

35. The Dangers of Doubt

Kasturi now spoke to you about the *Puranic* story of the churning of the ocean to gain the nectar of immortality). He said that when the demi-gods were overcome by conceit, delusion, and ignorance, the sages cursed them with age, greyness, and senility; and they became easy victims for the demons. So, to restore to them the lost splendour, the Lord suggested churning the ocean and the winning of nectar of immortality.

You have to take this story in its symbolic sense. The mythological stories always deal in parables. Each tale has a deeper meaning, something that is more valuable and useful than what appears on the surface. This meaning is to be practised in daily life; they are not stories told to while away the time.

Indra insulted Dhurvasa because he was blinded by the power of office, and the curse of the sage forced him to rethink about his Reality, to discover his innate status. Then, he found that he was nectar, of the same nature as the Supreme Reality Itself. In fact, he came to know that he *was* the Supreme Brahman but moving about in the delusion that he was Indra! The churning is the symbol of the spiritual exercises needed to remove the veil of delusion, more specifically, the royal path of integral spirituality.

When the Power of Divinity declines and evil impulses predominate, even the demi-gods fall; they lose their special privileges and rights. Once falsehood enters into the character, you lose contact with Nectar. He dies many deaths, he who is false, afraid of truth, blind to his own glorious heritage of immortality.

In their inner impulse, men are sub-human

Truth (*sathya*) is that which is eternal. Falsehood is poison; truth is nectar. Truth alone confers splendour or Divinity. So, when the demi-gods fell prey to pride and attachment to unreality, they had to churn their thoughts and impulses, their feelings and emotions, their instincts and inspirations, and bring out the cream of Truth. The two groups who pulled the churning rope are the “forward leading influences and the backward pulling influences” — the divine and the demonic urges.

As I said, Indra insulted Dhurvasa and invited upon himself the anger of that sage because of the ignorance of his fundamental reality, his ignorance, which plunged him in pride. What should be done to restore him to sanity is to re-teach him the *Atmic* (universal spiritual) basis of all the pomp and pageantry of office, the evanescence that is immanent in all created things.

Today, though in outward appearance people are human, in inner impulse they are sub-human or demonic; people who have no charity or sacrifice in them are called demons. Demi-god and demon are mixed in the human make-up, and now the demon rules the roost. Therefore, man has lost his glory and his power and his splendour; he must win them again by spiritual discipline. So make yourselves pure by incessant striving.

Man is but a flame of the eternal fire

The partaking of the nectar that I create is only the first step in this process for you: it does not mean much if you do not take the second step and the third and march on toward self-realisation. You must have faith in the discipline laid down in *Sanathana Dharma* (Eternal Religion) and in the ultimate divine basis of all creation. Get convinced that the world can give you only fleeting joy and that grief is but the obverse of joy. Strive now, from

this very moment, for time is rushing like a swift torrent. Develop the joy that will not decline, the joy that will ever be full. Be true to yourself. Be bold, be sincere. The only reality is the twin bird on the tree: individual soul, which tastes the fruits and suffers, and the Supreme Soul, which sits unmoved and merely looks on.

Mention was made now of the form of fascinating woman and the way in which the demons were misled by the enticing charm of outward form. Now, all this talk of the Consorts of the Lord, of Lakshmi, Saraswathi, and Parvathi being the wives of the Trinity, are absolutely silly. They reveal only the worldly living glasses that you wear, the projection of your worldly fancies on the “heavenly families”, the weaving of stories on the human model for the satisfaction of human cravings.

These names are only convenient expressions for the Divine Power that is immanent in Godhead. For example, Lakshmi is the personification of the Grace of Vishnu; that is why she is said to dwell on His breast! So too, Parvathi is half the body of Siva, inseparably incorporated in Him! The powers of Creation, Conservation, and Dissolution are coexistent and continuous in Godhead. You may ask how the three can coexist. Well, look at electricity! The current can create, conserve, as well as dissolve, all at the same time, and to the same extent. These divine energies are similarly pictured as inseparably associated with the three aspects of the Absolute. Man’s duty is to achieve unity with the Siva Power (*Siva-Sakthi*), for he is but a spark that has emanated from it; he is but a flame of the Eternal Fire.

Devotion must confer patience and fortitude

Enter upon that task of spiritual discipline from now on; that is the lesson you must learn here. Otherwise, a pilgrimage leads only to the accumulation of vessels—you buy vessels from wherever you go: from Raameshwaram, Tirupati, Kasi, Haridhwar, Madhura, Kumbhakonam. That is the merit you get from a pilgrimage, a room full of vessels. You come from long distances, incur heavy expenses, suffer in the cold in the open, or lie in the shade of trees, and wait for days, expecting the longed-for interview with Me; but in the end, you return and dissipate the peace and happiness you derive from this place.

Devotion is something sweet, soothing, refreshing, and restoring. It must confer patience and fortitude. The devotee will not be perturbed if another gets an interview first or if another is given greater consideration. He is humble and bides his time: he knows that there is a higher power that knows more and that it is just and impartial. In the light of that knowledge, the devotee will communicate his troubles and problems only to his Lord; he will not humiliate himself by talking about them to all and sundry, for what can a man, who is as helpless as himself, do to relieve him? It is only those who have that implicit faith in God, who will deign to communicate only with the Lord and none else, who deserve the nectar of immortality.

