered the ultimate goal of human life. The body is a tool in the pursuit of dharma, earning money, enjoying life and attaining liberation.

At the time of education, an individual has to learn about dharma. He has to

practice dharma throughout life. For example one should not cheat in exams or resort to giving bribes, using influences etc to obtain employment. One has to perform duties with heart's content and involvement and without accepting bribes. Thus a person has to live as per dharma and earn money to sustain himself, family and the society.

Even non-performance of a righteous duty is a violation of dharma, in the grand scheme of things designed by God. He has to fulfill his righteous desires such as earning livelihood, obtaining offspring and simultaneously pursue path to liberation. Liberation is not something that might happen after death. We should attain it, here in this life itself. In reality we are never separate from God, but it is ego that binds us to body and mind, and makes us appear separate individuals.

First part of this book explains the principles necessary for success in materialistic life or economic wellbeing. Such success is needed because it is difficult for an individual, to think of higher goals, as long he is struggling to make a living. But, materialistic gains without a spiritual base leave emptiness, dissatisfaction, and sadness. Hence man's life becomes effective only when he pursues materialistic goals with a spiritual base.

Unfortunately there is a misconception that spirituality is reserved for the old people. But a person should realize his spiritual essence at any early age because that enables best utilization and expression of inner strengths.

Childhood is spent in ignorance and sports. Youth is spent in satisfying sensual pleasures and running after money. Old age is spent in worries about children, regrets about past, ill health and so on. Many people assume that they can postpone spiritual pursuit to a later stage of life and first they should focus only on material pursuit. There are three problems with this approach.

1. We don't know for sure how long we are going to live, and any moment can be our last moment.
2. For a person immersed in material pursuits for a long time, a transformation to spiritual pursuits is very difficult, because deeply imprinted tendencies are hard to break.
3. Mind and body become very weak in old age and are not conducive for any new pursuits.

In ancient days spiritual education was given to students of an early age, say 8-12 years. At that age they are not burdened by family responsibilities and their brain cells are very active and their learning process is at its best. However those people who start late in spiritual pursuit need not despair. Better late than never and the right time for spiritual pursuit is right now!

The wise say that we should not seek possessions first and then God last. If we first seek God through Self- realization, all things such as wealth, wisdom, power will be added later.

There are estimated to be 8,400,000 species of life - including aquatics, plants, birds, beasts, insects, and human beings. The wise say that it is a very rare opportunity to be born as a human being, of all creatures. Human beings can be distinguished from other creatures through many characteristics, the chief among them being thinking and the reasoning and discretionary power to choose between the good and evil. All other creatures are driven by instinct and live as nature intends them to be. They do not have the concept of good or evil, punishments for bad behaviour.

However, we humans have the discretionary power to choose between good or bad, and also have developed systems such as prisons to punish and reform the bad. We also have notions of paradise as reward for the good and hell as punishment for the bad. Having such reasoning power, we might wonder, at one time or another, what is the purpose of being born? Is it just to eat, sleep, enjoy the pleasures and die like all other creatures? Or is there any worthy goal that makes this life worth living?

Most of us spend our days in the familiar world of five senses. But what lies beyond that, if anything, we may have no idea. Most of us are happy to stay where we are. We may be even little afraid to explore the unknown. Why we should leave the familiar world, we might ask.

Yet there are always a few who are not content to spend their lives indoors. Simply knowing there is something unknown makes them very restless. They have to see what lies out there – as someone said of Mount Everest, “I have to climb it, just because it’s there.”

That is true of adventurers of every kind, but especially of those who seek to explore not mountains, jungles and oceans, but consciousness itself. While the rest of us stay put, they quietly slip out to see what lies beyond.

Then, so far as we can tell, they disappear. We might not have any idea about where they have gone. But every now and then, like friends who ventured to mysterious islands, they report back with fantastic photos and videos, rambling about a world beyond ordinary experience, urging us to come and see. “Look at this! Isn‘t it marvellous? I wish you were here to see this.”

The Bhagavad Gita is one of such earliest reports given by the sage Veda Vyasa to inform us that there is more to life than the everyday experiences of our

senses. It guides us with a map of territory, shows various approaches to the summit with their rewards and dangers, and tells us what to pack and what to leave behind.

According to the great epic Mahabharata, evil Duryodhana and his brothers, Kauravas, usurped the kingdom belonging to their cousin brothers Pandavas. When all peace negotiations failed to resolve the dispute, vast armies were assembled on either side to fight in what came to be known as the Great Bharata war.

Just before the start of war both Duryodhana and Arjuna, one of the Panadva brothers approached Krishna asking for support. Krishna declared that one side could have all his army and ammunition while he himself would not fight but only will be a charioteer and guide to the other. Duryodhana chose army and ammunition while Arjuna chose Krishna.

Upon seeing the vast armies Arjuna became despondent and had thrown away his weapons saying that he cannot fight against his cousins and would rather let them keep his share of kingdom. Krishna taught The Bhagavad Gita to him, and motivated him to fight. Kaauravas got defeated and the Pandavas became victorious. ‘The Bhagavad Gita’ in Sanskrit means ‘Song of God’. It is also called ‘Brahma Vidya Upanishad’ or ‘Supreme Science’ because it explains the coordination of inner and outer worlds.

Though Krishna teaches rules of dharma to Arjuna, it seems that he himself did not follow them on many occasions during the war, which seems very confusing to understand. During the game of dice Dharmaraja, the eldest of pandavas loses kingdom and wife Draupadi. When she was threatened by the Kauravas with humiliation Dharmaraja did not protest because he gave importance to the rules of dice game.

But Krishna teaches that the spirit of dharma is greater than the rules of games or wars. He prompted Arjuna to kill many Kaurava warriors by violating the rules war. He teaches that rules cannot be allowed to become weapons in the hands of evil people who ignore them when it suits their purpose and claim their protection at convenient times. An evil person cannot be allowed to tie the hands of the righteous by rules of dharma in order to establish adharma.

The Mahabharata war can be seen as metaphor for the perennial war between the forces of good and evil in every human mind. Thus seen, The Bhagavad Gita is not just an external dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna. It is an internal, divine dialogue between our mind full of questions about life and our Divine Self, taking place in the depths of consciousness.

Krishna‘s words make sense when we keep in mind that he is not speaking of himself as a mortal human being or as a personal God. He is speaking as Arjuna‘s higher Divine Self, Truth, Consciousness; whereas Arjuna’s lower self is ego.

For example when Krishna says, “worship Me alone, love Me alone and serve Me alone”, he is not instructing Arjuna to worship him as a personal god. He means that, we should listen to Truth, Consciousness or Divine Self alone, and not to our ego. We should love and serve the mankind (realizing our oneness with universe), instead of just pleasing our ego.

When Krishna says “abandon all dharmas and take refuge in Me alone”, he means that there is no rule or god or religion or whatever shelter higher than Truth, Consciousness. Where ever there were words such as “I”, “Me” and “My” they should be interpreted as Truth, Consciousness.

Another clue to understand the Bhagavad Gita properly is to remember that it was not told in Sanskrit language by God to a man, but it was a heart-to-heart communication in Arjuna‘s inner consciousness, beyond the limitations of physical senses and thinking.

There is a big difference between spirituality and religion. Spirituality aims at finding God within the Self whereas religion aims at finding God outside of us. For a spiritual person the Self within guides him in his actions whereas a religious man is bound by rituals and moral values imposed by organized religion. A ritualistic religion, instead of eliminating ego, often strengthens it and steers the practitioner away from the ultimate goal which is self-realization and liberation.

Gandhiji's life teaches us that spirituality should not require escaping from worldly responsibilities. Instead, we should transform our everyday work, relationships and wealth into instruments of truth, righteousness and service. For instance his understanding of trusteeship explains how to use ardha (wealth) in life, as explained in later chapters.

*****

Chapter 13

This world is a Divine play

Gandhiji once said *"what I want to achieve, what I have been striving and pinning to achieve these thirty years – is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain liberation. I consider no sacrifice too great for the sake of seeking Him. The whole of my activity whether it may be called social, political, humanitarian or ethical is directed to that end."*

We are given four goals or purushardhas - dharma, ardha, kama and moksha to achieve life's purpose. But even if the goals are clearly described why is it so difficult for us to attain them?

Sages explain that this creation is God's Maya (divine illusion). Through His Maya, God creates the universe out of himself. As God is Omni pervasive, there is no place whereupon God stands aside as a Creator. He is the Creator and also the Creation.

Universe consists of two eternal principles – Purusha (the Conscious principle) and Prakriti or maya (the material principle) consisting of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas gunas (Bhagavad Gita 13:20).

All material things and beings in the universe are called illusion, because they are ever-changing, impermanent and unreal whereas Consciousness or Truth alone is real. For instance, in a cinema, the white screen is real and the images projected on it are unreal. In the darkness we mistake a rope to be a snake. When we see it in light, we see that snake does not exist and there is only a rope. Same is the case with maya.

Ekam Sat, vipra bahuda vadanti i.e the Truth or Brahman is One and scholars call It by different names. Like all the rains that fall from the sky finally reach the ocean, in whatever form a devotee worships the God, they all reach the Brahman.

The Brahman possesses three qualities i.e Sat (Eternal existence), Chit (Super Consciousness), and Ananda (Bliss). "Sat Tri Kala Abhasitam" means "The Truth (or Reality) shines across all three divisions of time (past, present and future)."

In our illustration to describe Truth as Atman and Brahman we have used two

dimensional format because of limitations in conveying our understanding of Truth. But this Truth cannot be really described as circle or globe or any other format. It can only be perceived through direct experience.

The world is illusion but we perceive it because of space (desa) and time (kala). Of all the five elements space is the most subtle. Out of this space grosser forms such as air, fire, water and earth are formed. Thus celestial bodies and also our physical bodies come into existence. But these bodies are not permanent and they transform from one element to another.

Time is eternal but we experience it relatively. For instance we consider earth‘s rotation on its axis as a day of 24 hours and further subdivide it into hours, minutes and seconds. Earth‘s revolution around the Sun causes seasons and we count it as a year of 365 days. From moon‘s movement we infer the passage of time as fortnights and months. If the earth is moving in a straight line instead of in cycles, our perception of time would be different. The time measurements on a different celestial body can be quite different. Thus our perception of time is relative.

Space (desa or form) is also not absolute because it changes with passage of time. Human bodies, continents, celestial bodies and so on are born, undergo changes and perish. But Brahman exists as the foundation for existence beyond limitations of space and time.

We all know that nature has so many evidences to make man understand the nature of maya. We all come into this world with empty hands and again depart with empty hands. So, all the earthly things are not really ours. Even if a worker earns money as much as thousand workers can earn, still he can eat only one man’s proportion of food. Any more food than that causes ill health and kills him.

Much philosophical debates were conducted to answer how to deal with maya if it is not real. One day while a sage was walking an elephant was coming in the opposite direction. The sage climbed up a nearby tree and advised his disciple to do the same to escape from the elephant.

The disciple asked, "why should we run away, is this elephant not an illusion?"

The sage replied "gajam midhya, palayanam midhya (the elephant is an illusion and so also the fleeing away from it'"). He got down from the tree after the elephant went away.

Recognizing that this world is only illusion doesn’t mean that we deny and

walk away from matter and physical phenomenon. It only means that they are just means to arrive at the end, the Real. All our relationships with people and objects are because of our ‘karma’. As soon the debt of karma ends, our relationship with them also ends.

Lotus is born out of muddy water but still stays detached from the mud but contains fragrance and beauty. Similarly we live in the world but stay detached from its impurities and entanglements.

Sometimes we may wonder ‘why there is so much variation in the creation?’ As explained in the chapter on ‘Subconscious mind’, universe consists of energy and matter, which can be transformed from one into other. Every thought-energy (mind) and matter is a combination of below three gunas (qualities). No single English word can translate these three words precisely but the below description gives an idea.

