

### 13. Experience the Divine

*STUDENTS!* To illumine a lighted lamp, you don't need another lamp. Likewise, it is foolish to try to illumine the effulgent *Aathma* by the light of any other knowledge. It is a sign of ignorance to embark on a search for the *Aathma* principle which is all-pervading, effulgent and unchanging. No individual tries to search himself in the world outside. Similarly, is it not sheer ignorance to search for the *Aathma* when he himself is the *Aathma*?

Bhaarath has been propagating this sacred truth over many aeons. Bhaarath is the birth-place of spiritual enquiry, generosity and righteousness. It was the home of peace and non-violence. Nowhere else in the world can be seen that interest in the pursuit of Truth which Bhaarath had. The seven great sages were born in Bhaarath. It is the land which gave birth to the Aadhikavi aalmeeeki and the great codifier of the *Vedhas*, the sage Vyaasa. It is the sacred land where Lord. Krishna delivered His message. It is the sacred land where Raama established *Raama Raajya*. It is the most sacred land of the Buddha. From ancient times, Bhaarath has never been bereft of people revelling in righteousness and charity and dedicated to the contemplation of God.

#### **Like food for body; God is vital for mind**

In the contemplation of God there can be no difference of caste or creed, no distinctions based on age or language. It is open to everyone. Like food for the body; God is vital for the mind. In the practice of devotion there may be some ludicrous exercises. But even in such exercises, there is a spiritual under-current.

For instance, a student may pray to God for passing in his examination. A litigant may pray for success in his dispute. Why go so far? Some people pray even for securing a seat in a bus! In this manner Bhaaratheeyas have looked to God for help in trivial and serious matters. This may be regarded as a form of craziness or a kind of religious delusion, or even foolishness. Whatever people may say, each one is entitled to his madness. Each has a right to his beliefs, his faith and his appetite. No one has the authority to deny their right. Their beliefs are their business.

However, beliefs may require some basis. The discovery of a bridegroom does not decide the marriage of a bride. Finding some money will not ensure the launching of a business. Other accessories are needed for the purpose. By merely learning the alphabet, one cannot start writing letters. Letter-writing calls for knowledge of words and sentences. Likewise, knowledge of worldly matters will not enable the understanding of God. Spiritual knowledge is also necessary. The acquisition of spiritual knowledge calls for enquiry into truth.

To start with, every man has to understand the nature of the universe. He should also understand the life principle. Only those who understand the nature of living beings in the Universe can know the secret of the Divine.

#### **Science and spirituality**

From ancient times, wise sages and scientists have been investigating the secrets of the Universe. Galileo discovered some facts about the movement of planets. The earth is going round the sun at the rate of 18000 miles per second. It completes the round in 365 days. Who is responsible for the earth's motion? Why is it rotating? On what basis is it revolving? We find that night and day are caused by the earth revolving on its axis. The earth's motion round the sun is the cause of seasons, which enable man to raise food, etc. Whatever the Divine does, whether it is something small or great, it is for the good of mankind. There is a power at work about which we are

ignorant. This was described as the *Ajnaatha Shakthi* (the unknown power). The ancients called it *Dhivya Shakthi* (power of God).

Another scientist, exploring the secrets of Nature, came to the conclusion that understanding the powers of Nature means understanding God. The great scientist, Einstein, discovered the convertibility of matter and energy and declared that energy is convertible into various forms but cannot be created or destroyed.

Students who perform experiments in the laboratory should bear in mind an important truth. They know that water is made up of hydrogen and oxygen. But who created hydrogen and oxygen without which there can be no water? Likewise nothing can exist without a basis. Science is concerned with substances that are liable to change. Spirituality is concerned with the basic unchanging entity.

The term spirituality is bandied about in various ways. We talk about culture and spirituality. Culture was defined as "a way of life." In Sanskrit parlance, it is called *Samskrithi* or the refinement of behaviour. It was declared that for this refinement of behaviour spirituality is the means.

What is spirituality? People regard various rituals and forms of worship as spirituality. Spirituality is concerned with the spirit of love. Science is engaged in "split of love." The splitting process in science results in changes. The "Spirit of love" in spirituality is permanent and unchanging. Hence, culture grows out of the spirit of love. There can be no culture without love. Spirituality implies a power that is associated with love.

Einstein felt that the unchanging power that underlies energy may be described as divine. But he could not go any further.

