

42. The Divine Voice

Narakasura is present in everyone as lust, hate, and greed and as fear and grief, which are against the very nature of humanity. Just as an umbrella with inferior cover cannot protect you from rain but only one with a waterproof cover can, so too in this storm-driven world incessantly flushed by torrential rain, an umbrella with desire-proof and anger-proof covering is required. The five elementary constituents of the universe (fire, earth, water, ether, and wind) cannot harm one who is equipped with such protection. The five fortresses (*durgas*) in which Narakasura is said to have taken refuge are the five elements. There is great latent power inherent in everyone, and when that power is made explicit (*vyaktha*), a human being deserves to be called individual (*vyakthi*). When that is made manifest, the demon will automatically be destroyed.

Your reality is *Atma*; your quality is bliss (*ananda*). What does it matter to you if the Narakasura of the *Puranas* is killed by Krishna and Sathyabama? For you, Krishna is the Super or Omni Self (*Paramatma*) and Sathyabama is the individual self (*jiva*). *Paramatma* destroys the evil propensities with the active collaboration of the individual self: the individual self defeats evil with the active grace of the Lord.

Make desire the servant of Rama

India is the repository of spiritual power, but now, scarcely anyone practises the disciplined life that is the mark of that power. Millions go on pilgrimages, millions of copies of sacred texts and spiritual lore are bought and read, thousands of ascetics and *gurus* are scattered over the land and receive the homage of the people. Yet, there is no peace in the heart, no food in the stomach, no clothes to keep the cold off the body. India, which is the granary of the earth (*annapurna-swarupa*), has to go about with begging bowl for food for her children. This tragedy is caused by ill-discipline, by want of self-control, by what can be called the absence of Self-government, or government of the Self.

SathyaNarayana, when he acted the role of Sathyabama in the drama, remembered always that he was SathyaNarayana, though he was also aware that he had a part to play in the drama, and he played it well. It would be a failure for him to forget either his SathyaNarayana-hood or his Sathyabama-hood. So, too, act in the world, but remember your genuine Self. When human beings forget that this is a play and starts assuming it real, the Lord comes down to remind them of it. Otherwise, when the execution scene is enacted, heads will fall. When Lanka is set on fire in the drama, the theatre itself will be consumed. Do not take the world more seriously than it deserves.

There is space for only just one throne in your heart. But now, you are inviting too many to sit on it—or you try to put two thrones there, one for Rama, and one for desire. Or, when you find it difficult, you are inviting Rama and *Kama* (Desire) to squeeze themselves into that one seat! Or, you install *Kama* and want Rama to sit down below as his henchman! No wonder Rama deserts you. Make Rama the deity on the throne and utilise desire as His servant—then there is no harm.

Cultivate the inward look

The mother cat, it is said, takes hold of the new-born kitten and shifts it from place to place seven times within a few days of its birth, so that its eyes might open and it might see! The kitten gets proper vision after going through seven transfers. But the human being does not get the vision (viz. that one is in reality the deathless,

birthless, infinite *Atman*) even after one is shifted from womb to womb a million times! This is the tragedy of ignorance and sloth.

You have heard the Gajendra-liberation story, the elephant, caught and dragged by the crocodile, appealing helplessly to the Lord and the Lord sending down the good-vision (*sudarshana*) discus to slay the tormentor and save the beast. The story has a deeper meaning, which has universal appeal. The wild elephant is the individual (*jiva*), full of sensual greed and blind with delusion. It enters the tank of the objective world (*samsara*). There, the crocodile of egoism grasps its leg in the vice of its teeth and pulls it down deeper and deeper into the mire of objective world.

There is a definite process for God-realisation

The individual struggles by itself for a long time until its pride is exhausted and its faith in its own powers is spent. Then it appeals in complete surrender (*saranagathi*) to the Lord. And what does the Lord send? Good sight (*sudarshana*). Mark that word! What does it mean? *Sudarshana* —Good sight! Beneficial outlook! A vision that is correct, conducive to lasting joy, namely, the inward look, away from the sense objects. As soon as that sight is cultivated, egoism is destroyed and the individual is freed.

Live and act in the world, by all means, but deal with the objective world as you apply collyrium to the eye. The eye is not blinded by the collyrium, it is rendered more efficient, more charming, that is all. So too, worldly life must make your spiritual effort more efficient and more pleasing to yourself and others. Be like the lotus, which, though born in mud, rises higher, through the waters, to the region of sunlight. It requires both mud and water for its existence, but it knows their real value, so it does not allow itself to be contaminated by either.

A great sage once fell in with a gang of non-believers in an atheist settlement. They crowded around him and plied him with impertinent queries and insisted that he must show them the God in whom he believed. The sage promised to do so, but he asked for some milk before he could demonstrate God. The vessel of milk was brought. He sat silently for a long while, stirring the milk with his finger. The crowd got exasperated at the delay and at his silence. They asked him what he was at. He replied that he was only trying to spot out where the butter was —at the top, middle or bottom? The crowd shouted that it was everywhere, in every drop of milk, and that he could see it only when the preliminary process of churning was done. he sage answered, “Well, the Lord is also immanent in every atom of this universe. He can be perceived and experienced only when the preliminary spiritual exercises are done.”

There is a definite well-known process for God-realisation also, just as there is a definite well-known process for butter realisation.

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Iwant devotees to improve their behaviour and character. It is no good attending the temple and sharing loudly in the singing of devotional songs, with cymbals in your hands. They are but external signs of enthusiasm. God watches the thought power behind it, not the outward pomp.

Sathya Sai Baba