1. Sattva (goodness, purity, light, harmony or balance). In terms of evolution it is on the highest level.
2. Rajas (activity, passion which can be both good and bad). It is ambitious and provides motivation, the will to act, but may also express itself in anger, hatred or greed.
3. Tamas (darkness, ignorance, dullness and inactivity). It is the lowest state in terms of evolution where nothing much happens either for good or bad.

The gunas can also be illustrated by comparison with the three states of matter – solid, liquid and gas.

1. Just like a block of ice, tamas is frozen energy (inactivity). It has a good amount of energy in the chemical bonds that hold in together, but the energy is locked in and rigid.
2. When the ice melts, some of the energy is released as the water flows; rajas (activity) is like a flooded river, full of uncontrolled power.
3. Sattva (harmony) can be compared with steam when its power is controlled and made useful in running locomotives and engines.

Gunas are the very fabric of universe, the veil that hides unity in a covering of diversity. Tamas is the maya’s power of concealment, the darkness or ignorance that hides unitive reality. Rajas distracts and scatters awareness, turning it away from reality toward the diversity of the outside world. Thus the gunas are essentially born of the mind. When the mind‘s activity is stilled, we see life as it is.

We can also think of gunas as below different levels of consciousness.

1. In tamas there is no choice or awareness; this is complete ignorance of the unity of life and ignorance of any other thing than one's own basic urges.
2. Rajas is what we ordinarily mean by mind, the incessant stream of thoughts desiring, worrying, resenting, scheming, competing, and getting frustrated. Rajas is power released, but uncontrolled and ego centric.
3. Sattva is the higher mind – calm, self-controlled and stable.

The rajasic person is full of energy; the tamasic person is dull, indifferent, insensitive; the sattvic person, calm, resourceful, compassionate and selfless. Yet all three gunas are always present with differing proportions: their interplay is the dynamics of our personality.

We all have times when we are bustling with thoughtful energy, times when we are peaceful and times when we feel dullness or inertia to do anything. We are the same person; we are simply experiencing the play of the gunas. As long we identify with mind and body, we are at the mercy of this play.

But our real Self is not involved in the gunas' interaction; it is witness rather than participant. To realize our true Self, we need to rise from Tamas to Rajas and from there to Sattva and finally transcend beyond Sattva guna.

It is the three gunas – sattva, rajas and tamas – that bind the immortal soul to the body (The Bhagavad Gita 14:5).

Sattva, even though pure and luminous, binds us with attachment to wisdom and happiness. We might become arrogant of our knowledge (The Bhagavad Gita 14:6)

Rajas is passionate and binds us in selfish desires and pleasures (The Bhagavad Gita 14:7).

Tamas, born out of ignorance binds us through laziness, sleep and inaction (The Bhagavad Gita 14:8).

Those who rely on this wisdom will be united with Bramhan. For them there is neither rebirth nor fear of death (The Bhagavad Gita 14:2).

By serving Bramhan (all beings in the universe) with steadfast love, a person goes beyond the gunas. Such a one is fit for union with Brahman (The Bhagavad Gita 14:26).

Being pure, Sattvic nature enables spiritual advancement. But even in this state a problem may arise when a person finds pleasure in sacred knowledge and becomes arrogant of it. It is called Sattvic ego. Any pleasure, even good ones, creates attachments. They are like gold ropes, binding the soul to the pain and suffering of the material world.

In Rajasic person, desire goads him into action and creates a sense of doership in the mind. It spawns a thirst for acquiring and clinging to worldly things – to people and pleasures that attract senses. This attachment, when opposed, causes anger. Anger makes a person lose control over his emotions, does not let him think properly, and clouds his judgement of what is right and what is wrong. He soon follows his doom.

All things in nature are just combinations of three attributes – even the mind, senses, and objects that attract the senses. The person who transcends beyond these three attributes is in essence transcending nature itself. Such person unites with God and gets liberated from the cycle of death and rebirth.

Maya can be both delightful and treacherous. To transcend beyond Maya of three gunas and achieve liberation Sanatana Dharma prescribes simultaneous practice of all four paths - Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga.

The above four paths are not mutually exclusive and contradictory but suit differently based on an individual‘s temperament and level of maturity. Jnana yoga is better suited for people who are intellectual in nature. Bhakti yoga is better suited for people who are emotional in nature. Raja yoga is better suited for people who are contemplative. Karma yoga is better suited for people who are very active.

Though we may choose one main path, we need to practice other paths too. This is because jnana Yoga is the solution for tamasic ignorance and teaches us to live in accordance with dharma and law of karma. Karma Yoga is the solution for inaction caused by sattvic calmness and happiness. Raja Yoga and Bhakti Yoga are the solutions for agitations and selfishness caused by Rajasic desires and activities.

Truly God is present everywhere. Just as sunlight reflects well in clean water, and not in water covered with dirt, God can be found to a greater degree in a pure person. Individual water drops share the majesty of mighty Ocean. So, spiritual pursuit is a process of purifying ourselves and also loving God present in others. Thus service to mankind is service to God.

Most people know about dharma, karma, what is right and what is wrong. They want to do the right thing, yet they end up doing the wrong thing. They are exactly in the position of Arjuna, who asked the same question that we might also ask: What is this hidden force or power which compels a person to do wrong, even when he resolves to do right (The Bhagavad Gita 3-36)?

To answer this question several belief systems came up with ideas such as ‘devil’, ‘saitan’, and so on and explained that this is the work of an evil person with devilish appearance residing outside of human beings.

Because God is present everywhere, there is no place where devil can really exist. Krishna explains that the real culprit for evil is Rajasic nature. He cautions Arjuna to be aware of the dangers of rajasic nature inherent in human mind. Rajasic nature compels a person to move in the direction of the myriad objects of senses. Rajas has below two aspects.

1. Kama-passion-lust, the force that causes attraction and love and the many kinds of likes
2. Krodha-anger-hate, the force of repulsion that produces the many kinds of dislikes.

It is selfish desire and anger, arising from the guna of rajas, that are the appetites that cannot be satisfied. (The Bhagavad Gita 3-37).

Just as fire is covered by smoke and mirror is obscured by dust and embryo rests deep within the womb, knowledge is covered by selfish desire. (The Bhagavad Gita 3-38).

Selfish desires never end. The moment one is satisfied, another one springs. When a selfish desire is unfulfilled, it causes anger. Anger destroys discrimination in a man about what is right and what is wrong. He resorts to evil thoughts and actions.

Then we may wonder ‘how to overcome rajasic nature?

Selfish desire is found in the senses, mind and intellect, misleading them and burying the understanding in delusion. (The Bhagavad Gita 3-40).

Fight with all your strength, Arjuna. Controlling your senses, conquer your enemy, the destroyer of knowledge and realization. (The Bhagavad Gita 3-41).

The senses are higher than the sense objects, the mind is higher than the senses, the intellect is higher than the mind and Atman is higher than the intellect. (The Bhagavad Gita 3-42).

Thus knowing that which is supreme, let the Atman (higher self) rule the ego (lower self). Use your mighty arms to slay the fierce enemy that is selfish

desire. (The Bhagavad Gita 3-43).

Just as fire in a glass lamp is covered by smoke, wisdom is hidden by selfish desires. The soul in man is fire and it can get surrounded by smoke of selfish desires. If the quantity of smoke in a glass lamp increases, the fire goes out. Similarly, if selfish desires and passions are powerful in any person, he falls spiritually.

So it is essential that we do not allow the quantity of smoke, our personal likes and dislikes, to increase and envelop our soul-fire. We need to have desires in our control and do not get carried away by them.

Life is a combination of downward pull of animal instincts of our evolutionary past and upward pull where we are destined to reach our divine origin.

To reach the invisible Brahman by using the visible world as a vehicle, the sages have prescribed the below four stages.

1. Brahmacharya: A pupil has to learn about scriptures and also about knowledge that help him secure a livelihood.
2. Grahastha: In this stage a man has to earn livelihood, support his family. It is his obligation to support those who are in Brahmacharya and Sanyasa ashramas.
3. Vanaprastha: This is the transitory phase between Grahastha and Sanyasa ashramas. In this phase a person gradually transfers his possessions and knowledge to the next generation.
4. Sanyasa: In this phase a person detaches from a small family and progresses to accept the society and world as his larger family. Sanyasa doesn‘t mean wearing saffron robes and living in a forest secluded from people. A true sanyasi lives in the world and for the world without getting attached to or entangled by it.

When one is awed at the power of maya it seems as though God creates man with a rebellious ego and attraction towards the worldly things and then punishes him for indulging in it. But one has to think deeper. Man is capable of turning either ways – outwards to the material world or inwards to the Self or God within.

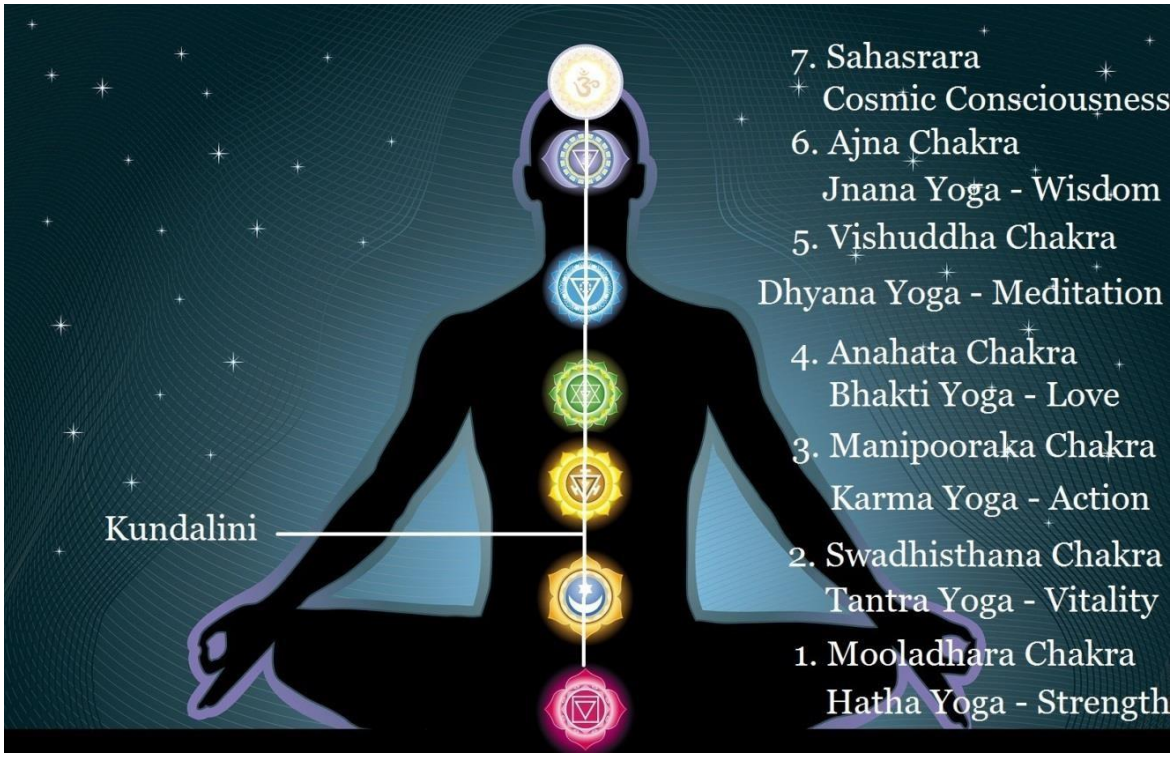
A mother plays hide and seek game with her child but all along makes it easier for the child to find her. The twinkle in the eyes of child after finding mother again is priceless. Similarly God as the Inner Guide always makes it easy for a person to find Him, who is in fact never separate but always within.

