

17. "Let God Be Your Guru"

THE supreme meaning of human birth is the realisation of one's true nature. Self-realisation is the path to immortality. Man's life is a bridge between this world and the Divine. The language of *Pranava (Om)* is the only medium for conversing with the *Aathma* (Divine Self). By wearing the garb of this body, made up of bone and flesh, encasing the *Aathma* that is pure and eternal, man imagines that his happiness lies in the physical environment. This is a delusion. There are two kinds of knowledge which man can seek in his quest for happiness. One is *Loka jnaana* (worldly knowledge). This relates to knowledge of music and the fine arts, of the physical Universe, botany, chemistry, mathematics, and the like. All this knowledge is of use only for earning a living. All of it relates to matters which are ever changing and perishable.

The other kind of knowledge is *Brahma jnaana* (knowledge of the Supreme). This knowledge reveals that the origin, growth and dissolution of the Cosmos are due to *Brahman* (Supreme Reality). The *Upanishaths (Vedhic metaphysical treatises)* have described it as *Akshayya* (imperishable) *Brahman*. Man today needs this supreme knowledge. There are three steps leading to this knowledge. One is "*Bhaavam*" (heart felt feeling). The second is "*Saadhana*" (spiritual effort). The third is "*Upaasana*" (contemplation).

Consider the entire Universe as temple of God

In the first stage, the thought of *Brahman* should be firmly established in the heart. When this is done, one has to look upon the whole universe as a manifestation of the Divine. One must realise that the Five Elements (space, air, fire, water and earth), the five *Praanas* (vital breaths)--*Praana, Vyaana, Apaana, Samaana, Udhaana*, the five sense organs, the mind and speech, all these have emanated from the *Brahman*. All that is beautiful and great in Nature--the lofty mountains, the vast oceans, the stars in the sky must be regarded as proclaiming the glory and power of the Divine. The sweet fragrance of flowers, the delectable juice of fruits should be regarded as tokens of God's love and compassion. The entire universe must be considered as the temple of God.

The external world will reflect your thoughts. If you view the world with love, it will appear as filled with love. If you view it with hatred, everything will appear antagonistic to you. Eyes filled with love shine with brightness and cheerfulness. Eyes filled with hatred appear bloodshot and fearful. Our thoughts determine our good and bad actions.

The Kauravas and Paandavas were cousins. But because of the inimical attitude of the Kauravas towards the Paandavas, they looked upon the Paandavas as their enemies. Because they looked upon Kama with a friendly eye, they made him ruler of Angadesha. The attitude of man to God is dependent on similar likes and dislikes. There are some devotees who worship God with devotion for a time.

Then they turn against God. The reasons for these changes in attitude are traceable to their ideas about God. When they feel that their prayers are being answered and their desires are being fulfilled, they adore God. But when their wishes are not fulfilled, they revile God in all sorts of words. This kind of devotion is based on self-interest and has nothing divine about it. Pure devotion will not be affected by changes in circumstances or fortunes. True love is not based on any conditions. It is equal in weal or woe and is not affected by the vicissitudes of fortune.

One should not blame God for his difficulties

The *Upanishaths* regarded *Prema* (love) as a quality of the eternal and hatred as *Asurathvam* (a demonic quality). Looking upon love of God as a sacred quality, one should cultivate it and strengthen it. One should realise that he alone is responsible for his happiness or misery. He should not blame God for his difficulties. God has no likes or dislikes. As thoughts are the most important factor in determining one's attitude and behaviour, one should entertain only good and sacred thoughts.

The second step is *Saadhana*. *Saadhana* does not consist merely in *Bhajans* (group singing of devotional songs), *Keerthans* (Spiritual Composition), *Japa* (recitation of holy names) and *Dhyaana* (meditation). All these are auxiliaries. The primary requisite is concentration on the *Pranava* (*Om*). All *Saadhana* should be based on *Pranava*. There are seven crores of names for God all of which have to be uttered with *Pranava* at the beginning. "*Om! Naarayanaaya Namah; Om! Maadhavaaya Namah, Om! Keshavaaya Namah!*" This is how the names of the Lord should be recited. To utter the name without the *Pranava* is like using a revolver without cartridges. By meditating on the *Pranava*, one can glimpse the nature of the Supreme Reality, according to the *Upanishaths*.

