

20. The human destiny

GOD in the form of Man (*Dhaivam manusha ruupena*) declare the Scriptures! They describe God as the *Viraat Purusha* (Cosmic Divine Person), with 'thousand' heads, 'thousand' eyes, 'thousand' feet that is to say, all heads, all eyes, all feet are His. While the individual *Purusha* (Person) is God installed in that body which is thereby a temple, the *Purushothama* (the Supreme Sovereign Person), is the sum-total of all the *Purushaas* and so has in Him all Of them. The human being alone can know the identity and the Bliss thereof. He is the crown of creation, divine in nature and unique in destiny.

There can be no privilege without responsibility. So man has to observe very many regulations and restrictions and abide by duties and directions. The higher the status, the heavier the burden. The office of Prime Minister or President is a position of eminence and therefore, their duties too are of vast importance. Man, holding eminent status and possessing Divine capabilities, has to keep his vision broad and clear and his actions pure and beneficial.

Man has to be ever alert to avoid sin

The obligations that bind man can be considered under four heads: avoiding *paapam* (sin), escaping *shaapam* (curse), observing *shaasana* (law) and following *Shaasthras* (ethical codes). Let us consider sin. Birds and beasts do not commit sin; they have no need to be specially careful to avoid it. For they are free from unrestrained imagination, of cleverness in manipulation or desire to accumulate and possess.

Man alone has these qualifications and the duty to use them for his own good and the good of others. Man alone is equipped with a conscience and the faculty of reasoning which can present before him the pros and cons of every step in thought, speech and action. When his reason tells him that a certain thought or speech or action is wrong and he sets aside the judgement, preferring the evil, the wrong and the low, he sins. When an insane person commits evil no court of justice punishes him; it is only when a person, capable of distinguishing good from bad, deliberately chooses the bad, that his act is pronounced a sin. Man has to be ever alert to avoid sin.

As regards the method of escaping the curse of elders, one has to be equally vigilant. When a man behaves badly or rudely towards persons deserving veneration on account of their fullness in wisdom and virtue, he invites on himself the consequences of this denial of the essential 'man' in him which is God. Such action brings down a curse as an automatic consequence or as a willed reaction. Do not insult others; do not ridicule others; do not demean them in any manner, If you do, you are defying, distorting and destroying man's innate Nature, which is Love. In order to make such men recognise the crime committed against oneself and retreat from this unnatural course, the curse is pronounced.

Man should control their greed and hatred

Consider the behaviour of King Pareekshith which resulted in a curse. He was the Emperor, reputed and respected; he was highly learned; he was an earnest practitioner of spiritual disciplines. Yet, in a fit of anger, he placed around the neck of a hermit who was sunk deep in meditation, a snake that was dead! That was not a pardonable prank. As Emperor, his task was to be an example, a model, an inspiration for his subjects. Punishing him would be an effective method of teaching good conduct to millions. So, Shringi, the hermit's son, cursed him to die of

snake bite at the end of the week.

The sage Gauthama cursed his wife Ahalya for transgressing the limits imposed by the higher Self on the lower self Man or woman, each one has to honour the glory of mankind and examine each thought, word and deed on the touchstone of *Dharma* (righteousness). Or else, one has to encounter a curse.

The third obligation is 'obeying the *Shaasana*' (Law). When a stray dog enters the house, moves into the kitchen, guzzles the food kept ready for lunch and runs out breaking a few dishes and cups, it will not be dragged into court and forced to pay compensation. But, when a man does the same, the law takes hold of him and binds him. When a pig enters a field and damages the crop, no one arrests it and claims payment for the loss inflicted. Animals have no moral responsibility to leave alone the property of others. They are not human beings who ought to control their greed and their hatred. When men are moved into inhuman ways, the law has to restrain and reform them.

***Shaasthras* offer means of purifying the mind**

Next, man has the duty to observe consistently and sincerely the *Shaasthras* (codes of morality). The codes are framed for the guidance of living beings who can uplift themselves by their own efforts and determination. Others cannot utilise them or revere them as texts meant for instruction. However arduous and affectionate the training given to a tiger may be, it can never be made non-violent! One can feed a cat on milk and sweets for long but, when it sees a rat, it pounces on it and relishes its taste more than all the fine fresh food one has given for months.

A tiger will not eat '*poori*' (leavened bread) however gnawing its hunger may be. It will eat only flesh. A beast has to be always beastly. But a vicious man can transform himself into a saint! He may be born and bred in wicked surroundings, but he can be shaped into a good person through the influence of precept and example.

Ratnaakara, the robber, waylaid travellers and pilgrims and robbed them of their belongings. When some sages whom he attacked reacted with loving kindness, warned him and revealed to him the sacred path of devotion and dedication, he gave up his cruel profession and plunged into severe spiritual exercises which transformed him into a great poet-saint, Vaalmeeeki.

There is the example of the highway robber who collected the fingers of those whom he robbed and strung them into a garland round his neck. He was so proud of this horrid achievement that he named himself Angulimala. But, when he encountered the Buddha and listened to His compassionate counsel, his mind was cleansed and he became a faithful follower of Buddha.

Man can be educated or nurtured into higher levels of consciousness. The *Shaasthras* offer the means of purifying the mind. Other living beings have no such help or encouragement offered to them; they have to plod on as of old. This is the reason why life as a human being is a unique gift.

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It is a hard job to maintain a false stand and so, it is always safe to be straight and honest. Do not take the first false step and then be led, on and on, to perdition. Truth is one's real nature and when

you are yourself, there comes a great flood of joy welling up within you.

When you deny yourself and deceive yourself, shame darkens your mind and breeds fear. You take the path of falsehood because of the Raajasik passions of lust, greed, hate and pride.

Contentment, humility, detachment---these keep you on the path of Truth.

Sri Sathya Sai