In that sense the life a great cosmic hide and seek game.

*****

Chapter 14

Raja Yoga (Path of self-control)



"There comes a time when an individual becomes irresistible and his action becomes all-pervasive in its effect. This happens only when he reduces himself to zero. A seeker after truth cannot afford to be an egoist. So long a man does not of his own freewill put himself last among his fellow-beings; there is no salvation for him." – Gandhiji

When were a new born baby, we were of one feet height. When we are grown into adulthood, we may be of five or six feet height. The body is changing but the "I" remains the same who witnesses the changes. If the "I" is not changing at all, if there is really birth and death to this "I"? What happens to this "I" after the death of physical body?

Very few of us see life as it really is. Most of us see things only as we are, looking at others through our own likes and dislikes, interests and fears. It is this separatist outlook that fragments unity in life – person against person, community against community, nation against nation. In fact no man is an island and he is bound to other persons from womb to tomb.

In order to see life as it is, one undivided whole, we have to shed all attachment to personal gain, power, prestige or ego. Otherwise we will be only looking at life through our individual conditioning, and we will see the

world not as it is, but as conditioned by our likes and dislikes.

Through many years of such conditioning, trying again and again to satisfy our ego, we have come to believe that this is our real personality. In reality it is just a mask of ego which we have merely forgotten how to take off. Beneath the mask is all the glory of our real Self; complete fearlessness, unconditional love, and abiding joy.

When Gandhiji succeeded in taking off his mask and 'making himself zero' through many years of living for others rather than for himself, he found that what he had eliminated from his personality was only his separateness, his selfishness, his fears. What remained was the love and fearlessness that had been hidden there all the time.

A person always resides in one of the below three states:

1. Awakened state: Here a person is aware of his body and mind.
2. Dream state: Here a person is aware of his mind but not body.
3. Deep sleep: Here a person is aware of neither body nor mind. In that state a person is neither rich nor poor, neither ignorant nor wise, not a man or woman. He is not a Hindu or Christian or American or Chinese. He is, just he is, in true state – his true Self.

But a man cannot be aware of this true state in deep sleep. This state can be consciously experienced only in deep meditation. In meditation a person rises above the identities such as gender, religion, language, nationality and can see the universe with clear perception. Meditative experience also helps the seeker to easily understand the teachings of Upanishads.

There are many versions of meditations, chief among them being focusing on breath or an object, chanting a mantra repeatedly or occasionally, etc. We will use the last version in our practice in this book. It is advisable that meditation is practiced under the supervision of an able teacher. In the absence of such a teacher, the below method can be followed.

Pick any word of your choice, but small and easy enough to remember and pronounce. It can be Om, or Ram, or the name of your favourite God.

The word calms the mind and prepares it for meditation, which is the key to transformation of character and consciousness. Meditation is not religious. It is a dynamic discipline independent of any belief, in which all one's powers of concentration are brought to bear upon one overriding ideal to drive it deep into every cell of the mind, until it gradually consumes all smaller ideals and

goals.

Through this discipline one enters the deepest levels of consciousness, where the storms of deep seated conflicts rage continuously night and day. It is at these awesome depths, as Gandhiji put it, that love wrestles with anger and fear ‘and ultimately gains mastery over all other feelings.’

Prior to meditation, do not eat too much or too little, because such conditions are not suitable for meditation. You should be neither hungry nor too sleepy, with stomach full of food.

Switch off your phone, because even a small sound can be very alarming in deep state of meditation. Request others not to disturb you at least for 15-30 minutes and choose a secluded room or area.

Sit in a chair neither too high nor too low, so that you can feel comfortable with your feet touching the ground.

Hold your body, head and neck firmly in a straight line so that you don‘t slouch and keep your eyes closed.

You will notice that your mind constantly keeps changing between the below three states.

1. In the first state, a new thought (about some object or idea) generates.
2. The continuation of above thought is the second state.
3. Suddenly above thought ends, and this is the third state.

Then again a new thought starts in mind and continues for some time and then ends. Thus the mind always switches between these three states of thought. Waves of thought are produced in a stream one after the other.

Do not indulge in stopping a current thought or starting a new thought or continuing the current thought. At constant time intervals (say 15 seconds apart), chant your word of choice, in mind, without opening lips. You should be able to do this meditation effortlessly, without much struggle.

Schedule 15-30 minutes for meditation and plan to come out of this meditative state after this duration.

Meditation experience includes ‘”being in a state which is neither wakefulness, sleeping or dreaming", and “becoming detached from physical self”. Meditation also relieves stress and enables us to better focus our thoughts and energies.

They see the Self in every creature and all creation in the Self. With consciousness unified through meditation, they see everything with impartiality (The Bhagavad Gita 6-29).

Bramhan is ever present to those who have realized Him in every creature. Seeing all life as His manifestations, they are never separated from Him (The Bhagavad Gita and 6-30)

Though our relationship with the world is impermanent, our relationship with God is eternal. To explain about our relationship with God, Truth, Consciousness sages have used two words – Atman and Brahman.

In meditation, sages discovered a core of consciousness beyond time and space. Even though a person‘s body and mind experience changes in time such as childhood, youth and old age, there is an identity that remains changeless and stands witness to the changes happening to the body and mind.

This core of consciousness is also beyond space in the sense that it is not confined to one particular limb or organ, and there is no beginning, middle or end points to this core. The sages referred to this core of consciousness as individual soul or Atman, Inner Witness, the Divine Self (referring God as the in-dweller in each individual).

In profound meditation, the sages also discovered that there is an indivisible unity, Truth, Consciousness pervading the entire universe. They called it Brahman. Brahman is the Supreme Godhead, Who is the cause of creation, preservation and dissolution of universe. Brahman is also referring God as transcendent in endless universe (beyond the perception of our senses and thinking). Brahman is one and infinite. There cannot be two or more infinites because that means they end by limiting each other.

Brahman is also described with the word ‘Sat-chit-ananda’ meaning Sat (ever existing), Chit (Consciousness) and Ananda (blissful). The word Satya (Truth) is derived from ‘Sat‘ which means ‘Being’.

But there is no real separation between Atman and Brahman. Brahman is the mighty ocean whereas individual Atman is a tiny water drop. God as Truth is inherent in both Atman and Brahman.

> *"We may not be God," Gandhiji said, "but we are of God, even as a little drop of water is the ocean. Imagine it torn away from the ocean and flung millions of miles away. It becomes helpless, and cannot feel the might and majesty of the ocean. But if someone could point out to it that it is the ocean (and teach it to realize it), its faith would revive, it would dance with joy and the whole might and majesty of the ocean would be reflected in it."*

In other words, Truth is present in each one of us as Atman, Inner Witness, Divine Self, and at the same time present as Brahman pervading the endless universe. Truth is subtler than the subtlest and grosser than the grossest.

An atheist deluded by tamasic ignorance and rajasic arrogance cannot find God anywhere whereas a theist can find God everywhere. If we are evil, there is no place, either inside of us or outside of us, where we can run away and hide from Truth or overpower it. Truth is Omnipresent, Omniscient, Omnipotent and Eternal.

There is no place, either inside or outside of us, where Truth can be hid, contained, in this world or anywhere in this endless universe. As all seeing four lions in Indian national emblem declare 'Truth alone Triumphs.'

In deep meditation every trace of separateness ("I", "mine", "my") disappears and life seems an undivided whole. A man experiences a state that is beyond the normal three states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep. This is called Turiya state, the fourth dimensional.

Once this vast and vivid experience of One Self has dawned, there will be a tremendous surge of true love in a person for the whole world around. He finds his fulfilment only in recognizing the same divinity in every form, and his satisfaction in serving all names and forms as God's own forms. To him the world of names and forms is all a fabulous entertainment.

That was the occasion of 'Vishwa Roopa Sandarshanam (Cosmic Vision)' when Arjuna found in deep meditation, in the fourth dimensional state of Turiya, that he was not separate from Krishna, Truth, Consciousness, Who is Omni pervasive and has many forms and names.

But a person cannot remain in Turiya state of fourth dimension for a long time. After a while, awareness of body and mind returns, and then the conventional world of multiplicity rushes in again.

What is it that makes Truth appear to be a world of separate transient objects?

It is because of maya constituting Sattva, Rajas and Tamas that makes us believe that we are the body rather than Atman and perceive the world in fragments. One way to overcome maya is practising raja yoga.

Generally people refer to yoga as Hatha Yoga, which is a combination of physical postures that give strength and fitness to the practitioner. However the true meaning of 'Yoga' is 'Union'. It refers to union or oneness with God. Sage Patanjali defined yoga as 'Yogah chitta vritti Nirodhah' meaning 'yoga is the complete stilling of the fluctuations of mind'. When that is done, the

seer abides in his true nature. That is the objective of yoga. Imagine a lake whose water is constantly disturbed by waves. You cannot see the bottom clearly. When the water becomes perfectly calm, the bottom becomes visible.

We know that the globe can be divided into imaginary lines such as latitude, longitude, equator, tropic of cancer and Capricorn. Similarly a person‘s spiritual body can be divided into seven chakras starting from Mooladhara Chakra at the bottom to Sahasrara at the top. His spiritual energy lies coiled down as a serpent near Mooladhara Chakra. When awakened with spiritual practices, this energy reaches Sahasrara and this rising up is called ‘Kundalini awakening’ or ‘Self-Realization’.

Intense spiritual practices enable a practitioner to obtain super natural powers, called ‘siddhis’. That could become the path of sever penance where a meditator wants to reach God, but overcome by selfish desires, wants to become God himself, and finally brings his own demise.

Our aim in meditation is just to realize our relationship with God, Truth, and Consciousness. We should not run after siddhis (supernatural powers), but stick to our main goal which is liberation. So instead of dwelling too much in Raja Yoga, we should adhere to Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Karma Yoga.

Raja Yoga is also called Ashtanga Yoga (the eight limbs leading to absolute mental control). Sage Patanjali compiled the below eight limbs in Yoga Sutras as progressive steps which purify the body and mind, ultimately leading the aspirant to enlightenment.

1. Yamas: These are five moral restraints (Don'ts) that should be practiced in thought, word and deed.
   a. Ahiṃsa: Non-violence, non-harming other beings
   b. Satya: Truthfulness or non-falsehood
   c. Asteya: Non-stealing
   d. Brahmacharya: Chastity, marital fidelity or sexual restraint. Bramhacharya, as commonly believed, does not mean abstaining from sex or staying unmarried. It should be noted that Krishna and Arjuna had wives and obtained offspring. It is nature’s design that life procreates and multiplies. True brahmacharya means being conscious of the fact that one is Atman which is not separate from Brahman. Great achievers don’t indulge in meaningless sensual pleasures but channelize their sexual energy towards higher purposes.
   e. Aparigraha: Non-possession

2. Niyamas: These include virtuous habits and character (Do‘s) as below

a. Saucha: purity and cleanliness of body, mind and surroundings

b. Santoṣha: contentment, optimism, acceptance of others, acceptance of one's circumstances as they are in order to get past or change them,
c. Tapas: austerity
d. Swadhyaya: study of sacred texts
e. Ishvara praṇidhana: contemplation of Ishvara (surrender to God's Will)

3. Asanas: Asana is a posture that one can hold for a period of time, staying relaxed, steady, comfortable and motionless. Patanjali did not list any specific asana, except the suggestion, 'Sthira Shukhasanam (posture one can hold with comfort and motionlessness)'. The posture that causes pain or restlessness is not a yogic posture. Later yoga scholars developed and recommended numerous postures such as Padmasana (lotus), Savasana (corpse), Vajrasana (heroic), Bhujangasana (serpent) etc. Asanas help a practitioner to maintain physical fitness.

