

## 20. Wealth Or Grace?

Embodiments of Divine Love! Man's life is determined by his qualities. The transformation of the world is related to the transformation of the individual. The world will change only when the individual changes. When individuals are good, society also becomes good.

We tend to attach importance only to the external forms of social institutions. We lay stress on the conditions prevailing in the political, economic, social and environmental spheres. Changes in these spheres alone are not enough. Mental and spiritual transformation is more essential.

What man should seek is not longevity in life but divinisation of life. He must develop his good qualities. The span of life is determined by Time. It is virtue that has to be nourished. The character and conduct of a person are based upon his qualities. Forgetting this truth, people go after changes in the external conditions of life. When the Yaksha asked Dharmaraja (in the *Mahabharata*) "Who is the guide and protector for the world," the latter replied: "Only the good man is the protector of the world." If there were no good people in the world, it would be a hapless world.

### Students seek only material gains

Hence, today, even more than the teachers, it is the students who have to be exemplary and high-minded. Teachers and students today do not live up to this ideal. Students are self-seeking and self-centred. Likewise, the teachers also are self-regarding and self-seeking. Students go to teachers only to get their desires fulfilled. When their wishes are satisfied, they feel content. Otherwise they are disappointed. They are even prepared to take up cudgels against teachers. The result is that harmonious relations between teachers and students do not develop. What is most deplorable today is the indifference of students to their mental development, because they are concerned only about their narrow personal interests. They seek only material gains.

*Vairagyam* (renunciation of desires) is not a virtue that can be got by a message from others or as a result of prodding by someone. However many books you may read, or discourses you may listen to, or advice you may receive, the spirit of renunciation has to emanate from the heart within you. It cannot come from outside. Buddha's father, Suddhodana, tried every conceivable means to prevent his son from developing detachment. But he could not prevent Buddha from renouncing the kingdom and family and leading the life of a renunciant.

Our life is not based entirely on *annam* (food). It is based on the *Atma* (Spirit). One who regards food as the basis of life is an *Ajnani* (ignorant of the truth). The one who realises that the Spirit alone is everything in life is a *Vijnani* (the man of Higher Knowledge). Rantideva declared: "Oh Lord! The man who regards food as the summum bonum of life is a *papi* (sinner). The man who seeks a spiritual life is a *gopi* (a pure devotee of God).

### Power of love alone confers true strength

Krishna Chaitanya once went to the temple of Jagannath, at Puri. He was a handsome youth at that time. He addressed Lord Jagannath in these terms: "Oh Lord! You are not merely Jagannath (the Lord of the world). You are the Lord of all the worlds, of the Cosmos, the Lord of Life, the Lord of the Spirit, the Lord of all embodied beings. You can accomplish anything. I do not seek from you the powers of *yoga* or physical strength. I seek only the power of your Love. Your love will give me all the strength I need. It will be my real strength."

The power of love alone confers true strength. All other powers are of no avail. Hence the only strength we should seek from God is the strength of love. With that strength all the powers can be acquired. It is not *sir* (wealth) that we should desire. We should yearn for Hari. It is not a man of riches who is a Maharaja. They consider only those who have renounced everything as Maharaja (real rulers). It is not rolling in wealth that constitutes enjoyment. To be immersed in God's love and thoughts of God is the greatest enjoyment as well as true *yoga*.

Chaitanya declared that: "The Lord is the indweller in my heart" because according to the Lord's own declaration, "My *Atma* abides in all beings as the indwelling *Atma*." It should not be imagined that the Lord is only this human body. He is present everywhere in the Cosmos. He is timeless, without beginning or end. You must try to develop the awareness of this omnipresent Divine in your heart.

### **All wealth is impermanent and unreal**

Today we seek to accumulate all kinds of wealth by various activities. When these activities themselves are transient and evanescent, how can the wealth acquired by them be lasting? All of them are impermanent and unreal, as declared in the *Gita*. There is only one permanent and immutable reality, that is God. People are forgetting this truth. You may appear externally to be a great devotee and claim that you are doing many things to please God. But the truth cannot be hidden from God. You must consult your conscience and find out whether your devotion is genuine.