Make remembrance of the name of God part of yourself

The gross body should be ever immersed in holy company; the subtle body, that is, the thoughts and feelings, should be ever immersed in the contemplation of the Glory of the Lord. That is the sign of the devotee. One who shouts and swears and advertises one’s worries to everyone and craves for sympathy, such a one can never be a devotee. Such men are miscalled devotees. They make earnest men lose faith in Godly ways; earnest men feel they are superior to these pseudo-devotees. And this is a fact. It is a great responsibility to tread the Godward path. There is no sliding back, no halfway stop, no tardy pace, no side lane on such a pilgrimage. It is always up and up, right to the crest of the mountain.

Though your responsibility is greater, take it from Me, you are luckier than others. Do not deny with the tongue what you have relished in the heart; do not bear false witness to your own felt experience. Do not carp and talk cynically of the very thing you have revered and adored when the company into which you fall start such raillery.

It is said that the devotee can get the Lord everywhere easily, but the Lord cannot get a devotee so easily. Yes, it is difficult to secure a devotee who has that unshaken faith, that attitude of complete self-surrender. Such an attitude can come only by remembering God's Name —constant, sincere, and continuous, as continuous as the act of breathing and felt to be as essential for life. That is the silent recital of the Lord's name, penance, and meditation) for you all. Remembrance of God's Name like this will immerse you ever in nectar, not just a drop on your tongue.

Spiritual discipline has to be followed from a tender age

Do you know how much I feel when I find that, in spite of My arrival and teaching and spiritual instruction, you have not yet started this spiritual discipline? You simply praise Me and strew compliments; that I am the Treasure-house of Grace, the Ocean of *Ananda*, etc. Take up the Name and dwell upon Its sweetness; imbibe It and roll It on your tongue, taste Its essence, contemplate on Its magnificence, and make it a part of yourself and grow strong in spiritual joy. That is what pleases Me.

Do not wait until you are past middle age to practise this spiritual exercise; I know of some parents who drag away their sons who come to Me when still young; they tell them that they can take up religious practices in their old age. These parents do not know the extent of the loss. By some stroke of good luck, their children get the chance of knowing about the right path for peace and contentment, but the parents are angry that the sons do not find pleasure in the articles that gave them pleasure! They feel there must be something wrong in the make-up of their sons; they tempt them to drink, to gamble, to exploit, to hate — to imitate them, in short — and take them along with them to perdition. But a straight plant means a straight tree; a bent plant can never grow into a straight tree. Rotten, over-ripe, worm-eaten fruits are not fit to be offered to God. Years of sin would have warped the character of a person beyond repair. So the spiritual discipline has to be followed from a tender age.

Doubt is a component of the demonic nature

Faith can grow only by long cultivation and careful attention. The old are haunted by the demon of doubt. I know there are many here who are afflicted by doubt. They think that I have hidden a vessel of nectar in a spot in the sands previously fixed and known to Me only. That is why I now asked some from among those people themselves to decide where we sit on these sands.

Kasturi suggested this morning that since the thousands who have come to see the materialisation of nectar cannot get a close view on this flat riverbed, a mound of sand be raised, whereon I can sit. I did not agree because I knew these doubters would immediately infer that the nectar was hidden previously under the mound that was heaped up on purpose! This doubt is truly a component of the demonic nature, for it eats into the vitals of devotion. It clips the wings of joy, it dampens enthusiasm, it tarnishes hope. Such a person cannot attain the goal even at the end of a thousand births.

When doubt assails you, welcome the chance to see and experience and clear the doubt. But do not later deny the very truth of which you were once convinced and listen again to the voice of hate or foolishness. Do not put

faith in the words of men into whose hands you will not entrust your purse; as a matter of fact, it is the words of such men that are now leading many astray. Really, this is a pitiable state of things, is it not?

Come to Me, eager to learn, to progress, to see Yourself in Me, and I shall certainly welcome you and show you the way. You will indeed be blessed. All scriptures, all texts, the *Gita*, which is the milk of all the *Upanishadic* Cows, are intended to instill this thirst into you.

Do not vacillate and change Name and Form

The thirst has to be like that of the creeper for the tree trunk, of the magnet for the iron, of the bee for the flower, of the waters for a fall, of the river for the sea. The pangs of separation must gnaw the heart; the entire being must yearn for union. Do not vacillate or change or try a series of Names and Forms. That will only fritter away time and energy. Ceaseless contemplation of the Lord will give ceaseless taste of nectar to you.

If you do not follow this path, you are doubly to blame, for you have contacted Me. The Form usually creates doubts, for when only the Name is there, you can build around it all your fancies, all that you want, to complete the picture. Do not be misled by such doubts when the Form has come before you; make the moment useful, the life worthwhile.

(Finding that the vast gathering would not be able to see the materialisation of the nectar if He did it while seated on the sands, Baba first created a conch, “the vessel from which the *amrith* (nectar) will now emanate,” as He announced. Then He stood up in the centre of the crowd and “poured” from that empty conch into a silver vessel a sparkling stream of sweet and fragrant nectar, which he later distributed to every person who had come.)

Chitravathi River Bed, Vaikuntha Ekadasi, 1960-12-28

What you have heard and seen must be spoken out, without exaggeration or abridgement; that is truth-speaking (*sathya*). Of course, when the mind is controlled, the intelligence is sharpened and purified; you see only the One everywhere, in everything, at all times; then that One becomes the only truth, which you see, hear and speak of – for there is nothing else to see or hear.

Sathya Sai Baba