

#### 4. Please man; please God

You see a plane zooming in the sky; some one tells you that it is flown by a pilot, but, you refuse to believe, because you do not see him from where you are. Is this correct? You must go into the plane to see the pilot; you cannot deny his existence, standing on the ground. You have to guess that the plane must have a pilot. So too seeing the Universe, you have to guess the existence of God, not deny Him because you are not able to see him. People do not believe in God, but, they believe newspapers and the news they publish about things they do not see or cannot see. They believe what their ears hear, more than what their eyes see or minds experience. A blind man is in darkness and when he denies there is light, we need not attach any value to his denial.

Even if man does not attempt to seek God, he can at least seek to get *shaanthy*, *santhosh*, *soukhyam* and *swatantra* - peace, joy, happiness and independence. He does not now seek even these. Nor does he try to learn how he can get them. The top spins perpetually and has no rest; man too pines and labours for ever and ever and has no relief from the round. The only peace and joy that he gets now are of a momentary kind; here now, gone the next minute. Pain puts a stop to joy; joy is but the absence of pain. Why must man live for years--a burden on earth, so much of rice or wheat consumed year after year, with no return in joy or peace to himself or others? The petromax light will shine bright only when you pump air vigorously; your light too is dim and well nigh out; pump vigorously, that is to say, engage yourself in spiritual practice and illumine your mind better and spread light on all who come near you.

#### **Do not cast aspersions against the Divine**

You have given up even the little *saadhana* that observance of Shivaraathri demands. In olden times, people will not put even a drop of water on their tongues, this day. Now, that rigour is gone. They used to keep vigil at night, the whole of it, repeating *Om Namasshivaaya* without intermission. Now, the name of Shiva is on no one's tongue. People argue and discuss, at the slightest mention of God. They think they are superior enough for that. The Divine can be known only by those who know the signs, the characteristics, the special excellences, by a study of the scriptures. There is a special science relating to that. Simply because you have a tongue and can wag, do not cast aspersions against the path of God or against the Divine. Of course, if one can escape grief and pain and ensure joy and peace by denying God, the attempt can be made. But, even non-believers and atheists have misery, grief and pain. Atheism is not more profitable than theism. The atheist simply transfers the burden from the head to the shoulders, denying that there is no head. The burden has to be borne, but only with greater hardship.

There is the story of a king, the minister and the servant going in a boat over a stormy lake. The servant was thrown into panic at the sight of water all round. There was danger of his upsetting the boat itself. So, the minister caught hold of the fellow, pushed him into the water, dipped him a number of times in spite of his shrieks and then when he cried, The boat, the boat, he was hoisted back. Once in the boat he knew he was safe from the waters of which he was afraid. So too, we are in God, but, yet afraid of the waters of *samsaara* (worldly life). It is when we suffer the ordeals of worldly life that the security and safety of faith in God can be realised.

#### **You need a *Guru* to see yourself**

The eye which is an inch long can see the stars, millions of miles away; but, is it the eye that sees? Can the eye see itself?. No. You must learn how to know others and more than that, how to know yourselves. You are most curious about others. Even casual acquaintances you meet in

railway compartments, you ask about their family affairs, their property, and lineage. But, you do not know your own lineage, property, your heritage and status. You are *Manuja*, born of *Manu*, the person who laid down the moral code which is your property. You have the Lord installed in your heart and so, you are essentially Divine. All this wealth you deny and you go about poor and weak. To see your own eyes, you need a mirror; to see yourself in your native grandeur, you need a *guru* (preceptor).

Those who deny God are denying themselves and their glory. All have Love in their hearts, in some form or other, either towards the children or the poor or their work or goal. That Love is God, the spark of the Godly in them. They have *aanandha* (bliss), however small or temporary, and that is a spark of God and the Godly. They have peace, detachment, sympathy. All these are reflections of the Divine on the mirror of their minds. These are all mental excellences, revealed through an appreciation of the advantages of virtue. If they are revealed through helplessness, as the case of the thief in the story of Tenali Raamakrishna, they are no good. That thief exhibited great *shaanthy* and *sahana*, (peace and forbearance) motivated by fear.

### **Practise self-control with steady faith**

Noticing that a thief had come into his garden at night and that he was hiding under a snake-gourd bush near the well, Raamakrishna called his wife to his presence. He asked her to bring a rope and bucket so that he may draw water from the well. The wife drew the water and gave the bucket to him. The thief watched his movements and he crouched in the darkness, expecting that the man and his wife would go into the house soon. He planned that he should gain entry later and collect his loot without being caught. Meanwhile, Raamakrishna pretended that he had something in his throat. He poured the water into his mouth, gargled loud and spat underneath the "snake-gourd bush right where the thief was crouching! He got it right on his face, and that was Raamakrishna's intention too. The poor fellow could not run away, he could not protest, he was afraid to move; he showed perfect fortitude. But, do you call it a virtue? Do you appreciate him for it? He was motivated by fear, not faith. Such *shaanthy* and *sahana* are of no use at all. Practise self-control with steady faith. Then it is a source of strength.

