

12. The prop you need

THERE are three entities in the Universe, with which man has to deal: *Paramaathma*, *Prakrithi* and *Jeevaathma*---God, Nature and Man. Of course, God is to be worshipped by man, to be realised by man through Nature (*Prakrithi*). Nature is the name for all the various items that impress upon man, the glory and the splendour of God. It is called *maayaa* too. *Maayaa* is the vesture of God which hides as well as reveals His Beauty and Majesty. Man must learn to use Nature not for his comfort or entanglement to the utter forgetfulness of the God behind the joy he derives, but for the better understanding of the intelligence that guides the Universe. How does a tree grow or a flower bloom? How does man learn about the stars and space, except by the inspiration of the joy and the intelligence which He who resides within endows? Approach Nature in a humble, prayerful mood; then your future will be safe. Raavana coveted Seetha, who represents *Prakrithi* (Nature), and stealthily brought her over; but that selfishness and greed led him into the deepest fall. If only he had coveted the God behind Nature, Raama, he could have earned eternal joy.

All the sufferings of man today can be traced to this false sense of values. First things must come first. First, self; then, help. Nowadays, people start helping others on the spiritual path without traversing that path themselves. So both the guide and the led fall into the pit. Serve yourself first, that is to say, understand who you are, whither you are going, whence you came and why you journey. After having discovered the answers to these questions from the scriptures, the sages and one's own undisputed experience, man can dare lead others.

Duality is ever the basis of sorrow and pain

People also are not trained to recognise the true from the false, the temporary from the eternal, the right from the wrong, the socially beneficial from the socially harmful. They dismiss all old customs and manners, old texts and rites, as useless simply because they are old; they adopt new customs and fashions simply because they are new. Time is a good tester; things that have stood the criticism of centuries, the blows of many alien cultures, the attractions of strange fancies---these must have an essential core of truth and validity.

The mind has a way of being drawn away by passing fancy. That is why every chapter of the Geetha is titled a *Yoga*, beginning from *Vishaadayoga* and ending with *Mok-shasanyasayoga*. This word *yoga* is used in order to emphasise the importance of *Chiththa-vriththi-nirodha*---the overcoming of the agitation of the mind. The waters of the *maanasa-sarovara*, the lake of the mind, are never calm; they are seldom level. The slightest shiver in the air affects the layer and creates a series of wavelets which takes a long time to spend itself out. The mind too is stirred by the objects of the outer world and the impressions they make on the inner senses; the mind is either disgusted or drawn towards the objects. This disturbs equanimity; duality is ever the basis of sorrow and pain. Sorrow is the temporary absence of joy; joy is the temporary disappearance of sorrow. Both are not everlasting, except when joy is won by spiritual means.

The assurance that Geetha gives to humanity

How can this stage of *yoga* be attained? The Geetha proposes to teach just this. Its first word is *Dharma* and its last word is *mama* (mine). It teaches every one who studies it *mama dharma*---"my *dharma*," "my duty," "my responsibility to myself." And what is that? *Yoga*. How is this *yoga* to be attained? By surrendering to God, dedicating every word, thought and deed to God, by effacing one's will and accepting His Will and leaving all initiation of activity to His

Prompting, all execution to His Direction and all consequences thereof to His Plan. "Give up all 'right' and 'wrong' and surrender your will to Me. I shall save you from falling; I shall guard you against grief---this is the assurance the Geetha gives, that is the prop you need.

Surrender can be effected only after the perfection of detachment from sensual pleasures, accompanied by discrimination between the real and the unreal. The taints of "I" and "Mine" have to be removed by rigorous *saadhana*; chief among the disciplines being *Naarnasmarana*, because when you dwell on the names of the Lord, His Majesty, His Grace, His Potency, His Pervasiveness, these get fixed in the consciousness and one's own capacities and capabilities get eclipsed in the Divine. So, humility increases and surrender is possible quite easily. This is the very purpose of human existence, to see God and merge in His Glory. All other victories are futile. The *Vedhas* proclaim this to be the final goal of man. The *Upanishads* declare the path. The Geetha illumines it. The saints and sages proclaim its grandeur. *Avathaars* come when people stray from it and get lost in the wilderness and the wastes.

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Limit, control, regulate, set bounds and bunds; that is the way to succeed. If people let lose their thoughts, words and deeds, calamity will be the consequence. Shaasthra means that which 'lays down limits'; interest in the art of living is created by these rules. Rules of behaviour must be observed by politicians, rulers, subjects, monks, who are leaders of the community and heads of monasteries, scholars and others, for they are exemplars and guides and their responsibilities are greater.

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