

### 36. Purify The Heart To Realise God

Though, at the time of birth, man has no good or bad qualities, changes occur in his nature due to the food he consumes, and the influence of associates around him. One develops ego and attachment based on the company he keeps. As a person gets educated, he or she develops pride and entertains vainglorious thoughts about one's superiority over others. This conceit pollutes the heart.

When dirty water gets mixed with milk, the milk has to be boiled to make it pure. Likewise man has to undertake various types of *Sadhana* to purge his heart of impurities. Exercises such as meditation, *Yajna* or *thapas* can only provide mental satisfaction. It is only when the heart is melted in the heat of Divine love that one can succeed in getting rid of bad qualities and make the heart shine in its pristine effulgence. Just as the sun's rays can burn a heap of cotton if the rays are concentrated by passing through a lens, the rays of the intellect will destroy one's bad qualities only when they are passed through the lens of Divine love.

#### **The growth of demonic nature in man**

Although man has come from *Madhava* (God), he is enveloped in a *Bhrama* (delusion) which obscures the Brahma (Divinity) within him. So long as one is in the grip of this delusion one cannot understand God. Because of this delusion one gets attached to the body and develops limitless desires. This leads to the growth of the *Asura* (demonic) nature in him.

In the word "*Nara*" meaning man, "na" means "no" and "ra" means "destruction." So, the term "*nara*" describes man as one without destruction (that is, one who is eternal). When the letter "ka" is added to "nara" it becomes "*Naraka*," hell, which is the opposite of heaven. When one descends to the demonic level, he forgets divinity and follows the path to hell. The Divine is realised by pursuing the spiritual path (the *Atmic* path).

According to the Puranic story, Narakaasura is said to have been destroyed on this day of Deepavali (Naraka Chaturdhasi). Narakaasura was a demon filled with attachment to bodily pleasures. He was full of bad qualities like lust, anger and greed. He was a terror to women and perpetrated many evil deeds, inviting his own destruction at the hands of a woman, Sathyabhama, the consort of Sri Krishna.

It is worthy of note that the Lord gave this opportunity to Sathyabhama only after subjecting her to a cleansing process to rid her of her pride and jealousy as revealed in the Tulabhaaram episode, where Sathyabhama was advised by Narada to make a gift of Krishna to him and win him back by offering an equivalent weight of gold and jewellery. When Sathyabhama offered all the valuables she possessed, it had no effect. Ultimately a Tulasi leaf offered by Rukmini with a prayer to Krishna tilted the balance. Thereby Sathyabhama was cured of her pride and jealousy.

Apart from this Puranic version, there is a cosmic explanation for the observance of Deepavali. Naraka was a planet moving in orbit with the moon around the earth. Once it appeared to be heading towards the earth. People prayed to Lord Krishna to avert the impending catastrophe. The Lord had to take action to destroy this planet and save the world from disaster. From that day, Deepavali was being observed as a joyous day of deliverance from evil.

*Deepavali eve, Prashanthi Mandir, 24 Oct 1992*

*Among men, each one is himself the cause of his fortune, good or bad. He is himself the builder, the architect. Fate, destiny, predetermination, the Will of God--every one of these explanations is toppled by the principle of Karma. God and man can be reconciled and affiliated only on the basis of this Sutra or principal of Karma. When man realises that God has no share in causing his suffering and that he is himself the sole cause, that no blame attaches to any other person, that he is the initiator as well as the beneficiary--the cause and the effect of his acts, that he is free to shape his future, then he approaches God with a firmer step and a clearer mind*

*Sathya Sai Baba*