

## 24. Lost and found

THE two *Pandiths* who spoke now elaborated on the Path of *Bhakthi*, in words that were sweet and inspiring, quoting the experiences of Gargi, Maithreyi, Janaka and Nachikethas, and pouring out the nectar of *Upanishadhic* thought, on the Beauty of the Divine Form and the delicious charm of the Divine Name. But, all this has now become the possession of a few; scholars and pious personages are themselves by their conduct belying their professions of the validity of what they proclaim as true! Faith in God is declining, more as a result of the hypocrisy of the pious than the apostasy of the impious! We are now face to face with the crisis of the "Failure of Faith." So believers like you have to demonstrate by your courage and conviction that faith in God can be genuine and beneficial. The Prashaanthi Vidhwanmahaasabha has been assigned this mission of watering the roots of faith and reviving drooping spirits, by example and, to a lesser extent, by precept.

The Bhagavath Geetha describes the delusion that the mind of man contrives to confound him with, and says that it is well nigh invincible. *Pandith* Somasekhara Shaastry confessed that, in spite of all his mastery of abstruse *Vedhaanthic* dialectics, he found the task impossible and so, he advised that you should resort to the path of *Bhakthi* or dedication and devotion. He said that the most effective prescription for controlling the wayward mind was to tie it to the Lotus Feet of the Lord! Then, he said, all its freakishness, panic, license and agitation will stop.

### **Man is born with inherited twists and turns**

What then is the method by which you can bind this wild elephant to the Feet of God? The heavy tomes comprising the scriptures of all faiths and systems proclaim the answer in just two words: KNOW THYSELF. Every school boy today knows about the Sun, the Moon, the stars, about the outermost regions of space but, not even the most encyclopaedic scholar knows the answer to the very elementary query, "Who am I?" "I" is the most frequently used word; it recurs many times a second in conversation--I said, I saw, I went, I heard, I have this, I am King, I am a ryot, I am a child, I am a *Pandith*, I am tall, I am lean; but, who is this I that has these attributes and possessions? The *Upanishadhs* declare that the I is not the personalised individual; that is a delusion. It is not limited to the body which it inhabits. It is the most universal of categories, it is the eternal absolute, the *Param-aathma* (Supreme Self). It is the Omnipresent, Universal, Consciousness, the *Sath-chith-aanandha* (Being-awareness-bliss).

How to know this Truth, as an indelible, authentic experience? That is the key to liberation, to eternal joy, to the conquest of grief. The trouble is man is shaped into a basically incompetent individual by the activities of many lives; he is born with inherited twists and turns, knots and naves. Only faith and steady practice can overcome this handicap.

He is burdened with the delusion that the true is the false, that the temporary is eternal. Long identification has trained him so; so he has to be re-educated into the right vision. The truest thing, the fact that persists unchanged, is this I itself. All else is unreal, appearing as real. You may ask, how can this I be true? I grow, I am healthy once, I fall ill, I grow old. But, in and through all the growth and decay, the I persists. "I slept nicely," you say after the sleep experience, when you were not aware of the body, the senses or even the mind, not to speak of the external world.

### **Three desires which man cannot escape**

There are three desires which every 'I' cannot escape from. I must live, is the first. The will to live is overpowering and paramount. This is the urge for immortality. The desire to know is the second. This too is an unquenchable thirst and is an indication of the Omniscience of which the I is the inheritor. The desire for joy is the third, prompting man behind the senses into the outer world, for pleasures. This evidence shows that deep in the core of the I, there is a spring of *Aanandha* which seeks its mate and its fulfilment. When we speak of the yard of cloth, the litre of honey, the foot or yard, these are first fixed and then the measure or length is interpreted in terms of the already determined standard, isn't it? So too, the I is *Sath* (Immortal Existence), *Chith* (Universal Knowledge) and *Aanandha* (Absolute Bliss). Individuals are measured and weighed according to the approximation of each to the standard of the Universal I.

