

## 12. Discover your Divine essence

SELF REALISATION, the understanding of one's basic Reality, should be the fundamental purpose of education and not the mere acquisition of information about the external world.

Creation is a marvel. It has to be seen and experienced with wonder and awe and not dissected, disfigured or analysed or explained. The Cosmos is the glorious work of art projected by the Supreme Artist, without a wall or canvas to draw upon, without brushes or colours to paint with. Imagination boggles, beholding this cosmic scene. It defies description. It exhibits what is not real and conceals what is. Confronted with a Universe, so difficult to decide whether true or false, some have concluded it is real, some have declared it unreal and some have described it as a mixture of the real and the illusory. The problem has been the subject of endless debate and controversy. Right education should aim at discovering the basic truth, which will lay at rest this uncertainty.

The world is experienced by the "I". As long as the "I" dominates the mind, the world is cognised as real. And so long as the "I" is involved with the world, sorrow cannot be eliminated. In the state of deep sleep, there is no consciousness of the "I" and so there is no consciousness of the world too. When the world is absent, sorrow disappears. Man seeks to banish sorrow and acquire *Ananda* (happiness).

What is happiness? Do wealth, power or health confer happiness? The world has numerous wealthy men, but are they experiencing happiness? There are many wielding power or having good health, but are they happy? No. The reason is there can be no real happiness as long as one is infected with the ever-greedy ego.

### **Ego and Universe**

Like animals which run towards a mirage in the vain hope of quenching their thirst, man goes after sensual objects hoping to derive happiness from them. In the end he meets with disappointment and frustration and quits his life without realising his true destiny. Only when the feeling of "I" drops from him can man realise his *Brahmic* reality and attain *Ananda*.

The Vedanta declares: "*Brahman is Sathya* (Truth); the Cosmos is *Mithya* (illusory)." Whether the Universe is real or illusory, or whether it is real-unreal need not be your concern. For, the cosmos itself will reveal to you its permanent-cum-transient character. Your primary concern must be to understand whether *you* are real or unreal or what in you is real and what is unreal. It is only when you have recognised the truth of your own being, that you can recognise the world as illusory and your own reality.

The realised person asserts: "I am *Brahmam*." Wherefrom has this statement emanated? What does it mean? It is a spontaneous expression and not the result of thought or feeling. But when one states, "I am a man", the attribute "man" expresses a thought accepted and a feeling welcomed. "I" is inherent (*sahajam*); "man" is an intention (*Bhavamu*). The "I" is boundless Infinite. When the finite concept "man" merges in the Infinite "I" the "I" alone remains.

### **Aham and Atma**

When a river reaches the ocean, there is only the ocean; the river ceases to exist. Before it joins the ocean, the river is bound by its banks and it has a distinct form. But when it merges in the ocean, it loses its separateness, its form and name and taste. It becomes the ocean. Likewise,

when "man" merges in the Infinite "I" only the Infinite "I" remains and the limited human entity disappears.

What is the source of the term "I"? In Sanskrit, "I" is referred to as "*Aham*". The word *Aham* has its roots in the word, *Atma*. *Aham* arises from the idea of "I". The mind also is a projection of the idea of "I". The mind and the ego are thus related to the *Atma* as its manifestations. The *Atma* is the grandfather, *Aham* is the son and the Mind is the grandson. The ego has emanated from the pure, unchanging, selfless *Atma* but the ego has birth and growth; it comes and goes. The *Atma* has no birth, growth, decay or death. It is changeless, immutable and eternal. From the One unchanging Infinite *Atma*, the finite and changing ego and the mind, with its diverse feelings and ideas, have emanated. The multiplicity of names and forms can be understood in their true nature only if the truth about their fundamental basis is recognised. Hence, everyone should seek to know the basis of what he terms as "I." Instead, when one is engaged in exploring the physical *universe--prakriti* (Nature), he is pursuing only a chimera.

