

24. Be above and beyond

The seed grows slowly into a huge spreading tree; so, too, through tiny acts, soft words and kind deeds, man elevates himself into a Divine Being! The worst action is to do the opposite of what you preach' to deny by the hand what you dole out of your mouth. If you cannot act up to your declarations, keep quiet; do not go about advising and advertise that you are hypocrites. Do not preach *dharma* (virtue) while decrying it in deed. *Dharma* is steady, unchanging; it can never decline. What happens is: those who have to practise *dharma* decline in faith and steadfastness. By practice is a man judged; not by the precepts that he pours forth. One speaker was just now giving a list of sages and saints who were born in this District in the past; but, you must ask yourself the question: "What use have we made of their experience? How have we benefited?" When that list is being elaborated upon, you have to hang down your heads and lament the decline in spiritual development! You have to ask, "How have we deserved this heritage?"

The President quoted an English poet who said that life is like a pastime for God, who crushes a butterfly, after playing with it for some time. 'They kill us for their sport'; "Life is a tale told by an idiot", he quoted. He said what Western poets spoke of Fate as blind and cruel and had recently developed despair regarding human progress, in spite of technical and technological advances. This only reveals *that* they have no deep experience, no illumination.

Separate yourself from the grief

The experience of saints in this country is different. They have known (and you have also to know) that the body, with a form and a name, is just a temporary habitation. Form and name make anything temporary. You hear of the Lord giving *darshan* (audience) in the temple, wearing a diamond-set *hastham* (hand) ! That means the Lord is conceived as having a Name and a Form, which are limitations and therefore, temporary, attached to a particular manifestation only. Form and Name are needed for experiencing *sukha* (pleasure) and *sukha* involves *dukkha* (grief) also; they are the obverse and the reverse of the same coin, this side and the other side of a sheet of paper.

Grief is caused, as joy is caused, by the attachment of the senses to objects; once you know that you are not the senses or the mind, but He, who operates the senses and wields the mind, you cross the bounds of pleasure and pain. The President of India had a recent domestic bereavement; but he did not import that grief into his role as President, did he? No. The duties of the President were performed without any hindrance or loss of interest. Separate yourself from the grief; you are the President of your Realm. The senses and the mind, with all the attendant impulses, desires, attitudes, etc., are your servants, instruments that have to carry out your orders.

The *Vedhas* teach you this truth. Once, as part of a marriage procession, an elephant was also pushed along: a wicker-elephant, life-size. People looked at it in wonder and some even dared to find fault with it, saying the legs were too short, the ears were inadequate, etc. But, the thing was filled with crackers and, in a few moments, when it was lit, the whole contraption exploded in a blaze of brilliantly-coloured shooting stars with a tremendous bang. Why should there be so much criticism of a thing which, like the body, will soon go up in flames? The body is but an instrument for a high purpose, the realisation of the Glory that fills the Universe, of which you are a fraction!

Road to God is filled with immense hardships

Use all the talents of your senses, the intelligence and memory, for this purpose. Transform values, sublimate desires; let the higher always overrule the lower. Like the ass that carries sandalwood, without knowing anything more than its weight, man too carries the burden of worldly worries, without being aware of the fragrance which he can really get from the very burden on his back. The senses will drag him away from the higher purpose, so they must be kept under strict control by rigorous training. Without this mastery over the senses, all the elaborate puja (ritual worship), all the long hours of *dhyaana* (meditation), all the vows you observe, are mere mummary.

True devotion must not get dispirited; nor elated or satisfied with lesser gains. It must fight against failure, loss, calumny, calamity, ridicule and against egoism and pride, impatience and cowardice. Read the lives of Jayadeva, Thukaraam, Raamdass and Sakkubai; go through the stories of how the *Gopees* calumniated Raadha; then, you will realise the immensity of the hardships they underwent, when they travelled on the road to God. You find now a number of people who open their mouths wide in admiration of Western countries who prepare rockets to travel to the moon and go round the earth. They may circle lakhs of miles in space, but, they know not how to proceed half an inch more towards their neighbour, or brother; they do not dare explore their inner reality, though they are eager to explore the outer illusion!

The Truth that is in all beings is also in you. Search for that; discover that unity; that source of courage, of love, of wisdom. You do not realise that it is He who digests the food that you consume, for, as He says, in the Geetha, "I am the *Vaishwaanara*---fire that is in the bodies of all beings and digests the four types of food they eat." That fire digests food, but, it is careful not to destroy the stomach itself! He is the basis of all activity, though Himself unconcerned.

Do not allow the world to get into you

Be like the lotus, unattached to the slush where it is born and the water in which it is bred; the merits and demerits earned in past births is the slush, where the *jeevi* is born; *maaya* or the enticing illusion called world is the water, which sustains; but do not allow that enticement to affect you. Be above and beyond the earthly attachments like the lotus. Know that though you may be in it, you should not allow the world to get into you and affect your sense of values.