4. Pranayama: It is a combination of two Sanskrit words prana (breath) and ayama (restraining). It is the practice of consciously regulating breath (through inhalation and exhalation). This is done for instance, inhaling and then holding breath for a period (Kumbhaka), exhaling and then holding breath for a period (Rechaka), and repeating these cycles. Pranayama helps a person to be of good health by proper supply of oxygen to various organs.

5. Pratyahara: It is a combination of two Sanskrit words prati (towards) and ahara (fetch). Pratyahara is fetching and bringing near one's awareness and one's thoughts to within. It is a process of withdrawing one's thoughts from external objects, things, persons, and situations. It is turning one's attention to one's true Self, one's inner world, experiencing and examining self. Pratyahara is not consciously closing one's eyes to the sensory world; it is consciously closing one's mind processes to the sensory world.

6. Dharana: It means concentration and one-pointedness of mind. The mind is fixed on a mantra or object or one's breath without jumping from one thought to another.
7. Dhyana: It means "contemplation or reflection".
8. Samadhi: It is the state of ecstasy where one's mind is so absorbed in whatever it is contemplating on, that the mind loses the sense of its own identity. There is no distinction between the meditator, the act of meditation and the subject of meditation. There is only oneness.

*****

Chapter 15

Bhakti Yoga (Path of love)

Gandhiji explained the process of evolution as below:

> *"If we turn our eyes to the time of which history has any record down to our time, we shall find that man has been steadily progressing towards ahimsa. Our remote ancestors were cannibals, where the strong gorged on the weak. Then came a time when they were fed up with cannibalism and began to live on hunting.*
>
> *Next came a stage when man took to agriculture and depended on mother earth for his food. Thus from being a nomad, he settled down to a civilized stable life, founded villages and towns, and from being member of a family he became member of a community and a nation.*
>
> *All these are signs of progressive non-violence and diminishing violence. Had it been otherwise, the human species should have been extinct by now even as many of the lower species have disappeared. Man as an animal is violent but as spirit he is non-violent. The moment he awakes to the spirit within, he cannot remain violent. Either he progresses towards non-violence or rushes to his doom."*

Bhakti is intense love to God, Who is present as Atman in all beings. God can be found in a caring father, a loving mother, teacher, a compassionate friend, beloved spouse, a customer, or even in a mischievous child such as infant Krishna. Loving neighbour is as important as loving God. How can a person claim to love a distant God when he hates his immediate neighbour?

I am ever present to those who have realized Me in every creature. Seeing all life as My manifestation, they are never separated from Me (The Bhagavad Gita 6-30).

He who serves Me as undivided Self in all creatures. Such person, in meditation or in doing karmas, abides in Me (The Bhagavad Gita 6-31).

When a person responds to the joys and sorrows of others as if they were his own, he has attained the highest state of spiritual union (The Bhagavad Gita 6-32).

I love that person who is incapable of ill will, who is friendly and compassionate, and who lives without the selfishness of "I", "me" and "mine"

and of pleasure and pain! (The Bhagavad Gita 12:13).

I am in love with those who are patient, contended, self- controlled and firm in faith, (The Bhagavad Gita 12:14).

They alone see truly who see the Bramhan the same in every creature, who see the changeless in the hearts of all that change (The Bhagavad Gita 13:27).

Seeing the same Bramhan everywhere, they do not harm themselves or others. Thus they attain the supreme goal (The Bhagavad Gita 13:28).

Bhakti Yoga can be practiced through the below ways.

1. The first step in the path of ahimsa (non-violence) or love is shedding all hatred in any shape or form and abstaining from hurting any living being in thought, word and deed.

It is no love if we merely love those that love us. It is love only when we love those that hate us. I know how difficult it is to follow this grand law of love. But are not all great and good things difficult to do? Love of the hater is the most difficult of all. But by the grace of God even this most difficult thing becomes easy to accomplish if we want to do it‖.

But how can we cultivate and preserve love? How can we love corrupt and insulting officials, envious co-workers, and backstabbing friends? That can be achieved only through expanding sphere of love.

Gandhiji did not expect those who came to him, to make this transformation immediately, or reverse overnight the conditioning of years of evolution and love their enemies more than they love themselves. He himself had failed countless times in his attempts to reach that highest state.

> *"Start where you are. If you can't love the viceroy or prime minister, start with your wife, or your husband, or your children. Try to put their welfare first and yours last every minute of the day, and let the circle of your love expand from there. As long as you are trying your very best, there can be no question of failure.*
>
> *The path of Truth is as narrow as it is straight. Even so is that of Ahimsa. It is like balancing oneself on the edge of a sword. By concentration an acrobat can walk on a rope. But the concentration required to tread the path of Truth and Ahimsa is far greater. The*

slightest inattention brings one tumbling to the ground.

One can realize Truth and Ahimsa only by ceaseless striving. Ahimsa is not the crude thing it has been made to appear. Not to hurt any living things is no doubt a part of Ahimsa. But it is its least expression. The principle of Ahimsa is hurt by every evil thought, by undue haste, by lying, by hatred, by wishing ill to anybody. It is also violated by our holding on to what the world needs. But the world needs even what we eat day by day. In the place where we stand there are millions of micro-organisms to whom the place belongs, and who are hurt by our presence there. What should we do then? Should we commit suicide? Even that is no solution, if we believe, as we do, that so long as the spirit is attached to the flesh, on every destruction of body it weaves for itself another.

The body will cease to be only when we give up all attachment to it. This freedom from all attachment is the realization of God as Truth. Such realization cannot be attained in a hurry. The body does not belong to us. While it lasts we must use it as a trust handed over to our charge. Treating in this way the things of the flesh, we may one day expect to become free from the burden of the body. Realizing the limitations of the flesh, we must strive day by day towards the ideal with what strength we have in us. It is perhaps clear from the foregoing, that without Ahimsa it is not possible to seek and find Truth. Ahimsa and Truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. They are like the two sides of a coin."

2. The spirit of love further connotes that work is worship. Work is not for building up ego or to get any reward out of it. Work is done in the spirit of selfless service because the only way to find God is to see him in His creation and be one with it. A seeker understands that his talents and capacity are God's gifts and to be used for the lesser privileged. He is thankful to the lesser privileged for giving him an opportunity to serve them as a servant of God.

Gandhiji specially emphasized the service of 'Daridra Narayana' (God appearing in the form of the poor, the underprivileged and the oppressed).

"There is no worship purer or more pleasing to God than selfless service of the poor. The rich in their arrogance and intellectual pride, often forget God, or even question His existence. But God dwells among the poor, as they cling to Him as their sole Refuge and Shelter.

To serve the poor, is therefore to serve God. If I seem to take part in politics, it is only because politics today encircles us like the coils of a snake from which we cannot get out no matter how we try. I wish to wrestle with the snake".

3. Love and indifference to the miseries of fellow beings do not go together. The principles of non-stealing (Asteya) and non-possession (Aparigraha) are derived from the holistic approach that God is the Creator of everything, and therefore, everything belongs to God (Isha Upanishad verse 1).

   Since all human beings are the manifestations of the same God, all things in this universe are to be shared equally by all. No individual has the right to consume or possess more than his proportionate share. Thus, one who has taken more than one's due share is guilty of committing 'theft'.

   A seeker of God cannot steal and simultaneously claim to follow God or cherish love. Hence the saying 'a camel can pass through the eye of a sewing needle but a rich man cannot enter God's kingdom'.

   Gandhiji said, "The world has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed". This statement highlights simplicity in life, the moral limits of consumption and surplus distribution.

   Deliberate and voluntary restriction of wants is significantly different from forced poverty, or limitation of wants though budgeting. Voluntary restriction of wants is not a negative activity but a positive expression of love for fellow beings.

   Voluntary simplicity or non-possession does not mean that human labour, talents and capabilities are to be underutilized or wasted in any way. They are to be exercised to the maximum extent, in the right direction. Each will work according to his natural talents and capabilities to the maximum potential, but will take the minimum according to his real needs. If there is extra wealth in one's possession, one will act as a trustee of the same and use it in the best interests of the society.
4. Bhakti Yoga does not mean a passive state of being defenseless or giving up fight and tolerating injustices. Gandhiji once said "even though I love a snake, I should kill it, if it comes to bite you". Hence there is no contradiction in the Bhagavad Gita, where Bhakti Yoga teaches Arjuna to love all, and Karma Yoga requires him to fight the evil and protect the dharma.

Scriptures declare that suicide or killing another person is the worst of all sins, called Brahma hatya pathakam, which means killing God, the in dweller. But it was Arjuna's duty as a soldier to protect people and Krishna explained how to perform his duty without violating dharma and getting entangled by the law of karma.

In its most active form, ahimsa (non-violence) becomes Sathyagraha, which was Gandhiji's Bramhastra, 'Weapon of Brahman'. 'Sathya' does not mean mere speaking truth (the opposite of lie) alone. 'Sathya' means Truth, Brahman. 'Agraha' here does not mean anger, but 'firmness'. Being firm in Truth is Satyagraha. It is soul-force in action.

According to Gandhiji, Sathyagraha is the firm and fearless adherence to Truth, even in the face of death, without bearing any ill will towards the evil doer. Sathyagraha is an attempt to awaken the Truth in the heart of the wrong doer through persuasion, self- sacrifice and self-suffering.

The Sathyagrahi does not try to suppress or harm his opponent through the use of force of any kind. The evil doer is looked at as an extension of one's own self, and there is no attempt to harm him in any way, except a sincere and fearless action to enlighten to Truth in him through self-sacrifice. Sathyagraha is thus elevating both for the Sathyagrahi as well as for the evil doer.

It is never the intention of a Sathyagrahi to embarrass the wrong doer. The appeal is never to his mind, but must always be to his heart. The Sathyagrahi's object is not to convert the wrong doers to his way, but help them to become a better person. Sathyagraha can be practiced by any individual or groups of individuals in order to bring about any desired change in the family, society, and nation and so on.

Gandhiji wrote 'Whether humanity will consciously follow the law of love, I do not know. But that need not disturb me. The law will work just as the law of gravitation works, whether we accept it or not. The person who discovered the law of love was a far greater scientist than any of our modern scientists. Only our explorations have not gone far enough and so it is not possible for everyone to see all its workings.

In bhakti yoga a complete surrender to God is essential. We must surrender to Him and abide by His will whether He appears or vanishes. If we ask Him to do as we please, it is not surrender but command to Him. We cannot have Him obey us and yet think that we have surrendered. He knows what is best and when and how to do it. We must leave everything entirely to Him. That is

surrender and bhakti.'

The devotee holds on to his Ishta Devata (favourite God). To feel God's presence at all times is a devotee's happiness, in which he finally loses his lower self or ego. What remains is love and hence 'God is Love'. A devotee's mind is no longer 'mind' but becomes 'Love' which is Sat-chit-ananda (Eternal-Consciousness-Bliss).

Chapter 16

Karma Yoga (Path of action)

O Bharata, with the sword of wisdom cut through the doubt in your heart about the Divine Self; Arise, take up the path of (karma) yoga (The Bhagavad Gita 4:42)!

The Bhagavad Gita is addressed not only to Arjuna, but to each and every one of us. Krishna addressed Arjuna as Bharata. In Sanskrit 'Bha' means 'light and wisdom' and 'rata' means devoted. Bharata means the one who is devoted to the light of wisdom. Sages addressed all wise people as 'Bharata' and the land they live in came to be known as Bharat.

Bharat, spiritual India has no boundaries and shows her divine torch of wisdom to the entire world. Persians referred to the people living beyond Indus River as Hindus. Thus the word Hindu is not a religious identity but only a geographical identity.

From time immemorial this land is not defined by belief in one particular god or book. It is a land of followers of Sanathana Dharma (Eternal Truth) and seekers of spiritual wisdom, Truth, and liberation. Hence followers of any other faith also can practice Sanathana Dharma without having to undergo conversion rituals or integrating into Hindu social structure.

