

## 24. Light the lamps of love

LIFE on earth is, as on the ocean, ever restless, with the waves of joy and grief, of loss and gain, the swirling currents of desire, the whirlpools of passion, and the simooms of greed and hate. To cross the ocean, the only reliable raft is a heart filled with the Love of God and Man. Man is born for a high destiny as the inheritor of a rich heritage. He should not fritter his days in low pursuits and vulgar vanities. His destiny is to know the Truth, live in it and for it. The Truth alone can make man free, happy and bold. If he is not prompted by this high purpose, life is a waste, a mere tossing on the waves, for the sea of life is never calm.

Man seeks to earn contentment and joy by subjugating the forces of Nature to his fragile will. But all efforts to establish mastery over *Prakrithi* (Nature) or command it, or employ it for personal aggrandizement are bound to fail, are certain to recoil on man with deadly impact. In India, the story of the Raamaayana is well known. In that *story*, Raavana coveted Seetha, daughter of Earth (that is to say, Nature). He did not evince any attachment to the Lord of Nature, that is to say, Raama (God). He sought to gain nature, not the master of Nature (Raama, the husband of Seetha). The penalty he paid was terrible; he perished in the flames of his own foolish passion. The vast empire he built up so laboriously lay in ruins. He fell amidst the corpses of the heroes who had rendered him unswerving loyalty. Raavana was a great scholar: he had climbed the highest pinnacle of asceticism and won many supernatural powers. But, since he did not bend before the master of *Prakrithi* (Nature), he suffered irreparable damnation.

### **Walk Sunward to escape from shadow of Maayaa**

When his steps are directed towards God, man has no reason to fear; but when they are turned away from Him, fear haunts him at every turn. God is the source of the highest joy. People yearn for joy, but they accept as genuine the counterfeit joy given by the senses. No one knows that Nature is but the vesture of God. There is nothing real except He. When the morning Sun is above the horizon and you walk away from it towards the west, your shadow lengthens and struts before you. That shadow is *Maayaa*---the primal illusion, the basic ignorance; it deludes and hides truth and clothes it in the costume of falsehood.

To discard *Maayaa* and escape from its shadow, you have to walk sun-wards. Then the shadow will fall behind you. When the Sun (the source of reason and Intelligence) climbs higher and higher, the shadow becomes shorter and smaller. Until at last, when he is right on top, the shadow (*Maayaa*) crouches at your feet, surrendering to you; you can trample on it. So too, when your Intelligence is supreme, *Maayaa* cannot cast her evil spell on you.

The Gaayathri Hymn of the *Vedhas*, recited thrice a day by millions, asks for the awakening of the intelligence so that when it brightens like the Sun at its zenith, the smog of delusion is destroyed. Then the waves of indecision and decision that confound, contradict and confuse are stilled. This is the process of *yoga* or the arrest of the wandering mind, as Pathanjali defined it centuries ago.

### ***Bhakthi* is a continuous condition of the mind**

*Bhakthi* is also a *yoga*, a process of eliminating the mind or transforming the mind into an instrument for realising God. *Bhakthi*, however, has been watered down into a routine ritual---like turning the beads of a rosary, squatting a specified number of hours before an image, offering of incense, waving of lights, ringing of bells, dipping in holy waters, or climbing hills to

reach shrines. These are acts that quieten some urges and quicken others, which may or may not be congenial.

*Bhakthi* is not a penitential uniform that can be put on or off, as occasion demands. The constables on duty here wear uniforms, complete with ribbons and medals; but, when they reach home after their hours of duty, they take it off and wear other dresses. Devotion cannot come upon you during stated hours and fall off when you relapse into normalcy. It is a continuous, constant condition of the mind, a confirmed attitude, a way chosen and adhered to with avid attention.

Today, man dabbles in *yoga* (devotional practices) in the morning hours, revels in *bhoga* (festivity and luxury, catering to the senses) during the day, and tosses about in *toga* (disease) during the night! *Bhakthi* is not to be 'performed' during certain periods every day and superceded by other fashionable attractions. *Bhakthi* is a constant, continuous bent of mind, a habit of thought, a way of life. It must be loyally adhered to whatever may happen---dishonour, distress, despair, deprivation, pleasure, prosperity, power and pomp.

### **God has no trace of anger or worry**

The true devotee is deeply aware of the transitoriness of earthly triumphs. He knows that death is the final arbiter, that God is the only dispenser, and so, he is firm and calm, whether it is foul or fair. He will not slide or climb whatever happens. He knows that the God whom he adores is the indweller in the blade of grass and in the most distant star. God gives ear to the prayers that rise in all languages and even from the silence of the dumb. He has no trace of anger or worry. You too have no reason to develop anger and anxiety.

