

14. Light the lamp in your hearts

A LAMP has a unique power, which is not possessed by any other object. It dispels darkness. For this reason, *Bharatiyas* have always worshipped lighted lamps. Before commencing any auspicious or religious function, the ceremonial lamp is lit. Another notable quality of the lamp is that the flame goes upwards---the path of the Brahman. The sinful path leads downwards.

The light of the lamp, however, can only dispel the darkness outside but cannot remove the darkness that envelops the heart as a result of attachments and aversions carried from previous lives. Not all the blaze of light which filled Lanka when Hanuman set it on fire could remove the darkness from Ravana's heart. Because his heart was filled with lust and hate, no light could penetrate it.

Even as a lamp needs a container, oil, wick and a match stick to light it, for lighting the inner flame, one needs a container in the form of *Vairagya* (renunciation), *Bhakti* (the oil of devotion), the wick of mental concentration and *Tathvajnana* (the match stick of true awareness). Even if any of these four is lacking, the light of Self cannot be lit.

Where there is no attachment there is no fear

The world today is immersed in fear and suffering. The only way to get rid of fear is to cultivate *Vairagya* (non-attachment). Where there is no attachment, there is no fear. Only through non-attachment and renunciation can one acquire the competence to experience inner illumination. Renunciation does not mean giving up property and society and betaking oneself to the forest. What is called for is renunciation of all evil tendencies. That is *Yoga*. In the Gita three paths have been indicated. *Mathkarmakrit Mathparamo Madhbhaktah* ("Who works for me only, who looks on me as the only refuge, and is devoted to Me"), says Krishna. Here, *Mathkarmakrit* ("Who works for Me") does not mean doing service to Krishna. The "Me" represents the Cosmic Being. Because everything in the universe is permeated by the Divine, one who is enjoined to do service to all as the primary duty. All actions have to be done in society. You have to serve your country. The individual, the community and the world are the triune aspects of Divinity. To ignore any one of these is to court failure in the purpose of living. The goodness of the individual promotes the welfare of society. Social well-being is the basis for national welfare.

The cultivation of *Vairagya* (renunciation) calls for practice of certain restraints and disciplines. There should be curbs on desires. One should give back to society what one has been able to acquire by the use of the knowledge and skills received with the help of society. True sacrifice consists in sharing with others one's wealth, strength and qualities, which are in fact derived from society.

One should not be remiss in discharging one's duties and responsibilities. The proper fulfilment of duties is part of the spiritual discipline necessary for getting enlightenment. No room should be given for doubts. Many are haunted by doubts of every kind. While doubts remain, there can be no liberation from bondage.

Sacrifice leads to communion with Divine

Students should strive to lead exemplary lives. No one can give up completely all social relations or actions. Hence, one should dedicate all actions to the Divine and thereby develop the sense of detachment. To remove the chaos and violence prevailing in society today, you have to become *Karmayogis* and devote all your knowledge, abilities and energies to the transformation of

society. It is not wealth that is important. Character alone counts. *Bhoga* (sensual pleasures) can only lead to *Roga* (disease). *Thyaga* (sacrifice) leads to *Yoga* (communion with the Divine).

I have lit the lamp in the hostel today as a symbol of the spiritual light that has to be lit in the hearts of all of you. Spiritual enlightenment is as important as academic knowledge. All other branches are like rivers which merge in the ocean of Spiritual Knowledge.

During your educational career, develop purity of character and cultivate right habits. Even in ordinary routine actions like sitting, do not be sloppy and indifferent. If your back is bent when you sit, the *Sushumna nadi* (which runs through the spinal column) gets bent and this will produce harmful consequences including loss of memory power. Discipline is vital. Avoid unnecessary talks and purposeless association with anyone. Having come for study, you must concentrate on your primary duty. Strive to make your parents happy by your conduct and performance and see that you bring credit and good name to the Institute. Only then will your life be an example to others.

Discourse at the inauguration of the New Wing of 'the Institute Students' Hostel on 22-6-1987.

There is no stepping down in your Godward march. It is a continuous journey through day and night, through hill and dale. Where the road ends, God is attained and the pilgrim finds, that he has travelled from himself to himself.

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