Sanathana Dharma is not a religion in the ordinary sense because there is no founder or messenger. It does not accept the exclusive claim of any individual, however highly evolved, to the monopoly of Truth. Sanathana Dharma is not a religious conformity but a spiritual way of life with variations and combinations of concepts such as dualism or non-dualism, Saivism or Vaishnavism, monism or pantheism and so on. Thus Sanathana Dharma appears to be a colourful fabric but the common thread in it is seeking the Supreme Being which is unity in diversity.

Spiritual life is not about withdrawing from active life and living as a recluse begging for alms. The Bhagavad Gita teaches us to run into problems head on and fight the evil and stand for the good. Self-realized persons such as Gandhiji embraced the society and strived to make this world a better place. Unfortunately we have the tendency to put such great people on high pedestal and just worship them instead of learning from them and walking in their footprints.

Just when India obtained independence, it was plagued with communal riots. Gandhiji was working restlessly even at the age of 78 until the day of his

assassination like a true karma yogi. He toured many riot prone areas and facilitated peace process among warring communities. Men turned into beasts and resorted to murders, rapes, looting, burning homes etc.

Gandhiji advised people that they should live like human beings and be prepared to die like human beings instead of turning into beasts. He was also busy coordinating between the Prime Minster and Home Minister and other leaders to bring about peace and order in the country.

Gandhiji didn't have anything to gain from his activities, but he was working out of love for fellow human beings and a desire to serve them. He summarized the Gita's message in one phrase: 'nishkama karma', which literally means 'work that is without kama or selfish desire.' Kama is not just 'desire', it is 'selfish desire'.

It is important to note that 'desire' is the fuel of life. Without desire nothing can be achieved, let alone so stupendous feat as liberation, or something natural such as procreation and continuation of life.

Nishkama karma is not mere philanthropic activity. Good works that benefit others still carry a substantial measure of ego involvement. Action without selfish motive purifies the mind because the doer is less likely to be ego-driven later.

Gita tells us that we should not bother about the fruit of action. In verse 2:48 it also says 'yogastha kuru karmani'. First establish yourself in yoga, then do whatever you want to do – it will work. Being rooted in yoga means being rooted in union. You are one with everything around you. The Bhagavad Gita (2:50) also says 'yogah Karmasu Kaushalam' – Yoga is excellence at work.

Instead of just doing what is needed, if a man does something and then keeps record of it, 'How much I have done for somebody,' he is in the lowest level of the mind and he will inevitably suffer because he is expecting people to be nice to him in return for his deeds. If they praise, it may cause egotism and deviation from the path. If they are not nice to him, he will be disappointed and gives up works altogether.

Another example of a good karma yogi was APJ Abdul Kalam. Without a family or any possession worth mentioning, he dedicated himself to work for the country. Even after retirement he was busy writing books to inspire the young and was teaching till his last breath.

Strive constantly to serve the welfare of the world; By devotion to selfless work one attains the supreme goal of life (The Bhagavad Gita 3:19).

Do your work with the welfare of others always in mind. It was by such work that King Janaka attained perfection; Others too have followed this path (The Bhagavad Gita 3:20).

What a great person does, others try to do the same. The standards set by great persons will be followed by the whole world (The Bhagavad Gita 3:21).

There is nothing in the three worlds for me to gain. Nor is there anything I do not have. Yet I continue to work, not driven by any need of my own (The Bhagavad Gita 3:22)..

Ignorant people do karma with attachment; a wise person should do karmas with detachment in the interest of society (The Bhagavad Gita 3:25).

A wise person should not hinder the ignorant; he has to live by example and do karmas so that others follow him (The Bhagavad Gita 3:26).

An individual's welfare is encompassed in the society's welfare. To function properly, a society needs acharyas who guide people, leaders who protect people from internal and external enemies, entrepreneurs and farmers who create wealth, servants, professionals and employees who serve the society. These four classes can be regarded as divisions of labour.

I have created the four social divisions based on a person's guna (quality) and karma (work), but I remain the unchanging non-doer (The Bhagavadgita 4:13).

No other verse in the Bhagavadgita was subject to so much misinterpretation as the above verse. The division is based on guna and karma but not decided by birth. Any person from any social class can choose his field of action based on his interest and merit. In the chapter on 'Maya' the three gunas – sattva, rajas and tamas were explained. These four classes are categorized by the preponderance of one or combination of these gunas in a person as below.

If there is a preponderance of sattava in a person, he is intelligent and of balanced mind. Such persons naturally focus on learning scriptures and work towards passing on this knowledge to others. They are called brahmans.

If there is a preponderance of rajas and somewhat sattva in a person, he is strong and of active mind. Such persons naturally focus on leading and protecting people. They are of kshatra dharma and called kshatriyas.

If there is a preponderance of all three gunas in equal proportions, such people are inclined towards earning and producing wealth. They are called

vysyas.

If there is a preponderance of tamas and somewhat sattva and rajas in a person, he is of hard working nature. They are called sudras.

Vyasa was of fishermen community but became a great sage and author. Valmiki was of hunters community and became a great sage and author. Many warriors who were not born in Kshatriya varana became great rulers. So it is not birth but their field of action and merit that decides their role in the society.

1. Brahman: A true brahman is the one who is self-realized and guides other people to achieve such knowledge. *Acharya* is a Sanskrit term meaning 'one who teaches by his conduct.' A teacher does not necessarily mean a person who teaches sciences or languages. There is a Sanskrit adage saying 'Guru Sakshat Param Brahma'. Being an acharya is not just a position of authority but a position of responsibility.

Unfortunately now-a-days many teachers draw hefty salaries, but seldom teach. They mostly indulge in earning additional money through private tutoring, money lending, real estate transactions, life insurance business, and so on. Since parents and teachers have great influence on young minds, they become bad role models for our future generations.

The following is an excerpt from Gandhiji's life.

A woman was upset that her son was eating too much sugar. No matter how much she chided him, he continued his habit. Totally frustrated, she decided to take her son to see his great hero Gandhiji. She approached him with great respect and said, "sir, my son eats too much sugar. It is not good for his health. Would you please advise him to stop eating it?"

Gandhiji listened to the mother carefully and told her, "please go home and come back in two weeks."

The woman looked perplexed and wondered why he had not asked the boy to stop eating sugar. Anyway she took the boy by the hand and went home.

Two weeks later she returned, boy in hand. Gandhiji looked at the boy and said, "boy, you should stop eating sugar. It is not good for your health."

The boy nodded and promised he would not continue this habit any longer.

The boy's mother turned to Gandhiji and asked, "sir, why didn't you tell him that two weeks ago?"

Gandhiji smiled and said, “two weeks ago I was still eating sugar myself.”

Gandhiji lived in such integrity that he would not give advice unless he was living by it himself.

> *“A teacher situated miles away, can influence the spirit of the pupils, by his way of living” Gandhiji said, “A cowardly teacher would never succeed in making his pupils courageous. A stranger to self-restraint could never teach his pupils the value of self-restraint. I would be wasting my time, if I were a liar, and teach others to tell the truth. I saw therefore that I must be an eternal object-lesson to the pupils living with me. They thus became my teachers, and I learnt that I must be good and live straight, if only for their sakes”.*

2. Leaders: When someone does something selfish or deceptive people say, “look, he is playing politics.” But that‘s not what politics is and it is not an evil profession. Politics means activities involved in the governance of a group of people, usually local body, state or a nation. It can be noble or evil depending upon the person practicing it.

> *“Those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics," Gandhiji said, "do not know what religion means. Spirituality that has no bearing on and produces no effect on everyday life is an airy nothing.”*

His advocacy of spiritualization of politics was not intended to mix politics with religion. It was rather, a passionate appeal for moralizing the culture and practice of politics. Gandhiji‘s concept of religion transcends the rigid framework of a sectarian approach. He said that it binds one to the truth within and purifies actions. As a practical person he always tried to strike a balance between the political realities on the ground and his moral ideological pursuits.

In the field of politics there is an urgent demand for new leaders; a demand which indicates nothing less than an emergency. Today many politicians have become corrupt and power brokers. They also protect corrupt officials and exploit weaknesses of voters by giving money, liquor, playing caste divisions and so on.

A true leader leads people towards the common good. He even sacrifices his life for the sake of serving and protecting people. As Gandhiji rightly said, the antidote for bad politics is not ‘no politics’, but ‘good politics’.

Hence there is a dire requirement for people with noble ideals to enter politics

and serve the people, irrespective of winning and obtaining power. Democracy is not a spectator sport, but participatory sport. So every citizen should actively participate in it instead of just voting once in every five years.

Either acting alone, or by associating with like-minded people as a political party or NGO, one can fight for people's rights through channels such as Right to Information Act, Public Interest Litigation (PIL), Sathyagraha etc.

3. Entrepreneurs: Gandhiji said "the earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need but not every man's greed". Greedy businessmen think and act in terms of profits alone instead of thinking and acting in terms of human equations!

The real businessman must regard himself as a trustee, whose duty is to manage the business in such a way that it will work hardship on no individual or society. Making goods and services available to the customers at a fair price, paying reasonable wages to the workers, paying taxes promptly to the government etc are the responsibilities of an enlightened businessman. Entrepreneurship is also important for the wellbeing of society because being a provider of employment is better than being a seeker of employment.

A businessman, who is aware that the same soul as in him also resides in all other beings, cannot cheat his customers or the government. However, many businessmen may think that it is very difficult to be truthful in today's realistic situations. As a starting point, such men may progress spiritually, by being generous and contributing to righteous and philanthropic activities.

4. Servants: Gandhiji performed tasks such as weaving, sweeping dust and cleaning toilets in his Ashram. Thus he demonstrated that there is dignity in labour and there is no shame in being a servant. Whatever occupation or field of action we are in, we can perform it the way Gandhiji had conducted his legal career.

> "*So far as I can recollect, I have already said that I never resorted to untruth in my profession, and that a large part of my legal practice was in the interest of public work, for which I charged nothing beyond out-of-pocket expenses, and these too I sometimes met myself. I had thought that in saying this I had said all that was necessary as regards my legal practice. But friends want me to do more. They seem to think that, if I described however slightly, some of the occasions when I refused to swerve from the truth, the legal profession might profit by it.*
>
> *As a student I had heard that the lawyer's profession was a liar's profession. But this did not influence me, as I had no intention of*

earning either position or money by lying.

My principle was put to the test many a time in South Africa. Often I knew that my opponents had tutored their witnesses, and if I only encouraged my client or his witnesses to lie, we could win the case. But I always resisted the temptation. I remember only one occasion when, after having won a case, I suspected that my client had deceived me. In my heart of hearts I always wished that I should win only if my client's case was right. In fixing my fees I do not recall ever having made them conditional on my winning the case. Whether my client won or lost, I expected nothing more nor less than my fees.

I warned every new client at the outset that he should not expect me to take up a false case or to coach the witnesses, with the result that I built up such a reputation that no false cases used to come to me. Indeed some of my clients would keep their clean cases for me, and take the doubtful ones elsewhere."

It would be a good head-start if people start contributing to the society at an early stage. During student years a person can participate in programs such as NSS (National Service Scheme), NCC (National Cadet Corpse), blood donation camps, relief camps during natural calamities, tree plantation and other volunteer services. Such programs provide a person with valuable experiences in communication skills, leadership skills and personality development and empower self-esteem.

Once a man asked Gandhiji "How can we serve God when we do not know God?" Gandhiji answered as under.

"We may not know God but we know His creation. Service of His creation is the service of God. We can but serve that part of God's creation which is nearest and best known to us. We can start with next-door neighbour. We should not be content with keeping our courtyard clean; we should see that our neighbour's courtyard is also clean. We may serve our family, but may not sacrifice the village for the sake of the family. Our own honour lies in the preservation of that of our own village.