### **Discovering God**

However, many spiritual seekers undertook various exercises to discover God. At one time, some aspirants approached Buddha and asked him whether he had any awareness of God. On this issue, Buddha remained silent. Later on he told his disciple' "Son, there is no meaning in having controversies over the unknown. Don't go into such questions. Divinity is not perceptible. It is beyond human comprehension, not within the reach of the mind or speech. However, the Divinity that I know has three forms: Truth, Righteousness and Non-violence. I consider these three as the embodiments of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara. First of all, follow the truth and act according to *Dharma*. Lead a life of non-violence. This is true spiritual *saadhana*."

Truth is God. The *Vedhas* declared' "Speak the truth; follow Righteousness." There is no greater divinity than these two. Where truth reigns, there Divinity is present. Where Righteousness is prevalent, there the Divine exists as *Dharma*.

### **One who adheres to *Dharma* is embodiment of God**

It was because Raama stood by the plighted word, pursued *Dharma* renouncing the Kingdom and choosing to live in the forest, that Vashishta hailed him as .the very embodiment of *Dharma*. To honour the promise given by the father, the son was prepared to undergo such an ordeal. He sacrificed everything for truth. He ceaselessly practised *Dharma*. He was regarded as God incarnate. Any one who adheres to *Dharma*, whoever he may be, is verily the embodiment of God.

In our own times, some people approached Raamakrishna Paramahansa and put him the question 'Svaami! Have you seen God?' "Oh yes, I have seen Him." They then asked: "In what form did you see Him?" "I saw Him just as you are seeing me," declared Raamakrishna Paramahansa. "How is that possible?" they asked. "This is possible. You do not have that intense yearning needed to see God. You take endless trouble to acquire possessions. You shed tears over petty matters, you weep night and day for the sake of riches. Have you shed a single tear for God?" There is a poem of Jayadheva in which he declared that if a fraction of the trouble which people take for the sake of the family and wealth, were to be devoted to God, they would have no fear of death). Raamakrishna Paramahansa told them: "You are totally absorbed in worldly desires. How can you experience God?"

### **The apparent and the invisible**

Atheists, the Charvaakas and the scientists want to have direct perceptible proof for the existence of God. They ask: "How are we to believe in something which is not visible to the eye, and cannot be grasped by the hand?"

Scientists who demand such proofs should be considered extremely foolish. For instance, you see an individual. His height is 5 feet 6 inches. You can measure it. His weight is 63 Kgs. as shown by the weighing machine. His complexion is fair. He has a bald head. All these are evident to the eye. Is this the truth about him? Yes, so far as the external measurements and appearances are concerned. But the man has qualities which are not apparent and beyond measurement. He has kindness, determination, spirit of sacrifice, compassion, all of which are not visible to the eye and cannot be measured. You cannot notice them even if he is dissected. On this account can it be said that he does not have them? It is these qualities which make him a useful being. It is the invisible qualities which lend meaning to the visible features. It follows that what is not apparent provides the proof for what is apparent.

*You fool! Realise that*

*What is not apparent is*

*That which makes you suffer*

*The consequences of past actions.*

### **To consider apparent as the only reality is foolish**

To deny what is not perceptible by the senses as nonexistent is foolish. Equally, to consider the apparent as the only reality is foolish. For example, you see a tree full of branches. The scientist sees it and says that is the truth. But the spiritual *Jnaani* looks at the roots, without which the tree cannot exist. The one who looks at the branches will not see the roots, the one who looks for the roots will not bother about the branches. The question arises: Which are more important, roots or branches? If the roots are there, the tree will remain even if the branches are cut. But if the roots are gone, the tree will not survive. It is the unseen roots which enable us to see the branches. Likewise, there is an invisible Divine power which underlies all that is seen in the phenomenal Universe. It is because of that power that we are able to perceive the universe.

Here are some more examples- You have the fragrance of a flower. Fragrance has no form but you enjoy it. Can its existence be denied because it is not visible or can be touched or tasted? Likewise, love has no form, but the mother who shows love has a form. Fragrance has no form but the flower which exudes it has a form. Similarly, *Aanandha* (bliss) has no form, but there is a

form for the Divinity that confers bliss. What is that form? It is a form beyond comprehension by the senses. It may be associated with anything.

Yet another example. Air has no form. What is the form of water? Water is visible. Air has no form but you can experience its presence. When does air acquire a form? When a football or a balloon, is filled with air, it acquires their form. Water assumes the form of the container. Likewise, whatever the form in which the devotee worships the Divine, God appears in that form. What is the reason for this? The feelings of the devotees endow the form for the Divine. This is called *Bhaavaruupam* (the form caused by the feeling). *Dhyaana* (Meditation) is the means by which the form is experienced. Whatever the feeling about the form which the devotee cherishes, God assumes that form for him. The Lord appears in the form that you envisage. Divinity cannot be defined in this way or that. That is why it is said that God has a myriad feet, a myriad eyes, a myriad heads and He encompasses everything in the cosmos. He is omnipresent.