*Dharma* (Righteousness) is the measure of *Jnaana* (Wisdom). Intellectual enlightenment, cosmic consciousness, these must result in, not only elevation, elation and exaltation, but a quickening of the moral sense. The *Jnaani* has the highest moral character, after the illumination he has achieved. By the subjugation of his impulses and propensities to his cleansed Will, and the subjection of his Will to the ideal of Goodness which is God, he becomes the embodiment of *Dharma*. This is what has made Bhaarath the land which could lead other nations along the moral path.

### **Righteousness will save and sustain man**

Life has flowed here along the threefold current of BHAA-va (pure emotion), RAA-ga (sweet melody) and TH-aala (even tempo), and so, BHAA-RA-TH got a profound meaning. It is a piece of good fortune to be born in this land and be heir to this grand heritage. Living up to its claims, developing it according to one's capacity, is indeed greater fortune.

Vyaasa and Vaalmeekei have both painted on the golden canvas of their poetry the eternal values of *Dharma*. Vyaasa has drawn the picture of the Paandava brothers, hunted, tortured, persecuted, exiled, impoverished, humiliated, but, yet unbroken, because they relied on righteousness, emerging triumphantly at the end, through the Grace of God which is the reward. Vaalmeekei too has depicted Raama bearing with perfect equanimity the different phases of fortune, carrying the torch of *Dharma* with its flame unquenched even in the wildest storm. *Dharmo rakshathi rakshithah*---"Be right, righteousness will save you"---this is the refrain of the Mahaabhaaratha of Vyaasa and the Raamaayana of Vaalmeekei. Practise it loyally; it will save you, sustain you, strengthen you.

In the Bhagavath Geetha, you will find Krishna asking Arjuna to 'offer *Me*,' 'surrender to *Me*,' 'leave everything to *Me*.' This *Me* is no other than the I, that is the God within every one, the I which makes every one declare I shall do this, I own this, etc., the I that prompts the amoeba and the *Avathaar* into activity. I makes the tiger feel "I am hungry, I must seek prey," it makes the eagle soar high so that it may spy its meat down below, it makes the banyan tree spread wide so that it may get more of sunlight on to its leaves, it makes the jasmine creeper cling to the tree so that it may not drag on the ground and be denied the caressing wind and the warming sun. That 'I' can never grow weak, or fall ill, or falter; it is *Sath*, *Chith* or *Aanandha*. It is eternal everywhere.

### **Man is something beyond time and space**

Some desperate persons torn by anguish confess, "I am killing myself; I shall put an end to this misery; I shall be happy, after that, at least!" He is certain that his 'I' will survive death. He knows he is something beyond time and space and causation. This I throbs in every heart, exults in every body and knows through every brain. It is a spark of the Universal I which is God.

The *Pandiths* said that *Bhakthi*, the path of dedication, is easy and can be adopted by all. Well; it is not as easy as they depict. For, surrender of the little i to the greater I is a hard process. One has to overcome a series of obstacles, with alacrity and pleasure. When you yearn to come to Puttaparthi, you gladly bear all the obstacles; but, when the yearning is absent, you magnify the difficulty of alighting at Guntakal Junction, crossing platforms, boarding another train towards Dharmaavaram, transporting yourselves with luggage to the Bus Stand, and travelling by bus to Puttaparthi; perhaps, you give up the idea, as beyond you! First cultivate the yearning, foster it, then everything is easy.

### **God is the Seed of all Beings**

Learn from the experience of elders who have tasted the Bliss of knowing the I as a wave on the breast of the limitless Ocean of Grace. Or, since you are known only to yourself or to the God that is inside you, investigate it unaided, alone. When you ask another the question, "Who am I?" he can answer only when he knows himself as well as yourself. It is easy to explain and expound that All is I (*Sarvam Brahma mayam*), but, it is hard indeed to realise it. You know that you die, that others die, and so, you find it difficult to believe that the I does not die. The pot may die, but, clay remains; this silver box may die, but, the silver remains. The body may die, but, the I does not die. The *jeevi* (soul) survives. The elements that composed the body also reach back to their elemental stage.

