

5. Disease and Divinity

You can reset a tree to make it grow straight,

You can straighten even a granite stone.

But you cannot easily set right

The mind and rid of its vagaries.

IT IS the mind that makes a man. The mind is a conglomeration of thoughts. Thoughts are reflected in actions. The consequences of actions are being experienced as pleasure and pain by man. Therefore, man should have noble thoughts, which will spur him to good and noble activity.

Each one should enquire for whose sake he or she is living. When any one poses this question to oneself, the answer is: "I am living for myself and not for others." He justifies his answer by saying: "I am eating to appease my own hunger. I am taking medicine to cure my illness. It cannot be cured by anyone else taking the medicine."

When two persons are sleeping in the same cot, they do not get the same dreams but have different dreams. Basing on these facts man feels that he is living for himself. Later on, when he grows up he seeks a job on the ground that he has a family to look after and support. The same person, who once said he was living for himself, later on pleads that he is living for his family. When invited by a friend to accompany him to Bangalore for an interesting sports event, he says that he has to attend his office and cannot rake leave and hence he is unable to accompany him. He thus cites his duty as a reason for his inability to enjoy the sports. But when his wife or child is sick and in a hospital he rakes leave even on loss of pay and goes to attend on them. The same person, when he is hungry and just sirs for taking his dinner, leaves the meal served on the table and rushes our when he hears that his son or daughter is involved in an accident. Even hunger is forgotten. The person, who was proclaiming that he was living for himself only, now starts caring for his wife and children.

Man's own welfare is bound with that of society

When the village is in the grip of an epidemic like cholera or plague, the same person comes forward to do his best to combat the spread of the disease, because this may affect his own family too as they are part and parcel of the village. Thus man is born in society and grows in society. It is the bounden duty of every one to feel that his own welfare is bound up with the welfare of all others in society.

Today we are faced with the menace of fluorosis. If you enquire into this, we come to know that the problem of fluorests is not only prevalent in India but in many other countries of the world such as Indonesia, Germany, China, USA, Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Libya. Because of their affluence people in countries like U.S.A, are able to take steps to overcome the evil effects of this disease to a great extent.

The ill-effects of polluted drinking water

Many diseases are caused by drinking water that is polluted. If there is only one milligram of fluoride in a litre of water, it is safe. The presence of more than one mg in a litre may cause sickness. If there is 4 or 5 mg of fluoride in a litre, it affects the teeth and is positively injurious to health. In several States in India such as Himaachal Pradesh, Utthar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh

and Rajasthan this disease is widely prevalent. In Andhra Pradesh, it is rampant in Shrikakulam, Guntur, Medhak, Nalgonda and Mahboobnagar districts. Recently it has been found to be prevalent in Kudapa, Kurnool, Ananthapur and other places. It is found on investigation that the fluoride content in water varies from 15 mg to 10.5 mg in these areas.

The fluoride that is contained in underground water sources varies from 1 mg to 300 mg per litre. In many areas they have established Aluminum factories. Fluoride is made use of to a large extent in these factories. This mixes with air and the polluted air affects the people. It enters the stronger portions of the body such as bones and teeth. A portion of this fluoride is excreted through urine. The ignorant are not aware of the serious damage caused by this fluoride to their health. Fluorosis causes pain in the joints and affects the bones at the back, etc. The affected persons suffer from severe pain in joints. Some germs such as bacteria also enter the system and cause a lot of damage to the human body. Viruses also cause diseases. Polluted food also accounts for the spread of these disease carrying germs. Meat, fish, black and red salt, black coffee and tea also cause spread of fluorosis and aggravate it further. To the extent possible you should change your food habits. Chewing betel leaves also causes tooth decay. Certain drugs sold in the market also aggravate this disease.

Ways and means to combat fluorosis

There are some types of antidotes that can be consumed with food to prevent fluorosis. You should take sour things like lime, orange and tamarind in greater quantity. You can also take more of tomatoes, potatoes and vegetables with Vitamin C. You should also take more of carrots to build the bones. Intake of such food items in a liberal measure will help to combat the incidence of fluorosis. Besides these, consuming of green leaves which contain a lot of calcium will also help in keeping off fluorosis. Food is the main factor in maintaining good health or causing diseases.

