

40. The toughest armour

INDIA has, at present, a great responsibility. She has to preserve in its pristine purity the culture she has inherited from the hoary past. This is a duty she owes to the world. That culture enshrines the highest human values and the most valid of keys to the understanding of human destiny. She must also spread these teachings among all mankind, in order that the cause of Truth and Universal Harmony and Peace be promoted. And, the teachings have to be lived and practised and experienced by every Indian, so that they may be listened to with faith by those for whom they are intended. Mere propaganda, without the proof of practical application discernible in the propagandist will bear no fruit.

So everyone must study the elements of this Culture and live the ideals laid down therein; that is the best means of spreading it. In other countries, there is a composite culture, a certain uniformity of faith, and only a few religions of a kindred nature claiming the obeisance of the people. But, in India, we see the co-existence and even the co-operation of many faiths, many traditions and many culture-traits. India is a beautiful garden, where multicoloured beds of flowers add charm and fragrance to life. Every citizen of India has the privilege and pleasure of guarding and tending this lovely garden of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love.

Indians have to cherish the memory of their martyrs

How did this country become the source of this great message of Truth? A long line of heroes and martyrs struggled to set the example and elevate the ideal; they suffered untold misery and had often to sacrifice their all, including their lives, in their struggle. But, they won in the end and it is that heritage and memory that you have to cherish and foster. King Harischandra willingly faced a series of tribulations and tortures in his single-pointed pursuit of Truth. The Paandavas exiled themselves into the forest for thirteen years and bore extreme penury and dishonour, in their determination to uphold Truth. Sri Raama was the very embodiment of Truth and Morality. From time immemorial, this country has made truth and righteous conduct the foundations of its culture. Every act and movement--material, moral, administrative and *adhyathmic* (spiritual)--has been tested and evaluated on the touchstone of Truth and Morality. Here, no person can be honoured as great unless he is also good.

Truth and *Dharma* (Right Conduct) are the most effective armour for us. Other countries rely on atom bombs and hydrogen bombs; for us, these two shields are enough. Some of you know, I believe, the story of Paandavas. Dharmaraaja (born of *Dharma*) was the eldest brother. He had on either side of him, the brothers Bheema and Arjuna. On either side of Bheema and Arjuna, stood the two other brothers, Nakula and Sahadheva. Arjuna was the embodiment of the clear sharp intellect and Bheema was the symbol of physical might and heroism. The lesson conveyed by this picture of the brothers is: when *Dharma* or Righteousness is supported on either side by Intellectual Might and Physical Valour, success is assured. Only, the two, namely, intellect and courage must obey the dictates of *Dharma* and not defy it; or disregard its directives.

When there is Peace there will be Divinity

India stands forth among the nations of the world as Dharmaraaja, with her loyalty and steady faith in peace and mutual cooperation for noble ends. America is the Arjuna, ready with her weapons of incalculable destructive power. Russia is the Bheema, with her formidable might. India's strength lies in her adherence to *Dharma*. All other countries whose strength lies only in

their fire-power can earn victory only when they surrender ultimately to the force of Righteousness. If we safeguard *Dharma*, *Dharma* in its turn will safeguard us. *Dharma* is the life-hood of *Prema*. Where there is Love, there will be Peace. Where there is Peace, there will be Divinity. And, where there is Divinity, there will be Bliss.

These are eternal truths; but, Indians themselves are losing faith in them and they have started ridiculing them and refusing to practise them. Such persons are insulting their own mother; mother, and mother-country have to be revered equally, according to the scriptures. You honour the mother by obeying her and fulfilling her wishes, you honour mother-country by paying heed to the age-long traditions and hoary ideals that have stood the test of time.

No one honours a renegade. He condemns himself by denying his country. Do not therefore get involved' with borrowed ideologies, imported fashions or attitudes or apparels, and exciting notions of social behaviour. Youth, today, are ruined by this fascination for the false. Borrowed ideas cannot fit into the pattern of our culture. *Sanaathana Dharma* is the culture that has grown on this soil and best suited for maintaining peace and joy, in human communities. You cannot shine in borrowed feathers, for long. They can give I only temporary delight. So, do not distort or disfigure your culture by imitation or neglect.

