

34. Nurse the ancient tree

INDIA is the land where the dichotomy of 'that' and 'this,' of 'Creator' and 'Creation,' of 'energy' and 'matter,' was resolved in one grand Unity, by both theory and practice, in philosophical schools and in hermitages. The Tree of life, with its countless branches proliferating into thoughts, words, and deeds, attitudes, tendencies, and impulses, is known by the sages of India to have its roots in Heaven! So, every rule and ritual was made sacred and holy, suffused with purity, humility and love. This resulted in peace and happiness, for the individual, the family, the community, the nation and the world.

But on account of the domination of exotic ways of thinking, quite contrary to Indian ideals, people have become ashamed to call themselves Hindus, as if the picture the sages drew was a caricature; as if they were being misled by their ancestors. This is a wrong and dangerous attitude; it ignores the lasting benefits that one can draw from the experience of those sages. The attractions of a free and easy life are superficial and hollow. When the wicked Kauravas were undraping the clothes of Dhroupadhi, the Paandavas sat unmoved; for they felt bound by their plighted troth; but the Lord, who loved them for that loyalty, came to her rescue! Now too, the honour of Hindu religion and culture is at stake; it is being derided and discarded by the very people who have the responsibility to foster and fructify them. Hindus are fast giving up the rites and ceremonies that marked the different stages of spiritual development. They join in the humiliating laughter of cynics who proclaim that they circled in outer space and did not find God anywhere; as if the earth under their feet and Nature around them were not witnesses enough for His existence!

India must nurse the tree of Dharma

Indian thought affirms that T and 'He' are one; that all is integrated in the composite whole, true, good, and beautiful, through and through. Indian thinkers have reached the dizzy heights of speculation and the clearest depths of intuition; they have found that the experience of fundamental unity is not negated by most rigorous logic. Therefore, all other faiths are but facets of this supreme Truth, this sublime experience. And, each little duty cast upon man in the Hindu Code of Morals reflects this awareness of Unity. For example, it is laid down that when a person dines without first feeding the chance guest or the hungry man at his door, he is committing theft, eating a meal of sin, partaking a feast of foulness!

Dhamayanthi, deserted by her husband Nala, in the darkness of the forest, could not sleep, for she was anxious about her lord's welfare. Just then, she heard a herd of elephants rushing through, trampling the groups of aborigines sleeping around her; her warning cry was unheeded; they slept too soundly to be awakened. So too, India, that is to say, *Vedhamaatha* (the mother who speaks with the voice of the *Vedhas*) has to warn the nations of the world, sleeping the sleep of sense-satiety, that wildness is rushing in to destroy them. This is the role of Bhaarath--to assert that God is a present and persistent factor in human life, in every atom, in the Universe and that God is *Sath*, *Chith* and *Aanandha* (Existence, Consciousness and Bliss Absolute). She must nurse the tree of *Dharma* and garner from it, for the welfare of the whole world, the fruits of *Ahlaadha* (spiritual exhilaration), *Aanandha* (bliss) and *shaanthy* (calm equipoise).

The preservation and promotion of Hindu *Dharma* is the need of the times. People who practise its principles have to propagate them, by precept and example. In every one, there is the thirst for God; only many deny it on account of false pride, some on account of ignorance, some call it by

some other name, worry, discontent or despair. Some have faith only in Love, some believe only in Truth, some swear that they care only for Goodness---but, all these do not know that they are referring to God alone by these names. They too are pilgrims to the same Sacred Shrine.

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Man must reveal the divine qualities of love, humility, detachment and contentment. If he does not, he becomes worse than a beast and more deadly.

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