

2. Together! All together!

BHARATIYA culture represents blossoming of the Fundamental Truth, which is unaffected by Time, unspoiled by history, not destructible even by a cataclysm and not amenable to an iota of addition. The *Veda* is the basis of this Truth. The *Upanishads* (highest spiritual truths of the Vedas) originated from the *Veda*. The *Bhagawad Gita* gives us the essence of the *Upanishads*; the *Brahma Sutra* axioms summarise the same. Imbibe the *Upanishads* by listening (*sravana*); reflect on the epigrams of the *Brahma Sutras* (*manana*); digest and assimilate the *Gita* (*nidhidhyasana*). All three have to be valued as sacred scriptures and not treated as forms of literature. Devaluation of these texts has brought about stagnation.

It is asserted by many that the *Gita* is a unique treasure of the Hindus which they should hold for themselves alone. But, how can the *Gita* be so limited? This is a narrow and restricted view. It has to receive worldwide acceptance, for it helps solve some problems as and when they arise. It acts as the breath of life to all people and all faiths. In fact, every text everywhere that reveals God to man is a *Gita*. Considering the Holy Quran as belonging to Muslims, the Holy Bible as a Christian Text and the Granth Sahib as the scripture for Sikhs, differences have become wider and the path to God has been split.

Carry the message of *Gita* to all lands

The *Sadhus* (noble souls) of this country have to consider ways and means to carry the message of *Gita* to the common man in all lands. You have to transcend the usual method of viewing *Gita* as mere dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna by elevating it into what it really is--a Divine dialogue between *Eashvara and Jivi*, God and man. The recitation of the *Gita* is now being encouraged as an end in itself. But that is only a method of spending time beneficially. The *Gita* is a Path, a Goal, an Achievement. Its purpose is gained by practice and experience.

The voice of God as Message to Man, is a gift of Grace to all men. But it is interpreted by man along the lines his temperament dictates. The pure, clear message gets contaminated thereby. Later when message is presented in a variety of forms, it produces confusion and conflict. Those who profess to teach and preach religion must avoid such consequences and concentrate on arousing spiritual hunger and satisfying it. There are many who try to cater to people's taste by means of irrelevant stories which tarnish the main spiritual theme. The message can succeed in capturing people's hearts only when it is experienced by the speaker and when his aim is only to inspire others to share his joy.

The world's progress depends on the wisdom and altruism of those whom the people trust and follow. The leaders and guides should accept this responsibility and duty. They must be aware, all the time, of the Indweller and instruct others about the same.

The Cosmos which is the *Brahman* (*the omni-self*) is the effect produced by *Karma* (action). Every act is an expression of the power of Will. In the individual this power is projected through the body. *Sadhana* (spiritual effort) is the method by which that projection is purified and sanctified. It must be so purified that the temporary features (like the names and forms) fade away and only the never-changing natures (*sat, chit and ananda*) come into consciousness.

Exponents of culture sow seeds of doubt

Being in the world and bound by the distractions it presents before our sense, one cannot renounce and become free. How can a person standing on a rock succeed in pushing it aside? He

has to come down the rock and try. He must free himself from the bonds of attachment to the worldly things and thoughts.

At present, since education has spread widely and since education has meant only book-learning, people have become cynical. They doubt even the simplest statement and revel in wild discussions. The exponents of our culture speak about God being One and Only, of His Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence. At the same time, they speak of rivalry between the various aspects of the Divine. Thus, they sow the seeds of doubt in men's hearts. The *Brahman* principle, the Cosmic *Atma*, is known by different names and pictured with different forms but, like gold in a variety of jewels. All is *Brahman, Atma, OM. Ayam Atma Brahma* (this Atma is *Brahma*) declares the *Veda*.

Sadhana for Sadhus

Sadhus by the very act of renunciation, have placed themselves beyond caste and creed. While engaged in the service of humanity, care has to be taken against mentioning or emphasising these divisive features of the society. God is Almighty. It is sacrilege to ascribe human weaknesses to Him. Myths and legends about the mystery of God contain symbolic meanings, which are ignored. They yield their inner truth only to those who seek.

Now, rural folk have become clever enough to ask, what benefit society derives from those who don the ochre robe. They expect exemplary lives and sincere, unselfish service. In fact, 'the *sadhana* of service is superior to *sadhana* aimed at one's own liberation. Worship God, in His 'manifestation as mankind. Every one is a child of 'God, whatever the colour, caste, creed, and language. This sense of unity has to be fostered. This is the real *matham* (faith), the *abhimatham* (true faith), the fulfillment of your *vratham* (vow), the fruit of *manava matham* (humanity's faith). Service to man is worship of God.

The exhortation of the Upanishads

This *Sadhana* of Service should not be polluted by the spirit of competition among the *sadhaks* or even by dejection when obstacles loom large. God's grace will certainly be your support when you are on the march together to reveal the *Atmic* spring of strength, to people suffering from weakness. "Together"! That is the key to success. The *Upanishads* also teach the same lesson. *Saha naa vavathu; Saha nau bhunakthu; Saha Veeryam Karavaavahai*. In other words, the exhortation of the *Upanishad* is:

*Together, all together, we shall toil and travel;
Together, all together, we shall steadily grow.
Together, all together, we shall feed and foster
Fortune and friendship, full vigour and virtue.
Together, all together, the knowledge we have gained
We shall brighten, and brighten, till it enlightens all.
Together, all together, we shall share as friends
The fortune we have earned, the vision and thrill.
Together, all together, we shall acclaim Peace
Till we raise its praise into worshipful deeds.*

Together, all together, we shall intone the Pranava

OM, OM, OM, OM--we shall together sing.

You have in you both the talent and the desire to uplift your fellow men. This country needs your service urgently today. God welcomed the urge to manifest the Cosmos. *Ekoham Bahusyaam* (I am One; I shall become Many), He said to Himself. You must also feel the need to blossom and expand. Derive *Ananda* in the process, 'possess it and share it, in order to increase it. The *Upanishads* proclaim the message of courage, of strength. Give up the idea that you are weak and helpless. *Na Ayam Atma balaheenena labhyah* (*The Atma cannot be gained by the weak*). Believe that you have in you the strength and skill you need. Those who can sing *Bhajans* (*spiritual chorus*) can, as a beginning, lead villagers in *Nagara Sankirtan* (street singing of spirituals) and teach them to sing in groups. Those who can speak on spiritual topics can gather the people, when they have returned from the fields, and explain to them, in simple language the mystery of God, Nature and Man. Persuade them to give up habits that undermine their health and peace. Promote in them the qualities of mutual aid, truthfulness and non-violence.

Valedictory discourse at Akhila Andhra Saadhu Parishath on 4-1-1987.

Do not tell me you do not care for spiritual bliss, that you are satisfied with delusion and are not willing to undergo the rigours of sleeplessness. Believe me, your basic nature abhors this dull dreary routine of eating, drinking and sleeping. It seeks something it knows it has lost: Inward contentment. It seeks liberation from the bondage to the trivial and the temporary. Everyone craves for it in his heart of hearts. And it is available only in one shop: Contemplation of the highest Self, the basis of all this appearance.

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