

23. You And I

As Subbaraya Sastry said, the body has to be used to ascend the ladder of the three qualities (*gunas*), from Inertia (*thamas*) to activism (*rajas*) and from activism to goodness (*sathwa*), so that finally you may get beyond the ladder into the heights above.

The body is the root of all the grief and disquiet that is now the lot of mankind. Why? The body was acquired by means of the good and bad that was done in the previous birth. Collectively, they are called *karma*. *Karma* is caused by attachment and hatred, affection and disaffection. They are the products of sheer ignorance, ignorance of the unity of all creation including oneself. This ignorance can be removed only by good knowledge (*su-jnana*).

The three steps to reach non-duality

When a man suffers from a stomach-ache, the best treatment will be salts or a hot water bag applied to the stomach, and not medicated collyrium for the eye. Ignorance can be removed by acknowledging the universality of God and merging your individuality in the Universal.

First, practise the attitude of “I am yours.” Let the wave discover and acknowledge that it belongs to the sea. This first step is not as easy as it looks. The wave takes a long time to recognise that the vast sea beneath it gives it its existence. Its ego is so powerful that it will not permit it to be so humble, as to bend before the sea.

“I am yours; You are the Master. I am a servant; You are sovereign. I am bound.” This mental attitude will tame the ego. Make every activity worthwhile. This is the religious outlook named *marjala-kishora* —the attitude of the kitten to its mother, mewling plaintively for succour and sustenance, removing all trace of the ego.

The next step is: “You are mine,” where the wave demands the support of the sea as its right. The Lord has to take the responsibility of guarding and guiding the individual. The individual is important, worthy to be saved, and the Lord is bound to fulfil the need of the devotee. Surdas said, “You are mine; I will not leave you; I shall imprison you in my heart; you shall not escape.”

The next stage is: “You are I” —I am but the image, and You are the Reality. I have no separate individuality; there is no duality. All is One. Duality is but delusion.

The first sign of spiritual life is detachment (*vairagyam*). If you have no detachment, you are illiterate as far as spiritual scholarship is concerned. Detachment is the ABC of spiritual effort. Detachment must become strong enough to make you discard the bondage of the senses. Just a few minutes of thought will convince anyone of the hollowness of earthly riches or fame or happiness. When you are affluent, everyone praises you. When the tank is full, hundreds of frogs croak all round. When the tank is dry, not a single one is there to address the tank.

Seek the difficult road of God-realisation

If a corpse had a few jewels on it, the proverb says, many will claim kinship with the dead person. But if it has no valuables on it, not a single person will come forward to weep for it! Consider when you are adding more and more sums of money to your bank account whether you are not accumulating troubles for yourselves and your children, making it harder for your children to lead clean, comfortable, and honourable lives. When you struggle

to achieve paltry fame by devious means, remember who among crores of your countrymen are honoured today and for what. Don't you see that only those are honoured everywhere who gave up, renounced, and sought the more difficult road of God-realisation instead of the easier path of world-realisation?

Welcome all the blows of fate, all the misfortunes and miseries, as gold welcomes the crucible, the hammer, and the anvil, in order to get shaped into a jewel. Or as the cane welcomes the chopper, the crusher, the boiler, the pan, the sprayer, the dryer, so that its sweetness may be preserved and used as sugar by all. The Pandavas never demurred when disasters fell thick upon them. They were happy that they helped them to remember Krishna and call upon Him.

Submit to the will of God in a resigned way

Bhishma was in tears on the bed of arrows, when he was about to pass away. Arjuna asked him why, and he replied, "I am shedding tears because the miseries undergone by the Pandavas pass through my mind." Then he said, "This is done in order to teach the *Kaliyuga* (the era we are now in) a lesson: never seek power, position, or pelf but submit to the Will of God in a completely resigned way, so that you may be ever happy and unmoved."

The Lord rushes toward the devotee faster than the devotee rushes toward Him. If you take one step toward Him, He takes a hundred steps toward you! He will be more than a mother or father. He will foster you from within you, just as He has saved and fostered so many saints who have placed faith in Him.

Prasanthi Nilayam, 1963-09-08

Anger and hatred can be used to ward off the evil that stalks the spiritual aspirant; be angry at things that hamper you, hate the habits that brutalise you. Cultivate supreme knowledge, and visualise the Lord in all things and activities. That makes this human birth worthwhile.

Sathya Sai Baba