

## 8. "Stone as God," not "God as stone"

IN the culture of India, all religions and faiths are integrated harmoniously for, it emphasises Righteous life, Love and Service, beyond which there is no higher *saadhana*. But people have grown deaf to the call of this Message, and those whose duty it is to attract people's attention to the lapse have been rendered weak and vacillating by the attraction of alien attitudes.

Throughout history, India has drawn the loyalty of her children to the four goals of *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kaama* and *Moksha*, or rather, to the worldly ideals of *Artha* and *Kaama* to be worked out within the limits set by *Dharma* on the one side and *Moksha* on the other. *Artha* (wealth) has to be won through *Dharma* (righteousness); the only *Kaama* (desire, yearning) worth encouragement is the desire for *Moksha* (Liberation). Love is the impetus and Truth is the gain; they are the two wheels of the chariot of life. *Ahmisa paramo dharmah*---"Non-violence is the most meritorious activity." These axioms have been the life-breath of this nation since millenia, and they have become the heritage of each man, woman and child. Therefore, it must be said, the present plight when we find violence stalking the land, and brother stands with dagger drawn against brother, is a standing disgrace to all that the land has been proclaiming as precious.

### God can be cognised by pure consciousness only

*Hin* means *himsa* (violence) and *dhu* means *dhuura* (distant), so that *Hindhu* means a person who is devoid of violence, who loves and sympathises, who helps and serves--not one who hides and hits, harms and draws blood. The same sky is over every one's head; the same earth supports every one's feet; the same air enters every, one's lungs! The same God brought all forth, brings up all and brings about the end of this earthly career. Why then this inhuman role of foe and fanatic, of fight and feud?

In the Geetha, the Lord has declared, *Beejam maam sarva bhoothaanaam*---"I am the seed for all beings." The tree is a broad spread of leaf and flower, fruit and green. It is a fanned, out system of trunk, branches, twigs! All have grown out of one single small seed! And, every fruit of that tree has seeds of the same nature inside it! So too, contemplate for a while on the magnificent multitude of life, all its rich variety of strong and weak, prey and hunter, distressed and delighted, creeping, crawling, flying, floating, walking, hanging, burrowing, diving, swimming--all this uncountable variety of created beings have come out of the *beejam* (Lord) and each of them has in its core, the *beejam*, again (the Lord)! Visualise this Immanent Divinity; you become humble, wise, and full of love.

The God who is the origin and the goal can be cognised only by the pure consciousness, after *chiththa shuddhi* (cleansing of the mind) is attained. And, to cleanse the consciousness, one must start early. The race is won by those who start early and drive slowly; then, they reach safely, not otherwise. Put the little feet on the path of God; the joy of the first steps will lead them forward. We in India see God in trees, in plants, in birds and beasts; we worship Him everywhere, in all things. People laugh at you when you worship a picture; and, some weak-minded persons feel ashamed themselves, when they do so. But, we are treating the picture as God, and not treating God as a picture. Worship the stone as God, not treat God as stone!

### Saadhana is necessary to get vision of God

Seeing alone is believing, for these critics. Will they deny the Sun in the sky, when the clouds hide it from view? It is the cloud of *Maaya*, the curtain of confusion, that hides God from the

consciousness of man. The eye affected by cataract swears that there is no lamp in the room; but, an operation to remove it is needed for him to become aware of the lamp. That operation is the symbol of the spiritual discipline that one has to undergo, in order to get the Vision of God.

Man is flying to the Moon, and diving into the sea; but, he does not know how to live on earth with his fellowmen, in love and peace. He moves towards the Moon for fear that others may reach before him; and dives through the sea to strike terror, himself terrified of others! The way to live without fearing or causing fear is laid down in the Geetha, the very first *shloka* of which is about *Dharmakshethra* (field of righteousness))The *shloka* is about a question which Dhritharaashtra asks. Who is this Dhritharaashtra? The word means, he who holds fast to the kingdom, who will not give it up, who is attached to it fanatically. Now, what is the *raashtra* (kingdom) for a person? All that is not he are his possessions; that is to say, his body, his senses, his knowledge, his feeling, emotions, besides his house, car, lands, reputation, etc. *Dhritharaashtra* means, any person who treats things not his, as he himself, a person who identifies himself with his body, for example. He asked, Sanjaya to tell him what was happening in Kurukshethra and Dharmakshethra---The fields of Action and of Virtue.

