

20. Neither Scriptures Nor Logic

Varanasi Subrahmanya Sastry spoke for long on two types of inquirers at the present time and the conflict between the two, namely, the expounders of scriptures and expounders of intellectual reasoning. He said the former accepted the wisdom of the ancients as recorded in the spiritual texts as authentic and authoritative, while the latter preferred to follow the path of reason and take as authoritative only such things as will satisfy their logic. Of course, he showed the defects of the latter group by taking a number of examples and exposing the fallacies of the expounders of intellectual reasoning. He quoted profusely from the scriptural texts and made his discourse abstruse and scholarly. I feel that most of what he said went above your heads, so you have missed the crux of what he wanted to communicate.

The intellect (*buddhi*) revels in discussion and disputation. Once you yield to the temptation of dialectics, it takes a long time for you to escape from its shackles and efface it and enjoy the bliss that comes from its nullification. You must all the while be aware of the limitation of reason. Logic must give way to logos, and deduction must yield place to devotion.

The intellect can help you only some distance along the Godward path; the rest is illuminated by intuition. Your feelings and emotions warp even your thought processes, and reason is made by them into an untamed bull. Very often, egoism tends to encourage and justify the wildness, for a person is led along the wrong path by their very reason, if that is the path he likes! You very often come to the conclusion you want to reach!

Scriptures are only road maps or guide books

Unless you are extra careful to examine the very process of reasoning, even while the process is going on, there is the danger that you may be following only the trail you yourself have laid down. Reason can be tamed only by discipline, by systematic application of the yoke, the nose-string, the whip, etc. That is to say, by means of compassion, calmness, forbearance, endurance, etc. Train it to walk quietly along small stretches of road at first and then, after you have become sure of its docility, you can take it along the tortuous road of the sixfold temptations: the road of lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy.

Bhasmasura got vast power through the Grace of God, even the power to burn into ash anyone on whose head he placed his hand. But his instincts had not been tamed, his reason had not been purified, so, in his greed and egoism, he tried to reduce the very Giver of the Gift into ashes!

The scriptures are only road maps. They are guide books at best, describing the road and giving the directions for the journey. It is the actual journey that will reveal the hardships, the delays, the landslides, and the pot holes, as well as the beauty of the scenery encountered and the magnificence of the final goal. No second-hand account can equal the first-hand experience. Moreover, the scriptures might speak about a thing in many different ways, just to elaborate it for better understanding. Even the *Vedas* extol a thing in ten different poetic forms, from different angles and standpoints. But some scholars try to treat each such statement as distinct and as having a different connotation, so they add to the confusion rather than reduce it.

Both have good points as well as limitations

The symbols on the map are interpreted differently by different scholars according to their preconceived notions, predilections, and pet theories. So the expounders of scriptures are also not always right. They can be led astray by the desire to score a point over their adversary. They belong to certain schools of thought, and this too acts as a brake on their freedom to seek and know the real meaning of the spiritual texts.

I am neither an expounder of scriptures nor an expounder of intellectual reasoning. I am an expounder of love. So, I have no conflict with either the scholar who adheres to texts or the devotee of reason. Both have their good points as well as their limitations. If you acquire love (*prema*), then you can dispense with the spiritual texts, for the purpose of all spiritual texts is just that: to create the feeling of equal love for all and to negate the egoism that stands in the way. Reason, too, if it comes in the way of this love, is to be discarded as “perverted”.

All the time and energy spent in pursuing the spiritual texts are a sheer waste if study and reflection do not help you to recognise that the mind is worse than a drunken monkey. Pilgrimages too are for elevating the heart, sublimating the impulses, and leading the lower self to higher levels of thought and action. Reason serves the same purpose, or at least, it ought to. Reason seeks to know the unity of the universe, the origin and goal of it all, and the laws that govern the microcosm and macrocosm. It peeps behind the ever-receding curtain to get a glimpse of the puppeteer, who pulls the strings.

Do not run after devious desires

Do not engage yourself in the cultivation of or the promotion of wants and desires. That is a never-ending process of sowing and reaping, and you will never reach contentment. One desire when satisfied will fan the thirst for ten more.