Only when heart is purified Divinity can be realised

The third step is *Upaasana* (divine adoration). *Upaasana* means approaching near the Divine. *Upaasana* is often equated with fasting. This is not correct. There is a bliss that is greater than food. When one is immersed in that bliss the bliss of *Brahma-aanandha* (divine bliss of rapture), one gives up food of one's own accord. It is such giving up of food that constitutes true *Upaasana*. To subject oneself to fasting as a compulsory regimen is not *Upaasana*, but mere starvation. For instance, to keep awake on *Shivaraathri* night by watching films or playing cards is a caricature of the sacred vigil that one is expected to observe on that day.

The *Upanishaths* speak of seven degrees of *Aanandha* (Divine Bliss). The first is the happiness derived from enjoyment of worldly goods, from good health and bodily comforts. This is called *Manushya aanandha* (human bliss). The *Pithrudheva aanandha* (the bliss enjoyed by the Manes) is hundred times *Manushya aanandha*. *Dheva aanandha* (the bliss enjoyed by the *Dhevas*) is hundred times that of the Manes. Hundred times this *Aanandha* is the *Prajaapathi Aanandha*. Hundred times this bliss is *Viraat-Purusha Aanandha*. Hundred times the previous one is *Hiranyagarbha-Aanandha*. Hundred times this is *Brahma aanandha*. You can reckon how much greater is *Brahma aanandha* than *Manushya aanandha*.

The word *Brahma aanandha* is nowadays bandied about to describe any and every kind of pleasure. "I am filled with *Brahma aanandha* because a son was born today." "I got first marks in my class. I feel supremely happy." Such expressions of happiness are far remote from *Brahma aanandha*. This experience is tantamount to Moksha (Liberation). The *Brahman* experience is not to be got by the mastery of various *saadhanas*. It is only when the heart is purified that divinity can be realised. There is no room for divinity in a heart filled with egoism, pride and hatred.

Cultivate love to achieve fullness

Even when the Divine appears in human form, moves freely amongst men, and is near in various ways to people, few are able to recognise Divinity in the physical form. It is not easy to recognise the nature of the Divine through the corporeal form alone. A true *Guru* (spiritual

preceptor) is required to reveal the real nature of Divinity. Such a *Guru* has been equated with the Trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The devotee who regards God Himself as his *Guru* will not have any difficulties. Today many who are looked upon as *Gurus* utter the *manthras* (sacred formula) in the ear and stretch their palms for money. For everything they do, they expect money. Such *Gurus* are "*baadha*" (harmful) *Gurus* and not "*bodha*" (enlightening) *Gurus*.

The true *guru* is like an ophthalmic surgeon. The latter removes the film in the patient's eye and restores his natural vision. The *Guru* also should remove the veil of ignorance and attachment that blurs the vision of the disciple and restore his natural spiritual vision.

What is the recompense one should make to such a *guru*? On *Guru Puurnima* day, it is the practice for disciples to offer *Paadha Puuja* (offering worship to *Guru's* holy feet) to the *Guru* and give *Dakshina* (thanksgiving offering). The significance of the Full Moon should be understood. It is a day on which the Moon shines in all his fullness, without any blemish. It is a day of purity. The Moon sheds his cool rays on the earth. The Moon is the deity controlling the mind. Only the day when the mind is rid of the darkness of ignorance and achieves fullness of illumination, is the real *Guru Puurnima* day for man. Looking merely at the full moon in the sky and calling it *Guru Puurnima* is only worshiping the external, while internally there is a *sunna* (void). It is only when you have cleansed your heart by getting rid of ignorance, sorrow, worry, greed, and envy, that you can celebrate your *Guru Puurnima* and realise the Fullness of your Reality.

Carry with you the Divine experience and enlarge it

To achieve this *puurnathvam* (fullness) you have to cultivate *Prema* (love). You have to go through all the three stages of *shravana*, *manana* and *nidhidhyaasana* (hearing, meditating and practising) to achieve the goal of human existence.