But we must each of us understand our own limitations. Our capacity for service is automatically limited by our knowledge of the world in which we live. But let me put it in the simplest possible language. Let us think less of ourselves than of our next-door neighbour. Dumping the refuse of our courtyard into that of our neighbour is no service of

humanity, but disservice. Let us start with the service of our neighbours."

Karma yoga can be started with small acts such as participating in an 'annadana' (serving food to the poor) program. Volunteer to be the first to serve food in every one's plate and be the last to eat and fill your own stomach. While travelling in a bus, offer your seat to a fellow passenger. Such small acts lead to bigger acts.

Also try a number of things which you think you are good at. Some people may pull you down, not knowing that you have not yet fully developed in that area yet. Some will judge you and ridicule you, but listen to your inner voice.

Every person has a set of unique strengths, gifts and talents. At times you may need to go to school for training, and take time to sharpen yourself. For the time being ignore what you are not good at. Find your strengths and talents, and develop them! Once you discover your field of action, your life takes on a whole new meaning and you can't wait to wake up each day!

*****

Chapter 17

Jnana Yoga (Path of knowledge)

In this path a seeker does self-enquiry as to ‘who am I’? He may find sacred texts useful for study, of which important ones are mentioned in this chapter. There are two classifications of texts - Shruti (that which is heard) and Smriti (that which is remembered).

A. The Shruti refers to the body of most authoritative texts not authored by any person and hence called apauruṣeyas. They are considered revelations received by sages in intense meditation. They include the four Vedas: the Rigveda, the Yajurveda, the Samaveda and the Atharvaveda. Each Veda has been sub-classified into four major text types – the Samhitas (mantras), the Aranyakas (text on rituals), the Brahmanas (commentaries on rituals), and the Upanishads (philosophy and spiritual knowledge).

‘Veda’ means knowledge and ‘Anta’ means end. Because the Upanishads are the final or end part of vedas, they are called Vedanta. There was no author named for any Upanishad. There are 108 main Upanishads, of which the below ten are the most important.

1. Isha
2. Kena
3. Katha
4. Prashna
5. Mundaka
6. Mandukya
7. Taitiriya
8. Aitareya
9. Chandogya
10. Brihadaranyaka

B. The Smriti are texts attributed to an author. As a derivative work they are considered less authoritative than Shruti. They include the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata, the Bhagavad Gita the Sutras and Shastras, the Puranas, shad darshanas or six philosophies (Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta) and so on.

When a man asked Gandhiji if the scriptures are infallible guides, he answered as under.

> *"We have in Hinduism hundreds and thousands of books- whose names we do not even know which go under the short name of Shastras. Now when we want to find out whether a thing is good or bad, I do not go to a particular book, but I look to the sum total of the effect of Hinduism.*
>
> *In Hinduism we have got an admirable foot-rule to measure every Shastra and every rule of conduct, and that is Truth. Whatever falls from Truth should be rejected, no matter wherever it comes from, and therefore the burden lies on the shoulders of that person who upholds a practice which is inconsistent with Truth, so that if a man wants to defend, for instance, untouchability, he has to show that it is consistent with Truth. Unless he shows that, all the authorities that he may cite in support of it are to me irrelevant."*

Gandhiji said that when doubts and disappointments filled him with sorrow, he turned to the Bhagavad Gita for answers. He regarded Ramarajya not as a Hindu religious state, but as the Kingdom of God or a true democracy where even the poorest and weakest citizen can receive swift and equal justice. He regarded the Upanishads as a profound source of spiritual truth, unity, and moral strength.

Practitioners of jnana Yoga use their viveka (discrimination) to distinguish themselves from body, mind, senses, and intellect until they know that they are nothing but the Self. This is called 'Neti Neti (Not this Not this)' approach which is to understand Brahman by first understanding what is not Brahman. Through a gradual process the seeker negates the mind and transcends all worldly experiences that are negated till nothing remains but the Self.

The Three Bodies (Sariras) & Five Sheaths (Koshas):

According to Taittiriya Upanishad, every one of us has five koshas or sheaths. These can be grouped into three bodies. The first two – physical body and vital force are called the sthula sarira (gross body). The next two – mental body and intellect are called sukshma sarira (subtle or astral body). The last one – bliss sheath is called the karana sarira (casual body).

A. Gross Body (S*thula Sarira*)

1. A*nnamaya Kosha* (food sheath): This sheath is our physical body and is

the densest of all the koshas. It includes flesh, bones and also the tissues which make up our muscles and organs. Here, energy is solidified into matter and it is made of the five elements, of which the earth element is the dominant one. It is called the food layer because it is created by the food that we eat.

2. Pranamaya Kosha (energy sheath): This kosha is the vital life force that moves through the body. It literally consists of the breath and the five pranas, namely: prana, apana, udana, samana and vyana. These forms of prana control various functions within the physical body, and without prana, the body would be lifeless, and unable to move or think. It is the prana that makes the blood flow, carries impulses through the nerves from our body, to the brain and back.

B. Subtle Body (S*uksma Sarira*)

1. Manomaya Kosha (mind sheath): This kosha is made up of our thoughts, feelings and emotions. It is through the prism of this dimension that we perceive the world and our likes and dislikes (raga and dvesha) via the agency of the five senses.
2. Vijnanamaya Kosha (wisdom sheath): In this kosha we reach intuitive knowing and higher levels of consciousness. In this sheath the awareness of the body and mind is lost, and awareness is established as the 'higher' mind. We know, decide, judge, and discriminate from the wisdom part of ourselves, our higher consciousness. Consequently, the higher mind turns within towards the soul, seeking the Truth, and searching for the eternal center of consciousness.

C. Causal Body (*Karana Sarira*)

3. Anandamaya Kosha (bliss sheath): It is the spiritual or causal body, where, finally, you become one with the 'divine spark,' which is your soul. Anandamaya kosha is connected to the superconscious mind. It is only when the higher mind fuses with the superconscious mind, (or unconscious mind) that one awakens to the Presence with a sense of connection to all.

It is mind that makes a person believe he is body and not Atman. The gross body disintegrates at death. The subtle body disintegrates at rebirth, allowing a person to develop a new personality in his next life. The causal body reincarnates again and again, carrying the karma with it like luggage. It finally disintegrates at the time of liberation, when the Self disengages from the cycle of birth and death.

A person graduated from a class wouldn't be interested to sit in the same

class again. Similarly enlightened beings know that life‘s purpose is not to be born again and again, but ultimate liberation.

To explain the two aspects - Brahman and the world (including individual Atman), there are below three main schools.

1. Dvaita (dualism): The most famous exponent of this school is Madhva. Here, Brahman and the world (including individual Atman) are considered to be two separate entities and not related in any way. Brahman here is a purely personal God, usually worshipped in the form of Vishnu or his Avatars such as Rama and Krishna. This school appeals directly to the heart, in the desire of persons to have a God to worship and serve.
2. Advaita (non-dualism): The most famous exponent of this school is Sankaracharya. He summarized the essence of his philosophy into three concise sentences. These are:

   “Brahma Satyam. Jagat Mithya. Jivo Brahmaiva Na Parah.” These can be translated in English as follows:

   God only is real. The world is unreal. The individual is none other than God.

   The analogy given for Advaita is that of the snake and the rope. In the dark, we may mistake a rope for a snake and for a time take it to be a real snake. But soon we realize that it is in fact a rope only. Once we know it to be a rope, we do not see the snake anymore. The rope had never really existed; it was purely trick played by our minds. So also, although it is only the Brahman which exists all around us, we see the world which is only a reading of Brahman by our minds. But once we attain realization and see that it was Brahman all along, we do not see the world as it is anymore.

3. Vishista Advaita (qualified monism or qualified non-dualism): The most famous exponent of this philosophy is Ramanuja. In this philosophy, the world and Brahman are also considered two equally real entities, as in dualism, but here the world is not separate from Brahman but is formed out of Brahman.

   The famous analogy given for the above philosophy is the sea and wave – Brahman is the sea and the objects of the world, both non-living and the living souls, are like waves upon this sea. All waves are ultimately the sea only, but as long as we see the wave we think it to be different from the sea. The wave is of name and form only. Other analogies given for this are gold and gold jewellery, clay and clay pots.

   The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna recounts a famous conversation between

Lord Rama and Hanuman to illustrate how the three primary schools of Vedanta harmoniously coexist in a seeker's experience as under.

"Oh Rama, when I am identified with body, I am your servant (dualism).

When I am identified with mind, I am part of you (qualified non-dualism).

When I am identified with soul, I am you (non-dualism)."

Thus all three schools of vedanta are correct based on what level we are identifying with – body, mind or soul.

Both a water drop and the ocean are qualitatively the same but quantitatively so much different. That is why God is supreme and it is an individual soul's journey of perfection and to render devotional service unto Him.

Swami Vivekananda said as under:

> *"In fact, every idea of God, and hence every religion, is true, as each is but a different stage in the journey, the aim of which is the perfect conception of the Vedas. Hence, too, we not only tolerate, but we Hindus accept every religion, praying in the mosques of the Muslims, worshipping before the fire of the Zoroastrians, and kneeling before the cross of the Christians, knowing that all the religions, from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism, mean so many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realize the infinite, each determined by the conditions of its birth and association, and each of them marking a stage of progress. We gather all these flowers and bind them with the twine of love, making a wonderful bouquet of worship."*

There are two ways of understanding ultimate reality or Brahman – Nirguna Brahman and Saguna Brahman. Nirguna Brahman is the absolute, infinite, unchanging reality beyond all names, forms, attributes and limitations. It is not a person or an object that we can perceive through our senses. Saguna Brahman is the same ultimate reality understood through names, forms and attributes such as Omnipotence, Omniscience and Omnipresence.

It is difficult for an ordinary mind to focus attention on the Formless and Nameless. Hence devotees refer to God through many forms and names, just as one individual person appears as a father, teacher, officer or friend to different persons.

For instance God's creative aspect is called Brahma and the associated feminine aspect is referred to as Goddess 'Saraswati', because knowledge is essential for creation. His sustaining aspect is called Vishnu and the

associated feminine aspect is referred to as Goddess 'Lakshmi', because wealth is essential for sustainment. His destructive aspect is called Shiva and the associated feminine aspect is referred to as Goddess 'Parvati', because power or energy is essential for annihilation. God's capacity to do great things was illustrated through multiple heads, hands, weapons and so on as a way of symbolism.

There are other aspects such as Agni as god of fire, Varuna as god of water, Vayu as god of air and so on. The images and idols are only means to focus on the Formless, but they are not by themselves God.

All life is perfectly and purely divine and in our innermost spiritual being we are completely one with God, Truth, Consciousness. We are all sparks of the divine fire. Each divine spark, each one of us, is on an indescribably lengthy journey through the cycle of incarnation (birth, death, and rebirth) and this cycle or journey is governed by the law of karma, which is the law of self-created destiny. Gandhiji once said "I have travelled so far, and yet all I have done is, come home".

We cannot perceive light if there is no darkness. Our understanding of things depends on sense perception and comparison of one thing with another. Similarly there can be no day without corresponding night, no height without depth, no pleasure without pain, no good without evil and so on. Even though there is unity from Truth's aspect, there is always duality and multiplicity in nature, to cause diversity and variations in creation. But there is always 'unity in diversity'.

Adi Sankaracharya warned seekers as under:

Sabdajālaṃ mahāraṇyaṃ cittabhramaṇakāraṇam ataḥ prayatnājjñātavyaṃ tattvajñaistattvamātmanaḥ (Vivekachudamani 60)

It means that getting endlessly lost in scholarly arguments, and a thick maze of scriptural terminology only scatters and confuses the mind. Real liberation requires going past the forest of words to directly realize the true nature of the Atman (the Self) through practice and discrimination.

