

37. Jumping to conclusions

WITHOUT self-confidence no achievement is possible. If you have confidence in your strength and skill, you can draw upon the inner springs of courage and raise yourselves to a higher level of joy and peace. For, confidence in yourselves arises through the Aathma, which is your inner Reality. The *Aathma* is peace. It is joy, It is strength. It is wisdom. So, it is from the *Aathma* that you draw all these equipments for spiritual progress. There are two eight-syllabled axioms in the Geetha, which are the basic beliefs man must have' Shraddhavaan labhathe jnaanam (with Faith, wisdom is won) and *Samsayaathma Vinasyathi* (the doubter is destroyed). They are two embankments between which the river of life can flow, safe and steady, towards the Sea of Divine Grace. During the years of youth, the river is subject to sudden floods which may eat into the embankments and damage the region. So, special Care has to be taken to render them strong.

The planners of this country's future are concentrating on the production of food, drinking water and housing---but happiness cannot come through these alone. When morality is laughed at, *bhakti* is dreaded as a disease, cleverness is placed at a premium, and the individual is humiliated into an instrument to be manipulated and utilised by the State or some other collective authority, how can happiness be ensured?

When our people worship ant-hills, trees, snakes, birds, lions and cows, cynics laugh, unaware of the deeper truth it reveals, namely, that God is immanent in all creation. So too, there is deeper significance for the rituals and ceremonies that have been recommended and observed in this land since ages; but now the husk alone remains and the kernel has gone through neglect. It is at such times that the need arises for the re-establishment on the old foundations of the superstructures of Morality and Religion. There can be no religion without moral purity. The two are inter-dependent.

Do good when you feel like doing it, don't delay

Your car is not meant to be kept as a show-piece in a glass garage. It is meant for the roads, for taking you fast and safe to the place where you want to go. So too, your body must serve the purpose of your journey. Journey to where? No, as it has been happening, to the cemetery. You have nobler things to do than merely die! You must know your own Reality before you die and merge in that supreme Joy. Eat just enough to keep the body in trim; use the body to discover this Reality, namely, God. Sanctify every moment of your sojourn here with pious deeds and sacred thoughts. When Karna was applying oil on his head, with a golden cup of oil held in his left hand, a Brahmin who passed by, held out his hand and asked that the cup be given

to him. "Here. Take it," he said, and gave it to him, with the left hand. The Brahmin was annoyed, because no gift should be given or accepted with the left hand. But, Karna explained, "I am giving this to you the moment you asked, for, I do not know whether I will be so disposed when I change the cup from the left hand to the right. Pardon me." Do good when you feel like doing it; do not delay---that is the message of this story.

Not to have a son is no spiritual disaster

One common criticism of Hinduism is that it tolerates the worship of images. But the stone is not worshipped as stone; it is the symbol of the God that cannot be pictured in His abstract, attributeless, *Nirguna* (Formless) aspect. The idol is of great help in concentration, as was proved by Raamakrishna Paramahansa, Meera, Thyaagaraaja and a large number of other seekers.

Meera derived supreme satisfaction when she experienced the Divine in the form of *Giddhara Gopaala*, the Cowherd Boy Krishna, who raised the Govardhana Peak as an umbrella to protect the people and cattle of Gokul against the ravaging rains sent down by the angry Rain-God, Indhra. Each mystic has a special Form which touches the deepest chords of the devotee's heart and moves him into the Divine Ecstasy. Thyaagaraaja knew that Raama was the Sovereign of all Creation, that He was immanent as well as transcendent; and he drew the highest inspiration by picturing Him as the son of Dhasharatha and consort of Seetha.

Another Hindu belief is that food, when it is offered to God and then taken as consecrated by His acceptance, is activated by Divine energy and is freed from all evil influences that might adhere to it. This helps the attitude of dedication, and encourages the conviction of the constant Presence of God as an inseparable guide and guardian wherever you may be. This betel box that I have is made of lead; now, if some one comes and asks, "Keep the box, but give me the lead," it is absurd because they are inseparable, indivisible. So too, it is absurd to say, "Be a Hindu, but give up these beliefs, this *Dharma*." They are the very characteristics of the faith. If the *Dharma* is not known and practised, the Hindu is as bad as dead.

Mention was made here of the fear that the childless suffer from; the fear is that unless you have a son, who will do the rites prescribed for the departed, the dead parents will have to spend ages in a special section of hell! This emphasis on begetting a son was made only for royal dynasties. Since, in the absence of direct successors, the kingdom will have to pass through strife and bloodshed. Dhritaraashtra had a hundred sons; not one of them survived him and performed the rites to save him from hell! Suka, the incomparable Sage, had no sons; can you say that he missed *Moksha* (Liberation) as a punishment and spent ages in hell? Not to have a son is no spiritual disaster, I assure you.