This year is named *crooked* (*vikari*)! So, be warned! Do not run after devious desires or crooked satisfactions. All roads leading to the realm of the senses are tortuous and blind; only the road that leads to God is straight. Cultivate the path of straightforwardness in everything. That will reveal the *Atma*. Straightforwardness will enable you to overcome the three qualities (*gunas*). The treatment you have to give these qualities is to grind them to a paste so that a new taste of bliss (*ananda*) might emerge, just as you grind salt, chillies, and tamarind together to get a tasty chutney for your meal. No single qualities should dominate; all must be tamed and diverted to fill the lake of *ananda*.

It is the internal *ananda* that matters, not the external, the sensory, the objective, the worldly. If the inner poise or inner equilibrium is undisturbed by external ups and downs, that is real success. Every day is the same as another, the rising and the setting of the sun, the waxing and waning of the moon, the seasons, etc. When 365 days are over, we call it a new year and give it a new number; but the sun and moon are unaffected by it. Be like the sun and moon. Do not care whether they ring out the old year or ring in the new.

Train the mind to disperse the clouds

No one need do anything positive to discover the *Atma*; when the “cover” of illusion is denied and destroyed, it will reveal itself in all its glory. What is needed is the removal of the fog, the cloud, the miasma, and the casting off of all the clinging curtains that limit the self to the body and its adjuncts.

How to remove the fog? How to clean the mirror so that the *Atma* may be reflected clearly and without distortion? The mind, which makes you believe in spiritual texts as the ultimate authority, and the intellect (*buddhi*),

which makes you believe that reason is the supreme authority — both have to be scrubbed and polished. They get tarnished pretty quick! They require constant attention. Like a brass vessel that has to be scrubbed with tamarind and washed and dried so that it may shine like new, the mind has to be treated ever with goodness and service, repetition of the Name of the Lord, execution of beneficial plans, taking up of good deeds, and contemplation of the welfare of all.

The sun is up here in the sky; it is the passing cloud that hides him from your vision. The sensory world is the cloud that hides the *Atma*, ever shining in the firmament of your heart. The same mind that gathers the clouds can also disperse them in an instant; for it is as the wind, which collects them from all the quarters and renders the sky dark, and the next moment, changing direction, sends them in a scurry to wherever they came from! Train the mind to disperse the clouds, not to gather them. Every aspirant has to do this by following a systematic discipline.

You cannot reach the peak in one jump; it is a hard job to negate the evidence of the senses; one has to overcome the tendencies that have grown through hundreds of births. The world is an illusion and all is Brahman only for one who has reached the ultimate goal, but until Realisation dawns, one has to wait patiently, hoping and preparing. The growing baby cannot be fed on adult food; you have to adjust the food to the needs and capabilities of the child. Do not overdo or avoid doing anything. Both lead to disease and ruin health.

Develop bliss through cultivation of love

I do not consider intellectual scholarship as very essential for the spiritual aspirant. I advise you to develop bliss (*ananda*), not through these difficult and even doubtful means but through the cultivation of love (*prema*), which begins in the home and family and spreads to all creatures. Put down the sharp-edged weapon that seeks to analyse and chop the arguments of the opponent, to cut his point of view to pieces. Take up the sweet pudding of love, which spreads joy and wins over recalcitrant hearts.

That is My path, the path of *prema*, along which I shall take you. That is why I offer My visiting card to every one of you when you come to Me. I know your name, your degrees, your profession, your status, and your history. But you do not know mine. I have no need to know all about you from a perusal of your cards, but I want you to know something of My Glory. So I give you a glimpse of it, as a divine miracle. But I also give you enough of My *prema* so that you can mix a little of it with whatever you do or feel or think and make it sweet and palatable.

Venkatagiri, Adyatmic Conference, 1959-04-12

Each has their allotted task, according to the status, taste, tendency, and earned merit. Do it with the fear of God and of sin, deep in your heart.

Welcome pain and grief so that you take both success and failure as hammer strokes to shape you into a sturdy spiritual aspirant. Inner content is more important than outer prosperity.

Sathya Sai Baba