

5. The Nature of Truth

In the heart of every individual there is the *Kalpa Vriksha* or the tree that gives you all that you want. Around this *Kalpa Vriksha*, there is a growth of weeds; and, by your efforts, if you can remove all these weeds, then the *Kalpa Vriksha*, or the sacred tree, will become evident. The texts which traditionally belong to Indians are all intended to teach the inner meanings of all the sacred sayings, to put the outside world in its proper perspective and to make men realise their own individuality. God is not only capable of curing the ordinarily understood external diseases, but He also undertakes the setting right of all bad qualities that enter into the inner life of an individual. We generally make an attempt to cure various diseases by externally applying medicines. There are other kinds of diseases, to cure which, we take medicines internally. There are still other kinds of diseases which require not only external application of medicine but also its internal administration.

Today, you all have joined a hospital that is connected with the Divine. For all your diseases, there is a necessity of not only applying medicines externally but also of taking some medicines internally. Although, as the equivalent of external application of medicines, we undergo certain practices and certain *sadhanas*, we also have to realise the inner meaning of such *sadhanas* and such practices. It is the realisation of the inner meaning of such practices that constitutes the medicine that you take internally.

The *Gita*, which is really the essence of all the *Upanishads*, teaches us how life has to be handled internally. It is in the 32nd stanza of the sixth chapter of the *Gita* that we are told how this internal cleansing or purification should be effected. Good qualities like kindness, compassion, *prema*, sacrifice, qualify a man to be called a devotee or a *Jnani*, or one who has attained *Vairagya*, or detachment from the external world. But till then, till the individual attains these

good qualities, he remains a person only in that name and does not become one who has had any experience of these things. That these good qualities should be shown only in limited circumstances with certain restrictions, while for example, you are engaged either in *puja* or in *bhajan* or in devotion, is not the right attitude. That when you come out of your *puja*, you may forget about these good qualities and begin to develop hatred instead of love, to develop lust and anger instead of compassion and forbearance are not the attitudes that our devotees should develop. It is only when we can adhere to the observance of these good qualities both outside and inside and put them constantly into practice, that we will feel some happiness. There is the necessity of your observing and accepting such qualities like peace and forbearance always. By putting them into practice always you will deserve the title *Sathatham yoginaha*—you are always a *yogi*.

Today one does not become a *yogi* all the time. In the morning you are like a *yogi*. In the afternoon you are like a *bhogi*—that is one who eats and enjoys. In the evening you are like a *rogi* or a sick person who gets the disease after eating. How can something that changes in all the three parts of the day be of any lasting value? That is why our *Upanishads*, in the task of seeking truth, are telling us how we can get happiness throughout the day and every day.

We have the story in our mythology about the churning of the ocean of milk with the *Manthara Parvatha*, a certain hill; and how many things like diamonds, like the *Kalpa Vriksha*, the tree that fulfils all your desires; like the *Kama Dhenu*, or the cow that gives you all that you want, *amritha*, the immortal nectar, and many other precious things were got from it. In the same way, in modern times, we are churning the ocean of our life. By churning our life and by churning the bowels of the earth on which we live, we get many qualities and many things that we require, such as food, gems, and so on. If we look into the inner meaning of the parable or of our history, we note that there is a hill called *Manthara* and by putting this hill inside the ocean we churn it with the *Rakshasas*, or the bad

qualities, on one side and the *Devatas*, or the good qualities, on the other side. Out of the ocean have come some good things and some bad things. This is the meaning of the story. You may ask if this story has also got an inner meaning.

You should understand that there is not one single story in the whole history of our culture, which has not got an inner meaning in addition to an outer meaning. It has been explained that *viveka* or wisdom is the source from which these things come. The body has been established as the vessel. Our intelligence has been put into this body as the hill with which you churn. The essence of *Vedanta* has been taken as the milk in this story. In this churning, the right side and the left side have been equated to *ida* and *pingala*. *Ida* and *pingala* are the two nerves and these have been taken as the ropes for churning. Taking the name of the Lord, the churning or the *sadhana* has to go on. Out of such churning arises what may be called the divine butter. Therefore, if today we keep the good qualities on one side and the bad qualities on the other side, if we realise that our ideas are to be constituted into these churning nerves, the *ida* and the *pingala*, if we regard our own body as the vessel in which the milk is contained and we apply the *sadhana* or the practice, then surely we will reach the Divine.

