

13. The upward and downward pulls

THE Jyothirlinga (effulgent subtle form of Shiva) is represented as hanging in mid-air, between the pull and counter-pulls of a magnet from above and a magnet from below; evidently, it is of ferrous metal. Man too is like a ferrous *linga*, drawn upwards by the craving for liberation and for merging in the Super-Soul and drawn downwards by the craving for satisfying the senses and earning and possessing things from the nature around him. Now, the upward pull is becoming weaker. Respect for spiritual institutions, temples, holy places, elders and sacred books is fast declining. Pride in material wealth and competition in acquiring it, are fast increasing. This is the tragedy of the times.

Man imagines that he has achieved much as a result of his search for material pleasures. He has discovered electricity, and is using it for giving light. But what poor glory is this! When the Sun rises, even the brightest bulb pales into insignificance. Man has invented the fan and by means of electricity, he is able to induce breeze. But, when a storm arises in nature, the toughest tree is uprooted and man's handiwork of brick and mortar is laid in ruins, with the roofs flying in the air! On what basis can he erect his pride?

Man must be aware of the Divine Spark within

The Sun is but a star among billions in space. The earth is but a speck, rotating around the Sun. The nation to which he belongs is but a fraction of that spark; his village is a microscopic dot in that fraction and he is but one among the thousands or lakhs of people residing therein. He struts about for a few winks of the eye of time, and prides himself most stupidly, as if he is the lord and master.

But his real title to joy is not this. It is that he is the child and inheritor of immortality; he is the repository of Divinity, he can by various paths attain the state of Divinity itself! A machine without the power to activate it is of no use; so too, a human body without the Divine Spark is of no avail. Without that spark, man is a tree that bears no fruit, a cow that yields no milk; he must become aware of the spark, he must know how to illumine oneself with it and cover oneself with its splendour.

You are living now in the dark, in ignorance. The knowledge that you are the Divine Spark, encased in the sheaths of bliss, intelligence, feelings, sensations and organic substances---this knowledge is the light. You must light your own lamp. You cannot walk in the light of another's lamp. You cannot exist on the money in the purse of another. Have your own money; then alone are you free. Earn the knowledge yourself. Even knowing it is not enough; you must experience it. The well has water; but that is not enough. It must be brought up in the bucket and used to wash and to quench, the thirst.

The mind moves only towards the right and the pure, of its own accord; but the senses and the outer world drag it towards the wrong and the impure. The white cloth gets dirty, and when the dirt is removed, it regains its whiteness. The Prashanthi Vidhwan-mahaasabha is commissioned to tell the people the basic principles of this process, which is way of life, a steady upward journey.

Pull out the fangs of six cobras in your mind

Individual effort and Grace, both are essential. Shankara says, "*Ishwara anugrahaath eva pumsaam adhwaiitha vaasana*"---"*through the Grace of the Lord alone can man develop a desire*

for the non-duality of the Universe," for the One without a second. Seeing only the One is *jnaana* (spiritual wisdom); and *jnaana* alone confers *kaivalyam* (liberation).

Note down all the things for which you have cried so far. You will find that you have craved only for paltry things, for momentary distinctions, for fleeting fame; you should cry only for God, for your own cleansing and consummation. You should weep, wailing for the six cobras that have sheltered themselves in your mind, poisoning it with their venom: Lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride and malice. Quieten them as the snake charmer does with his swaying flute. The music that can tame them is the singing aloud of the Name of God. And when they are too intoxicated to move and harm, catch them by the neck and pull out their fangs as the charmer does. Thereafter, they can be your playthings; you can handle them as you please.

When these are laid low, you will gain equanimity. You will be unaffected by honour or dishonour, profit or loss, joy or grief. Raama was not elated when his father proposed to enthrone him; nor was he depressed when, even as he was being led to the throne, his father proposed that he spend fourteen years as an exile in the forest! He was as cool when Parashuraama challenged him to battle, for having bent and broken the bow of Shiva, as when he broke it and won the hand of Seetha.

***Dharma* lays down limits for man's passions**

Dhroupadhi yearned to share the calamities of her husbands; Seetha refused to stay back in capital, when Raama moved into the forest. She said, "My parents have taught me the fight path for the wife; I know that the path lies along the footsteps of the husband. You are the Moon, Raama-chandhra; I am the Light of the Moon. We are inseparable. We have to be together." Urmila, the wife of his brother Lakshmana (who accompanied Him into exile, of his own accord) said, "I shall remain in the capital, for, if I come you will not be able to serve the Lord Raama with undivided attention." That was how she revealed her greatness.

Kaushalya, the mother of Raama, was overcome with joy when her son entered the inner apartments as she thought he had come to receive her blessings, before the coronation ceremony. But she was shocked when Raama asked her blessings for a happy life in the forest! "Promise me that you will be full of joy, the fourteen years I spend in exile," he pleaded. She said, "I shall come with you. I am queen only in name. My life has been a stream of tears. Vishwaamithra took you away from us; I spent anxious days when you were with him, countering the demons; then when Parashuraama appeared before you, challenging you for a fight, I was really overpowered by grief. I can never be happy, away from you." But Raama was able to convince her that her place was with the grieving father, King Dhasahratha, her master and Lord. Kaushalya blessed Him, "May the *Dharma* that you revere and represent guard you ever."

Dharma is the *maryaadha* (the boundary), the limit that the intelligence lays down for the passion, emotions, impulses of man. To explain their importance and application to daily life is the task I have entrusted to the *Pandiths* who are members of the Prashaanthi Vidhwanmahaasabha. *Maanava* (man) means one who observes *maim* (measure or limit.)' He does not run wild and untrimmed; he submits willingly to control, regulation and discipline.

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This conquest of the ego is a very hard task; years of persistent effort are needed to get success in this endeavour.

For getting a Degree you struggle in the University for a number of years, poring over books night and day; how much more difficult is this examination, success in which guarantees lasting happiness, and escape from the weary round of birth and death?

Shri Sathya Sai