When the teeth bite your tongue do you get angry at them for hurting? Do you break the teeth that hurt it so? No. For, teeth and tongue are both yours, both *you*. Similarly, he who hurts you and you, are both limbs of the same Body, God. Feel that one-ness and avoid hate. God is on the look-out for his inner vision; He blesses those whose hearts are so vast that they can take in all His children. How can He be pleased when you are so selfish and narrow-minded that you send away His children from the door-step of your heart?

You must first have a clear understanding of the nature of the Goal---God or Goodness or the Universal Absolute---whatever the name, its grandeur, its beneficence, its magnificence. Then, that understanding itself will prompt and urge you towards it. The Universal of which you are a unit is pure, true, egoless, unlimited and everlasting. Contemplate on It and your innate egolessness, truth, purity, and eternity will manifest itself, more and more every day.

### **With God on your side, the world is in your hold**

You may have accumulated riches, acquired deep scholarship and achieved health and strength. But, unless you have gained, in addition, a vision of the Supreme Sovereign, and an aspiration to be ever in the ecstasy of that vision, all that has been garnered by you is mere lumber. India has a great epic, the Mahaabhaaratha, which describes a war between the Kauravas and Paandavas. The Kauravas had superior financial and military resources. They approached Krishna, the Incarnation of the Lord, for help; but, they were content to receive from Him a large army and a huge quantity of hardware.

The Paandavas sought from Him only His Grace! The Lord agreed; He came over to their side, alone and unarmed! He held just a whip and drove the horses of Arjuna's chariot! That was all;

but, that was all that was needed for victory. The Kauravas were defeated to the uttermost; the Paandavas won the empire and eternal fame.

If God is on your side, you have the world in your hold. This is the lesson driven home by the Hindhu scriptures. "Give up all bonds of fight and duty, surrender unreservedly to Me; I shall guard you from sin and liberate you from that sad cycle of 'entrances' and 'exits' on the stage of life. You can remain ever in your own Reality of Eternal Calm," the Lord has assured.

Freedom and Light are what man needs more than anything else. He needs them even more than breath. That is why he is miserable when bound and in the dark.

Man struggles like a fish in a dry bowl, frantically, to return to God, which is his home, and *Aanandha* (divine bliss), which is his element. He seeks God or *Aanandha*, which is but another Name of God, up in space, down in the bowels of the earth, alone or in crowded congregations, in silence or in noise. But all the time the spring of *aanandha* lies in his own heart. He can tap it if only he knows how to delve into the poise of deep meditation.

### **Man can purify himself into divinity by meditation**

Many postpone *saadhana* (spiritual discipline) to old age. This is wrong. Earn the precious reward while you are young and fresh. It is never too soon to begin. The tongue, the eye, the ear, the hand and mind should all be trained from boyhood upwards to avoid evil. If these are kept clean and holy, the Grace of God is won. When the flesh urges you to fall into falsehood, do not yield, stand firm. When the individual is strong and steady, the family prospers: when the family prospers, the village is happy; when the village is happy, the country is secure and strong; when countries are strong and secure, the world is full of humility and reverence, charity and peace.

Sing aloud the glory of God and charge the atmosphere with Divine adoration; the clouds will pour the sanctity through rain on the fields; the crops will feed on it and sanctify, fortify the food; the food will induce Divine urges in man. This is the chain of progress. This is the reason why I insist on group singing of the Names of the Lord.

Man is Divine: he can purify himself into perfect Divinity by the process of *dhyaana* (meditation), taken up with eagerness and followed with faith, by virtuous individuals. As regards the technique of *dhyaana*, different teachers and guides have different methods. I shall give you now .the most universal and the most effective.

### **The most effective method of meditation**

Set aside a few minutes, every day, in the beginning for this; later, you are sure to extend the period, when you experience the thrill of peace. Let it be the hours before dawn. This is preferable because the body: is refreshed by sleep and the peregrinations of day-time have yet to impinge on the senses and distract physical and mental energy. Have a lamp, with a bright little flame, steady and straight, or a candle, before you. The flame does not diminish in lustre, however many lamps may be lit therefrom. So, the flame is the most appropriate symbol of the eternal Absolute.

Sit in the *padmaasana* (lotus posture) or any comfortable *aasana*, in front of the flame. Look on the flame steadily and closing your eyes, try to feel it inside you, between your eyebrows. From there, let it descend down into the lotus of your heart, illumining the path. When it enters the heart, in the centre of the chest, imagine that the petals of the lotus bud open out, one by one, bathing every thought, feeling, emotion and impulse in the Light and removing darkness.

