

3. The fruit and the tree

BHAARATH is the most ancient of all the centres of civilisation that is surviving today with her heritage intact. But, out of a false sense of values, the leaders and the youth of the land are ignoring the traditions of this precious culture, and are adopting the ideas and ideals of the West. Therefore, they identify themselves with the body they spend their energies and skills in catering to its needs and whims, and they believe that the material world is the only field 'for study and subjugation.' The result has been here as everywhere else, as even, in the most advanced Western Countries, fear, anxiety violence, corruption and pollution. Physical comfort, individual advancement, personal progress, these are held to be desirable.

However, though each person might declare that he cares for himself only, no one can live in isolation. Persons, sleeping on the same cot are caught having different dreams; each one has an inner life of his own, his own path and speed. But ask him why he is engaged in work, what he is bringing from the shop, why he looks worried. The reply would be that he was engaged in building a house for his family, that he was purchasing clothes for his children, that he was worried about his wife. So he is living, not for himself, but for others whom he is attached to, who are his near and dear ones. Man is under an inescapable obligation to shape his activities and attitudes in consonance with those of others, amidst whom he is placed. He is given parents to revere and obey; brothers and sisters to love and learn with; playmates to mix and move with; society to be changed by and to change. His affection and attachment are attracted by others, and his reactions are determined by others.

Man has to expand his knowledge

He might be sitting at a table, before his plate on which dinner has been served; if some one rushes in to tell him that his child has been injured in an accident on the road, he runs out of the room and on to the road, without caring for the hunger and the plate. The call of the one he is attached to is louder and stronger than any call from within. In spite of such experience, man still believes in his ego, in an exclusive type of individuality. The family is essential for the blossoming of human personality; how can the helpless baby grow and learn, talk and move forward without the home? The home needs the community around it to keep it safe and happy. Even a bird in the bush cannot survive isolation from its kind. Man has to expand his knowledge, his emotions, his sympathies, his love. Expansion is life, expansion is love. When the community or the safe-guarding, sustaining Society is rendered weak, the family too tends to disintegrate and the individual suffers.

Loyalty to society is essential for man

The individual's fulfilment, in the joy of liberation, is undoubtedly, the fruit of the tree of humanity. But, when you yearn for the fruit, you cannot neglect the roots, the trunk, the branches, the leaves, the buds and the blossoms of the tree; they all help the fruit to manifest and to be filled with sweetness. When Pakistan invaded India last year, their armies did not attack Madras; but, yet did you not rush forward to teach them a good lesson? Attachment to the nation, affection to the language, reverence to religion and loyalty to Society are all essential. They are all facets of the overwhelming sense of gratitude one feels for all that has shaped one. Each such loyalty, instead of running counter to another, must feed and foster all the rest. Then they are most desirable.

Patriotism prompts man to understand the ideals of the past and the teachings of one's forefathers, based on their deeper experiences; it urges him to live for those ideals and gain experience for himself on the paths laid down by the sages of one's country. But, there are in India people who call themselves patriots, though they are neglecting and even harming those ideals and ridiculing those experiences and those paths. Adhering to one's own likes and dislikes, however harmful it may be to the interest of the culture of the country, is very injurious to both. When the hand is amputated, it is not merely the limb that suffers, a great quantity of blood also flows out from the rest of the body and makes the system weak and exhausted. So too, when one separates himself from the Society or Nation and insists on a path that is not part of the culture and traditions, not only does he lose support, he harms the nation too.

Love is the secret source of all sympathy

The world is one vast Society. Every individual in it is part of this Society, bound to it by the love that draws man to man, to be kith and kin. This love is there, deep in the heart of man. Only, it is unrecognised, ignored, doubted, denied, argued away. It is the secret source of all sympathy, and Service; it creates the urge to live in and for Society.. It is the *Vishwa-Prema*, that flows from One spark of the Divine to all sparks. When the eyes shine illumined by the highest wisdom, *Jnaana*, they see all as the One. Man realises that *Sarvam Brahmamayam* (All is pervaded by *Brahman*) *Jagath* (all that is apparently changing and transforming and moving). To have this One revealed as in All, one has to develop faith and discipline the mind. The mind has to shed its fancies and foibles; the Truth has to be known and experienced. Learning things by heart will result in only heartache. Learning *shlokas* or verses can only help you from not being engaged in anything worse during that time. They cannot take you an inch nearer the goal. How can mastery of the map equal the joy of the journey?

Faith is an individual asset; it is acquired and preserved by one's own efforts. Maanikkavasagar, the Thamil sage, used to say, "You have the freedom to say No; I have the right to say Yes." What he meant was, when one denies or asserts a thing, it is the outcome of his experience. How can any one dispute the experience of another? God may not exist in the horizon of your experience, but he has already risen in mine---that is what the thiest tells the atheist. The time indicated by the watch on his own wrist is the correct time for him and he asserts so, though others might not agree. And, he has the freedom to do so. Have faith; do not allow it to shake, because some one else has no faith.

Until you realise that you are Divine, that God is your Core and Reality, you will have to undergo these entrances and exists; the same newspaper should not be pored over again and again, day after day; one life must be enough to know the mystery. So, at least, recognise that there is a mystery, search for the secret, and unravel it for yourself.

Yearn for the ecstasy of Divine Mother's vision

Raamakrishna used to cry in agony at the loss of another day, without the vision of the Divine Mother. Have that yearning; feel that sense of urgency: Seek to know now, yearn for that ecstasy this moment. Do not postpone or spend time in discussing others. Trying to satisfy the sense is a dreary desert path. Do not imitate other nations, and compete with other cultures in external pomp. Yours is a mind, intelligence, ear and eye shaped by Indian tradition and culture, Indian history and *Sanaathana Dharma* (eternal religion). Move along those lines and success is certain.

You may have only a picture of Sai Baba before you, or an image in metal or an idol in stone. But, if you have the faith that He is alive and present in it, and that He is in your heart and the hearts of all beings, then, you can get the ecstasy of that knowledge, the knowledge that He is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. While meditating, first imagine and feel that you are in the Light, then, gradually, you can feel the Light is in you, not outside you; and finally, you will realise the Truth, that You and the Light are One and will ever be One.

The Divine is a wine, that would intoxicate you. It is produced by the nectar that the Name of the Lord is saturated in. Taste it and you forget everything else; you are transformed. Man is, they say, a monkey that has lost its tail; well, he must lose many more attributes of the monkey before he is entitled to call himself man. He must dedicate his thoughts, words and deeds to God, and surrender to His Will. Then only is this animal entitled to become a Man, in whom the Divine is enshrined.

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There is a distinctive type of devotion by which you worship God with a good, clean mind and good conduct. This has been given the name of Paraa Bhakthi.

By worshipping God always with puuja (ritual homage) and flowers, the saadhaka (seeker) will remain stationary in his place. This is good in a way but to remain in one place all the time and failing to rise to a higher position is not good.

It is a superior type of worship---to worship God through good qualities, good conduct, good thoughts and good company.

Sri Sathya Sai