

39. Controlled pride

THE awareness of the *Aathman* (the Divine In man) can neither be gifted to another nor be accepted from another. It is there all the time, hidden behind the veil of ignorance. When the false image disappears, the Truth shines in all its Glory. It is like the Sun behind the passing cloud. Your duty is to deny this veil and let the Sun of Awareness shine forth and illumine your thoughts, words and deeds.

As Andhras, it is desirable that you revere your native region and native language. But the reverence should not lead to Irreverence towards other regions and languages. Be proud of your language and culture---In that there Is no harm. But let not that pride lead you to dislike other languages and cultures. The languages by which thoughts are expressed may be varied, but the thoughts, emotions and feelings are the same. The language of the heart is the same, but when it comes to the tongue, it may take various forms. When it is known and appreciated that the One manifested itself as the many, and that the One is known by many Names, there is really no scope for hatred or irreverence.

***Sathsang* helps to develop freedom from delusion**

Attitudes of tolerance and reverence can be cultivated only along the spiritual path. That is the one path for attaining peace and harmony in this world of ceaseless striving and never-ending despair. The *sathsang*, the gathering of Godward-bound seekers, is a must for the sprouting of spiritual desire and its fulfillment. Even the tardy will soon develop a keen enthusiasm for the spirit through the influence of *sathsang*. A piece of string may be bright and white, but no one will wear it on the hair and round the neck. However, let it get entwined through some fragrant flowers and make of them a garland, and people will love to have it in their hair or round their necks. The *sathsang* of flowers gives it that high status.

A boulder, lying neglected and in-treated beside the road, will receive the adoration of millions if through association with a sculptor it becomes an Idol for a temple. The common rat, despised as a pest, becomes holy when worshippers of Ganesh find It associated with Him as His vehicle. On the other hand, fire, which Is worshipped as *Agni dhevatha*, becomes the target of the hammer when it enters a ball of iron. That is why Shankaraachaarya has sung in *Bhaja Govindham*, "Through *sathsang* you develop freedom from delusion, through freedom from delusion you develop faith in Truth and through faith in Truth, you attain Liberation Itself."

Egoism is the crown of all evils

We become what we feel and act. *Karma* (action) shapes the future as it has shaped the present. *Karma* is the supreme maker of one's destiny. So one must seek *sathsang* in order to purify one's *Karma*, which otherwise might act as a shackle. It is impossible to escape from the consequences of one's *karma*. The *shruthi* (revealed sacred text) requires you, therefore, to prostrate before every *karma* that you do, praying that it may not bring harm to any one or to yourself.

As child of Immortality, man is entitled to live a noble life and realise his Reality. The lotus takes birth in slush, rises through water, and dies when thrown out of water. It cannot survive for long when deprived of water. Man, too, is born in the world, lives in it, and has to exist in it. You must have heard the dictum, "All honour rendered to man reaches God." Hear also another statement, "All dis-honour inflicted on man reaches God." It is the law, as inescapable as the law that makes this piece of cloth that I hold in my hand fall to the ground when I release the hold.

Only when man is able to have the Grace of God and the reinforcement of *dharma* (righteousness) will he not be led into disaster. He will then be led along the path of spiritual progress, for *dharma* protects its protector.

So long as man lives a life devoted to objective pleasures and objective victories, he cannot escape sorrow, fear and anxiety. Only the Inner Vision can grant him *Aanandha* (divine bliss). For the *Aathman* is the fountain head of *Aanandha* just as egoism is the crown of all evils. Man must develop humility and a sense of proportion as regards his aims and ideals.

You have fostered this educational Institution. You must lay emphasis on universal ideals in the field of education. You must encourage those who talk the language of the *Aathman*, and not merely the language of the Andhras. The latter provides food for the stomach; but joy for the eye and bliss for the heart---these are given by the former. Man is not merely body; he has a mind, a heart, many levels of consciousness and a thirst for the Reality. Many practise *dhyaana* (meditation), but the evidence for progress in *dhyaana* is to be sought in a more universal outlook, greater steadiness, peace, forbearance and more eagerness to serve fellow-beings. *Dhyaana* must reveal the Divine in man and thereby induce self- confidence, self- sacrifice and self- satisfaction.

So regulate your lives in such a manner that you do not dislike others nor have others dislike you. Love all as embodiments of the same Divine Principle. Demonstrate by your lives, these ideals among the Maharaashtrians. Let them speak of Andhras as broad-minded and warm-hearted. With the co-operation of the Maharaashtrians you have built up this Institution, and I am happy to bless it and give all guidance and help. You are Mine; I am yours. When it is an educational Institution, I take special interest in it, and I am ever ready to visit It and bless the students.

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