You must all realise that relationship between you and Me is not related only to the physical body. Thinking only of the physical relationship, you should not waste your life. The body is a passing thing. You should concentrate on the attainment of that which is permanent and beyond the limitations of time and space. You have seen for yourself and experienced the Divine here. You must carry with you this experience and enlarge it by contemplating on it internally.

Here is an example. Thousands have assembled in this Puurnachandra Hall. I have been conversing with you. How long can this last? Perhaps for two or three hours. Tomorrow you will all be returning to your respective places. After you go back, the memory of what you have experienced here, Swaami's discourse to you, the presence of thousands of devotees in the Puurnachandra Hall will be etched in your mind whenever you try to recall this day. It will be a life-long possession for you. This is because you are carrying Me in your mind.

Tests are intended to strengthen your faith

Looking at things externally, the Puurnachandra hall will be before you only for a short time. But you must retain permanently what you have seen with the outward looking eyes. What you see externally is a burden. When you have made it a part of yourself it ceases to be a burden. It is like the food which a traveller carries on his head for consumption on the way. As long as the food remains outside it is a burden. But when he has eaten it, he gets stronger and there is no burden on his head.

As long as we are involved with external appearances, we have to carry the burden' of doubts and weakness of faith. We will not be able to get rid of involvement in unnecessary things. Faith is

like a live volcano. No seed will sprout on such a volcano. Doubts are like seeds. If the doubts multiply, it means that your faith is weak and unstable. It is like an extinct volcano. If your faith is strong, no doubts will crop up. Where there are doubts, there can be no faith.

We alone are responsible for our doubts. The Divine acts as only a Witness. The Divine shows you the path to self-realisation. Your doubts arise or disappear because of your past karma (action). To realise Divinity you must first get rid of all your doubts. From time to time, God subjects you to various tests. These are not intended to be punishments as you may imagine. These are intended to strengthen your faith.

Look upon God alone as your true *Guru*

Arjuna himself was subjected to such a test by Krishna on the eve of the Kurukshetra battle. Arjuna was worried about how to wage the war against his kinsmen and what strategy he should adopt. Krishna took him to a forest in the evening. It was twilight. The light of knowledge was setting and the darkness of ignorance was emerging. Krishna wanted to find out whether Arjuna was fit for receiving the *Geethopadhesa* (spiritual initiation

to Geetha) the next day. He pointed out to Arjuna a bird on a tree and asked him whether it was a peacock. Arjuna said: "Yes, my Lord". "No, no. It is a dove," observed Krishna. Arjuna immediately said: "Yes, it is a dove." Krishna then said: "You senseless fellow. It is not a dove but a crow!" "Yes, Swami! It is a crow," said Arjuna. Krishna then told Arjuna: "You have no power of discrimination at all. You cannot decide whether it is a peacock, dove or crow and only say 'yes' to whatever I say. Should you not have this much of understanding."

Arjuna replied: "Krishna, if one does not know your real nature, one may attempt to agree or disagree with you. But I have understood the truth about you. If I declare that it is not a peacock, a dove or a crow, you have the power to turn it into a peacock, a dove or a crow. I have therefore no need to enquire into what it is. Your word alone matters for me. That is sufficient authority for me." When Arjuna displayed such implicit faith in Krishna, he felt that Arjuna was fit to receive the message of the Geetha. Hence He told him "*Nimittha maathram Bhava!*" ("Be thou my instrument").

Look upon God alone as your true *Guru*

Therefore, the first requisite is deepening of one's faith in the words of the Lord. It is not possible to know the Lord by book knowledge or by human intelligence. When the Lord comes in human form, His measureless powers are not to be judged by looking at his age, size or innocent behaviour. Such judgement will only lead to greater misunderstanding of the Divine.

When the child Krishna was brought before his mother Yashodha and accused of eating mud, Krishna protested to his mother that he was not an infant, or a naughty boy or a madcap to eat mud. Krishna then revealed to His mother His divinity. The *Avathaar* is not to be judged by reference to age or actions.

Premaswaruupas (embodiments of divine Love)! On this holy day of *Guru Puurnima*, take a resolve to purify your minds and to install in your hearts the Supreme Lord. Look upon God alone as your true *Guru*.

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