It is the stilted sense of values that makes you carry a radio receiver strapped to your shoulder, even when you come here! This has become a fashion; sons-in-law now try to extract a transistor radio from their fathers-in-law, as quickly as possible. There was a young man in a big town; it so happened that his father arrived on a visit and was received at the railway station by the son himself. They were going home in an auto-rickshaw when the father, already confused by the roar and noise of the traffic, noticed some one carrying a small rectangular box, strapped on his shoulder. He saw many more such boxes, carried proudly by young men, fashionably attired and walking in a strut, with nonchalant gaze. He asked his son what they charged in the town for a shave and when the son answered, a half-rupee, he was surprised that it was so cheap. "These barbers going about with those boxes strapped on their shoulders are so well dressed and rich looking that I thought they must be charging five rupees at least," he said. The poor man thought the transistor radio sets were barber's boxes. In fact, many who carry them and tune in do not know the A B C of music, eastern or western, nor do they know an iota of geography or history or politics to appreciate the news. They carry watches on their wrists, but do not know what hour

it is, they have to stretch their wrists before those sitting next to them! They cannot read a watch, nor have they any engagement to keep. All this is but needless multiplication of misery!

Know that which, if known, makes known everything that has to be known. This was the advice given to Uddalaka by his *Guru*, as mentioned in the *Upanishads*. You are the core, the centre of your world. Without you there is no world for you. Unless you know yourself, you cannot know the world which is your creation. Now, you ask every one you meet, "How do you do?" But have you ever asked the question to yourself, "How do I do?" You ask every third person, "Who is he?" But, have you asked the first person, "Who am I" and searched for the answer? That is what the *Vedhaantha* teaches, that is what these Pandits are eager to tell you.

Steady enquiry is essential

Some of you may ask, what is the use of telling all this to such vast gatherings, things that have to be whispered in the ears of ardent seekers only. Well, how do you know that there are not many such here? I know there are many who will treasure what they have heard to-day; they will ruminate over it; perhaps they will remember it, when the need for it becomes urgent and acute; they will then say to themselves, "Ah, Baba told us this that day when we heard Him at Rajahmundry." Nothing that is experienced will go to waste. It will shape the course of events; it will change attitudes and habits; it will purify and clarify situations and outlooks. That is why I want you to read the Bhagavad Geetha; this learning of the Geetha is like learning *eetha* (swimming). *Eetha* saves you from drowning. Geetha saves you from drowning in the treacherous flood of worldly desire. The Geetha is the real purpose for which the Avathaara of Krishna was undertaken.

Man's four main duties

The Geetha is His command; how can you earn the Master's Grace if you do not carry out the Master's Commands. If the son says, "Leave me to myself. I need no instructions from you", how can he expect the father to give him a share of the property? The Geetha also helps you to recognise the incarnations of God. Usually, when the Lord appears with Form, man is pestered by doubts and he actually loses the precious chance. He asks himself and all those whom he meets "Is it true? Can it be true?" and before his doubts are removed, he deserts the quest and wanders into the wilderness. Of course, steady inquiry is essential; do not be led by others; awaken your own reason, amass your own experience; and, decide for yourself your own path. Then only can you get joy in treading it; if you are forced to take a path by others or persuaded into it by some one else, then, when the first obstacle turns up, you will get dispirited and turn back.

What exactly is your duty? Let Me summarise it for you. First, tend your parents with love and reverence and gratitude. Second, *Sathyam vadha, Dharmam chara'* Speak the truth and act virtuously. Third, whenever you have a few moments to spare, repeat the Name of the Lord, with the Form in your mind. Fourth, never indulge in talking ill of others or try to discover faults in others. And, finally, do not cause pain to others, in any form.

Now, the only thing that is cheap is "man." All else have gone up in value. Man is the thing most defamed, most neglected. The Minister was saying yesterday that when costly projects are planned and finished, when the area becomes rich and prosperous the inevitable result is an unfortunate increase in crime and vice, because there is no plan to build up the moral stamina of the human community the project is intended to benefit! The community can be really happy

only if it has fine health, steady peace of mind and intelligence valued and directed to the service of others. The recognition of the evanescence of the body and all things material must over-rule the tendency towards pride and pomp, and check avarice and ambition.

Means have to be as noble as the end

Whatever happens, the path of virtue should not be given up. When Hanumaan saw Seetha in the Ashoka Vana at Lanka, surrounded by ogresses, forlorn and helpless in the midst of her captors, he fell into such overpowering agony that he said to himself, "The whole world is sunk in sorrow since this Mother is grieving; I shall take her on my shoulder and leaping across the sea, restore her to Raama and make her happy." He invited Seetha to accept his proposal. But, listen to what Seetha replied. She resisted the temptation to escape from captivity, to reunite with her Lord, to rejoin her people, her kith and kin. She struck to the path of *Dharma*; "I should not, out of my own will, touch any male other than my Lord. Besides, it will detract from the glory that awaits my Lord, who will certainly liberate me by the prowess of his arm. If you carry me back now, you will be repeating the act for which we now condemn Raavana." The means are as important as the goal; the end does not justify the means; it has to be as noble as the end.

The President referred to the Prashaanthi Vidwanmahaa-sabha as having been founded by Me, but remember, any institution or individual engaged in feeding the roots of *Dharma* are Mine; I am in every one who does good, speaks good, and thinks good.

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If the place you must reach is very near, you can just step across; if the distance is more, you may need a vehicle, bullock- drawn or horse-drawn; for longer distances, you may require a car or a plane. But, the Lord is nearest to you. Slide ajar the door of delusion; part the curtain of ignorance; open the closed eye; He is right there, before you. The fog of sensual pleasure is hiding Him from you. Switch on the light; the darkness disappears and He becomes visible.

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