

13. The world, a training ground

"WHENEVER there is a languishing of *Dharma* or righteousness and an upheaval of unrighteousness, I create Myself, for it is part of primal resolution or *Sankalpa* to protect the spiritual structure of the Universe. I lay aside My formless essence and assume a name and a form suited to the purpose for which I come. Whenever evil threatens to vanquish good, I have to come and save it from decline." The Lord does not insist on all men following one path and accepting one discipline. There are many doors to His Mansion. The main entrance is, however, *moha-kshaya* (the overcoming of attachment). This is what Krishna exhorted Arjuna to achieve. Arjuna lost heart and allowed the bow to slip from his hand, because he was overwhelmed by a deluding type of attachment.

Krishna had to demonstrate to him that the kinsmen whom he dreaded to kill, the teachers whom he wished to live, those whom he loved and hated, all were but instruments of His Will, puppets pulled by His Hand. This destroyed his attachment and he resumed his task, without any attachment to the consequences.

That made him the recipient of the greatest lesson in history. This lesson is valuable for the theist as well as the atheist, for both have attachment to the consequences of their tasks, an attachment which will colour their eagerness and double the distress when disappointed. *Moha-kshaya* is necessary for both *Aasthikaas* (theists) and *Naasthikaas* (atheists), in order to secure lasting joy. Both do not take from here any minute portion of their acquisitions, both can earn the gratitude of men only by sacrifice and love.

The individual is but a spark of the Universal

Mohammed of Ghazni, who amassed vast heaps of treasure by his campaigns against India, died of fever. He directed his *vazir* to carry his corpse to the burial ground with both his palms uplifted for all to see that the emperor who had accumulated fabulous wealth was going to the other world with empty hands. "Let every one know how transient is the splendour derived from the worldly possessions," he said during his last moments.

When the tree of life sends its roots into the *Aathmic* reality, the unchanging, eternal, universal, immanent entity of which the individual is but a spark, it will flourish grandly, yielding fragrant blossoms of loving service, sweet fruits giving nourishment and joy to all, the sweetness of virtue rendering every bite and chew delightful.

This does not mean that you have to renounce hearth and home and flee to the forest. There is no guarantee that the hearth and home will not follow you into the silence and solitude of the forest; for, if your mind clings to worldly desires, you cannot escape them by simply putting some distance between you and them. You may be in the jungle, but your mind may wander in the market place. Similarly, you may be in the market place, but by *Saadhana* you can still secure a patch of peace in the heart in the midst of the busiest thoroughfare.

The mind can build a Silent refuge or tie you up into complex knots. It binds; it loosens bonds. You can sail safe on the sea of *Samsaar* (worldly life), if you have no leaks in the boat; but through the leaks of *Kaama* *Krodha*, *Lobha*, *Moha*, *Madha* or *Maatsarya* (lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride and envy), the writers of *Samsaar* will enter the boat and it will sink, drowning you beyond redemption. Do not allow the water into the boat; stop all the leaks. Then, you need have no fear in *Samsaar*, you can benefit by all the chances it gives for training the senses,

widening the affections, deepening the experiences, and strengthening the detachment.

Let every moment of your life be bhajana

You have to read the newspaper to know how mad and foolish the world is; how futile is heroism, how momentary the glory; and after perusing it for the information it conveys, you throw it aside; it is now a tasteless waste. So too, live but once; so live that you are born but once. Do not fall in love with the world so much that your false fascination brings you again and again into this delusive amalgam of joy and grief. Unless you stand back a little, away from entanglement with the world, knowing that it is all a play whose director is God, you are in danger of being too closely involved. Use the world as a training ground for sacrifice, service, expansion of the heart, cleansing of the emotions. That is the only value it has.

When you sing *Bhajans*, dwell also on the meanings of the songs and the message of each Name and Form of God Raama---the name should evoke in you the *Dharma* He embodied and demonstrated. Raadha---the name should evoke in you supramental, super-worldly Love she had as the greatest of the *Gopees*; Shiva---the name should evoke the supreme sacrifice of the drinking of the Haalahaala poison for the good of the world; the cool Grace heightened by the cascade of the Ganga and the moonlight from the Crescent. Do not waste time purposelessly; let every moment be *Bhajana*. Know the purpose of *Bhajana* or *Naamasmarana* and devote yourself wholeheartedly to it; derive the maximum benefit from the years allotted to you.

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Be always saturated with prema, do not use poisonous words against any one, for, words wound more fatally than even arrows. Speak soft and sweet; sympathise with suffering and loss and ignorance; try your best to apply the salve of soothing word and timely succour. Do not damage the faith of any one in virtue and divinity. Encourage others to have that faith by demonstrating in your own life that virtue is its own reward, that divinity is all-pervasive and all-powerful.

Sathya Sai Baaba