

9. Make the mind a mirror

India is the charming land where nature presents beauty to the eye and melody to the ear, fragrance and soft refreshing coolness. It is the heartening arena for the exercise of *viveka* and *vairaagya* (discrimination and non-attachment to the world). India provides a rich heritage of philosophy and practical spirituality, a galaxy of eminent saints and seers immortalised by poets of pure renown. But the language of the past, the treasure house of this vast and valuable experience is now known only to a few and even they are fast disappearing through neglect and want of encouragement.

Samskrith, which was once the language that linked the learned men and women of all parts of India, from the Himaalayan hermitages to the cowrie-decked ascetics of Kanyaakumaari, has now earned the ill-fame of a 'dead language' and is being consigned to oblivion by the ungrateful children of the motherland.

This mother has given birth to Vaamadev, who had realised that he was no other than *Brahmam*, even in the womb; to Prahlada, who recited the holy Name of God even as a child, who revelled in the midst of unbearable torture in the recitation of the sacred *manthra*, *Om Namoh Naaraayana* (Salutations to God *Naaraayana*, the Supreme); to Shukadev, the unexcelled anchorite, unattached to the world of the senses from childhood; to Shankaraacharya, the supreme ascetic and interpreter of the *Vedhas* and *Upanishads* and the two other basic texts of *Sanaathana Dharma*, the *Geetha* and the *Brahma Suuthras*, the Master who revived *Bhakthi* and sang in praise of every great Hindu shrine; to Prince Bharatha who played as a child with a gambolling lion cub; to Arjuna, the greatest Bowman who could shoot arrows with both his hands, the disciplined disciple of the Lord who won from Him the sublime teaching of the *Bhagavad Geetha*; to Shivaji, the devoted servant of Samarth Raamadas, who built an empire where *Sanaathana Dharma* reigned; to Shibi and Karna, unique examples of selfless renunciation; to Seetha, Saavithri, Dhroupadhi, Shabari, Meera, Andaal and many other women who proclaimed the supreme significance of *Dharma* to purify and liberate the mind, who gladly entered the raging flames rather than suffer the ignominy of disloyalty to the ideals of that *Dharma*; to Empress Chandramathi and Dhamayanthi who welcomed every disaster as but one more example of the loving interest that the Lord had in their progress towards His Feet.

Become the ideal candidate for Divinity

Man is just not a creature with hands and feet, eyes and ears, head and trunk; he is much more than a total of all these organs and parts- they are but the crude image that came out of the mould. Later, they have to be ground, scraped, polished, perfected, smoothed, softened, through the intellect and the higher impulses and the pure intentions and ideals. Then, man becomes the ideal candidate for Divinity, which is his real destiny. The impulses will be rendered pure and the intentions will be raised to the higher level, if man but decides to dedicate all his deeds, words and thoughts to the Lord. For this, faith in One Supreme Intelligence, which conceived, conserves and consumes this Universe, is essential.

The next step is to be convinced of one's own helplessness and distress at one's own grief. Then, surrender to that Intelligence is easily achieved. Sugreeva sought the Grace of the Lord, come as Raama; but he was afflicted with doubt regarding His prowess and His integrity. But the Lord had such love towards him that He submitted to the tests which he desired Him to undergo- casting off with His Foot the heavy corpse of an ogre, shooting an arrow right through seven sal

trees, etc. But Vibheeshana saw that He was the Lord in human form and he ran straight to him for protection and surrendered unconditionally at his feet. So he was accepted without the faintest demur by the Lord, even though those around Him expressed apprehensions.

Cleanse your heart and make it a clear mirror

Therefore, cultivate faith and surrender; then Grace will flow through you into every act of yours; for they are no longer your acts, they are His and you have no concern about the consequences thereof. All acts and words and thoughts will thereafter be pure, saturated with love, conducive to peace. Cleanse your hearts so that the Lord may be reflected therein, in all His Splendour, in all His myriad forms.

There was a famous painter who approached Krishna and arrayed before Him all his masterpieces and all his titles, medals and trophies. He offered to paint a portrait of Krishna, an offer which was gladly accepted. Sittings were granted and the portrait was ready; but it was discovered by all that looked at it that the picture was somehow different from the Krishna who gave the sittings. The painter was graciously given a few more chances, but every time his picture was found quite off the mark, for it depicted a figure which all agreed was not that of the Krishna who gave the sittings. The pride of the artist was pricked; he hung his head in shame and left the City utterly humiliated. Naaradha saw him on the outskirts of the City and hearing his plight, the sage told him, The Lord has a multitude of forms; indeed, all forms are His. So, you cannot fix one form on Him and succeed in painting Him. I shall advise you how to proceed and took him aside.

The next day, the painter appeared at the Court with a big framed 'picture' covered by a white cloth; the Lord asked him to uncover it and when he did so, it was discovered that he had brought only a mirror. Lord! You have a thousand forms; in this picture, all forms are clearly and instantaneously depicted, he said. Cleanse your heart and make it a clear mirror; the Lord's glory will then be reflected therein.

When the senses are negated, mind disappears

The desires that cling to the mind are the blemishes that tarnish man's inner consciousness. Control the senses, do not yield to their insistent demands for satisfaction. When a corpse is placed on a pyre, and when the pyre is lit, both the corpse and the pyre are reduced to ashes. So too, when the senses are negated, the mind too disappears. When the mind disappears, delusion dies and liberation is achieved.

Faith in God is the best reinforcement for spiritual victory. When you revel in the contemplation of the splendour of the Lord, nothing material can attract you; all else will seem inferior; the company of the godly and the humble alone will be relished. This Maharaashtra has been for long the home of saints who have sung of the Grace of the Lord, whom they had realised in the altar of their hearts. The flood of *Bhakti* which they brought down by their songs has fertilised millions of parched hearts in Maharaashtra and other regions. By then *japa*, *thapas* and *yoga saadhana* (recitation of Lord's Name, penance and *yogic* practice), they have enabled many an aspirant to approach the Lord quicker and more intimately: so intimately that no disappointment can shake their faith. Kabeer, Raamadas, Tukaaram and many others have built the royal road of devotion for humanity, When it is a claim for spiritual excellence, Maharaashtra makes it with confidence among all the States of India with Saurashtra as a

close competitor. It is your duty now to live up to the heritage handed over to you for development by the pious forefathers.

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*Spirit can only be awakened, realised through individual discipline
and the Grace of God.*

These two can be won through Love, Purity and Service to others.

Sathya Sai Baaba