

18. Education And Peace

The Governor, Dr. Ramakrishna Rao, spoke now so feelingly about the urgent need to cultivate spiritual values. When economic progress is made without modifying the spiritual background, then egoism, competition, and greed bring the community to grief. Here in Thiruvananthapuram, there is no forgetting the spiritual background. The temple of Padhmanabha dominates the town as well as the daily life of the people, not only of this place but of the entire State. Kerala is itself a holy land, and its holiness has increased by the advent of Sankaracharya and his teachings.

The land is very beautiful, as I saw when I came from Coimbatore all the way to this capital city. The scenery formed by the backwaters and the coconut groves stretching from one end of the State to the other was like a vast painting by a great artist on a huge canvas. The Lord enjoys these things as a painter; He appreciates His own handiwork, standing before His own painting or sculpture.

To see the Lord's own loveliness in the lovely scenery around you requires not the outer eye but the inward eye. If you develop that, walking over the land or voyaging over the waters is itself a pilgrimage through holy land, giving you glimpses of God in every speck of cloud or patch of green. But all this Divine Beauty (*Sundaram*) must lead man to truth (*sathyam*), and all this truth to goodness (*mangalam*). That is the natural path. The beauty of the Lord's handiwork leads one on to the glory of the Lord; the picture makes you curious about the Painter. The Lord, when His Truth is grasped, confers bliss, which is auspiciousness itself.

Kerala is ancient repository of spiritual wisdom

I found also that the people here are very hardworking and industrious. From one end of the state to the other, people were busy on the roadside, in the shops and fields, in the gardens and canals. Another thing that attracted the attention of all those who were with Me was the stream of children hastening to the schools, with cadjan leaves or slates or bags of books slung on their shoulders, boys as well as girls. The percentage of literacy here is, I know, the highest in India. Besides every family has a number of highly educated men and women. Thiruvananthapuram is the centre of many great educational and cultural institutions.

In spite of all the ancient traditions of spiritual victory, all the granary of spiritual lore, all the activity, all the industry, all the passion to get educated, and all the opportunities that are so gladly grasped, I find here a great deal of unrest. No "inner peace" is prevalent here, where one would expect to find it in large measure. Of course, as the saying goes, "An aged tiger still has the stripes." Let Me tell you that the breath is still there, but strength has gone from this ancient repository of spiritual wisdom, which once taught the secret of equanimity and peace (*santhi*) to all.

Gramophone records are all made of the same material. So too are all hearts of the same Supreme Consciousness. The grooves carved in them appear the same in all the plates. The grooves carved upon the hearts by grief and joy are also more or less the same. It is the needle that runs over the groove that produces through the sound box and the amplifier good music or bad. The needle is the mind, the mind that runs over the happiness and misery and translates or exaggerates the response and makes you feel elated or dejected. If the needle is sharp, the music is a pleasure to the ear. If it is blunt or broken, the sound becomes a screeching torture.

The education man must first secure

The mind is the wind that brings us the smell, foul or fragrant, of the world. When the mind turns to the foul, it makes you disgusted; when it turns toward the fragrant, you are made happy. The wind gathers the clouds from the four quarters; similarly the mind brings into your consciousness the disappointments of many hopes. Again, it is the mind that, like the wind, scatters the clouds that darken it or make it feel lost in the night of doubt. Control the mind and you remain unruffled. That is the secret of peace; that is the education that one must first claim and secure. We find today that, the person who is most highly educated is the very person who is most discontented and unhappy. Then, what is the gain from all the study the person has made of books and of men and things?

To gain this equanimity, you have to do not reading but systematic spiritual effort. Then, you can be happy whether you are rich or poor, appreciated or rejected, prosperous or unlucky. That is an armour without which it is foolish to enter the arena of life. If the arena is entered just for getting sensory joy, you are in for all kinds of trouble. It is like sailing in a tiny boat on a storm-tossed sea without a rudder. So, enter upon the path of spiritual discipline now itself.

Meditation will teach the mind to be sharp

Each one of you has a great deal of concentration; you know the art, for every task requires it and everyone benefits by it. The carpenter, the weaver, the clerk, the boatman — all have it in a greater or lesser degree. Use it for this task also: direct the mind toward its own working, examine it and train it to restrict itself to good company, good thoughts, and good deeds. Practise meditation on any Form of the Lord and repeat, with awareness of the sweetness, any Name of the Lord. That will teach the mind to be sharp and produce good music out of the joys, as well as the griefs that are incidental to life.

Like underground water, the Divine is there, in everyone, remember. The Lord is the Indweller in all beings; He is All-pervading. He is the Soul (*Atma*) of every being. He is in you as much as in everyone else. He is not more in a rich being or bigger in a fat being; His spark illumines the cave of the heart of every one. The sun shines equally on all; His Grace is falling equally on all. It is only you that erect obstacles that prevent the rays of His Grace from warming you.

Do not blame the Lord for your ignorance or foolishness or perversity. Just as underground water wells up in a gushy spring when a bore is sunk down to that depth, by constant *Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram*, touch the spring of Divinity, and one day it will gush out in cool plenty and bring unending joy.

Nothing can give unmixed joy

Life is a pilgrimage to God; the holy spot is there, afar! The road lies before you, but unless you take the first step forward and follow that step with others, how can you reach it? Start with courage, faith, joy, and steadiness. You are bound to succeed. The mind and the intellect are two bullocks tied to a cart, “the inner man”. The bullocks are not used to the road of truth, righteousness, peace, and love (*sathya, dharma, santhi, and prema*), so they drag the cart along the road familiar to them, namely, falsehood, injustice, worry, and hatred. You have to train them to take the better road so that they may not bring disaster to themselves, the cart they are yoked to, and the men inside it.

Your child gives you great joy by its play and prattle, but when it interferes with your work or teases you

when you are otherwise engaged, you get very angry with it. It is a source of joy as well as grief. There is nothing that can give unmixed joy. Even if there is, its loss brings about sorrow. This is the very nature of things. So try to correct the very source of joy and sorrow, the mind. Control it and train it to see the real nature of the objective world, which attracts and repels you by turn. That is the real fruit of education.

Thiruvananthapuram, 1958-12-20