

## 22. The Great and The Good

*'Tis rare in this world*

*To get the company of the good;*

*The wicked are a-plenty.*

*Granite stones are everywhere*

*But you have to search for diamonds.*

Differences in beliefs and cultural practices among men are well-known. Although climatic conditions may be the same in the various regions of the world, the ways of living and practices of people are diverse. This diversity is inherent in Nature. It is not a defect but an ornament. This diversity is not to be seen among birds and beasts. That is because they do not have the power to think. Man alone has this capacity.

Whatever one's education, position or intelligence, every man desires two things. He wants to achieve greatness and wishes to be a good man. No one wishes to be lowly and despised.

What is the difference between a great man and a good man? Greatness is based on worldly attributes. The great man is able to attract people. The good man tries to sustain himself by his own efforts. The difference between the two has to be clearly recognised. The great man enjoys many luxuries and amenities. He has thus many physical comforts. The good man experiences the bliss of the Divine. Greatness has a *Rajasic* quality. Goodness bears a *Satwic* quality. Good persons should try to develop *Satwic* qualities.

Greatness is often associated with persons who have likes and dislikes, attachments and hatred and who have an inflated ego. Goodness expresses itself in pure joy and unselfish service to others. *Dharma* (right conduct) is like a mirror. It reveals to you what is your duty towards your parents, your friends and others. How you discharge your duties will determine how you yourself fare later in life.

### Four kinds of temples

There are four kinds of temples: One, *Vidyalaya* (the Temple of Learning); second, *Bhojanalaya* (the Temple of Food); third, *Vaidyalaya* (the Temple of Healing) and *Devalaya* (the Temple of God). All the four are equally places of worship for man. But because of the infirmities in human nature, they are not all treated alike. People go to a *Bhojanalaya* (hotel), eat whatever food they like and come out happy. They go to a *Vaidyalaya* (hospital), relate their illness to the doctor, and receive the prescribed medicines from him. With this the purpose of going to the hospital is accomplished. If you ask for eatables in a hospital, will you get them? In a hospital you can only ask for medical treatment. When you go to a *Vidyalaya* (an educational institution) you must seek only knowledge in the subjects you are interested in.

When people go to a *Devalaya* (temple of God) they do not always conduct themselves properly. In a temple you should be concerned only with worship and not think of anything else. Instead of concentrating the mind on the Divine, the mind is allowed to wander hither and thither and think about useless mundane affairs. With the result that people tend to forget that if they secure the grace of God all other things will be accomplished easily.

Having come to Prashaanthi Nilayam, some persons are developing various differences and doubts and forming undesirable associations and contacts. Thereby both time and resources are wasted. Time is precious and should be profitably used.

### **Correct your faults and sanctify your life**

Education, wealth and strength are necessary for everyone. But the value of each of them depends on the way you use it. When a good man gets the benefit of education, it ripens into wisdom and makes his life an ideal one. But when a bad man gets educated, he gets immersed in disputations and education itself gets polluted. When a good man gets wealth, it is used for charity and righteous causes. He redeems his life by sacrifice. But wealth in the hands of a bad person promotes arrogance and pride and ultimately causes his downfall. Strength in a good man enables him to help the weak and serve the society. Strength in a wicked person encourages him to cause harm to people and harass the weak. Thus education, wealth and physical prowess derive their value from the way they are used.

It is only when the individual is transformed and becomes good that society can be changed for the better. Men must engage themselves in a constant process of self-correction, instead of seeking to find fault in others. If, instead of searching for a hundred faults in others, one corrects any one of his own faults, he would be sanctifying his life.

### **Make no room for jealousy and egoism**

Before you undertake any activity, you must examine whether it is right or wrong, good or bad. When such an enquiry is being made, sometimes an evil force enters. It is jealousy. It clouds your vision. This jealousy has an evil companion called *Ahamkara* (egoism). This ego is constantly seeking to dominate the body and the mind. These two evil elements are always seeking to establish themselves, especially in the minds of the young. Every effort must be made to make no room for them.

*Bhakti* (devotion) is essential for experiencing *Ananda* (Atmic Bliss). *Bhakti* is the source of man's true *shakthi* (power). This power endows man with various abilities. Through this power man can develop ultimately *virakti* (detachment). When detachment grows, man achieves *mukti* (liberation). *Mukti* (liberation) is not a special state or object. It is the gradual elimination of all desires. Desires arising from *Kama* (lust), *Krodha* (anger) and *Lobha* (greed) have to be reduced as much as possible. Students should make special efforts to get rid of these three evil qualities. They must widen their vision and develop the spirit of oneness with all living beings. This may not be easy to realise but through steady practice and spiritual discipline, it can be achieved.

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*Like underground water, the Divine is there, in everyone, remember. The Lord is Sarva-bhutaantaratma, Sarvavyaapi. He is the Atma of every being. He is in you as much as in everyone else. He is not more in a rich being or bigger in a fat being. His spark illumines the cave of heart of everyone. The sun shines equally on all; His Grace is falling equally on all. It is only you that erect obstacles that prevent the rays of His Grace from warming you.*

*Sathya Sai Baba*