

11. The five hoods

THE word, *Vishnu*, means 'That which pervades everywhere,' the Omnipresent. When people are told about an idol of Vishnu, they laugh and condemn it as foolish. But, when we desire to drink the ambrosia that the all-pervading Vishnu is, we require a spoon, a cup or a vessel. The idol is only such a contrivance, by which it is possible to consume the bliss. The cup can be of any shape or design; the joy consists in the nectar that it is able to convey to the person who is thirsty and anguished. *Raso vai sah*---God is ambrosia, sweet, sustaining, strength-giving. You can imbibe Him through a cup shaped as Nataraja or Durga or Krishna, or Linga, or Ganesha, or Christ or any other Form that will arouse the ardour and satisfy the agony.

This is a temple, where I have installed, twenty- one year s ago, one such Form, which many yearning persons love to picture as their most favourite cup! This is the Sai Form, which sat and taught, at *Dhwaarakaamaayi*, at Shirdhi. It has a Sesa (serpent) with five hoods coiled behind it, the idol being in the shadow of the spread hoods.

Now, what does that represent? The five hoods are symbolic of the five senses, which have sinister poisonous potentialities. The eyes draw you away into the realm of fleshy charm and sensual beauty; the ears crave for salacious songs; the tongue overloads your digestive system with highly flavoured food; the nose leads you into jungles and laboratories in search of fragrances and scents; the sense of touch seeks softness in silk and velvet, and flounders man in mire. When man is able to master the senses, and direct them along more beneficent channels---the eye seeing God's footprints in stars and rose-petals, the ear hearing God's voice in the throats of birds and peals of thunder, the tongue tasting God's sweetness in all that appeals to it, the nose discovering fragrance in everything that recalls the glow of God, the sense of touch content to clasp the hand of the forlorn and the distressed as the beloved children of God---then, he can visualise the God installed in the cavity of the heart; that is the lesson the five-hooded *Sesa* imparts!

Be fixed in your own determination

These are days of strikes and bandhs. Groups of persons stop work, start shouting, or desist from activity, in order to gain some end, causing loss or dislocation to others. I would advise you all to declare a strike against the mind! Do not obey its vacillations and temptations. Be fixed in your own determination, to pursue only what your discrimination advises you as beneficent. Ignore the mind; respect the intelligence. Make the senses the servants of the intelligence, not the overlords of the mind. Tell them that the mind is dethroned, it is non-existent! Sensuousness is a disease. It denies you ease and peace. The *roga* (disease) can be cured by *Yoga*, not by *bhoga* (material enjoyment). *Bhoga* means catering to the whims and wildness of the senses; *Yoga* means the regulation and reform of the impulses of the mind which run after goals laid down by the senses! If the water is saltish, how can adding sugar make it more potable? There are other ways to make hard and brackish water, harmless and tasty.

God is all-pervading, but, yet, we have some scientists who assert, "We have searched all outer space, we have looked for Him on the Moon; no; He is nowhere to be found. He does not exist." They do not know what to seek and where; still, they have the impudence to assert that it is not found. Is God an occupant of an identifiable body or Form, has He a habitation and a habiliment that is traditionally His? God is all this and more, He is in all this and beyond. He is the inner

motivator of the very scientist who 'denies' Him! Man himself is God; all matter, even in the Moon, is suffused with the Divine Presence.

Remove the desires that surge in your heart

To search for God with the instruments of the laboratory is like trying to cure pain in the stomach by pouring drops into the eye! There is a technique and a special instrument for that purpose, which the pastmasters in that science have developed and spoken about. Equip yourselves with a clear eye, through detachment and love, sharpen your sense of discrimination, *Viveka*, so that it has no prejudice or predilection, then, you can see God in you, around you, in all that you know and feel and are. The doctor asks you to remove your shirt, before he applies the stethoscope and tries to diagnose your illness. You have another shirt covering your chest, the desires that surge in your heart! Remove that shirt, so that your real nature, that is Divinity, can be revealed to you and all who seek to know you.

All men are caskets, containing Divine Glory. But you love some of them as friendly, hate some others as unfriendly, and divide them into camps and companies. When a man is good to you, attribute that goodness to the godliness in him; when a man is bad to you, be happy that you have given him some satisfaction, by becoming the target for his attention! If he harms the body, sages are unaffected, because they know that they are not the body! If they try to harm the soul, sages know that it is impossible, for the soul is ever in Bliss!

By means of *saadhana*, become that type of sage, unaffected by pleasure and pain, loss or gain, victory or defeat. Be a witness, a disinterested witness of all the gyrations of fortune. *Vichaara* (inquiry), will reveal to you that they are fleeting fantasies of your mind, and not real. By means of *Japa* and *Dhyaana*, you can attain that identity with the Reality, which will convince you of the unreality of all except *Brahmam* (the Universal Absolute).

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Gain internal peace, internal joy; that can be done only when you act without an eye on the gain. The act must be its own reward; or rather, the act must be according to the prompting of the God within, so that its consequence is left to Him. Practise this attitude consistently and you will find great Peace welling within you and around you.

Sathya Sai Baaba