You are afflicted with the disease which the Geetha can cure, the disease of *moha* (delusion), which warps your sense of values, fogs your vision and distorts your outlook. But, to benefit from the drug, you must have the *vishaada* (sorrow) which Arjuna had, the *prapaththi* (dedication) he was capable of, the *vairaagya* (detachment) he had developed and the *ekaagratha* (concentration) he evinced. He was ready to go abegging for his livelihood rather than enthrone himself as king after the killing of his kinsmen, teachers and elders. Have that keen yearning; then, the Geetha can destroy *moha* and liberate you.

### **Do not seek the faults of others**

Discover for yourself your stage of spiritual development, to which class in the school you would fit in. Then determine to proceed from that class to the next higher one. Strive your best and you will win the Grace of God. Do not bargain or despair. One step at a time is enough, provided it is towards the goal, not away from it. Beware of the pride of wealth, of scholarship, of status, that drag you into egoism. Do not seek the faults of others; seek your own. Be happy when you see others prosper; share your joy with others.

However high you move up on the ladder of education, do not let the roots of Indian Culture dry up in your heart. There was a great Pandith well versed in *Sanaathana Dharma* and deeply

attached to its practice. He sent his son overseas for higher education. He took him to the temple of his *Kuladevatha* (family deity), *Kaalimaatha*, and with tears of gratitude in his eyes, he showered on his head the sacred *prasaad* of *Kaalimaatha*, when he boarded the steamer. He wrote to him often, pleading that he should keep up the rites of worship, even in the strange lands to which he had gone. He was confident that his son will not give up the performance of the morning and evening ablutions and recitations.

After some years, the boy returned by plane, in outlandish clothes, but the pious father believed that his deeper convictions had not altered and that he was genuine Indian still. He took him first to the temple of *Kaalimaatha*, for he felt that he had returned safe and strong as a result of Her Blessings. He uttered a *sthothra* and begged the son too to pray. He was shocked to hear the boy address the Goddess, Hello, Mrs. Shiva! How do you do?' The old man's heart broke at the discovery that his son had cut himself away from the sustaining principles of *Sanaathana Dharma*.

### **Consequence of departing from Truth**

These are the cardinal principles of *Sanaathana Dharma*: *sathya*, *dharma*, *santhi* and *prema* (truth, virtue, peace and love). Dharmaraaja, the eldest of the Paandavas, was a sincere adherent of *sathya*. But, during the Kurukshethra battle, he was persuaded to utter a white lie, a subterfuge which he thought was excusable, though it was not cent percent honest. In order to kill Dhrona, the master archer and General on the opposite side, they had to somehow trick him into discarding his bow, so they planned a subterfuge. They named a war- elephant after Dhrona's son, Aswatthaama. Then, they killed it. Immediately within the hearing of Dhrona, the Paandava army was asked to shout in glee, Aswatthaama is killed---the elephant, which was strictly true. But while the soldiers were repeating the words, the elephant, drums were beaten, bugles were sounded, trumpets pealed, so that Dhrona heard only the first three words. Naturally, he took them to mean that his son had met with his death from enemy hands.

Dhrona was heavily laden with grief, his hands could not wield the bow and the arrow, as deftly as usual; at that moment, he was overwhelmed and slain. For this one sin that he had encouraged, the only one in his life, Dharma-raaja had to spend a few minutes in Hell, says the epics. Such is the consequence of departing from *sathya* even by a hair's breadth.

### **Life is best spent in alleviating pain**

Listen to the sequel. When the emissaries of the other world were escorting Dharmaraaja after death to Hell, for this nominal sojourn, the denizens of Hell suddenly felt a coolness and a fragrance in the air they breathed, a strange peace and joy, a thrill and exhilaration which they had never hoped to enjoy. That was the consequence of the holy soul approaching the region of terror and torture. The unfortunate sinners gathered around Dharmaraaja to be soothed and comforted by his very sight. When Dharma-raaja was directed to turn back towards Heaven (the term of his sentence was soon over) the populace of Hell cried out to him to prolong his stay. They were reluctant to go back to the heat and the pain. Hearing their piteous wail, Dharmaraaja declared that he was surrendering to them all the merit that had earned Heaven for him; he was willing to stay with them! But, that great act of renunciation not only benefitted the suffering creatures, it gave Dharmaraaja a greater lease of life in Heaven and a more honoured place there. Life is best spent in alleviating pain, assuaging distress, and promoting peace and joy.

The service of man is more valuable than what you call service to God. God has no need of your service. Please man; you please God. The *Purusha Shuktha* sings of God as having a thousand heads, a thousand eyes and a thousand feet. That is to say, all beings are He, all who have heads, hands and eyes. They are not separate. Note that it is not mentioned that He has a thousand hearts. There is only one heart. The same blood circulates through all hands and heads. Each being is a limb. When you tend the limb, you tend the individual. When you serve man, you serve God.

*Prashaanthi Nilayam: Shivaraathri, 19-2-1966*