

12. Tolerance

I had no idea of speaking to you this evening, but of course, I need no “preparation”. My Resolve and its fulfillment are instantaneous.

Sri Subbaramaiah spoke just now of some important guiding principles of life, like the cultivation of virtues, the development of character, the control of hatred, etc. Advice such as this is being given from a hundred platforms every day, and people listen and depart. But they do not practise what they have heard, so things remain where they are. This is because those who give advice do not follow what they preach; they must themselves be examples of the value of what they teach. Like the blind men who described the elephant, they describe the advantages of acquiring virtues and the benefits of controlling hatred more out of hearsay than out of experience.

There is deep-rooted unrest today in every individual, because there is no harmony within. The social and spiritual rules that have come down from ages prescribe one type of conduct; the books that one reads recommend another type; experience gives conflicting advice. But peace depends on the mind and its awareness of the secret of poise. The body is the caravanserai, the individual soul is the pilgrim, and the mind is the watchman. The mind seeks happiness; it feels that happiness can be got in this world from fame, riches, land, and property, from other individuals or relatives; further, it builds up pictures of heaven where there is more intense happiness for a longer time. At last, it discovers that eternal undiminished happiness can be got only by dwelling on the Reality of one’s own Self, which is Bliss Itself.

Yielding to despair worsens the problem

The life principle is like the grain covered up in the husk of delusion (*maya*), as the rice is enveloped in the paddy. The delusion has to be removed; the life principle has to be boiled and made soft and assimilated so that it might add to health and strength. The softened rice can be compared to the Supreme Soul. The mind has to be used for this process. It has to be fixed in truth and the everlasting. To remove the husk of delusion, discrimination is an instrument.

Develop the power of discrimination and find out which is permanent and which is not, which is beneficial and which is not. Even in selecting a guru, use your discrimination. Not all clouds are rain-bearing. A real teacher will be able to attract seekers from afar merely by his personality. He need not be talked about in glowing terms; his presence will be felt and aspirants will hurry toward him like bees toward a lotus in full bloom.

Seek the light always; be full of confidence and zest. Do not yield to despair, for it can never produce results. It only worsens the problem, for it darkens the intellect and plunges you in doubt. You must take up the path of spiritual practice very enthusiastically. Half-hearted, halting steps will not yield fruit. It is like cleaning a slushy area by a stream of water. If the current of the stream is slow, the slush cannot be cleared. The stream must flow full and fast, driving everything before it, so that the slush might be scoured clean.

Liberation can be achieved by subtle means

I shall talk to you of these first steps only, for they are the most important for spiritual aspirants, and you all are all or are bound to be spiritual aspirants. “*Moksha* lies in the *sukshma*,” they say —”Liberation can be

achieved by subtle means.” Treat the others in the same way as you would like them to treat you. Never brood over the past. When grief overpowers you, do not recollect similar incidents in your past experience and add to the sum of your grief; recollect, rather, incidents when grief did not knock at your door but you were happy instead. Draw consolation and strength from such memories and raise yourself above the surging waters of sorrow.

Women are called “weak” because they yield to anger and sorrow much more easily than men, so I would ask them to take extra pains to overcome these two. Repetition of the Name is the best antidote for this, and if only men and women would take it up, the Lord would come to their rescue. That will instill the faith that everything is God’s Will and teach that you have no right to exult or despair.

When you go to a doctor, you must take the prescribed medicine and follow the advice and instructions. There is no use blaming the doctor if you default. How can the doctor cure you if you do not drink the mixture or stick to the restrictions imposed or regulate your diet according to the advice? Do as I say, follow My advice, and then watch the result.

It is a sign of foolishness to brood over mishaps and mistakes once committed and punish oneself for them by refusing to take food. It is a childish way of correction. What is the good of ill-treating the body for the sake of correcting the mind?

Even if you cannot love others, do not hate them or feel envy toward them. Do not misunderstand their motives and scandalise them; if you only knew, their motives might be as noble as yours or their action might be due to ignorance, rather than wickedness or mischief. Pardon the other man’s faults but deal harshly with your own.

The holy culture of this ancient land has been spoilt by just one impurity: intolerance of another’s success, prosperity, or progress. If you cannot help another, at least avoid doing them harm or causing them pain. That itself is a great service. What right have you to find fault with another or to talk evil of him? When you say that nothing can ever happen on earth without His Will, why get annoyed or angry? Your duty is to cleanse yourself and engage in your own inner purification. That endeavour will bring you the cooperation of all good men, and you will find strength and joy welling up within you.

Venkatagiri, 1958-08-02