Man's innate nature is to revel in the Divine

Resolve, before it is too late, to weed out the wrong and strange notions and fashions. Entertain the belief that God exists in every living being. All people **are** your people and all your people are God's people. When someone hurts you, or abuses you, mitigate the anger by the knowledge that 'you and he' are both one, in God. When your teeth bite your tongue, you do not punish your teeth; both tongue and teeth are yours, and both are equally loved by you.

In the environment of *Prema*, there will always be peace and harmony. Regard God as Love, Living Love. In many instances, this Love is hidden by the fog of anger, greed or lust. Discard these temporary formations and associations and control the evil influence of these passions. Then only can you feel and express genuine Love. Love must be regulated and directed by intelligence and discrimination. Or else, it may cause even injury and defeat.

When a person saw a fish struggling on a river bank because the waters receded leaving it high and dry, he sympathised with its plight and brought it home wrapped in his handkerchief. He found it struggling even when he put it to bed; so, he gave it a few teaspoonfuls of hot coffee. The poor fish could not survive such ignorant kindness! It died. If only he had put it back into river, it could have lived happily; even if you put it in the bowl studded with gems, it would be miserable. So too, it is man's innate nature to revel in the Divine; so, if you keep man in the world and pour material gains and comforts on him, he will still pine for God whom he knows to be the fountain-head of happiness.

Attachments make you lose your freedom

Suppose all of you who are in this hall now do not know or remember where you have .come from and where you have to go after this function. There will be utter confusion and panic; if you do not know who you are, where you came from and which is your destination, there will be fear, anxiety, anger and greed among you.

Who is the real resident of this body? You are the positive aspect that is activating the negative aspect, the body. The life-breath repeats Soham every time you breathe. It means, I am He, I am

God. What a profound authentic declaration, the breath is making, every moment of your life, while waking, dreaming or in deep sleep, whether you listen to it or not! If this simple lesson, this truth of our truth, which is being dinned all the 24 hours of the day does not alert you or inform you of your real task, how can you understand your Reality by the mere study of books?

Three aspects to the *Aathma* concept

Recognise the string that passes through every flower to make this one garland. When you see the flowers, the string is not seen; it is however the thing that holds them together. You can make from the silver cup you have, a plate or a casket or an idol. Names and Forms change but, silver they all are and will continue to be. Call out for Raama, or Krishna; they both come before you and announce "I am Raama, I am Krishna." But, who is this 'I' that is common to both Raama and Krishna? That common factor is the *Aathma* (spirit or divinity), as the Indian sages have declared. There are three aspects to this *Aathma* concept. What you think you are, is the *Dheha Aathma*, the Body Personality; what others think you are, is the individualised self, the *Jeevaathma*; and what you really are, is the Universal Soul, without limitations of Name and Form, the *Param-aathma*.

Attachments make you lose your freedom. You can move freely, when you are not encumbered with burdens. Less luggage, more comfort, is a slogan for the journey of life. Reduce desires, loosen attachments; you win your freedom. The end of wisdom is freedom; the end of education is character; the end of culture is perfection; the end of knowledge is Love. Self-confidence is the basis of faith in God also. People who do not know who they are and who have no confidence in their own strength and power assert that there is no God. But, how can they declare that the God in whom you believe and who exists for you does not exist? They are free to assert that God does not exist for them; but, that assertion cannot make God Himself non-existent!

There is a story about a Hindhi *Pandith* in Banaras. He used to pray for five minutes every morning and for five minutes every evening, thus spending ten minutes a day in meditation on God. His colleagues laughed at him for wasting ten precious minutes on this silly wasteful habit. He replied, "Sirs! If really there is no God, I concede that ten minutes of my time are being wasted each day; but, if God exists, imagine, you are wasting 24 hours each day, without recognising Him and praying to Him! I feel that I am using these ten minutes in something .in which I have full faith. I am deriving great joy therefrom." "

Do not try to find fault with others; search, rather, for your own. I direct you to implant three ideals in your hearts: (1) Do not forget God; (2) Do not put faith in the world you see around you; it is changing every second and does not last; (13) Do not be afraid. You are the imperishable *Aathma* that knows no fear. I want you also to banish two ideas from your hearts: (1) Forget the harm that anyone has done to you, and (2) Forget the good that you have done to others. Above all, develop *Prema*. Love all religions and all nations. Recognise and accept all religions as paths leading men to the same destination. All of them teach love and compassion, humility and forbearance. I bless all of you and ask you to promote love, sympathy and compassion towards all beings; God is present in everyone of them; and it is your duty to revere God in each of them.

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