

12. Light The Inner Consciousness

When I see this gathering. I am reminded of a similar gathering at this place as well as the surrounding villages, twelve years ago when the high school was started. Then too it was in this temple that you all met, but, since then, I have been passing through this village or coming to gatherings on the outskirts of the village, that is all. It is only today that I am here again, at the old place. I am happy at this; more so because the reason for this event is connected with this temple itself. Twelve years ago it was the temple of learning; this temple of Lakshminarasimha.

Please do not be under the delusion that God needs light, that he requires illumination. He is Divine Light personified, with the splendour of a thousand suns. He is the force that makes light shine, and He is above and beyond the lustre that nature can supply. It is not so much this stone structure that needs illumination, when you come to think of it. It is the temple that you are carrying about with you, the body, that must be fitted with lights. The body is said to be the temple (*“Deho devaalayah prokthah”*), and in that temple is installed the indweller (*“jeevo devah Sanathanah”*), who is the “timeless” God.

The inner motive force is God, and when He is dwelling in the heart of man, He is called the individual soul (*jivi*). The soul is not recognised as God because of the darkness of delusion. You mistake a stump for a person in the darkness; in the same way, the individual soul is mistaken to be a separate, changing individual. The principle of the individual is given more importance, and the divine principle or principle of infinite consciousness is ignored on account of the darkness. So the lights have to be switched on in the person’s inner consciousness (*anthahkarana*), rather than in the house where the image of the Lord is installed and worshipped.

A temple is the centre of culture for the town

At the present time, there is a great deal of anxiety and agitation due to great advances in material comforts and conveniences without corresponding advances in character, virtue, and sense of justice. The ‘material world’ is the stick that helps man to walk, but of what use is it to the person who cannot walk? If the legs do not function properly, the stick is but an extra burden. The stick is like material comfort; the primary need is the strength of limbs, the power to walk, namely, character, virtue.

For the development of that strength of limb, spiritual discipline is essential —any form of discipline suited to the taste and capacity of the individual. People struggle for the evanescent and the unreal, but they shy away from any effort to attain the eternal and the real; that is the tragedy.

In the report that was read, the Young Men’s Association thanked a very large number of persons who had given money for the lights! I feel that instead of making the boys go from door to door for small sums, any one donor could have undertaken the entire work, for the temple is really the centre of culture for the town. In the old days, when a man arrived at a village, the first question he would ask was, “Do you have a temple here?” He would sleep in the village only if there was one. The idea evidently was that the temple would have educated the people into soft-hearted hosts and well-behaved citizens and also that the God installed in the temple would watch over the inhabitants and prevent disease and disaster. (Now, perhaps, the question of the newcomer would be, “Is there a hotel here?” or, “Is there a cinema theatre here?”) So remember, any improvement done to the temple is an investment in the progress of the entire town.

Himalayas are very near to spiritual aspirants

Do not give up the treasure that has come down to you from the generations that went before. Last month, I was in Uttar Pradesh near the snow-capped Himalayas and had gone as far as Badarikshetram. Though they are so far, the Himalayas are very near to spiritual aspirants. If you see only the splendour of the light and do not feel the warming effect, it proves only that you are far. This is true of your relation with Me also. All these years, you who are so near have been seeing only the light; you did not benefit by the warmth; that only shows that you are yet far, though so near.

Well, we went to the Himalayan regions and saw thousands of old decrepit men and women, besides others who were stronger and more prosperous — men, women, and children braving the rigours of the climate, the dangers of the road, the cold and hunger, the cost and the distance, and trudging along to get a glimpse of Narayana (God) installed there. I am often asked where righteousness (*dharma*) can take refuge in this iron age. Well, *dharma* is still flourishing in the hearts of those thousands, I can say.

When in Ayodhya, I could see and sense the constant recitation of Rama's name (*Ramanam*) by almost all the people there. In a bag of rice there may be a handful of stones, but do not condemn the entire bag for that defect. The pilgrims were repeating the name of Badri Narayana, and that gave them an extra dose of strength and inspiration to trudge forward. Yes, you will find by experience if you practise it. It gives you joy and peace. The divine power is there in you; it need not come from somewhere outside you. Only, you have to prepare the ground, so that it may manifest itself.

You must be sincere in the spiritual field

Remove the roots of the weed of egoism from the field of your heart; that is enough. But this is very difficult; the lightest shower will induce the weeds to sprout again. Similarly, when circumstances turn favourable, egoism throws up its shoots and grows as thick as in the past. You will have to remove the roots too; this can be done by insisting "Not I, but the Lord."

In the spiritual field, you must be sincere. Do not pretend and deceive yourself and others. A mendicant once sought a place where he could get a meal, since he was very hungry. A pious old lady called him into her house and asked him to take his bath and partake of the noon meal. He said, "Oh, why should I take a bath? '*Govindethi sadhaa snaanam.*' —I just repeated the name of Govinda, and that is as good as a bath."

Hearing this, the lady said, "In that case, '*Rama naamaamritham, sadhaa bhojanam.*' —the Name of Rama is food forever, I shall also feed you with a quotation. Get out of here pretty quick."

Do not use the study of the scriptures for increasing your egoism; let it make you humble, though, at the same time, more resistant to temptation. Your nature is divine; what has happened is that delusion has covered it with dirt. The washerman does not make your clothes white; they are white already; what he does is to manifest the whiteness by removing the dirt that has hidden the genuine native colour, white. The washerman must have two good things to bring out the basic whiteness; soap and water. Both have to be good; you cannot manage with only one of the two. In the case of the mind and removal of the dirt therein, the soap is ethics and the water is its practice.

Heritage of the past is lost through neglect

It is the ignorant person who argues loudly and angrily and talks cynically. The wise man will pause before judging; he will see all sides of the problem, relate it to his own experience, and hesitate to accept it or condemn it. He will hear less and taste more.

The plight of Indians is like a person who with butter in hand is running about for ghee. Here, you have the technique of attaining peace developed as nowhere else; yet you are running after all kinds of amateurs! Of course, even the spiritual leaders are taking to competition, conflict, and the acquisition of wealth and fame, so the heritage of the past is lost through neglect. Though the soap is good, the water of practice is dirty, so the clothes do not get their genuine whiteness. Even for a householder, *Lakshya* (Objective) and Lakshmi (Goddess of Wealth) are both equally important. He too has an objective, which he forgets at his peril. Wealth should not hamper that goal or hide it from the eyes. For an ascetic, wealth is taboo; only the objective is to be pursued.

Well, now that the lights have been switched on, those who come to this temple will see the shrine more clearly. I bless them that they may also see their own selves more clearly. Light is the source of joy and knowledge. Do not insult the light by misusing it, playing cards or talking about or planning actions of hate or greed. Utilise it for increasing your devotion, for developing your knowledge of the Glory of God, and for serving others in a spirit of true brotherliness.

Lakshmi-Narasimha Temple Bukkapatnam, 1961-07-18

Do you like to measure the vastness of the Grace of the Lord? Then look at the crops in the fields thirsting for rain. Poor things, they cannot reach up to the clouds bearing the delicious water; they can only pine and pray plaintively. But the clouds pour the rain they have brought from the far distant sea and make the crops green and gay.

The Lord answers the prayers and refreshes all drooping lives.

Sathya Sai Baba