In these days, though there is plenty of milk, curd and other dairy products available with the villagers in their houses, they are in the habit of selling these products and buying some useless and harmful things that affect their health adversely. Consuming of curd will help one to a great extent to combat the onset of this disease. Modern youth take black tea and coffee (without milk though milk is available) thereby inviting the disease. Some take black and brownish salt which contains more fluoride. They should avoid this and take only white purified salt. It is only by propagating such practical preventive steps that Government can play its role in checking the spread of this disease.

Thought of Divine essential to combat disease

Apart from the exercise of such care in the food consumed there should be also *Dhaiva chinthana* (contemplation of the Divine). Because people don't drink of God they are subjected to a lot of misery. Without divine thought, man is harbouring two bad qualities. One is he hides many defects and evil qualities within himself. The other is he magnifies even minor faults in others. Because of such evil qualities among human beings diseases are also on the increase. Only when human effort is there, with God's grace, good results will be attained. The *Sanskrit* saying declares "*Dharmaartha Kaama Mokshaanaam Aarogyam Muulam Uthamam*" (For the attainment of the four *Purusharthas*, good health is essential). Even though one may have all the wealth in the world, if his health is impaired, he is miserable. Good health is the most important acquisition one should aspire for. Whether a villager or an urban dweller, good health is very essential for anyone leading a meaningful life.

To enjoy good health, one should have water, food and air free from pollution. Now all these three are polluted. Apart from these, man's mind is also polluted. To purify the mind, one should nurture noble and sacred thoughts of service to others. One who does not hurt anybody and has feelings of love and compassion to fellow beings is the greatest of men. That is why sage Vyaasa gave the essence of the Eighteen *Puraanas* he composed in the aphorism; "Help ever, hurt never."

You should make every effort to avoid harming others in any circumstance. You are only hurting yourself when you hurt others. You should not use harsh words. When you develop human values, you can be free from diseases and even enjoy good health with God's Grace.

To enjoy good health you need control in living

Once a poet gave the reason for the-lack of *Dharma* in this country in the form of a song. Because there are people who have bad thought, hear bad things through their ears, see bad things with their eyes, spread scandals through their tongue, there is no *Dharma* (righteousness) and no peace. Human beings are embodiments of Divinity. They should live up to their Divine nature and not descend to the level of animals.

We should see that by our action no harm is caused to society. The incidence of fluorosis is a threat to public health and affects society in general. But, there are easy methods to combat this menace by taking preventive steps. In our Institute, Venkateshvara Rao has done detailed studies in this field and has found out methods of conducting numerous experiments to control this disease. This can be controlled to a great extent by using sour things such as tamarind, lime, oranges, etc., in larger quantities in food. The villagers should consume lot of greens which contain a good amount of iron.

The Government has embarked upon measures to control the spread of this disease. The people, for their part, should co-operate with the government. Then the results will be good.

My opinion is that it is not good enough to provide for treatment for this disease. It is prevalent even in the affluent countries like U.S.A. With all their money power they are not able to eradicate the disease. So you should realise that God's grace is very essential. Along with medicine you need discipline and control in living.

Pure engineers, officers, scientists have all gathered here. They must educate the people to avoid meat eating, which causes fluorosis. Water and other substances coming from underground have a lot of fluoride content. In some places there is as much as 8 to 10 mg of fluoride in one litre of water.

Divine vibrations in Prashaanthi Nilayam

Whether you believe it or not, in Prashaanthi Nilayam, which is situated in Ananthapur District, there is no trace of fluorosis. Here, there is a lot of Divine vibrations as all good and sacred things are being done. People of different religions and Nationalities are assembling here in thousands. But all are engaged in divine activities and constant remembrance of God. Here there is not more than 1 or 1.5 mg of fluoride in a litre of water.

The Collector of Ananthapur district is making a lot of effort to combat this disease. It is necessary to combine divine activities along with the other steps to combat this disease.

Discourse at the inauguration of the National Symposium on methods to combat Fluorosis, held in the Sathya Sai Institute Auditorium on 29-1-1994.

*You love the God in all beings and the God in all beings responds
with Love.*

BABA