There is no space now for darkness to take refuge; it has to flee before the flame. Imagine that the Light becomes wider, bigger, brighter. It pervades the limbs; they can no more busy themselves in dark, wicked, suspicious activities. They have become, you are conscious of it, instruments of Light, that is to say, of Love. The Light reaches the tongue. Falsehood, slander, bragging, spite vanish from it. It reaches the eyes and the ears. All dark desires that infest and infect them are destroyed by the brilliant Light of Wisdom and Virtue. No more puerility, no more poisoning of the ear. Let your head be charged with Light; all wicked, vicious thoughts disappear, for, these are denizens of darkness. Imagine that Light in you more and more intensely--and it will be so. Let it shine all around you, enveloping you in the brilliance of Love; let it spread from you, in ever widening circles, taking into its fold your kith and kin, the loved ones, friends, companions---nay, strangers, foes, rivals, enemies---all men all over the world, all living beings--all Creation.

### **When light meets light, it is all Light**

Do this every day, without break; for as long as you enjoy it; do this deeply and systematically; a time will certainly come when you can no more relish dark and evil thoughts, no more yearn for dark and sinister books, no more crave for toxic food and drinks, no more handle ugly demeaning things, no more suffer infliction of infamy or injury, no more formulate evil designs. You are then in the realm of the Divine, of Peace beyond words.

Stay on in that thrill, witnessing Light, being Light, everywhere, for all. If you are used to adoring God in any form, visualise that Form in that Light. For, Light is God; God is light. When light meets light, it is all Light. There is no boundary between your light and His Light. They merge, they fulfil.

In this *a-shaanthi* (peacelessness), that is confounding the world, you must seek *prashaanthee* (the higher spiritual peace); in that *prashaanthee*, you can visualise *prakaanthee* (Supreme Splendour) and in that *prakaanthee*, the all-embracing *Paramjyothi* (immanent and transcendent splendour, boundless, benign) is experienced; in that *Paramjyothi*, the Universal Eternal Absolute, the *Paramaathma* is experienced. When the individual meets the Universal it becomes Universal. I and I become we; we and he become only we. Practise this meditation, regularly everyday. At other times, repeat the Name of God (any Name that arouses in you the spirit of adoration and devotion), always taking care to be intensely conscious of His Might, Mercy and Munificence.

### **Sharing *Aanandha* heightens it for both**

I want that in Kampaala people who are interested in spiritual progress must gather in groups for *Bhajan*, and adore God and sing His Glory. It is not enough if you gather in thousands on occasions when a *mahaathma* (sage) comes to town; you must do it as a duty to yourself. Meet once a week or oftener; do *Bhajan*, read some spiritual book that will inspire you to further *saadhana*, meditate for some time and depart, refreshed and strengthened. Feed the little lamp of yours with the oil of enthusiasm provided by godly company.

Wherever possible, you can also move along the streets, singing in chorus the Name of God. This is called *Nagarasankeerthan* in India; it awakens in all who hear and participate, the consciousness of living in the lap of God; it is done before dawn, when the east is suffused with the glow of Sunrise. The day starts with the paean of praise for the Giver of Gifts, the sustainer of life, the strength and solace.

Embodiments of Love! Cultivate Love, pure, unsullied by selfish desires. Share that Love with all your brothers and sisters of all creeds, colours, climes. When your neighbour prays to God, do you not feel kinship with him? Is he not asking in anguish for the same gifts, from the same Giver? He may be asking in another language; in another style; in the formalities of another creed. But, his hunger and thirst are the same as yours. His *Aanandha* and grief are the same as yours. Share that *Aanandha*; sharing heightens it for both. Share that grief; sharing lowers it and robs it of its bite. Let your Love flow into the hearts of others. Stagnant water becomes foul; flowing waters are cool and limpid, Love is *Aanandha*; Love is Power; Love is Light; Love is God.

I shall come among you again, next year, I shall then stay longer, to accept your Love. I shall be happy when each one of you becomes a Lamp of Love, shedding virtue and purity all around you.

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*The tongue is the armour of the heart; it guards one's life. Loud talk, long talk, talk full of anger and hate---all these affect the health of man. They breed anger and hate in others; they wound, they excite, they enrage, they estrange.*

*Why is silence said to be golden?*

*The silent man has no enemies, though he may not have friends. He has the leisure and the chance to dive within himself and examine his own faults and failings. He has no more inclination to seek them in others.*

*Shri Sathya Sai*