

22. Eliminate the Ego

IT is indeed a piece of good fortune that you have been able to hear, in the midst of the many worldly worries that engross you, the valuable teachings of the ancient scriptures of this land, from these great Pandiths. This is what really confers lasting happiness. In the land which once cultivated these great ideals, weeds and thorny bushes have over-run the fields and with the decline of spiritual enthusiasm, enmity, factions, injustice and falsehood have grown wild. Indian religion and culture have treasured many folkways and customs that enshrine the lessons laid down by *yogis* and *rishis* for the good of the community. They are called *samskaaras*, (purificatory acts), acts which sublimate the baser emotions and impulses; there are 48 of these mentioned in the *Shaasthras*, but, of these, 16 are essential for the individual who strives for the higher destiny.

These have been neglected by society, since many decades, on account of a mad infatuation for the ways of the ruling race, which had come from the west. Their language slowly modified habits of living and even thinking; their dress which was adopted, changed outlooks and modes of living; their games and recreations transformed the ways in which Indians spend their leisure; their culture percolated into every field of activity and Indian culture is faced, even after the recovery of national independence, with a great danger to its continuity.

Discard all low desires

Of course, there is no need to feel unduly depressed. One has only to recognise ignorance, in order to make it vanish. One has only to know one-self in order to contact the springs of Bliss and Immortality and of kinship with all beings. In Sanskrit, the individual is known as *vyakthi*, because he has to make his innate divinity *vyaktha* (explicit). That is your reality; discover it, dwell in it, desire to divulge it. Discard all low desires for a few acres of land, or a fat account in the bank, or a few more bungalows or cars or radios; desire rather the joy that will never fade, that will never cloy, deep, steady and strength-giving, the joy of Divine Realisation.

Discover your holiness, your divinity, your truth. You may have doubts which is *dharma* (right conduct), which is *sathya* (truth), which is *prema* (Divine love), etc.; I admit; but, you can have no doubt about yourself, is it not? So, find out who you are and be fixed in that truth. That is enough to save you, to give you everlasting joy. That is why the *Vedhas* and the *Upanishadhs* teach, what the sages and the saints experienced, what these *Pandiths* (scholars) remind you in their discourses.

Remember the God in whom you move, the God who makes you move, the God who is all this vast universe, every atom, every huge star. Select some Name and Form for this all-pervasive immanent God and keep those on your tongue and before your mental eye. That is what is called *japasahitha dhyaanam* (meditation-cum-recitation of the Name).

Discover the truth in silence

You are now more interested in listening to film-songs on the transistor radios which you carry round your necks. A villager came to Madras recently and his educated son-in-law went to the railway station to meet him and take him home. While they were proceeding homewards in a taxi, the father-in-law asked the son-in-law a rather strange question: "How much do the barbers here charge per shave?" The son-in-law was amazed at his curiosity; he asked why he was so eager to know this particular fact, more than anything else. The villager replied, "I saw a few

barbers going along the road now; they are all wearing rich clothes, and they are carrying their equipment not in tin boxes as our village barbers do, but, in fine shiny leather boxes." The old man had seen people carrying these transistor radios. People miss a very valuable thing if they do not listen in, even while they are moving about or resting in the park or beach! They are afraid of being alone; they avoid silence as something detestable! But, you can discover your own truth only when you are alone with yourself and there is silence all around you.

Justice Sadhaashivam said now that he had seen huge gatherings of eager listeners at religious meetings like this and so, he was led to the conclusion that atheism is not gaining ground in this country. The gatherings are certainly large but they are not very encouraging if you consider what a small percentage actually pay attention and of those who attend, what a small percentage cherish the teaching in the heart and strive to regulate their lives accordingly.

As a matter of fact, there are no atheists at all but, only ignorant people. They do not know that God is their innermost core. They deny God because they do not know that their very breath is God. It is like fish denying the existence of water. You have to pity them for their colossal ignorance, not get angry with them for saying things you do not like. God dwells in you as *aanandha* (divine bliss); that is why you seek *aanandha* automatically, always, in every object around you. To become as full of *aanandha* as *Raadha* (the consort of Lord Krishna) or as *Raamakrishna Paramahansa* or as *Vivekaanandha*, you have to sacrifice your ego and saturate yourself with the consciousness that the Lord is your very being.

Krishna and Aanjaneya

You must have heard many stories of *garvabhangam*--the suppression of conceit or egoism by the Lord. One day, *Aanjaneya* appeared in a garden on the outskirts of *Dhwaaraka* (abode of Lord Krishna). Krishna who heard about the pranks of the strange monkey, directed *Garuda* to proceed and scare the animal out of the city limits. *Garuda* failed, even though he later took the entire army with him for the fray. His pride was humbled. Krishna sent a message through him to the monkey, who had declared himself as *Aanjaneya*, that he should deign to come to Krishna's court. But, *Aanjaneya* recognised only *Raama* and would obey only the orders of *Raama*. So, Krishna had to send another message that *Raama* was calling him to His audience hall! Devotion compels the Lord to yield to the whims of His servants. *Aanjaneya* hurried to see *Raama* and Krishna gave him the *darshan* of *Raama* Himself. *Sathyabhaama* had offered to change herself into *Seetha* and when she stood by the side of *Raama*, *Aanjaneya* could not recognise in that form his *Seetha*. He was bewildered at this apparition. He asked Krishna, "O Lord *Raama*! Where is my *Seetha*? Who is this substitute?" Thus, the conceit of *Sathyabhaama* was broken by the Lord. He then asked *Rukmini* (Krishna's consort) to come forward and *Aanjaneya* immediately saw in her the *Seetha* he adored.

So long as you have a trace of ego in you, you cannot see the Lord clearly. That is the *thera* (curtain), which Saint *Thyaagaraaja* prayed Lord *Venkateshwara* to remove from his mind. Egoism will be destroyed if you constantly tell yourself, 'It is He, not I.' 'He is the force, I am but the instrument.' Keep His Name always on the tongue; contemplate His glory whenever you see or hear anything beautiful or grand; see in every one the Lord Himself moving in that form. Do not talk evil of others, see only good in them. Welcome every chance to help others, to console others, to encourage others along the spiritual path. Be humble, do not become proud of your wealth, status, authority, learning or caste. Dedicate all your physical possessions and mental

skills and intellectual attainments to the service of the Lord and to the Lord's manifold manifestations.

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*Mother is Love. Worship the mother as God. Father is Truth.
Worship the father as God.*

SHRI SATHYA SAI