### **No one is entitled to ridicule worship of Nature**

Everything in the universe, from sub-atomic particles to the biggest star, has a form: It was this fact that impelled the ancients to worship the *Bhu-maatha* (earth as a Mother). Some scientists ridiculed this adoration as a superstitious worship of mud and stone. They asked what is the meaning of worshipping mud and stone? The answer is: "That mud is the source of our food. The air (over the earth) is enabling us to breathe and live. The sun is enabling the crops to grow. Hence, no one is entitled to ridicule the worship of Nature. It is proper to worship those who help us. What help are the five basic elements rendering to mankind? Without these elements, there will be no world' at all. What, then, is the loss in adoring them?"

Some others ask: "Apart from the five elements, you are worshipping stones. How can these stones be treated as God?" The answer is' "You crazy one! Everything is an embodiment of God. Why should not they be worshipped?" "They have no qualities. They have no consciousness. Why do you worship something which is inert and unconscious?" In answer to this, mention may be made of an appropriate example. On August 15th the National Flag is hoisted and it is honoured in various ways. Why is the flag respected? It is a piece of cloth, made up of threads. It has no virtues. It is unconscious. It sways if there is wind. Otherwise it is still. Why is respect shown to such an object? Because it is regarded as a symbol of the freedom that we gained after a struggle. Divinity has to be regarded in the same manner. You have to place your faith in some symbol. In every country, its national flag is honoured. If a flag can be honoured though it has no consciousness, what is wrong in worshipping a stone idol if it has no consciousness? The Divine consciousness is universal.

### **Devotee's devotional feelings are imprinted in idols**

In our daily life, there is an object of general worship. It is wealth. People offer worship to Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth and prosperity, in elaborate rituals. People even consider a hundred rupee note as sacred and press it on their eyes before placing it in the pocket. What is this hundred rupee note? It is made from some pulp. What virtue or merit is there in it? Both theists and atheists value the note for its value as currency.

People worship the photo of the father or the grandfather after they have passed away. The reason is that the picture is a reminder of one's ancestor. Similarly, the worshipper of a stone idol is entitled to say: "Doubtless, it is a stone. But the stone bears the image of the God I worship." The devotee's devotional feelings are imprinted on the idol.

If one goes about enquiring in this manner, he will realise that God is present in everything. No one is qualified to criticize another's beliefs and practices. You may keep out of them if you like. But you have no right to interfere in other's beliefs.

### **The quest for truth**

Although there have been a variety of beliefs, the ancients laid stress on what they called the quest for truth. What is the rationale of this quest? The reason is that Truth is one. Here is an example. With the same eyes a man sees his mother, his wife, his sister, his child, aunt and several others. The eyes that see are one and the same. But the perspective from which the mother, the sister and all the others are to be seen calls for *anveshna* (enquiry into the truth about what is seen). The mother has to be viewed as a mother, that is, with filial feelings. This is the search for truth. You cannot treat all alike. You can see them with an equal eye, but the feelings will vary.

Likewise, we have the five senses, each has its own functional role. Enquiry into truth calls for an understanding of what is true and false. A distinction has to be made between an apparent fact and the real truth.

For instance, seeing a flat piece of ground one may say the earth is fiat. In a limited sense this is a fact. But when the nature of the earth is explored, it is proved to be a globe. Moreover, apparent facts are liable to change. A man who is seen wearing certain clothes, today; may be seen in a different dress tomorrow. Facts relate to momentary appearances. Truth relates to the unchanging reality. It is changeless in all the three categories of time--past, present and future. That is Divinity. What pertains to the individual is subject to change. But what is opposed to both the permanent and the changing is false.

### ***Brahmam* is only one without a second**

In spirituality, you have insight into such truths. This has been termed "the secret of truth." Why should there be any secrecy about truth? There is a secret within this secret. That is why the *Vedhas* declared: "The Truth is one, it is described variously by the wise." The *Vedhaantha* declared: "*Ekameva adhvitheeyam*" (*Brahmam* is only one, without a second). Why did they not stop with saying that *Brahmam* is only one? Why should they go on to say that there is no second? It is to emphasise the oneness of *Brahman* that the second statement is added. By stating that "God is only One and not two," all room for doubt is eliminated. In this manner the scriptures reveal profound truths.

