

13. Know the Knower

MEN everywhere are frittering away the precious years allotted to them on earth, in three vain pursuits: praising oneself, thrusting one's interests forward, aggrandizement at all costs; defaming others, blackening the reputations of others, scandalising the good and fawning upon the bad; talking frivolously, or irresponsibly, stoking the fires of hatred or slinging mud, helter skelter, with no care for the injury done.

Men try to know everything about everybody else; but, they do not try to know about themselves! The attempt to know about the knower is called *saadhana*; knowledge about the knower is *Aathma Vidhya*. It is only through that knowledge that man can live in peace anywhere. For, when you know that you are but a spark of the Divine and that all else are the same Divine sparks, you look upon all with reverence and true Love; your heart is filled with supreme joy; and the assertions of the ego are rendered ineffective. Man seeks joy in far places and peace in quiet spots; but, the spring of joy is in his heart, the haven of peace is in himself. Even when he walks on the moon, man has to take with him, his fears, his anxieties, his prejudices and his pet aversions. Have faith in God, and in the correctness of moral living. Then, you can have peace and joy, whatever may be the fare that fortune offers you.

Love alone confers lasting happiness and peace

Goodness, compassion, tolerance---through these three paths, one can see the Divinity in oneself and others. Softness of heart is condemned by people today as weakness, cowardice and want of intelligence. The heart has to be hardened, they say, against pity and charity. But, that way lies war, destruction, downfall. Love alone confers lasting happiness and peace. Sharing alone can reduce grief and multiply joy. Man is born to share, to serve, to give and not to grab. When you instal faith in God as a .precious truth in the altar of your heart, you will welcome with equal' alacrity the blows and blossoms of fortune.

Man can have the highest joy and can share that joy with others; but he is now having only grief and sharing that grief with others. A king once granted a woodcutter in the forest an extensive sandal wood plantation as *inaam* (gift), in return for an act of hospitality that he had the chance to offer him. The fellow did not realise the value of the wood nor did he investigate the meaning and mode of the fragrance that emanated from the wood; he cut all the trees in a short time and burnt them for selling as charcoal. Most men waste their lives; they make charcoal out of sandalwood and are happy at the few chips, they get in exchange!

By means of prayer you can win the Grace of God; prayer saves you from slavery to the senses; when you extol God and feel that you are activated by His Will, you will become free from anger, anxiety, prejudice and envy; these passions ruin physical and mental health. Whenever you feel greed or resentment, try to control the emotion. Treat it as you would treat an illness; find the cure and master it. A monk was going along a jungle track when he was followed by a gang of tribals who showered abuse on him. He sat down on rock before the edge of the forest was reached; and encouraged them to do their worst for, he said, there he would be met by a group of his devotees who might beat them off enraged at their behaviour.

Discipline is the mark of intelligent living

Man is basically love, peace, joy and truth. He is the embodiment of all these, that is to say, of Divinity. He ought to behave only in accordance with his basic traits; but he overlays upon them

the false traits of I and mine, and tarnishes his own personality. How to get rid of this tarnish is the problem of religion, everywhere. *Bhajan* (group singing of devotional songs) and *Naamasmaraṇ* (remembering God's Name) are fine cleansing processes. Only, the mind must dwell on the sweetness of each name, and become sweet as a consequence. They must be done as a regular discipline, with the awareness that they will yield good results. They should not degenerate into mere mechanical routine items of a crowded schedule.

Discipline is the mark of intelligent living. Parents should not allow children to fall away from their control, and wander about without compass or anchor. Many parents feed and fondle their children, and then, in the name of freedom, leave them to find their own friends and pleasures. They take them to films regardless of the impression they create on their tender minds. They entertain the friends of their children, but, do not inquire their antecedents or habits. They even encourage their children to smoke and drink, not knowing they will one day have to rue their action. They thus declare by their actions that they are the enemies of their own progeny!

The path of life has both ups and downs

I like children; I take great care of them; I pay them great attention. I give, and advise parents to give them, proper advice at the proper time. I insist on discipline, on reverent obedience to parents, on regulated food and play, on rigorous allocation of time for study, *bhajan*, meditation, etc. I also recommend some items of service, like nursing the sick. I condemn frivolous talk, luxurious living, deleterious habits, addiction to films, horror-comics, pen-friends, exotic dress, outlandish coiffures designed to draw attention to oneself etc. By these means, boys and girls are slowly drawn into unrighteous and immoral ways.

Discipline trains you to put up with disappointments; you will know that the path of life has both ups and downs, that every rose has: its thorn. Now, people want roses without thorns, life has to be one saga of sensual pleasure, a picnic all the time. When this does not happen, you turn wild and start blaming others. If each one cares for his own pleasures how can society progress? How can the weak survive? Mine, not thine, this sense of greed is the root of all evil. This distinction is applied even to God!--my God, not yours! Your God, not mine!

I am indeed very happy today that I could spend some time with you, children of the Remand Home. To spend some time in Divine Presence is a fortune which is the reward of past merit. You are here going through sentences from coups for delinquencies. Let me tell you that all men are undergoing sentences for long or short periods, with simple or hard labour, to atone for misdemeanours and crimes done by them in past lives. Every fall makes a dent; every fault has to be corrected; every sin has to be-cleansed. Every one is a prisoner.

Learn the Golden Rule of Life

For, wherever he goes, two officers accompany them, and watch each action. It is only when one can go alone, that one can be said to be free. But, now, I as well as Mine, do not leave men alone; they walk on each side exercising their subtle influence over each step. I insist that you are the body, the mind, the senses, and the intelligence. It encourages you to care for the strengthening of the body and its beautification; to cater to the fancies that attract the mind, to pursue the fleeting pleasures of the tongue and eye; it tells you that reason is the only instrument for measuring truth, and decries intuition, and experience. Mind teaches you to grab, acquire, and possess, merely for the joy of possession, and the joy of depriving others of things of value. But,

the mind can also be used for liberation from these two shackles: I and Mine. Let it be fixed on God; they will both disappear.

You must examine every act to find out. whether it will cause pain to others; if it does, withdraw from it. Don't do to others what you do not like to do unto you. This is called the Golden Rule. Yes, It is the best test for. distinguishing right from wrong. If another person has with him what you like to have, do not make him miserable by snatching it from him. Would you like something you like to be snatched away from you by another?

Learn to serve people to the extent of your capacity. Learn to revere your parents, teachers and elders; they have your progress always in view. When you go back to your villages, join the *Seva Samithis* (service organisations) there and engage yourselves in *bhajan*, service programmes and study with the members there.

Hyderabad, April, 1973

This is Sai's Message to you all. May you all develop this Divine Love and stand out as the harbingers of a new age free from selfishness, greed, hatred and violence. Let each of you be light unto himself or herself and thereby be a light unto others.

There should be no differences among devotees in the Sai Organisations. There should be no scramble for power or position.

What matters is the purity, intensity and sincerity of the devotion and the spirit of selfless sacrifice in which each devotee renders service to the needy and the suffering.

Sri Sathya Sai