

## 15. The uniqueness of man

RARELY does man realise that he is the crown of creation. Rarely is he aware of his innate glory. If he dwells in the constant consciousness of his uniqueness, his life would be lighter, more beneficial and fully saturated with ecstatic delight. Man, then, will strive unceasingly to reach higher and higher levels of consciousness enveloping both the objective and subjective worlds. He will not allow himself to slide into lower levels of animality, which he is now able to subdue and rule over through the use of his intelligence.

Of the traditional 84 lakhs of living species, man is the last and the most significant. He is the only animal that is capable of knowing not only itself but also its Creator and Master, not only its own potentialities but the potency of God. Other living beings strive to preserve and prolong life. Man is prepared in pursuit of an ideal or in answer to a call to sacrifice and surrender life.

Man alone can posit for his consolation a series of past lives and for his guidance a series of future lives. He can peep into the past as well as into the future and profit thereby. He has the power of choice to rise or fall, to become a God or a beast or a demon. He can use his unique intelligence and memory enshrined in language to widen his vision, to adjust his reactions to nature and society and to benefit by the knowledge and experience of others. He can influence society as much as society influences him.

### **Man is the representative of the Divine**

Man is the only animal that can transform his own nature, along lines consciously laid down. A beast continues to be stupid or cruel until death but man can by spiritual effort or godly company deal with himself as a problem and modify his feelings and actions. The dacoit who became Vaalmeeke and the highway robber Angulimaala who became a staunch Buddhist are illustrations of this characteristic of man. By association, through-teaching and faith, sinners become saints.

Again, man alone is capable of awakening the serpent-power of the life-energy that lies dormant in him as the *Kundalini Shakthi* and elevate it through *chakras* (higher fields of awareness), up to the thousand-spoked wheel on the very crest of the head. This is the *uurdhwa Gathi* (the Upward Path). This *yoga saadhana* is possible for man, since he has a straight body and can sit with his trunk and head held in a straight vertical line. Quadrupeds and bipeds other than man are severely handicapped. They cannot tap the vital *Kundalini Shakthi*.

The Samskrith word *Maanava* for Man means *Maa* (not), *nava* (new). That word intimates that man has had a series of births and deaths and is heavily laden with burdensome heritages of good and bad. He doesn't land on earth for the first time. His task is to discard this burden and become free. For that he must concentrate on another meaning of the word *Maanava*, where *Maa* stands for nescience, delusion and mistaken identity, *na* stands for 'without' and *va* stands for '*Varthana*' (Action). Man must act, speak and think without being deluded by the apparent, in preference to the real. Man ignores the *Aathma* (Divine Soul), which is the only Reality, and allows himself to be fascinated by *Maaya* (illusory energy), which scintillates and deceives.

Since he has in him the Divine enshrined as the *Aathma*, man has the high status of an embodiment of the Divine, a *Prathinidhi* (representative) of the Divine. The senses activated by the mind bring in experiences which are collected and coordinated by the mind. *Buddhi* (intellect) illumined by the *Aathma* examines these and directs action along beneficial lines.

Acting under the dictates of the mind brings disaster; acting under the instructions of the illumined *Buddhi* is desirable. This is the great boon that man has won from God.

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*To find out what is dharma (righteous) and what is adharma (unrighteous), apply this one test: If it goes counter to Truth and Love, it is unrighteous. If it promote, Truth and Love or is full of both, it is righteous.*

*Sri Sathya Sai*