

6. Hitha and priya

The recognition of one's innate Divinity and the regulation of one's daily life in accordance with that Truth are the guiding stars for those who are caught in the currents and cross currents of strife and struggle in populous cities like this. Without *that Aathmajnaana*, life becomes a meaningless farce, a mockery, a game of fools. It is the acquisition of that awareness that makes life earnest sweet and fruitful. Man is not aware of the grand goal of his pilgrimage. He is straying into wrong roads which lead him only towards disaster. He puts his faith in things outside himself and plans to derive joy, from and through them. He does not know that all joys spring only from the spring that is inside him; he only invests the outer things with his own joy drawn from inside himself; he envelopes the outer things with his own joy and then, experiences it as though from that other thing--that is all!

When you try to prepare a meal, you may have with you all the materials you need: rice, dhal, salt, lime, spices, vegetables. But, unless you have the fire in the hearth, you cannot get the edible meal. So too with life *Jnaana* (of your own reality, as just a wave of the ocean of divinity) is the fire which makes the material world and the external activities and experience, edible and tasty, assimilable and health-granting and joy-giving. That joy is called *Anandham*; it is uplifting, it is illuminating, it is constructive.

Release can be won only through travail

Life 'here' is for the sake of reaching 'there'. That is to say, *iha-nivaasam* is for *para-praapthi*. And, let me tell you this. You cannot attain *sukham* through *sukham*. That is to say, the joy of release can be won only through travail and trial. Through pain is achieved by woman the bliss of mother-hood. Through toil, the coveted grain is earned by the farmer from the field. Through long days and nights of steady swatting is the examination passed and the Diploma won by the student. Deprive yourselves luxury and even comfort, detach yourselves from what you hold dear and near through sheer ignorance of what is the thing most dear and most near to yourself; pine, struggle, strive ceaseless-ly---and, then you are blessed with the inexpressible Bliss of merger with the Universal, of *Saakshaathkaara*. It is grief that makes joy worth while, a precious possession; it is the pitch-dark night that prompts the seeker of light; it is death, that lends zest to life.

Life is not a simple affair; it is not governed by uniform laws which can be discovered and applied. Twice two may not always be four, in life, though it may be so in arithmetic. Each one has his own strength and weakness, his foibles and fears; his skills and handicaps, and so no one prescription can be suggested for all. One day is sunny, but, the next may be rainy. One man may come upon a treasure while walking on a road; the man behind him on the same road may lose his purse and all that he possessed! Each one must proceed from the place where he is, at his own pace, according to own light. But, if each has caught a glimpse of the *Aathmic* Reality, of the source from which he has emerged and the goal into which he is to merge, then all will reach the goal of the journey, sooner or later. Once that glimpse is received either through grace or through a Guru or through some other means, the fascination for the body and the senses which dominate it, and the world which feeds the senses, the fascination for the vainglorious adventures in search of fame and fortune, will become meaningless and will fade away; man will then have instead of the *deha-bhraanthi* (yearning for body) which now torments him, the yearning to know and be established in the *Dehi*, the Divine Indweller.

Do not try to cover up your defects

For that yearning and the pursuit that is impelled by it, the first equipment that is necessary for the individual is 'a rigorous self-examination' to remove all evil from oneself. Do not try to cover up the defects, the down-dragging tendencies and habits. When people go to a shop to purchase cloth to have dresses prepared for themselves, have you noticed that they prefer coloured materials to white? The answer they will give when you question them why they choose coloured materials is, "It will not reveal dirt"! So, you see how anxious people are to hide their defects, instead of striving to remove them. They are so much attached to physical comfort and objective pleasure.

Really speaking, the body has to be treated as a wound that has to be washed, bandaged, and treated with medicated ointment, three or four times a day. That is the real purpose of food and drink and raiment. Thirst is the disease; drink is the drug. Hunger is the disease; food is the medicine. Craving for pleasure is the disease for which detachment is the medicine.

