

35. The Divine and the Demon

*What is the reason for all the
Violence in the world?
With the decline of selfless service
irrational desires have grown.
The pursuit of mundane desires without
fear of sin
Has led to a waning of the
Love for God
Men have lost their humanness –
As a consequence peace in the world
has been shattered.*

*"I am in the light; I am the light.
The light is in me. The light is me."
The Wise One who realises this truth
Becomes one with the Supreme.*

EMBODIMENTS of Love! God is the One who manifests Himself in the cosmos with a myriad heads, a myriad eyes and a myriad feet. When this eternal Divinity is so near us (by His omnipresence) we are searching for Him all over the universe. This is as foolish as the person who goes abegging to his neighbour for milk while the wish-fulfilling *Kamadhenu* is in his backyard. It is sheer senselessness on the part of man to search for God outside him when the Divine is within him.

No one can comprehend or describe the glory and mystery of *Prakriti* (Nature). Nature is a reflection of the sport of the Divine. It is animated by the three *gunas*, which are manifestations of the trinity (Brahma, Vishnu and Siva). God is nourishing and promoting Nature by using the three *gunas* in multifarious combinations and forms. The purpose of life is to experience the sacredness of nature as a projection of the Divine.

Realise the value of Time

Time is supremely precious. It waits for no one. Everyone has to submit himself to Time. It is not subject to any one. It is only when Time is utilised properly through right actions that the human can rise to the level of the Divine. Man's foremost duty is to make the right use of Time through the bodily vesture given to him. Man is bound by actions in this phenomenal world. While the Divine is all-pervasive, man is failing to recognise it. He is unable to see the light that is within him. The Reality which you are seeking everywhere in the outside world is within you. The Supreme Lord is present inside and outside, everywhere in the cosmos. Man today looks only at the outside world like any animal. To look inward is the mark of the true human being.

Obsessed with the external and losing the internal vision, man has forfeited his power of discrimination.

Significance of *Dipavali* festival

When we enquire into the significance of the *Dipavali* festival which we are celebrating today, we find that traditionally it is a joyous festival to celebrate the destruction of the demon Narakasura by Sri Krishna. It is only when we first understand the meaning of the Krishna Principle will we be able to understand the significance of the *Naraka* principle. Krishna is the embodiment of the Five Elements ---ether, air, fire, water and earth. He is also the embodiment of five life breaths--*Prana, Apana, Samana, Udana* and *Vyana*. "*Kleem-Krishnaaya-Govindaaya- Gopijanavallabhaaya-Swaah.*" This mantra contains the essence of the *Bhagavatha*. The five names represent the Five *Pranas* (vital airs). *Kleem* refers to the earth. *Krishnaaya* refers to water. *Govindaaya* refers to *Agni* (the Fire-God). *Gopijanavallabhaaya* refers to *Vayu* (Air). *Swaah* refers to ether.

When we recognise that the Divine is immanent in the five elements, we will realise that there is no place in the cosmos where these five are not present. The human body is composed of the five elements. These elements, because' they constitute the body, can affect only the body but cannot affect the *Atma* in any way.

In commenting on the Krishna story in the *Bhagavatha*, many writers have indulged in all kinds of misinterpretations. One such misinterpretation relates to Krishna's wives.

Misinterpretation of *Bhagavatham*

In the human body, there are what are called *Shadchakras*--six spiritual centres. Of these, the two most important are: the *Hridayachakra* (the Heart Centre) and the *Sahasraara* (the thousand petalled centre). The *Hridayachakra* is also known as the *Hridayakamala* (Lotus of the Heart) and the *Sahasraara* is called the Thousand-Petalled Lotus. The lotus of the heart has eight petals. These eight petals symbolise the eight worlds, the eight directions, the eight guardians of the world, the eight *bhutas* (spirits) and the eight parts of the earth. Because Krishna was the lord of these eight petals, He was described as the husband of eight queens. The master is called *Pathi* and those under him are described as wives. This is a symbolic relationship and not a husband-wife relationship in the worldly sense. It is because the esoteric significance of these relationships was not properly understood, the *Bhagavatham* came in for misinterpretation.