The Lord declares that He is the Seed of all Beings, "*Beejam maam sarva bhoothaanaam.*" Watch a tree! The roots, the trunk, the branches, the twigs, the shoots, the leaves, the flowers, the fruits all look different in form, taste, hardness, smell; they have different uses for the tree and for us. But, all this manifold variety is produced, sustained, subsumed, and served by One Single SEED. And, each fruit contains the same SEED! He is the Seed, He is the Tree, He is the Fruit. Love is the Seed, Love is the Tree, Love is the Fruit.

The Tree of Creation is hanging down with its roots in Heaven; or else, it will dry for want of sustenance; it is called *Ashwattha*, the Horse Tree, for *Ashwa* or Horse is in Indian tradition, the symbol of restlessness, wavering agitatedness. The Banyan Tree which is the *Ashwattha* shivers in every leaf, with the slightest whisper of wind. You must have heard of the *Ashwamedha* or Horse Sacrifice, a great rite in the past. The inner meaning of that rite is the destruction of the wayward mind, the *Ashwa*!

### **Wildness of the mind can be controlled by practice**

Arjuna prayed to Kaishna how the wildness of the mind can be controlled. Krishna prescribed *abhyaasa* (practice). You learn to talk or walk, eat and write, all through trial and error, constant practice, don't you? The mother feeds the baby, using many a song and ventriloquial demonstrations and distractions, but, later, through the force of habit born out of daily exercise, it starts feeding on its own, its hands taking the food to its mouth, even in pitch dark! Take the mind to God and keep it there for a short time every day morning and evening.

God is so merciful that He will come ten steps towards you, if you but take one step towards Him. Vibheeshana, the brother of Raavana, inquired from Hanumaan whether Raama will accept his homage and take him under His protecting shade. He said, "I am the brother of His worst enemy, whom He has vowed to destroy; I am a member of the demonic race; I am unacquainted with the *Vedhas* or *Shaasthras*, or the rituals of the *Aaryns*." Then Hanumaan replied, "O you fool! Do you think He cares for ritual correctitude, or family status or scholarship? If so, how could He accept me, a monkey"? That settled the matter. Vibheeshana was assured of Grace.

When Vibheeshana went to Raama later, He asked the elder monkeys around Him whether He could accept Vibheeshana into the fold. Of course. He did not need any counsel from any one. He was never influenced by others. But, still, just to bring them into the picture, He consulted them and made a pretence of not having made up His mind yet. When Sugreeva said 'no,' Raama reminded him that he too had come to him, first, giving up his elder brother) When Lakshmana said that the only treatment he deserved was to be thrown back into Lanka, Raama said, "Yes! I am resolved to crown him as the emperor of Lanka, after the demise of Raavana."

#### **Raama accepts surrender on the spot**

Whoever surrenders, Raama accepts, on the spot, without reservations. When some one suggested that Vibheeshana should not be promised a Throne, for, Raavana may fall at the Feet of the Lord and earn pardon for his iniquity, Raama replied, "In that case, I will hold both hands of Bharatha and beg him to make Vibheeshana Emperor of Ayodhya, our ancestral domain; we both Bharatha and I, will spend our time happily in the forests."

You must discover your identity; then only can you have Peace. You are like a man who has forgotten his name, his address, his mission in life. Realise it and try to delve into yourself, so that you may know who you are. Then, you get security and peace. Sharpen your intellect for this purpose, cleanse your consciousness for this purpose, through *Sathsang*, *Japa*, *Dhyaana*, *Naamasmaran*, (holy company, chanting, meditation and constant thought of the Lord) etc. That is the advice I give.

*Dhashara, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 5-10-1970*