The scientists also conducted numerous experiments and came to the conclusion that there is a unique power, without calling it God. People can call it by any name. But the substance cannot be altered. There is water in this tumbler. That water is given different names in different languages. The names vary but the water remains the same. Likewise, different people adore the Divine under different names and forms. But one thing is common to all of them. God exists. There is only one God. He may be worshipped in different names and forms.

Without God there is no universe. It is essential to enquire into the nature of God to strengthen one's faith. For instance, when you examine a piece of cloth you find that it is made up of threads, which are made out of cotton. Cotton is the basis. Threads and cloth are changes in form.

## **Purity and truth**

A child believes whatever the mother says because of faith in her words. The faith may be ascribed to innocence. But in that innocence there is *Amaayakathvam* (the transcending of ignorance). Jesus used to say: "How happy would I be if only I could be a child for some time in a day!" In that childlike innocence there is freedom from all the lies and deceptions of the world. That is purity of mind. In that purity dwells truth. Today we are discarding that purity and leading a polluted life.

*Students!* Don't get involved in controversies about Divinity. Recognise that there must be a basis for everything. Nothing can exist without it. What the scientists have found so far is an infinitesimal part of the totality of knowledge. They are making much of it. But he who knows everything remains calm and quiet. The argumentative man knows little.

If you mean to be a true scientist, you must first learn to control the senses and develop love. There is nothing greater than love. Develop Love. It has to emanate from the heart. It expresses itself as kindness and compassion. Today people behave without compassion.

God has been described as the *Hridhayavaasi* (Indweller in the heart). It has been said that a heart filled with compassion is a shrine of the Divine. When you develop that compassion, you will have the vision of God.

The Divine is omnipresent. He is inside, outside and everywhere. God is in the air you breathe and the words you utter. The Divine is in sound as *Shabdha Brahman*. The radio waves are all-pervading. They represent *Dhivya Shakthi* (power of the Divine). It is the same power that manifests itself as magnetism, electricity and atomic energy. You have to realise the limitless Divine powers latent in the cosmos.

The Bhaagavatha extols the indescribable and marvellous powers of the Divine. The stories of the Lord confer bliss and immortality.

## **Need for discrimination**

*Students!* You are not being respected for your education, nor for your personality. You are being respected for your conduct. When a man's behaviour is good, he is respected without any enquiry. Did not Raama confer His grace on Shabari and Jataayu without their asking Him? But Raama did not respond to the entreaties of Dhasharatha. Even the sages in the forests who were earnestly praying to him were not recognized by Raama. The Divine alone knows when and whom to bless, for what reason and where and in what form. You have to seek the Divine's grace in the right form, at the proper time and place. This calls for discrimination regarding time and circumstances. This is mostly absent today. This discrimination is called "Constant Integrated Awareness." It is described as "*Prajnaanam Brahma*," the humanness that is the Divine Itself.

The four great pronouncements in the *Vedhas* are: "*Prajnaanam Brahma*," "*Ayam Aathma Brahma*," "*Aham Brahmaasmi*" and "*Thath Thvam Asi*." They proclaim the oneness of the *Aathma* and the Omni-Self. I once asked a student: "Who are you?" When a question is asked the reply must be well considered and must be related to one's practice, reflecting one's deep conviction. Remembering what Svaami used to say, the student replied- "I am you and you are me." I thought this boy had gone very far! "Is it so?" I asked. "Yes!" he said.

"In that case, you go to that shed and give dharshan to the devotees and come back," I said. Who will see him? If you say: "I am Svaami and Svaami is *I*," will anyone look upon you as Svaami?

If that feeling is fully and genuinely within you, you will appear so to others. But if you only mouth the words but don't live up to them, it is no use. Practise and realise the truth.

### **Supremacy of Bhaagavatham**

Today the Vice-Chancellor requested Me to speak to the students about the Bhaagavatham during the summer course. A knowledge of the Bhaagavatham is essential for the boys because it expounds the childhood deeds of Krishna. By understanding the Bhaagavatham well, you will become *baagavuthaam* (better human beings). All the fruits of *saadhana* are contained in the Bhaagavatham. *Ba=Bhakthi*, *Ga=Jnaana*, *Va=Vairaagya*, *Tha=Thathvam*, *Mu=Mukthi* (devotion, spiritual wisdom, detachment, philosophy and liberation). Bhaagavatham is the quintessence of all the *Shaasthras*, it is the goal of all paths. I have decided to give in the next ten days all the essential stories in the Bhaagavatham in a manner appealing to the young. It is not enough to listen to these stories. You must put into practice the lessons they convey. Therefore, eat and digest the Bhaagavatham, purify your hearts and serve society.

*Discourse on the afternoon of 20-5-1995 in the Kunwar Ba Auditorium, Brindhaavan.*