Do not be diverted by persons with perverse minds

Look at another absurdity. Some worship God as Shiva and call Him as *Pashupathi* (Guardian of cattle), '*pashu*' meaning living beings, the bound; some worship God as Vishnu or Krishna and call Him as *Gopaala* (Protector of cattle), '*go*' meaning living beings, the bound. And these two sets of devotees refuse to revere each other! Shiva is extolled as the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer, by those who adore Him. Vishnu or Krishna is extolled as all these three by those that adore Him; but, they don't take the next step of recognising that there cannot be any legitimate reason for their differences. You must welcome all Names and Forms, though you might have a personal attachment to one Name and one Form. You have to admit that the God whom you adore is universal enough to have many Names and many Forms.

When a lone dog gets frightened by the shadow that moves ominously in the misty moonlight, it sets up a howl, which is echoed by all the dogs in the vicinity. Not knowing the reason, all howl in unison; it is sheer canine nature. The moonlight of Divine Grace stirs some humans also to howl and others to join in blind imitation. It is their nature; they cannot tolerate the Immeasurable Glory that showers Grace and Faith, courage and consolation. Your duty is to march ahead, straight and steady, towards the Goal, without being diverted by the exhibition of self-imposed ignorance and perversity. Every *Avathaar* had such pitiable contemporaries. You must have read of Sishupaala, Poundraka, Danthavakra and others, in the *Dwaapara Yuga*.

Enslave yourself to God, not to man

Maintain your self-respect as Dhroupadhi did. When she was about to be humiliated in the open

court, where her husbands who had staked her and lost her in dice-play to the wicked Kauravas were present, she was so enraged that if she had only cast a look on the gang of ruffians who had won her and dragged her thither, they would have collapsed into heaps of ash; instead, she looked at Dharmaraaja, the eldest husband who had staked her and who was sitting before her with downcast eyes. That look quietened her a little. Then, she uttered a curse, which echoed over the earth and heaven. "May the wives of these vipers who laid their hands on my hair and dragged me here, lament their widowhood, waving their loosened hair, in unconsolable grief. Until then, I shall not plait the hair which these barbarians have unloosened now." She proclaimed, in the hearing of all, her lineage, and its reputation for self-respect and her resolve not to tarnish it or demean it. Maintain the dignity of your lineage, the lineage of Raama, Krishna, Harishchandra, Meera, Thyaagaraaja, Thukaaraam, Raamakrishna and Nandanaar. The glory of your lineage is like a carefully rolled ball of thread. Any slip on your part will result in its disastrous entanglement. So beware! Enslave yourself to God and not to man. Hold fast to your *Saadhana*.

Be unmoved either by adulation or denigration

Repeat the *Gaayathri* - it is a universal prayer. It has three parts, *dhyaana*---meditation on the Glory of God as the Illumination immanent in the worlds, upper, middle and lower (*Om Bhuh-bhuva-swah; thath savithur varenyam*); it has *Smarana* or picturisation of the Grace (*bhargo devasya dheemahi*) and *Praarthana*, prayer for compassion for the sake of liberation, through the awakening of Intelligence that pervades the entire Universe, not to any particular Name or Form of that Intelligence; and so, all can use it and be saved by it. There can be no fanaticism, no hatred, no rivalry, if the *Gaayathri* is adhered to; its *japa* (pious repetition) will clarify the passions and promote Love. Do not water and feed the tree of desire. Intolerance is the product of anger, hate and envy. Try your best to suppress the first appearance of anger. It does not come upon you unawares. The body becomes warm, the lips twitch, the eyes redden---so, when you get the intimation, drink a cup of cold water, sip it slowly, close the door and lie in bed, until the seizure passes away, and you laugh at your own folly. This may appear difficult, but you have to practise it. For the consequences of your yielding to anger will be so disastrous that you will have to repent long for them.

There was a father-in-law, who was so angry with the son-in-law for not writing letter to him and his daughter from foreign lands where he had gone as a soldier, that he wrote to him an angry letter: "You are as bad as dead, so far as we are concerned, for you do not care for your wife any longer. So she has shaved her head and started wearing widow's weeds." The soldier when he received this letter lamented aloud that his wife had become a widow, not realising that so long as he was alive, that calamity cannot happen!

Do not jump to conclusions, abdicating your discrimination. Don't deny the validity of your own experience. Stand on your strength. Be unmoved, either by adulation or denigration. Follow My lead: I am unaffected by either, I march on, alone, undeterred and of My own accord. I am My own Guide and Witness, have full faith in this.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 13-10-1967

God is no partial benefactor; he gives the fruit from every tree, according to the seed. you have planted the sour mango, hoping to

use the fruit for pickles; then, why lament that the fruit is not sweet to the tongue? Do good and aspire to get the fruit of goodness--- that is pardonable. It is not as bad as doing bad and blaming God that He has given you the meed for evil deeds.

Sathya Sai Baaba