

15. Be Heroes, Not Zeros

I am happy that I could converse now with so many of you at the same time. Yesterday and the day before, I had the same happy experience, and thousands partook the joy from the words that were spoken.

Now the whole world is very agitated; it is full of discontent and anxiety, fear and petty faction and hatred. In order to calm and quieten it and remove the discontent and anxiety, you must have enthusiasm and courage. When defeat and disappointment stare you in the face, you must not give way to weakness or despondency. Never condemn yourselves as inferior or useless; analyse the defeat and find out the reasons in order to avoid it the next time.

You should have muscles of iron and nerves of steel. Then your resolution will itself generate the necessary confidence, and that will win over opposition. For the crop of life, courage and confidence are the best manure as well as the best insecticides. Be like lions in the spiritual field, rule over the forest of the senses and roam fearlessly with full faith in victory. Be heroes, not zeros; for man (*manava*) is of the nature of God (Madhava); he is the imperishable eternal *Atma*! Just as rain falling in various parts of the world flows through a thousand channels and reaches the ocean at last, so too, creeds, rituals, religions, and theologies, all derived from man's yearning for the vast inscrutable beyond, flow in a thousand different forms, fertilising many fields, cooling many communities, refreshing tired people in many ways and at last reach the Ocean of Bliss.

Proper atmosphere is essential for spiritual exercises

The Lord is all Love, so he can be seen only through Love. The moon has to be seen only through its own light — no other light can illumine the moon. In the night of utter delusion, the Lord can be seen only by the light that He himself is, namely, the light of pure love (*prema*). He is Truth and Eternal, so He is beyond the categories of falsity and change.

Drop the delusion that you have become old or diseased, or that you have become weak and debilitated. Some people begin to count the years and grieve over advancing age and shudder like cowards afraid of death. But remember, elation is Heaven, despondency is Hell. Have always some work to do, and do it so well that you get joy.

Delusion is the dust that settles upon the glass of the chimney of the lantern and dims the light. The attachment to sensual objects and to the pleasure they give is the soot that sticks to the inside of the chimney; that also dims the light. Clean the chimney by repetition of the Name every day, and the flame will shine for you and others. Also, have good activities and good companionship. That will help very much in spiritual discipline; proper atmosphere is very essential for the aspirant. That is why spiritual seekers used to move out and dwell in the hermitages maintained by sages in the past.

In the hermitages, the spiritual aspirants had the unique chance of being immersed in good thoughts, good activities, and good company. It is like keeping a pot of water immersed in water; the water in the pot will then not be lost through evaporation. But if the pot of water is kept in the open so that the wind plays upon it and the sun shines on it, very soon the pot becomes empty. Be careful, therefore, that the success you have won in the promotion of virtue, in the conquest of baneful habits, and in the assumption of regular disciplines are not frittered

away by trite company, loose talk, cynical criticism, or lackadaisical effort.

Draw upon God's Grace for all your needs

The Goddess of Victory smiles only on the heroic, those who make lions of themselves, hardy, brave, and adventurous warriors. If you secure the Grace of God, you are reinforced with so much strength that you can carry out even the most difficult tasks. So get the Lord on your side and draw upon His Grace for all your needs.

The treasure that is unmistakably precious is the quality of equanimity, unruffledness. Practise this and make it your natural reaction. Why be put out when you see wrong? Why be attracted when you see evil? Remember, evil has in it the potentiality to become good; good has in it the liability to turn evil. There is no fire without a wisp of smoke; there is no smoke without a spark of fire. No one is fully wicked or fully infallible. Take the world as it is; never expect it to conform to your needs or standards.

The illusory quality (*maya*) envelops the good with the blemish of the bad; it makes the evil glitter with the shine of the good. Discriminate to the best of your capacity, and develop your capacity to discriminate. Struggle to win, that is the best that you can do; few can say, 'I have won.' Your conscience knows the real source of joy. It will prod you toward the right path; your business is to take it as "guide" and not disobey it every time it contradicts your whim or fancy.

India has a rich mine of spirituality

There were two parrots on a tree, twins to be more precise. A hunter trapped them and sold them, one to a low, cruel butcher and the other to a sage who was running an ashram to teach the *Vedas*. After a few years, he was surprised to find that one bird swore very foully, while the other recited the divine plays of the Lord in a sweet musical tone, which captivated the listeners. Such is the effect of the environment. So, seek and secure good company.

If truth is given up and man slides down the path of falsehood, then, as Appa Rao said just now, starvation and disease (*kshaama*) will descend on the earth instead of well-being (*kshema*), famine will stalk the land instead of the plenty that characterised it formerly. Appa Rao said that in Hindustan, there have been many manifestations of the Lord. That is true, for teachers have to be present where schools are and where children eager to learn are found. You cannot have the teachers in one place, the school in another; the black board in one place, the bell in another.

There are mica mines near Gudur; you cannot ask why they are not found near Peddapuram. It is so, that is all. So too, in India, there is a rich mine of spirituality, so engineers have to come here to operate it, extract it, and prepare it for use. That is why more manifestations of the Lord appear here. The atmosphere here is also conducive to the practical application of new modes and methods of extraction and use for the benefit of all humanity.

I am you and you are all I

Bha-ratha means the land of those who have attachment (*rathi*) toward Bhagavan (*bha*), that is to say, the Lord. The Lord too has to come in human form and move about among people, so that He could be listened to, contacted, loved, revered, and obeyed. He has to speak the language of humans and behave like human beings, as a member of the species. Otherwise, He would be either negated and neglected or feared and avoided.

The *Avatar* (divine Advent) has to lift humanity and put it into the crucible in order to remove the slag and inferior metals that have destroyed its sterling worth. When little boys turn the tap without knowing its mechanism, water badly drenches them by scattering on them circular showers; thus is man drenched in grief because he does not know how to turn and get an even flow.

If the hero (*nayaka*) is good, the drama (*nataka*) will be grand; if the hero is a flop, the drama will be a disaster. The leaders of the people must have faith in their own *Atma* and the confidence born of that; then they can lead others; then they will not lead them astray, for they will feel kinship with the basic *Atma* in all. Appa Rao spoke of Me. My Mystery can be known only by traversing My path, which I have here laid down. Understand yourself, and that will reveal Me to you, for I am you and you are all I.

There is no need to retire into a forest or a cave to know your inner Truth and to conquer your lower nature. As a matter of fact, you have no chance to exercise your anger there, so victory achieved there may not be lasting or genuine. Win the battle of life; be in the world but yet be away from its tentacles. That is the victory for which you deserve congratulations.

Peddhapuram, 1958-09-03

Spread joy at all times. Do not pour into others' ears your tales of woe and worry; carry a smile on your face so that everyone who sees you can catch that exhilaration. When you tell others of your success, your purpose is to create envy in them. You must not only love others; you must be so good that others too may love you. Try to console, encourage, strengthen, and enlighten those who are miserable, downhearted, weak, or ill-informed. Get yourselves equipped for this role.

Sathya Sai Baba