It is also stated that Krishna was wedded to 116000 *gopikas*. Who are these *gopikas*? They are not cowherdesses in physical form. In the human head there is a lotus with a thousand petals. The Lord is described as the embodiment of the 16 *kalas*. As the Lord of the *Sahasraara* (thousand-petalled lotus), He presides over the 16,000 *kalas* which are present in this lotus. The *Kundalini Sakti*, which starts at the bottom of the spinal column (*Mooladhaara*), rises and merges with the 16,000 entities in the *Sahasraara*. This is the esoteric significance and the meaning of the role of the Divine within the body. Oblivious to this inner meaning, people indulge in misinterpretations and perverse expositions.

Krishna's encounter with the demon Naraka has to be understood against this background. "Naraka" means one who is opposed to the *Atma*. Naraka does not mean a demon. It is the name of the satellite which revolved round the earth. When people were filled with apprehension about

the threat to the earth from this satellite, when it seemed to be approaching the earth, Krishna removed their fear by destroying the satellite.

***Dipavali* commemorates Krishna's victory**

Dangers from the planets are apprehended from time to time. For instance, some years ago, people expected great danger to the world from the combination of the "Ashtagraha" (eight planets). Five thousand years ago people dreaded the approach of a planet near to the earth. To allay their fears, Krishna came to their rescue and averted the impending danger. The celebration of Dipavali as the day of deliverance from Narakasura commemorates Krishna's victory. The day is observed as an occasion when the Divine leads mankind from darkness to light.

The legendary version of the Narakasura episode describes the demon as master of *Praagiyothishapura*. The symbolic meaning of *Praagiyothishapura* is that it is a place which has forgotten the *Atma*. The inner meaning of this is that demonic forces dwell in any place where *the Atma* is forgotten. All the chaos and evil in the world today are due to the fact that men have forgotten the *Atma* (the Supreme Spirit). Every man is conscious of the body and of the individual soul, but is not conscious of the *Paramatma* (Divinity) within him.

From sheath of food to sheath of Bliss

Man is encased in five *kosas* (sheaths): *Annamaya*, *Pranamaya*, *Manomaya*, *Vijnanamaya* and *Anandamaya kosas*. The physical body is *the Annamaya kosa* (the sheath based on food). Man takes good care of the body. Man also takes care of the *Pranamaya kosa* as he cannot exist without the life-breath. Without the *Manomaya kosa* (the mental sheath), man cannot accomplish any of his desires. Man today has progressed upto the stage of caring for the first three sheaths. Upto this stage his vision is turned towards the external. The *Vijnanamaya kosa* calls for internal vision. It leads to the understanding of the *Anandamaya kosa* (the sheath of Supreme Bliss).

Starting from the sheath of food man should progress towards the sheath of Bliss and not get stuck up midway in the mental sheath. This is the reason for man getting filled with demonic qualities, which can only lead him to *Naraka* (hell). The demonic qualities (symbolised by Narakasura) have to be destroyed to avoid being thrust into *Naraka* (hell). By taking refuge in Krishna, the destroyer of Narakasura, man can get rid of the demonic qualities in him.

On Dipavali day, we light numerous lamps with one candle. The light with which other lamps are lit is a symbol of the Divine. The other lamps are *Jivana jyothis* (individual lamps). They derive their light from the One Supreme Light. It is to teach this truth to men that the Festival of Lights is observed.

Thus every festival has an inner meaning and purpose. Forgetting this, the holy days are observed only as occasions for feasts and fun. Holy days in Bharat are all full of spiritual significance. Forgetting this, people are lost in meaningless observances.

According to the legend, Krishna killed Narakasura with the help of Sathyabhama. What does this signify? Each of us has to fight and destroy the demonic forces within each by resorting to *Sathya* (Truth). "*Sathyameva Jayathe*" declares the *Upanishad* (Truth alone triumphs). "Speak the Truth" is a *Vedic* injunction. Once the Goddess of the Earth went to Vishnu and lamented that she can bear any kind of burden but not the burden of carrying those indulging in falsehood. One must be prepared to make any kind of sacrifice for upholding Truth. That is the lesson

taught by Harischandra, who sacrificed his kingdom, wife and son, for the sake of the pledged word. He stands out as the supreme upholder of Truth.

Everyone should endeavour to adhere to Truth. Truth is God. With faith in God and adherence to Truth, all demonic forces can be vanquished.

Discourse at Brindavan on Dipavali day, 28-10-1989.

Your beliefs and actions must be expressions of Faith. They must have holiness as their core. They must be so full of Love and compassion that they attract on you the Grace of God.

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