### **Education has to develop power of concentration**

*Chaitanyam* (Consciousness) is all-pervasive in the cosmos and in the individual mind. But, in the mind it is limited. It is most active, potent and prominent in man. Man is able to enquire into, examine and explore the phenomenal universe because of the consciousness that prods him. Nature and the phenomena that comprise it are reflections of inner experience. The world is a beautiful painting, a grand work of art. The art is outside, but the beauty is experienced by the heart inside us. Art becomes art when the heart recognises it.

All investigations of the external world are indeed reflections of mental processes which emerge from the "I" projected by the *Atma*, a spark of *Paramatma*. If we concentrate on this basic truth, we can see the Divine basis that sustains everything. Education, therefore, has to develop this power of concentration and not the mere capacity to collect facts. Today with the accent on "collection", we are ignoring "concentration". The essence of education is concentration of the mind and not collection of facts.

The world is teaching man innumerable lessons all the time. Each one should try to discover for himself the secret of his life and the Universal Consciousness that is inherent in him. The first requisite for each one is to make himself his own *guru*.

### **Nature and life**

Nature is a preacher; life is a teacher. When this truth is recognised, life becomes meaningful and purposeful. Everyone should strive to unfold the divinity within him and illumine his life. Poring over a few books, one may secure a high rank in university examinations by one's diligence and industry. But this is not the consummation of education. Knowledge is not to be derived from books alone. Nature is to be accepted as a better instructor. By its forbearance, adherence to its genuineness, unselfish bounty, patience and serenity Nature is continually proclaiming its inherent and real role of preacher of spiritual truths. Consider, for instance, a tree. It puts up with heat and rain, summer and winter and all the harm inflicted on it. It offers shade and distributes fruits to whoever approaches it. It has no feelings of hatred or vengeance towards those who cause injuries. It seeks no return from those who benefit from it. Everyone should learn this lesson in selfless, patient service from the tree.

Consider, next, the bird. The lesson it teaches is self-reliance. A bird perched on the leafy twig of a tree is not affected by the wild swaying of the twig or the storm which might blow it off

because it relies not on the twig or tree but on its own wings for its safety. It knows it can always fly and save itself. The bird is always happy and carefree, sporting as it pleases. Birds are not concerned about acquiring things for the morrow. They are content to make the best of the present, living on whatever they can get for the day. They do not worry about the careers of their children or the state of their bank accounts. They have no anxiety about the upkeep of houses or properties.

Now, look at what man has made of himself. Sitting on the branch of the life tree, he is worried about every little tremor in life; he is consumed by it, and loses his peace of mind.

### **Need for removal of defect in the vision**

Man's ignorance of the Reality stems from his incorrect understanding of the world. This ignorance cannot be dispelled by *yajnas*, *yagas* or *japa* or even long bouts of *dhyana*. Only when he discovers his indwelling Divinity and realises the true nature of his self can he rid himself of this ignorance.

The individual who regards God as separate from Nature will declare that Nature is *unreal--mithya*. But, when he recognises that God is immanent in Nature, it becomes real to him. What is needed, therefore, is the removal of the defect in *drishti* (the vision).

Nowadays, we hear of more and more people complaining of tension, as a reaction to frustration, failure and disasters. Tension is caused as a result of the mind indulging in likes and dislikes. Everyone must be vigilant about the mind, its capabilities and character. It reacts in fifty million different ways, not one or two. It assumes fifty million forms. Each of these is a wave that agitates. The system of education practised today does not divinise the mind and turn it towards the 'I' which is a reflection of the *Atma* within. Students must, even while they are undergoing this education, probe into the divine basis of mental activity, so that the mind can bestow wisdom and bliss.

God is as far from you as you are far from yourself. That is to say, you are not the body to which you cling. God reacts to the status assigned to the "I". Who is it that says "I"? The body? How can the body speak? It is gross matter. The *Atma*? How can the *Atma* speak? It is subtler than the subtlest. Really, the "I" serves as the link which disappears when the body-mind complex merges *in the Atma*. This is the illumination you have to acquire as students. When you light a lamp in each home, the entire street gets light. I bless you that you will steadily inquire into the Divine Principle and that you will receive all the encouragement and inspiration while on this task.

*Discourse by Bhagavan as Chancellor of the Sri Sathya*

*Sai Institute of Higher Learning at the commencement*

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