For a beginner spiritual aspirant it can be very difficult to stay firm in the awareness that he is Atman because there are three layers of ignorance as explained below.

1. For instance when he listens to or reads (Shravanam) the great sentence (mahavakya) such as 'Tat Tvam Asi (You are That)', the first layer is removed and he 'knows'.

2. When he reflects (Mananam) on the meaning (the word ‘That’ indicates God or Brahman and ‘You’ indicates the individual or Jiva) the second layer is removed and he ‘understands’.
3. When he meditates and applies (Nidhidhysanam) those teachings in life the third layer is removed and he ‘experiences (Self-Realization)’.

   Hence shravanam, shananam and nidhidhysanam are very important in the spiritual pursuit.

In ancient times there was a man named Vajasrava. He had a son named ‘Nachiketa.

Once Vajasrava decided to perform a yagna (offering) called ‘Viswajith’. When the chosen god is pleased with mantras and sacrifices, the yagna yields the desired wish.

The specialty of Viswajith yagna is that it gives supremacy over the universe. But the condition is very peculiar. The yagna karta must give up everything that he possesses. It means one who gives up everything alone is fit to possess everything.

In those days a person’s wealth was calculated based on the cattle he possessed. Vajasrava donated away only cows that were not useful for himself, the cows that are aged, of ill health and ready to do. He kept for himself all the cows that were healthy and capable of giving milk.

Nachiketa was observing this and became very sad. He thought that his father will go to hell because the condition of yagna is not being followed in true spirit. So we went to his father and asked “father, to whom you are going to give me up to?”

Nachiketa’s thinking was that ‘there is no possession greater to a person than his own son’. But Vajasrava thought his son was just blabbering something without knowledge. So he did not answer son’s question.

When Nachiketa asked the same question second time also, Vajasrava wouldn’t answer. But when asked for the third time, he became very irritated and replied “son, I am going to give you up to Lord Yama”.

So Nachiketa reached the kingdom of Lord Yama and met him there. Lord Yama was pleased with Nachiketa’s sincerity, and offered him a boon. Nachiketa wanted to know about Truth. Lord Yama enticed Nachiketa to grant all the possessions and pleasures in the world, except knowledge about Truth. But Nachiketa was not tempted by them and wanted to know only about Truth.

Lord Yama was pleased and thought about Truth to Nachiketa. He said there are two paths - ‘sreyo marga’ and ‘preyo marga’. Sreyo marga leads to Truth and liberation. Preyo marga leads to bondage.

The above narration is from Katha Upanishad. In our lives too we must choose sreyo marga over preyo marga.

The four great sentences of Upanishads explain a man’s real identity as under.

Itareya Upanishad says ‘Prajnanam Brahma’ meaning ‘Consciousness is Brahman’. Bruhadaranyaka Upanishad says ‘Aham Brahmasmi’ meaning ‘I am Brahman’. Chandogya Upanishad says “Tat Twam Asi’ meaning ‘You are that’. Mandukya Upanishad says ‘Ayamatma Brahma’ meaning ‘This Atman is Brahman’.

“You may be born poor. You may be physically weak. But you are Brahman. You have the potential to achieve anything you want”. This is the essence of Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita.

*****

Chapter 18

From death to Immortality

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad’s Shanti Mantra (Mantra of peace), explains a man’s path as below.

Asato ma sadgamaya
Tamasoma jyotir gamaya
Mrityorma amritam gamaya
Om Shanti Shanti Shanti

From ignorance, lead me to truth
From darkness, lead me to light
From death, lead me to immortality
Om peace, peace, peace

One may ask, "Everybody dies. What is the difference?" But there is huge difference. The mother cat carries her kittens in mouth to transfer to a safer place. She may also catch a rat and carry it in her mouth. It is the same mouth, but whereas the kittens are comfortable and safe, the rat suffers in the jaws of death. Similarly, at the time of death the enlightened persons reach their ultimate home, whereas the ordinary people suffer through cycles of rebirth and death.

In fact death is a great boon. It urges us to understand the value of life and make the best of every minute.

Decades of persistent efforts of Gandhiji and other freedom fighters yielded fruits. The British agreed to give independence to India on 15th August of 1947, but divided it on religious grounds. The whole country celebrated the day. There were singing and dancing processions and parades everywhere. Free India's Tricolour flag fluttered proudly on the historical Red Fort in Delhi.

But Gandhiji was in faraway Calcutta striving for peace between Hindus and Muslims. Riots had again broken out there and he was in the midst of that fire. He stayed in a poor hut in a poor area. He moved from street to street and house to house requesting people to stay calm. At last he went on fast. This had the desired effect on the minds of the people. The leaders of both communities assured him that they would control their people. Gandhiji accepted that assurance and broke the fast.

Few religious fanatics accused that he was a traitor who had sacrificed Hindu interests to appease Muslims. There was an assassination attempt from which he escaped unhurt, and continued his mission.

On the evening of 30th January 1948, Gandhiji walked out of his temporary residence at Birla House to reach prayer house. Weakened by fasts and tours, he walked slowly with the support of his two grandnieces. Hundreds of followers gathered to touch his feet, to get his blessings and join him in prayers. Gandhiji paused and folded his hands in traditional Namaste salutation.

A person stepped out from the crowd greeting Gandhiji with folded hands. Then he drew a pistol and shot Gandhiji three times at close range. With bullets in chest and abdomen, Gandhiji died instantly saying “Hey Ram”.

His funeral was attended by one million people and dignitaries from several nations. Today, there is no town in India without either his statue or a road named after him.

> *“The fight of Satyagraha is for the strong in spirit, not the doubter or the timid” Gandhiji said. “Satyagraha teaches us the art of living as well as dying. Birth and death are inevitable among mortals. What distinguishes the man from the brute is his conscious striving to realize the spirit within.*
>
> *The last eighteen verses of the second chapter of the Gita which are recited at the prayer give in a nutshell the secret of the art of living. It is given there in the form of a description of a sthitaprajna or the man of steady wisdom, i.e. a Satyagrahi in reply to Aijuna's query to Lord Kirshna:*
>
> *The art of dying follows as a corollary from the art of living. Death must come to all. - A man may die of a lightning stroke or as a result of heart failure or failure of respiration. But that is not the death that a Satyagrahi can wish for or pray for himself. The art of dying for a Satyagrahi consists in facing death cheerfully in the performance of one's duty...*

I believe in the immortality of the soul. I would like to give you the analogy of the ocean. The ocean is composed of drops of water; each drop is an entity and yet it is part of the whole, ' the one and the many'. In this ocean of life, we are little drops.

My doctrine means that I must identify myself with life, with everything that lives, that I must share the majesty of life in the presence of God. The sum-total of this life is God. We may not be God, but we are of God.

I want to say emphatically that we should not at all grieve over the death of one whom we consider a saintly man; and we should have a firm faith that it is only after his death that his true work commences, or rather begins to bear true fruit. What have been considered to be his great achievements during his lifetime will pale into insignificance before the future ones. Of course it is our duty to follow, up to the extent of our capacity, the good steps of those whom we respect as saints".

Albert Einstein, a famous scientist said, "Generations to come, will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth." Gandhiji's achievements were many. Each one of them, judged by the manner of its execution or by its results, would have made his name honoured anywhere in the world.

Gandhiji brought liberation from foreign rule to a fifth of the human race. And India's freedom was, in a way, the harbinger of freedom to many countries of Africa and Asia. Several world renowned leaders such as Nelson Mandela of South Africa, Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar, Junior Martin Luther King of America and countless others drew inspiration from Gandhiji.

Of no less significance was what he did for those who were once despised as 'untouchables'. He broke their centuries-old shackles of caste tyranny and social indignity. He insisted that freedom should be measured by the all-round social, moral and economic well-being of the millions who live in the villages.

His very death was an achievement in itself, for the martyrdom shamed his people out of hysteria of hatred and fratricide, and helped the new-born nation to consolidate the secular and democratic principles.

The scriptures tell stories of battles between the devas (gods), and the asuras (demons). But these words should not be taken too literally. The scriptures

dramatize the struggle between the forces of good and evil in the world and present them in artistic ways.

The Bhagavad Gita says that there are two paths for humanity - divine or demonic. Cultivating divine attributes lessens the presence of demonic attributes. We need to pay attention to demonic attributes – not to dwell on negatives, but to guard against them.

The attributes and practices of a person with divine tendencies are: love, absence of negative emotions and fears, self-control, selfless service, truthfulness, humbleness, forgiveness, evenness of mind, etc.

The attributes and practices that make a person demonic are: hatred, anger, dominating ego, jealousy, arrogance, cruelty, hypocrisy (double standards for self and others), fears and negative emotions, absence of discrimination between right and wrong, etc.

People with demonic tendencies argue that the scriptures are a lie, that the world is a dog-eat-dog place with no moral foundation. Holding to such distorted view points they cause suffering to others and eventually to themselves. They will not hesitate to resort to any means to achieve goals. If left alone to their self-indulgence they would heedlessly destroy the world, the way Adolf Hitler did. They may attain their goals for a while but their destination is a hell of their own making – often in this very life.

In puranas (mythology) demons are described with ferocious forms but indicate that they do penance to get boons from either Brahma or Siva and usually consider Vishnu as enemy. They are the persons who are ignorant of divine presence within them and also under the influence of arishadvargas – kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada and matsarya. Siva's cosmic dance form Nataraja is depicted with a dwarf demon called Apasmara under his feet. Apasmara is a symbol of tamasic ignorance which can never be completely destroyed but kept under control by God.

Sanathana Dharma doesn't condemn non-believers or evil doers for eternal punishment in hell, because for hell to exist there should be a place where God is not present. Since God is present as Atman even in people of demonic nature, they are not condemned for eternal damnation. The choice to choose the right path is always open for them.

Arjuna asked Krishna an important question. "What happens to a person who believes in a spiritual goal but lacks self-discipline and wanders from the

path, not attaining success? If he were to fail, would he have lost everything – all that he had given up in worldly life as well as his goal of self-realization?"

Krishna assured him that no effort to improve his spiritual condition could be a wasted effort. Even looking ahead to the next life, he has nothing to lose but a lot to gain. He will be reborn in a household suitable for taking up his quest where he left off. In his next life, he will be drawn to the spiritual pursuit once again, and he will have an early start.

Divine path lifts us to liberation while demonic path throws us into bondage. Being hurled into darkness as a beast is an example of consequences for evil actions. Taking birth as a human is an example of mixed reward.
Being born as a noble being is an example for consequences for noble actions. But wise people know that even riches and pleasures are part of nature and hence eventually perish. When the merits they earned in this life are spent, they must return to yet another ordinary birth-death cycle. This is path to bondage. So our goal should be to attain liberation and merge with Truth, Brahman, Imperishable Pure Consciousness.

I am easily attained by the person who always remembers Me and is attached to nothing else. Such a person is a true yogi (The Bhagavad Gita 8:14).

Great souls make their lives perfect and attain Me. They are freed from mortality and the suffering of birth and death (The Bhagavad Gita 8:15).

Every creature in the universe is subject to rebirth, except the one who is united with Me (The Bhagavad Gita 8:16).

Those who realize life‘s supreme goal know that I am beyond senses and Eternal and Supreme. Having come home to Me, They never return to separate existence (The Bhagavad Gita 8:21).

This supreme Lord who pervades all existence, the true Self of all creatures, may be realized through undivided love (The Bhagavad Gita 8:22).

Only one in many thousands truly seeks God. And of these, only one in many thousands truly attains God. Despite these odds, all beings are destined to reach this degree of perfection, in the course of time and evolution. Whatever form of deity people choose to worship, they are destined to evolve phase by phase towards ultimately reaching God.

