

2. Pretenders

WHEN the Buddha sat under the Bodhi Tree in Bodhgaya, after the illumination that revealed to him the Four Noble Truths, gangs of disbelievers gathered around him and poured ridicule and abuse on him. His disciples were enraged; they prayed to the Buddha, "Lord, Give us leave; we shall beat this insolence and ignorance out of these traducers." But, Buddha only smiled at their anger. He said, "Dear ones, know you not how much joy they derive from this exercise? You derive joy worshipping me. They derive joy pelting me with abuse. You pour reverence; they pour ridicule, and receive equal satisfaction. Control yourselves; do not hate any one, that is the teaching. This is the ancient ordinance."

Some people cannot tolerate glory in others; some are filled with the venom of envy; some are demonic in nature and cannot tolerate holiness and divinity; some are perverted by disappointment and cast the blame on God; such people will indulge in abuse. If you associate with such people and their followers, you will only be contaminating your mind. Even ordinary men will feel ashamed to cast aspersions on the great, but, these expose themselves by their tactics as lower than the lowest.

God is above and beyond dualities

You might say, we are the ordinary kind; when the Form we adore is traduced how can we bear it silently? Suppose some one sends you a letter by a registered post. When you sign and take it, you become aware of its contents, though you may not accept the contents. If you do not sign, the letter goes back to the person who sent it and his purpose in making you aware of the contents is defeated. So too, don't give ear to the abuse; keep cool and uninterested; then, the foulness goes back to the sender, and cannot affect you at all. It will affect him as a re-sound, reaction and reflection. Instead of harming you, it will only recoil on him.

Look into the Bhaagavatham. What was the fate of Jaraasandha, Kamsa, Shishupaala? Shishupaala ridiculed Krishna and his hatred reacted on him alone. The Lord is not affected by either praise or blame. He is above and beyond the dualities that agitate man. He has neither favourites nor foes. Your goodness yields good to you; your badness brings about bad for you. Your virtue is your shield; your vice is the weapon that inflicts wounds on you. Happiness and misery are but the reflections of the good and bad which fill your heart and shape your activities.

In the Bhaagavatham, there is mention of a certain Poundraka, who sought to become a passable 'imitation', of Krishna. He added unto his name the name of Krishna, viz., Vaasudheva. He announced himself as Poundraka Vaasudheva. He got made an imitation Conch and an imitation Wheel (out of wood) and carried them about, in his two artificial extra hands. He discovered the style which Krishna adopted while wearing his yellow silken robe and he scrupulously followed the same. He skilfully imitated the gait and gestures of Krishna. Some fools gathered round him, mistaking him to be the Lord they were seeking. His insanity finally brought about his downfall and humiliation.

Nature is the best preacher

In this *Kali Yuga* also such imitations are cropping up just as Poundraka shaped himself into a Vaasudheva. We have today even Sathya Sai Babas. They get the same type of robe stitched, they strain themselves to cultivate the crown of hair, they study photographs and hold their hands up very nearly like I do and make themselves ridiculous by frantic attempts to imitate Me. They

forget that "imitation is only human; but, Creation is Divine." Those who attempt to become Sathya Sai Babas by this ludicrous process of imitation only destroy whatever faith some people have placed in the Divine. They are poisonous pests which injure the peace and harmony of society. They collect around themselves insects of like nature. For only birds of the same feather can flock together. These 'pretenders' fall into ruin themselves and bring ruin on the society where they operate, as the proverbial horde of monkeys that ruin themselves and bring ruin on the forest which they inhabit.

Let Me tell you this' There is no need for you to follow this person or that person in the search for a *Guru*. The heart full of compassion is the altar of God. Nature is the best preacher. Life is the best teacher. Fill yourselves with awe and reverence at the handiwork of God, the manifestation of His Power and Glory that is called the World. This is enough Instruction and enough Inspiration for you.

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Undigested food brings about illness in the body; similarly undigested knowledge imparted by the present day educational system has brought several illnesses in the social organism and the body politic. The disease is promoting contrary feelings that are expressed in mutual conflicts.

The educated are reacting with envious emotions towards those who have secured jobs; when they are unable to get jobs, they impute, motives of nepotism, etc. and develop resentment, anger and hatred.

The system of education is the root cause of the prevalent discontent and resentment.

Sri Sathya Sai