Once the *Aathma* is cognised, all is Unity; you will find that all is really One. This is the goal prescribed by the ancient scriptures of this land. But, the children of this sacred land have neglected the path and they are today struggling in the quagmires and cesspools of faction and fear. When the four bulls that grazed in the jungle were united and watchful of each other's safety (for they felt they were all One) the tiger dared not approach them; but, when discord broke them and created out of the One, four separate individuals, they were attacked one by one, and destroyed by the tiger. That is the fate of those who feel separate. Know that though *vyakthis* (individuals) may be separate, the *shakthi* (power) is one; that *Shakthi* is the *Param-aathma-thathwa*.

What is beneficial may not be pleasing

This is the Message that I bring---the Message that will confer strength, peace, hope and fulfilment. This Message surely is *hitha* (beneficial), though it may not be *priya* (pleasing). A patient has to take drugs and put himself through regimen that is beneficial; he cannot ask for only sweet medicines and comfortable regimen which please him. The Doctor knows best. He has to be obeyed, for the sake of recovery. The ministers of Raavana spoke only what was pleasing to him; they were afraid and so, they proved dangerous counsellors. Vibheeshana, the brother, alone gave him the beneficial drug, the drug which would have cured him; but, since it was not *priya*, Raavana rejected it and fell into perdition.

The Vedhas and *Shaasthras*, since they were won by penance and travail by sages and seers who were interested only in the welfare of humanity and the liberation of Man are the greatest repositories of *hitha*. They advise that Man must regulate his 'out-look' and develop the 'in-look'; the inner reality is the foundation on which the outer reality is built. It is like the inner wheel in the car, which directs the outer wheels. Know that the basic reality is God, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent. Become aware of it and stay in that awareness always. Whatever the stress and the storm, do not waver from that Faith. Or you can earn that awareness by reminding yourselves of it with every breath of yours. How can you so remind yourselves, you may ask. By means of any one of His Names, any Name that is fragrant with Divine Perfume, any Name that is reminiscent of His Beauty. His Grace, and His power.

Realisation can come only if you deserve it

Start with this first lesson, from the spiritual primer. Do not merely boast that you have mastered the *Bhagavath Geetha*, having read it a hundred times over, and learnt by rote all the *slokas* with all the commentaries so far written upon them. Among all the millions who were taught the *Geetha*, Arjuna alone had the *Vishwaruupa Darshana*, the realisation that this Universe is but a partial manifestation of His immeasurable glory; why is it that these great Pandiths had no such experience? Realisation of that reality can come only to the aspirant who deserves it. Arjuna had reached the highest stage of surrender when the teaching started and during the process, he had unexcelled *Ekaagratha* or concentration. No wonder he was blessed.

Unless one has the same degree of surrender, the same yearning and the same concentration, how can one expect the result that Arjuna attained? It is no easy path, this path of *Sharanaagathi*, of *Prapaththi*, that the *Geetha* lays down. The seed that is dried in the sun will sprout when planted in the soil; it has *janana* (birth) and *marana* (death); the cycle of birth and death cannot be got rid of by study and scholarship. Most *saadhakas* are like the dried seed only. But, Arjuna was not a dried seed; he was a fried seed. He was *gudaakesha*, who had mastered the senses. He had repelled the advances of Urvashi, whom he defeated, by his attitude as a son towards his mother.

For all who seek to cleanse the mind and climb upwards to the realm of spiritual bliss where 'this' and 'that' are discovered as ONE, the uninterrupted remembrance of the Name is the most effective *saadhana*.

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Let the pretty wishes for which you now approach God be realised or not, let the plans for promotion and progress which you place before God, be fulfilled or not; they are not so important after all.

The primary aim should be to become Masters or yourselves, to hold intimate and constant communion with the Divine that is in you as well as in the Universe of which you are a part. Welcome disappointments, for they toughen you and test your fortitude.

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