

15. The Achaarya....as God

THIS day, *Guru Pournami*, is celebrated by people as thanksgiving Day for their spiritual preceptors, those who initiated them into spiritual disciplines, *manthra* recitals, *meditation*, *japa* and the study of sacred texts. We have a popular saying, "Without a preceptor, all learning is blind." But, this refers to authentic *Gurus*, those who have the double qualification of *gu* and *ru*: *gu* meaning, devoid of gunas and *ru* meaning, devoid of *ruupa*---that is to say, those who have transcended Form and Flavour, those who have merged in God, or *the Aathma* Itself. It is only these who can help you to attain.

The Vedhas declare that the Mother, the Father, the *Achaarya* (Preceptor) have to be treated as God. The Mother brings forth and trains the emotions and intelligence, and fosters and feeds the body during the critical first few years of life. The father protects and guides, and supports till the child is able to fend for itself. The Achaarya opens the inner eye; he shows the way, for joy and happiness, here and hereafter. So, the responsibility of the guru is overwhelming. Today, we have gurus who scheme for earning riches and status; their minds are poisoned by the fumes of egotism and greed. They cause even the faithful to desert the path of discipline which they have entered. Others have vast learning and consequently, they suffer from swelled head and the infection of competition will not accept such men as His favourites. You may put in an envelope a letter written in exceptionally beautiful style, containing precious sentiments and decorated with charming drawings--but, unless you affix a 20 paise stamp, it cannot reach the person whom you address. On the other hand, the paper may be crumpled and cheap; the sentiments may be commonplace; the style may be poor. But, fix the stamp--it reaches the destination! What is essential is the yearning, the anguish. If that is evident, the prayer will reach God.

Eternal vigilance is the price of peace

Every object in nature, every incident in time, is really speaking, teaching you a lesson, as the postal stamp does. Dakshinaamurthy was one morning walking in slow steps along the sea-beach. He looked at the waves---and drew a lesson therefrom. He saw the waves slowly but systematically, carrying towards the shore a bit of straw, passing it on from one crest to another, until it was deposited on land! The sea is a broad expanse, it is deep and mighty. But, yet, it is constantly engaged in clearing itself from all extraneous things. It knows that, you must not neglect a desire, for the reason that it is a straw. Force it back, on to the shore, where it can do no harm. Eternal vigilance is the price of peace and happiness. Dakshinaamurthy exclaimed, "Wonderful! The Sea has taught me a great lesson."---the lesson that danger lurks, when desire raises its head.

Take the example of Seetha. She was the daughter of the greatest *jnaani* and philosopher of the age, Janaka. She was the consort of the Lord; her father-in-law the mighty emperor Dasharatha. Nevertheless, when her lord was exiled and sent into the forest for 14 years, she gave up all the luxuries to which she had become accustomed, and insisted on being taken by Him into the same forest, as His companion. What tremendous detachment, what admirable adherence to the dictates of morality! But, when she saw in the woods, a 'golden deer', desire entered her heart; as a result she had to suffer the agony of separation from the Lord. That is the tragedy of desire, arising from the senses and the mind. He who instructs you to give up desire is the real *Guru*.

Keep the heart cool, pure, soft as the moonlight

Each religion emphasises one name and one Form of and recommends them for acceptance. Some even insist that God has no other Name or Form. But, the Reality is beyond name and form, *Akshara* (the indestructible, eternal) as the characteristic and Om as the Form. You reach the *Akshara* stage---the stage of attributeless unity---in three steps of Saadhana: (i) I am Thine, (ii) Thou art mine, and (iii) Thou art myself. Through Saadhana, one must transcend the duality of I and You. I is only the reflection of You in this body. The consummation is reached when duality is superseded. That is why it has been declared, "It is good to be born in a church; but, it is not good, to die in it." That is to say, before life ends one must go beyond the limits set by institutionalised religion and reach the vast limitless expanse of the *Aathman*, which pervades all.

As the Judge from Calcutta said just now, in his speech, the head is of no help in this Saadhana; the heart must win the goal. Raamadhaas of Bhadhraachalam used to write on palm leaves hundreds of songs on his favourite Deity, Raama; the leaves accumulated into a gigantic pile. One day, Raamdhaas stood by its side and wondered, "Am I the fellow who wrote all this? Did I write them for my satisfaction or for pleasing Raama?" He carried the whole pile and threw them into the Godhaavari River; Only 108 songs floated above the waters; the rest sank and were lost for ever. Those 108 came forth from the heart; the rest were products of intelligence, cleverness. They rose from the head. God does not reside in the head; He is *Hridhayavaasi*, the Dweller in the Heart. Keep the heart cool, pure and soft---as the moonlight is on this day---the *Guru Poornima* Day.

For this, your mind has to be cleansed by the mind only. Just as you shape an iron sickle or axe with an iron hammer, the mind is the shaper and shaped, both. The power behind the mind which helps it to shape it well, is Faith in God. That is why it is declared that one must have faith in God, holy places, the scriptures, the *manthra*, the soothsayer, the drug and the teacher. Cultivate that Faith and everything else will be added unto you.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 29. 7.1969

Our failures and disappointments, our setbacks and our problems, need not retard our progress, if only we use the obstacles as "stepping stones" and not as "stopping stones." The man worth while, is the man who can smile, when everything goes dead wrong.

Sathya Sai Baaba