

27. Maaya and mayaa

THE Pandiths of the Prashaanthi Vidwaanmahaasabha have been everyday telling you about the Witness of the three stages: the waking stage, the dream stage and the deep sleep stage. They have been quoting various *shlokas* from the scriptures to establish that you are the witness, and not the participant and that you have only to wake up from the slumber of ignorance to realise this. During day, you are engrossed in what may be called day-dreams, at night you are either dreaming or lying dormant, with only the 'I' consciousness alive, but, not aware even of that!

This fundamental ignorance called *Maayaa* plays many tricks with you. It makes you believe the rope to be snake and you shiver and run away. It makes you imagine a lake of water where we have only the hot sands of the desert, and you run towards it with your dry tongue, to allay thirst! And you call it, "mayaa," "through me," "for me," identifying yourselves with it, as if it is real and beneficial. The moment you realise it is *Maayaa* (illusory), it ceases to bother you.

The dog will stop barking at its own shadow in the stream, when it knows that it is not another dog, but is only itself. All are shadows, and so, whom are we to hate and whom are we to prefer? What is the attitude of the wise? "Give up attachment, give up entanglements---*thyaga.(renunciation)*, that alone grants freedom," say the *Vedhas*. Renounce the idea of your being separate; see in all beings, yourself; and yourself in all beings. That is the highest renunciation, the renunciation of the sense of ego, which makes you cling to this temporary habitation, this bundle of bone and flesh, this shell with a Name and Form. Spiritual exercise consists of two things' Contemplation of God, and discovery of one's innate nature or reality.

Be the witness of your activities and thoughts

The inherent nature of fire is 'to bum'; of water, 'to wet'; of stone, 'to be heavy.' The nature of man consists in the yearning 'to know.' This attribute has come into man from the moment he put on this body and entered the stage, to play the present role. You are now believing that you are the role. And, enjoying and suffering as a result of that belief. Just as you get cured of the bite you get from a snake in your dream as soon as you wake up, so too, when you awake from *maaya*, and become yourself, the fear and grief will disappear. When an actor weeps or laughs on the stage, he watches his own weeping or laughing and tries to make it more realistic and effective. So too, be the witness of your activities and thoughts; keep afar and away, without attachment or disgust.

Science asks the questions, "What? and How?" and seeks to get the answers from the objective world of Name and Form, the world one can see, hear, taste, touch and smell, the world one can categorise through reason. But the science of the spirit asks the question, "WHY? For what purpose?" It discovers that *maayaa* is the answer for the Why! Sheer delight, at confusing reason, through the illusion of manifoldness! Ice and steam are but water, though they appear so different in every way; diamond is but carbon; jewels are but gold; pots are but clay. Go into the truth and you see the One behind the manifold! *Brahman* alone is the One; all else is the superimposition of name and form upon its *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* (Being-Awareness-Bliss) essence.

Feel in your heart that God is the doer and enjoyer

Fill the consciousness with the thought of the One, it will get saturated in *Aanandha*; fill it with ideas of the many, it will get befouled by hate and partiality, prejudice and envy. The world is the creation of your mind; go into deep sleep; it is negated! That is why sleep is said to be a form of *Samaadhi*, when the *dhee* (intellect) becomes *sama* (balanced), merged in equanimity. Arjuna said, "Lord! YOUR *maaya* is difficult to overcome!" The *maaya* is His *leela* (sport). So, take refuge in Him, for, He alone can save you from the machination of His creation.

You need not run away to a cave in the Himaalayas for this *saadhana* (spiritual discipline); you can be where you are, carrying out whatever duties life has cast on you. Only, feel in the cave of your heart that He is the doer, He is the enjoyer; that you see because He is the power behind the eye. The *Aathma* (the Divine) is the cell, in this torch (body), wherein the eye is the bulb and the intellect, the switch.

When you go to a petty officer armed with tiny authority, you bend your heads low and kow-tow in fear, or approach him in awe and reverence afraid that he will reprimand you for your failings and defects. When you approach God, the source of all authority, whose ukase runs over the entire Universe, how humble, honest and sincere you should be in reverence, awe and purity! Remember, God is your guardian, when you sleep; when you are helpless; even when you have forgotten or neglected or discarded Him. He has no need for the things you offer, or promise to offer. He is ever content, ever blissful, ever full, ever free. Do your duty to yourself---that is enough offering for Him.

Faith and steadiness will make you master the culture

If you do not care to spend your time for promoting love among men, do not wake up at 4-30 a.m.! You can wake up an hour later!, for that will save others an hour of bother! If you are eager to fill time with your works, rise at 4, there is no harm! If you cannot desist from talking scandal of others, sleep a little longer. While going in groups engaged in *Nagarasankeerthan*, if you must discuss with your friends, or neighbours, the menu for the day, or the illtreatment that your mothers-in-law are meting out, do not join the *Sankeerthan* round! Keep away, and save others who are more eager and sincere.

When the *puuja* with 108 or 1008 names is progressing, do not be satisfied, when the sound falls on the ear! Try to grasp the meanings too, so that you can ruminate over the glory, which each name denotes. When you hear over the phone that your son got a son, you feel immensely happy; but, if you do not know the meaning of what he says, and if it is just a jumble of sound for you, how can you derive the intended joy? Then, share in the *bhajan*, too. That will keep you always in the higher regions of Divine Ecstasy, where you will be cool and calm.

The higher you go, the cooler is the atmosphere. The lower you come, the hotter it is. So, keep yourself up, by means of *dhyaana* and *japam*. Learn a lesson from these Americans and other foreigners. They have no background of the culture, of the music or theology, or philosophy, or metaphysics of this country. Their faith and steadiness have made them master the culture, the music and the words and they sing the *bhajan* songs with the same or even more gusto and enthusiasm than many of you, in style that was strange and weird to them, a few months or weeks ago.

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Constant practice with full faith will transmute nara into Naaraayana, maanava into Maadhava (human into Divine); for Naaraayana is your real nature, Maadhava is your real essence. You are but a wave of the sea; know it, and you are free.

Sathya Sai Baaba