

32. *Seva* that sanctifies

Oh Man! When you come out of the mother's womb

You have no necklace of any kind round neck.

Neither of pearls, nor of gold, nor a string of gems;

But there is one garland round your neck with

which the Creator has sent you.

It is the heavy chain of your good and bad deeds

carried from all your past lives.

That unbroken chain is all that you bring into the world.

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love !

Karma (one's deeds) is responsible for birth. Every man is a child of *Karma*. Born on account of *Karma*, *Dharma* (Righteousness) becomes one of the primary goals of human life. *Dharma* governs all worldly and other-worldly actions in life. Based on the rules of *Dharma* (conduct) pertaining to one's caste, vocation, or *Asrama* (stage in life), people are supposed to regulate their lives. This is regarded as *Dharma*. But this is not the correct meaning of the term. *Dharma* in its exalted meaning is that which applies to all people, in all countries at all times.

The eternal Dharma

Dharma is that which sustains mankind. True humanness consists in observing unity of thought, word and deed. All actions done with this triple unity are *dharmic* (righteous actions). All such actions will be non-violent. Words spoken with such triple purity will be truth.

Dharma conceived in this way transcends the barriers of space, time and circumstance. Hence it is called *Sanathana Dharma--the eternal verities*.

There are in the world various rules of conduct which are related to conditions governing time and space. Such rules are liable to change from time to time and country to country, according to changing situations. But if *Sanathana Dharma* is changed, humanity will cease to be human. Just as burning charcoal, if it loses its heat, becomes mere charcoal, and a piece of jaggery, if it loses its sweetness, becomes a lump of clay, likewise man remains truly human only as long as he adheres to the eternal *Dharma* (which is represented by purity in thought, word and *deed--Trikarana Suddhi*). Without this basic quality, man is only human in form and not his true nature.

Human life is a precious jewel which is being bartered away for the flimsy tinsel of sensuous pleasures and this happens because of pollution of the mind. The mind is prone to afflictions from four sources. One is through *bhrama* (delusions) which make the mind see objects differently from what they really are. Because of this, man forgets his inherent divinity and gets immersed in the transient and the impermanent. Ignoring the In-dwelling Spirit, he gets attached to the perishable body. This delusion results in the state called *Pramaadam* (perilous or critical condition). The entire personality is affected by the delusion. The result is the next stage, called *Karanapatanam*, the weakening of the sense organs.

The mind by itself has no power of perception. It has to perceive everything through the *indriyas* (sense organs) such as the eyes, the ears, etc. The mind acts on the basis of the impressions received through the sense organs. When the senses are weakened and the impressions received through them are misleading and unreliable, the mind is also affected. The mind goes astray by association with wrong impressions. That is why in the spiritual field, the efficacy of association with good people is emphasized.

Envy is the most sinful vice

The fourth affliction to which the mind is prone is *Vipralipsa* (envy). This is an evil quality. The envious man cannot suffer others being prosperous or happy. He has a carping spirit. He always wishes ill for others. Envy converts a man into a veritable monster. This is a most sinful vice.

It is because the mind is prone to these four kinds of afflictions that *Vedanta* recommends special disciplines for the mind to get rid of polluting influences and evil tendencies. How is the mind to be purified? Through service to society with dedication and identification with everyone. You have to cultivate this feeling of *Ekaatmabhaava* (oneness with all). By engaging yourselves in service, you develop this sense of oneness. In this context, the supreme importance of love should be recognised. Love is your true nature. But modern man, in his preoccupation with the world of external phenomena, is failing to discover his own true nature. Of what avail is all the knowledge about the physical world if a man does not know what he really is? Love is the basis for this self-discovery. Love is the means and love is the proof.

Buddhi* is superior to *Medhas

Self-enquiry calls for *sraddha* (earnestness) and understanding of *Rita* (the principle of cosmic order governing the universe). *Rita* transcends the categories of time and space. It is the eternal verity represented by *Trikaranna Suddhi* (unity of thought, word and deed). The *Buddhi* (intelligence) is the instrument for making the enquiry into the Real. *Buddhi* is superior to intellectual talent. The ancients accorded a higher place to *Buddhi* because it confers the power of discrimination between right and wrong, between the permanent and the passing. Modern man attaches higher value to intellectual ability. The falsity of this view was demonstrated centuries ago in a debate between Adi Sankara and Mandana Misra. In that debate Sankara conclusively proved that *Buddhi* (the power of discrimination) was superior to *medhas* (intellectual ability.)

Few are qualified to declare the distinction between Spirit and matter and to determine the nature of Divinity and the truth about the phenomenal world. The reason is that all people in the world suffer from delusions of different kinds. Consequently they suffer from various fears and hallucinations and have no peace of mind. The only way to get rid of these delusions and fears is to practise love and realise the divinity that is present in all beings. Once this spiritual unity of all beings is recognised, the relevance of this truth for every sphere of life--the physical, the social, the political, the economic, the ethical and the spiritual will become clear.

The scientists, in their exploration of the nature of matter, have discovered the existence of various subatomic particles like electrons, protons and neutrons. The divine energy that is present in all these particles is one and the same. Once the divine energy is understood, there will be no need to pursue other explorations. If, for instance, you understood that sugar is the basic constituent of different kinds of sweets, there will be no need to examine each of them.

Help to the needy is the highest virtue

Multiplicity is a characteristic of *Prakriti* (Nature). The Cosmos is a projection of the Divine. It is called *Jagat--that* in which things arise and disappear, come and go. Nothing seems permanent. But the spiritually realised person will recognize the permanent that subsumes the changing entity. Such a realisation can come only when a person is pure in thought, word and deed. Purity must express itself in loving service. Help to the needy has been described as *punya* (the highest virtue). Harming others has been condemned as a sin. Sai devotees must engage themselves in acts of service, which will sanctify their lives. The exemplary man is the one who causes no pain to others, who feels no pain himself and who leads a life of service to others. Hoping that, with the name of God on your lips and with your hands engaged in service, you will dedicate your lives to help others and realise the bliss of the Spirit, I shower My benedictions on all of you!

Discourse to the Fifth World Conference of Sathya Sai Seva Organizations on 21-11-1990, at the Hill View Stadium.

Education sans wisdom, mere wisdom bereft of discrimination, action without discretion, erudition lacking sagacity, power not justified by credentials, statements not based on truth, music wanting in melody, adoration not sustained by devotion, a person devoid of common sense and character, a student not endowed with humility and a discourse that fails to inspire--these serve no useful purpose.

BABA