God is Time – both death and Immortality; Being and non-Being. There is no

end to God's Divine manifestations, because He is Omni pervasive and nothing exists outside of Him.

I give you both knowledge and wisdom. When both these are realized, there is nothing more you need to know (The Bhagavad Gita 7:2).

A group of six blind men heard that a strange animal, called an elephant, had been brought to the town. But none of them were aware of its shape and form. Out of curiosity, they said: "We must inspect and know it by touch". So, they sought it out, and when they found it they groped about it.

The first person touched the trunk and said "This animal is like a thick snake". The second person reached its ear, and said it is like a fan. The third person touched one of the legs and said, the elephant is like a pillar. The fourth person who placed his hand upon its side said, "elephant is like a wall". The fifth person, who felt its tail, described it as a rope. The sixth person felt its tusk, stating the elephant is like a spear.

Gandhiji commented on the above story as under

> *"The seven blind men who gave seven different descriptions of the elephant were all right from their respective points of view, and wrong from the point of view of one another, and right and wrong from the point of view of the man who knew the elephant. I very much like this doctrine of the multiplicity of reality. It is this doctrine that has taught me to judge a Muslim from his own standpoint and a Christian from his. Formerly I used to resent the ignorance of my opponents. Today I can love them because I am gifted with the eye to see myself as others see me and vice versa".*

To get a glimpse of God, we need both knowledge and wisdom. The difference between them is; we gain knowledge through senses and mind – perceiving and thinking; we gain wisdom through direct experience and intuition. Knowledge 'knows' God, theoretically. Wisdom 'realizes' God and is able to apply this knowledge in every moment of living.

Enlightened persons devote themselves with full hearts to this 'Truth'. All those who realize God come to this ultimate 'home', never to be separate and born again. The purpose of years of their evolution will have been achieved. The immortal Atman completes mortal journeying and merges again in Brahman.

Gandhiji once warned some of his co-workers who had formed a Society named after him to promote his ideals.

> *"My life is my message. There is no such thing as Gandhijism, and I do*

not want to leave any sect after me. I do not claim to have originated any new principle or doctrine. I have simply tried, in my own way, to apply the eternal truths to my daily life and problems ... The opinions I have formed, and the conclusions I have arrived at, are not by any means final. I may change them tomorrow if I find better ones. I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills. All I have done is to try experiments in both, on as vast a scale and as best as I could. In doing so, I have sometimes erred, and learnt by my errors.

My uniform experience has convinced me that there is no other God than Truth. And if every page of these chapters does not proclaim to the reader that the only means for the realization of Truth is Ahimsa, I shall deem all my labour in writing these chapters to have been in vain. And, even though my efforts in this behalf may prove fruitless, let the readers know that the vehicle, not the great principle, is at fault.

After all, however sincere my strivings after Ahimsa may have been, they have still been imperfect and inadequate. The little fleeting glimpses, therefore, that I have been able to have of Truth can hardly convey an idea of the indescribable lustre of Truth, a million times more intense than that of the sun we daily see with our eyes.

In fact what I have caught is only the faintest glimmer of that mighty effulgence. But this much I can say with assurance, as a result of all my experiments, that a perfect vision of Truth can only follow a complete realization of Ahimsa.

To see the universal and all-pervading Spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life. That is why my devotion to Truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and I can say without the slightest hesitation, and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means.

Identification with everything that lives is impossible without self-purification; without self-purification the observance of the law of Ahimsa must remain an empty dream; God can never be realized by one who is not pure of heart. Self-purification therefore must mean purification in all the walks of life. And purification being highly infectious, purification of oneself necessarily leads to the purification of one's surroundings.

But the path of self-purification is hard and steep. To attain perfect purity one has to become absolutely passion-free in thought, speech and action; to rise above the opposing currents of love and hatred, attachment and repulsion. I know that I have not in me as yet that triple purity, in spite of constant ceaseless striving for it. That is why the world's praise fails to move me, indeed it very often stings me.

Conquering the subtle passions is much harder than the physical conquest of the world by the force of arms. Ever since my return to India I have had experience of the dormant passions lying hidden within me. The knowledge of them has made me feel humiliated though not defeated. The experiences and experiments have sustained me and given me great joy.

But I know that I have still before me a difficult path to traverse. I must reduce myself to zero. So long as a man does not of his own free will put himself last among his fellow creatures, there is no salvation for him. Ahimsa is the farthest limit of humility."

There is a Sanskrit adage 'Atmano Mokshardham Jagat Hitayacha' meaning that by serving the society we purify ourselves towards achieving Self-Realization and also improve the living conditions around us. Amruthabindu Upanishad says 'Manayeva Manushanam Bandha Mokshaya' meaning it is mind that either binds or liberates us.

An ordinary person who identifies with body and mind is called 'Jiva'. A person who realizes that he is above these two and one with Self, is called 'Jeevanmukta'.

Because karmas are performed through physical body, rebirth is required to bear the karmic results. A Self-realized person may still have his karma sesham (karmic residue) to be depleted. Karmic results can be compared with the pots made by a potter's wheel. As long the wheel is spinning, karma-pots are being produced and they stop generating new pots when the spinning of wheel comes to a complete stop slowly.

After Self-realization too a person has to be confined by his body until all past karma is depleted. Then when he leaves body, he will have no more birth to be taken and submerges in the Supreme Self. Such a person is called 'Videhamukta'.

According to the four purushardhas liberation is the ultimate goal of human life. But we should aspire to be born again and again to serve God and His Creation. That is the true mark of divinity.

*****

Epilogue

Gandhiji categorized our society‘s seven deadly sins as below.

1. Education without character, where students are urged to only compete for marks and ranks instead of self-development and be of use to fellow beings.
2. Science without humanity, where science only teaches about external world, and does not give a clue about how to coordinate it with inner consciousness.
3. Commerce without morality: The Golden Rule or win-win situation is a spirit of morality and fairness for all concerned should be the guiding factor for enlightened businessmen. They provide goods and services at the fair price without exploitation of customers.
4. Wealth without work: practice of getting something for nothing; get rich quick schemes, by manipulating people and markets without providing value in return.
5. Politics without philosophy, where politicians divide and rule people for selfish interests, instead of leading them towards common good. A true leader should be like a statesman who looks for long term benefit of people instead of short term gains or exploiting their weaknesses.
6. Worship without heart, where people cling to idols and rituals ignoring the suffering of their fellow beings. A person truly sees God when he loves and serves the meanest creature in the universe.
7. Pleasure without conscience: The chief costs of pleasures without conscience are high as measured in terms of time and money, in terms of reputation and in terms of wounding the hearts and minds of other people who are adversely affected by those who just want to indulge and gratify themselves in the short term.

Most people believe that ‘materialism’, refers to a culture which is mainly motivated by the acquisition of money, possessions, material goods, and worldly success. But materialism really means the belief that there is nothing above or beyond material life, that matter is all there is, that everything is essentially physical and biological and that the idea of Atman and Brahman are ignorant delusions.

The opposite of materialism is spiritualism, but this is yet another word which has become misused, far more so than materialism. To a modern mind it may bring up images of monks begging for alms or saffron clothed god-men living in mansions and performing cheap tricks for a living.

Spiritualism really means the belief that the ultimate reality is not something material and physical, but rather something purely spiritual and transcendent, and that this is the source and final destiny, of everything and everyone. It does not refuse the matter and physical phenomena but maintains that these are only

impermanent in nature, and only to be used as instruments for spiritual experience and evolution. While a materialist loves things and uses people, a spiritualist loves people and uses things only as tools.

A complete human being needs to balance both dimensions of life – material life (pravritti marga) and spiritual life (nivritti marga).

To teach the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna, Krishna chose battle field as the background, instead of a hermitage or forest retreat. Hence the Bhagavad Gita is not a book that has to be kept locked in a box and worshipped, and to be opened only after we retire from active life. It is a guide that can be used at any time of life. It does not tell us to renounce life and run away from problems. Instead it guides us to run head on into life‘s battles with faith and fearlessness.

The gist of the Bhagavad Gita‘s teaching is that Arjuna performed his duty as a warrior without getting entangled with war‘s karmic effects. By using the same Bhagavad Gita, Gandhiji also fought for nation‘s independence without using his fame and power for selfish desires.

Mundaka Upanishad explains about two types of knowledge – Lower knowledge (science, grammer etc) and Higher or supreme knowledge (about Self). We need coordination of both for success in life.

During the middle ages, sea voyages and scientific explorations, commerce and creation of wealth, acquiring strength to protect the weak, and so on were all discouraged. Slowly the society slipped down into tamasic ignorance, dullness and slavery.

Desire is the fire, energy of life, and can be used for constructive purposes such as achieving independence, inventing medicines, technological advancements, creating wealth and jobs and so on, and to explore all the marvels of creation. Used for destructive purposes or selfish gains, desires can lead one to his self-created fall, because ultimately dharma prevails and ‘Truth alone Triumphs’.

Our body and minds are instruments to attain liberation, pursue dharma, earn ardha, fulfil kama and be of service to other beings. Hence we need success both in proper use of material resources and in our spiritual evolvement.

But deep rooted tendencies such as jealousy, greed, hatred, wickedness and untruthfulness cannot be removed so quickly and easily. Before trying to remove them from other people, we need to remove them from ourselves first and be an example to others. We need to cultivate positive tendencies such as faith, love, fearlessness, compassion, non-possession so that the influence of negative tendencies gets reduced.

Many of Gandhiji's contemporary lawyers earned more income than him and amassed greater wealth. But they all vanished into time's womb and not remembered today.

Gandhiji was not born perfect. He was born like any other ordinary person. But be became Mahatma through self-reflection and efforts. That's what makes him a great example from which to learn. We must make our life an experiment with Truth, the way Gandhiji coined his autobiography as 'My experiments with Truth'.

In this book Gandhiji was taken as a real life example but not authority. For sanathana dharma Vedas are the ultimate authority. Gandhiji himself wrote "When anybody finds any inconsistency between any two writings of mine, if he has still faith in my sanity, he would do well to choose the later of the two on the same subject. My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statements on a given question, but to be consistent with truth as it may present itself to me at a given moment."

Great saint of 16th century, Thyagaraja Swamy composed 'Bantu reethi koluvu…." in Telugu language. He pleaded Lord Rama to keep him closer by appointing him as a royal guard.

Chatrapathi Sivaji presented his kingdom to guru Samardha Ramadas as dakshina (repaying debt). Then upon the guru's command, he ruled the kingdom as a representative of Lord Rama.

God takes care of the protection and wellbeing of his servant and leads him in the right path. Hence we must devote ourselves to the service of God, nation and mankind.

For more information on topics in this book, reference books, stories, videos etc please visit our website www.dharmakshetra.info

As a servant and instrument of Lord Rama,
this book is dedicated to Him.
- Author

*****



Acknowledgements & Thanks



1. Think and grow rich – Napoleon Hill

2. 'My experiments with Truth' – written by M.K. Gandhi

3. 'Gandhi The Man' written by Eknath Easwaran, founder of the Blue Mountain Center of Meditation, copyright 1997, 2011; reprinted by permission of Nilgiri Press, P. O. Box 256, Tomales, CA 94971, www.easwaran.org

4. Gandhi a life – Krishna Kripalani

5. Gandhian Holistic Economics – Shashi Prabha Sharma

6. 'The Bhagavad Gita' translated by Eknath Easwaran, founder of the Blue Mountain Center of Meditation, copyright 1985, 2007; reprinted by permission of Nilgiri Press, P. O. Box 256, Tomales, CA 94971, www.easwaran.org

7. Self unfoldment – Swami Chinmayananda

8. The art of man making - Swami Chinmayananda

9. Vedanta in daily life – Swamini Sarada Priyananda

10. Royal science of God realization – Paramahamsa Yogananda

And countless others…….thanks to them all!