### **Develop nearness and kinship with God**

*Sanjaya* means, one who has won the victory, the victory over the senses and other forces that limit and divert the higher faculties which lead man Godward. He was asked about the progress of the battle that was being fought in Kurukshethra, which was also Dharmakshethra; his answer is summed up in the very last, the 700th *shloka* of the Geetha: "The side that merges in the *Yogeshwara*, the Lord of those who seek to merge their identities, to lose their separate names and forms, Lord Krishna, that side will gain the victory." The first *shloka* has the question and the last, the answer! The rest of the text is the elaboration of this theme.

People have specialised in the various methods of worshipping God; there is a host of rites, ceremonials, hymns, festivals, fasts, vows, pilgrimages; but, the best form of worship, the one that will bring the Grace of God in ample measure, is to obey the commands of God. Adulation is poor adoration! Placing God at a great distance from you and praising Him as Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent will not please Him. Develop nearness, proximity, kinship with God. Win Him by obedience, loyalty, humility and purity.

Make your lives simple; fill the daily tasks with love and mutual co-operation; be tolerant towards the errors and failings of others; look upon them with sympathy and understanding; be calm and without agitation, under all conditions. Then, you can be happy and the country can be happy. Your sentiments will be unselfish and your emotions, tender. Envy, hatred and vindictiveness can gain no entrance into the stronghold of your mind, where! mercy, benevolence and indulgence stand guard.

### **Disappointments test your fortitude**

God is not involved in either rewards or punishments. He only re-flects, re-sounds and re-acts! He is the Eternal Unaffected Witness! You decide your own fate. Do good, be good, you get good in return; be bad, do bad deeds, you reap bad results. Do not thank or blame God. Thank yourself, blame yourself! He does not even will that creation, protection and destruction shall take place. They follow the same law, the innate law of the *maaya-ridden* universe.

This electric current, for example, can be used by us, to turn the fans and give us coolness in this sultry weather; it can be used to give light, to magnify human speech and take the sound nearer

to you; it can be made to produce many copies of a printed sheet. In all these cases, it creates. But, if you are so overcome by all the good that it does and your admiration goes a little too far and you grasp the wire that carries it to you, you are killed! The current creates; it protects; it destroys; it depends on how we utilise it.

Let the petty wishes for which you now approach God be realised or not; let the plans for promotion and progress which you place before God, be fulfilled or not; they are not so important after all. The primary aim should be to become Masters of yourselves, to hold intimate and constant communion with the Divine that is in you as well as in the Universe of which you are a part. Welcome disappointments, for they toughen you and test your fortitude.

The gold that was melting in the fire, before the goldsmith with his blowpipe, told him: "Do not exult when you drop me into the fire and I am molten and the alloy is taken out of me. Remember I am rendered purer and more valuable every moment, whereas all that you get for your pains is smoke in the face and soot in the hand!"

### **Believe that ills draw you nearer to God**

This is the lesson the Mahaabhaaratha teaches! Never give up God, holding Him responsible for your ills; believe rather that the ills draw you nearer God, making you call on Him always when you are in difficulty. You suffer stomach pain and the doctor gives you the pain of operation, in order to reduce that pain and give you relief. Then, you say, you have joy! Joy is but the interval between two moments of pain, and pain the interval between two moments of joy.

Raamakrishna Paramahansa had a boil on his throat and he could not swallow any food or even drink liquids without much pain. At this, Vivekaanandha pleaded with his Master, and prayed to him to seek the Mother's Grace so that he might take in at least liquid food. Raamakrishna replied that he did pray to Mother and the Mother answered, "Are you not now taking enough food through all these billions of throats, the throats of all living beings in the world? Unable to take in through one out of the billion, why are you so upset?" The one *Aathma* (Consciousness) is pervading everywhere; that was the lesson taught by the Mother. Everyone is just a wave, a part of the Universal, the *Paramaathma*. That is the Truth, the *Sathya*.