Annamacharya, the composer, sang many songs in which he hailed God as his sole refuge and support. Later he had the realisation that he had been trying to deceive God by his words. Then a great change came over him. We should realise that we cannot please God by our books or our songs or by our learning and scholarship. Nor is it possible to please God by intellectual eminence or clever tricks. Annamacharya declared: "The degree of everyone's (spiritual) attainment depends on the nature of his thoughts. Oh Lord! Whatever the feeling with which one envisages you, you appear to him within that form." Divine Grace is in proportion to the measure of your devotion. You can take from the vast ocean only the amount of water your vessel can contain.

According to the purity of our actions, we will get the fruits thereof. Our precious human birth can be redeemed only by developing human qualities and leading a righteous life. You (the students) must make good use of the golden opportunity you have got now. Besides worldly education, cultivate meditation on God and develop the inner vision.

Become *Raja yogis*. *Raja yoga* implies doing your duty without concern for the results and dedicating yourself to the service of society and welfare of humanity. This is the penance which Emperor Janaka did.

### **Seek to experience the Divine internally**

The foremost duty of students is to concentrate on their studies, behave in an exemplary manner in all their relations with the outside world, and seek to experience the Divine internally as a spiritual discipline.

The first *sutra* (aphorism) in the *Brahma Sutras* declares: "*Athhatho Brahma Jignaasa*" (Then thereafter seek to know the Brahman). In the four words of this *sutra* are contained the meaning of life. To begin with, the nature of creation has to be understood. We have to view creation in

relation to its *vilakshana* (extraordinary magnificence). Next, our conduct has to be *salakshana* (harmonious) and orderly. We have to realise that the whole universe is permeated by the *Vishnuswarupa* (Divine). Our conduct should be such that no one can point a finger of criticism at us. It should be blameless and pure. If the heart is also pure, one will not get immersed in the body-consciousness. The body is doubtless an essential instrument for fight living and its health and fitness should be safeguarded. But our main concern should be to experience the Divine in everything in creation. If the latter is ignored, physical existence alone will have no meaning.

### **Karma, Dharma and Brahman**

In this context, how is one to seek the knowledge of the Brahman? This quest can begin after one has acquired knowledge of *Dharma*---that is, after the stage of *Dharma Jijnasa* has been completed. When is *Dharma Jijnasa* accomplished? When *Karma Jijnasa*, the knowledge of *Karma*, has been mastered. There are thus three stages. *Karma Jijnasa* (Knowledge of *Karma*) *Dharma Jijnasa* (Knowledge of *Dharma*) and *Brahma Jijnasa* (Knowledge of Brahman). This means the progress is from *Karma* to *Dharma* and from *Dharma* to Brahman. Hence, one must have full faith in *Karma* (prescribed duties) and *Dharma* (the principle of right conduct). To observe *Dharma*, one has to ensure purity in thought, word and deed. *Dharma* is the basic goal of life. Sri Rama has been described as the very embodiment of *Dharma*. (*Ramo Vighrahavaan Dharmah*).

### **Surrender yourselves to the Will of the Divine**

Students should bear in mind the rules of right conduct that should govern their life. They are passing through the most precious and sacred period in their lives. This should be well used. Dedicate all your thoughts and aspirations to God and surrender yourselves to the Will of the Divine. Surrender may appear to be difficult, but it is not so. It is in fact like keeping your money in the bank. You will be able to draw money from the bank whenever you need it. Similarly when you have entrusted all your concerns to Bhagavan, you can draw from Him whatever you need. What is it that stands in the way of this surrender? It is your ego and your possessiveness. You do not have sufficient trust in the Lord.

People desperately cling to their possessions saying: "My money, My house" and so on. They forget that when you surrender to the Divine, you acquire His grace. Some time or the other your wealth will go. But once you have earned the grace of God, you can feel secure and satisfied. Bhagavan does not need your wealth. He is always a "*Chittachora*" (one who steals the heart), not a "*Vithachora*" (a stealer of wealth). It is you who have to change from "*Vithachoras*" to "*Chittachoras*."

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