



## Virtue, The Purifying Force

God's plan for man is ascent unto Divine Perfection, which is inherent and latent in every human individual. For, the individual soul is part and parcel of the Universal Soul. The inner, hidden, true identity of the human being is the God-nature. God's plan for man is a successful journey culminating in Liberation and entering into a supernal State of eternal joy and peace.

The wise sadhaka always keep this in his mind, and proceeds to fulfil God's will in his life by striving diligently to awaken and unfold the perfection of God that lies within the innermost centre – where one is not man but one is God, where one is not human but one is Divine. God Himself coming as Lord Krishna has stated that divine virtues lead to Liberation, and their opposite leads to bondage and misery. And to bring about this home in a still more forcible manner, He states three vices – lust, greed and anger – are gateways to hell. They destroy the spiritual nature of man. They have to be given up.

The path of virtue should never be given up. The practice of virtue is a science from the point of view of Yoga and Vedanta. The practice is scientific, because virtue is the purifying force, virtue creates *sattva*. And of the three *gunas*, *sattva* has upward propulsion that makes one take the ascending path. *Vedantins* insist upon virtue, because it is the one way of going within to the subtlest depths of our being, and burning up *ashuddha samskaras* (impure tendencies). Raja Yoga prescribes virtue, because virtue refines the *Chitta*, the mind-stuff, and makes it subtle; then one is able to practise concentration.

Virtue is a divine power. Just as all karmas are burnt by the fire of jnana – the fire of transcendental wisdom – even so, all unspiritual *samskaras* and *vasanas* are burnt up in the powerful fire of virtue. The adherence of virtue alone burns up all unspiritual latent impressions in the mind. There is no other means of burning up wrong *samskaras* and *vasanas*.

One should practise virtue as if this is the last chance he has. It is not to be missed, never to be postponed. Never allow any time to pass between virtuous thought and virtuous deed. In virtue lies your highest welfare. It is the guarantee and assurance of your Peace, Bliss, Illumination, Immortality and Liberation. Therefore virtue should never be abandoned, come what may.

May God Bless You All! May Gurudev Bless You All!

■ Swami Chidananda