*Sathyaan naasthi paro dharmah---*"There is no higher *Dharma* than Truth." Be true; that is the acme of righteousness, the essence of all morality. The truth of the One-ness of all involves Love, Service, Peace and so, it is the basis of moral living. All distinctions are temporary walls erected by ambition or hate.

### **All differences are trivial transitory marks**

Now, *Hindhu Dharma* or Christian *Dharma* or Muslim *Dharma* is identified with external conformities like dress, coiffure, facial hair-styles, rosaries and caste marks, and other attitudes like whom one can touch and yet remain ceremonially pure, when one can pray, where one has to eat and what, and such trivial, transitory marks. It is mostly superstition and mumblery, don't touch this, don't touch that!

*Dharma* must be surging from the heart as the cool energising water of *prema* and *shaanthy* (love and peace). You can learn what exactly *Dharma* is from the Raamaayana. Raama is the very embodiment of *Dharma*; every word and every deed is resonant with its message. Lakshmana, the brother of Raama, who followed his footsteps throughout his earthly career, is the symbol of the Mind; walking on the footprints of *Dharma*, it never lost its way; it triumphed in the lap of

Victory. The Raamaayana is a text-book for *Dharma* to be lived out in every home, by the father, the mother, the son, the brother, the members of a joint family---both men and women.

Gandhiji dreamed of *Raamaraajya* in Bhaarith; he wanted that people here must live like the subjects of Raama in Ayodhya. But look at the sad contrast! Then, the brothers Raama and Lakshmana reached the supreme state of identity as a result of the Love between them. Now brothers reach the Supreme Court, in their attempt to resolve differences and disputes, over some paltry properties, which are not proper ties at all! People climb rostrums and shout 'Brothers! and Sisters!,' but that platitude remains a flatitude! As soon as they descend from that altitude, the sentiment melts into thin air. The brotherhood one has to cultivate is the readiness to give love for love, heart for heart and life for life!

### **Purify yourselves and purify the atmosphere**

*Bhaaratheeya* culture condemns violence as bestial and even worse. Though the epics and ancient tales of this land speak of demons, men and gods as diverse, they are names only for traits, which all share to a more or less extent. Humanity has to get rid of the dross of demonism and invest itself with splendour of divinity.

Take the story of Krishna in the Bhaagavatha. Kamsa has *asuric* (demonic) character; his sister, Devaki, is human, and she brought forth Krishna, the Divine, that incarnated to rescue the world from perdition! The person who married Devaki, the person who had the honour to be the father of the Incarnation was Vasudheva. His sister's son, Shishupaala is an *asura* (demon)! And, strangely enough, Shishupaala nearly married the future Queen of Krishna, Rukmini. Krishna carried her away from the wedding gathering and saved her from being wedded to the demonic personality, Shishupaala! So, it is clear, that the inclinations and behaviours of persons decided the category into which they were thrown---demon, human or divine.

Be therefore ever vigilant that your activities do not drag you down into the depths of demonhood; let them elevate you into the heights of Divinity. It is really commendable that in this City so many of you are engaged in *Bhajans*, *Nagarsankeerthans* and *Naamasmaran*. Let the Name of the Lord proceed from the heart, not from the lips. Be Prahladahas, in the land that is sick with too many Hiranyakashipus. The Name of the Lord is the *Narasimha* that will save and sustain! Purify yourselves and purify the atmosphere, in which and by which you have to live. That is my advice and my blessing.

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*As the shadow that you cast is reduced bit by bit with every step that you take towards the Sun, until the Sun shines right on the top of your head and the shadow crawls under your feet and disappears, so maayaa too becomes less and less effective as you march towards jnaana.*

*Then it is well established in your understanding and maayaa falls at your feet and is powerless to deceive you further; it disappears, so far as you are concerned.*

*Sathya Sai Baba*