

1. Milk and Water

THIS day is celebrated in India too, as New Year Day, in accordance with the observance of Western countries, whose calendar begins the New Year on the first day of January. But if you only ponder for a minute, you will realise that every second is new. Every second marks a new birth; it is a fresh chance for achieving a new victory. For, the goal as envisaged by Indian culture is the realisation of the *Aathma* by the individual, not the acquisition of wealth or scholarship or fame. The chief duty of man is investigation into Truth. Truth can be won only thorough dedication and devotion. And they are dependent on the Grace of God, which is showered only on hearts saturated with Love.

The question, "Where does God exist," is often trotted out by people nowadays. By unceasing recitation of the Name of God, Prahlaadha knew that God is everywhere; it is not correct to assert, "He is only here" or that "He is not there." The realisation of this Truth can come only after intense *saadhana* (spiritual practice). You may see all kinds of attractive articles in a departmental store; they cannot be yours merely for the asking. Only those articles for which you pay the price can be secured by you. Realisation may be an attractive article for you to carry home with you; but, you have to pay the price. It cannot be yours if you have only argument of appeals in your possession.

Strive for freedom from dependance on passions

You deserve to be a king only if you are the undisputed monarch of a kingdom. When you are fleeing from the throne, pursued by foes, how can the dignity of that status be appropriate for you? So too, it is only when you have defeated the inner foes of lust, greed, hate and pride, and secured undisputed mastery over yourself, that you can ascend the Throne and claim to be the Master.

In India, we say we have won *Swaraajya* (Freedom); but, *Swaaraajya* (identification with the self-effulgent *Brahman*) is the status we should each aspire to win. *Swaraajya* is political independence, freedom from the humiliating yoke of an alien ruler. *Swaaraajya* is freedom from the degrading dependence on passions and emotions. When external shackles are broken we have *Swaraajya*. When internal shackles are broken we have *Swaaraajya*. *Swaaraajya* alone can ensure peace and joy.

God is not far from you, or away in some distant place. He is within you, in your own inner altar. Man suffers because he is unable to discover Him there, and draw peace and joy from that discovery. A *dhobi*, standing knee-deep in a flowing river, washing clothes therein, died of thirst, because he failed to realise that life-giving water was within reach. He need only bend and drink. Such is the story of man. He runs about in desperate haste, to seek God outside him and dies disappointed and distraught, without reaching the goal---only to be born again.

Of course, you have to be in the world, but you." need not be *of* it. The attention has to be fixed on God, the God within. In the Kannada country, there is a festival called *Karaga*. The central figure of this holy rite keeps many pots on his head, one over the other, and moves in the procession, keeping step with the music; he has also to sing in tune with the rest and keep time to the beat of the drum. But, all the while, he has his attention fixed on balancing the precarious tower on his head. So, too, man must keep the Goal of God-realisation before him, while

engaged in the noisy, hilarious procession of life.

Jnaana can be won with a pure mind only

Some people are envious of the high standard of living reached by the rich nations, but the poverty of India is much more congenial to the good life than the luxurious and vainglorious life of the West. The sea has a vast expanse of water, but can it quench the thirst of man? Similarly, however much a man may possess, if he has not cultivated detachment, it is but arid waste. Detachment from sensual pleasures and objective pursuits helps the growth of Love towards God and the Godly.

People boast that they are interested only in inquiry and reason, that they follow only the path of *jnaana* (spiritual knowledge). They aspire to be *jnaanīs* (liberated persons possessing spiritual knowledge)! But *jnaana* cannot be won without a pure mind. He must discover who he is, before he ventures upon the inquiry, "Who is God?" Once he has discovered who he is, there is no need to know who is God, for, both are the same.

When you come to know that God is in you, you will value yourself much more, for when a man knows that the piece of 'glass' he has picked up is a diamond, he will keep it in an iron safe, for better security. When a boulder has been carved by a sculptor into a charming idol of God, it will be prized high and installed in a magnificent temple and worshipped with ritual ceremony by generations.

The wrong notion that the world is real and that you are the body has been so deeply implanted in you through birth after birth, that it can be removed only by means of a very potent drug, administered continuously. The drug, Raam Raam Raam, is to be swallowed and assimilated ad *infinitum*. Its curative essence will travel into every limb, every sense, every nerve and every drop of blood. Every particle of you will be transmuted into Raam. You must melt in the crucible and be poured into the Raam mould and become Raam. That is the fruition of *jnaana Raamanaama* or any other Name if chanted and absorbed in the mind, will help control the vagaries of the senses which drag you away into vanities.

Conquer inner foes, triumph over your ego

There is a vast difference between India five centuries ago, and India today, in the field of sense-control. Today, the senses are allowed free play; man is a slave to greed, lust and egoism. The fault lies entirely with the parents and the elders. When their children go to temples or religious discourses, they reprimand them and warn them that it is a sign of insanity. They tell them that religion is an old-age pursuit; it should not be taken seriously by youngsters! But, if only they encourage them, the children can equip themselves better for the battle of life. Parents ought to advise the children: "Be convinced that there is a God, guiding and guarding us. Remember Him with gratitude. Pray to Him to render you pure. Love all; serve all. Join good company. Visit temples and holy men." You read in the papers of campaigns, conquests, victories, triumphs, etc., but they are all material conquests and other triumphs. Campaign against the temptations of the senses; conquer inner foes; triumph over your ego. That is the Victory for which you deserve congratulations, not the others. That is what I referred to as *Swaaraajya*.

The year becomes new, the day becomes holy, when you sanctify it by *saadhana*, not otherwise. *Saadhana* can grow only in a field fertilised by Love. Love or *Prema* is the *sine qua non* of *bhakti* (devotion to God). The love you have towards material objects, name, fame, wife and children, etc., should be sanctified by being subsumed by the more overpowering Love of God.

Add two spoons of water to two seers of milk, the water too is appreciated as milk! At present your *saadhana* can be described only as mixing two litres of water with two spoons of milk! Have the Love of God filling and thrilling your heart; then, you cannot hate any one, you cannot indulge in unhealthy rivalries, you will not find fault with any one. Life becomes soft, sweet and smooth.

Shri Sathya Sai Mandali, Guindy, Madras, 1-1-1967

*Butter is in every drop of milk; chicken is in every part of the egg.
So too, God is in every part of the Universe. He is the strength; He
is the substance; He is the sustenance.*

Sathya Sai Baaba