If I have to give you an illustration of what has been said in the modern context, I may refer you to the game of football, where some children are on one side and others are on the other side. There will be say, six children playing on one side and six on the other side. They have a ball put in the centre. This ball will be hit by the players who play on one side and the players who play on the other side. Not only will they have two fixed boundaries, two limits, on either side but also a rule that the game should be played within the limits which have been accepted on both sides. Today, in the world, every man and every woman is continuously playing football during his life. Our heart is the football ground. It is not the physical heart but the spiritual heart. In this playground of our spiritual heart, on one side are the *arishadvargas* or the six bad qualities. These six

bad qualities are *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, and *matsarya*. That is lust, anger, greed, attachment, arrogance and jealousy. On the other side are the six other players, *sathya*, *dharma*, *shanthi*, *prema* along with two others *ahimsa* and *poornathwa*, that is, nonviolence and fullness. These two contestants are having the ball, which is life, right between them. The good people are hitting the ball and the bad people are also hitting the ball. But the situation now is that we are not able to decide who is going to get the victory. The bad people are having physical strength and the good people are having divine strength.

We also have to ask ourselves, while this game of football is going on in the field of the heart, what the two limits are, the boundaries which we talked of beyond which the ball should not be hit? They are the *Dharma Vidya* and the *Brahma Vidya*. That is, the education relating to our conduct in this world and the education relating to our conduct in the other world. These two are the limits within which the ball has to be kept. If during the play, we hit the ball such that it goes out of these two boundaries that we have established, we would only be scoring a fault as we will send the ball outside the limits of the court.

The essence of all the *Vedas*, what is being taught by all the *Vedas*, comes from within man. It is not coming from anywhere outside. In the context of our belief that God is omnipresent, that God is present in front of you, inside you and outside you, there is no need for you to give any special importance to what comes from outside. You will have to believe that everything is contained within yourself. On account of ignorance, on account of some illusion and also due to some of your actions in past births, you are thinking that there is something which is coming from outside into yourself which has got some sanctity. This is not correct. It is only when you are able to overcome this ignorance, it is only when you are able to throw away this illusion that there is something sacred which is coming from outside, then alone can you realise your own real nature.

There is a small example for this. A dog got hold of a dry bone and put it in its mouth with the intention of eating it. However much the dog tried to eat the dry bone, it was not able to get any essence or juice out of that. In its desire to get something out of that dry bone, it bit hard with its teeth. The sharp portion of the dry bone cut into the soft mouth of the dog. Immediately, blood started flowing out of the mouth of the dog. The dog then thought that, at last, out of the bone was coming some juice, some blood, and it started sucking its own blood with great pleasure. The dog was not aware the blood had come from within itself. When you look at this story, you will realise that we are also more or less in the same position. So long as we remain in this ignorance, it means we are like dogs.

If we succeed in throwing out this illusion or *maya*, then we shall be aware of our divinity. The one who realises his true self is God. The one who does not realise his true self and who is in the illusion of believing that he is something else than his true self, that he has to get something sacred from the external world, will be entangled in great many difficulties. We will have to conclude that *maya* or illusion is not something that is our property. *Maya* is something that belongs to God. You have to get round *maya* only by the grace of God. *Maya* is something which by the consequences of your own *Janma samskara*—what you have done in your previous births—can make itself look like a thing quite different from what it actually is. In fact, just by the result of an illusion on your part, it can create a considerable amount of fear and terror.

There is a small example. After this discourse is over, you will be trying to go to the shed in which you are staying. On the way there is something like a crooked rope. As soon as you see this rope, a fear comes that there is some snake there. The moment that the idea of the snake comes into your mind, your body goes far away from this particular rope. Not only does the body move as far as possible from that rope, but all the sense organs will start trembling. This will also give rise to a certain amount of desire in you by which you begin to make an enquiry. This will show itself, as in the ex-

ample, by your searching for a torch light. As soon as you bring a torch light and turn it on the rope, then you will learn that it is not a snake. The moment you learn that it is not a snake, then a large amount of courage comes from nowhere and you will go very close to this rope. But the snake which was imagined to be there has not gone away anywhere. The rope, which is really there, did not come there from anywhere else. The fact is that there is a rope and that it was mistaken for a snake. Later when you had brought the light, you realised that it was not a snake and that it was a rope.

All these changes are simply the result of the fear and the illusion that has been caused in your mind. So it is the attitude of the mind that can cause such an illusion. This is being referred to by the word *maya*. You may ask, how long will this trouble, this illusion that is being called *maya*, last. It will last only so long as you are not able to understand what the divine nature is. So, if in the very first instance, we try to understand the meaning of the Divine, then we will not be subjected to either these troubles or these doubts.

You may be getting some doubts as to whether we can get an answer to these questions through the study of either the *Upanishads* or the *Gita* or the *Vedanta*. By studying these texts you will only understand their subject matter. But just by reading them neither the *maya* nor the ignorance is going to leave you, nor are you going to move any closer to divine things. These books are all like guideposts. The guideposts only tell you that such and such a town is situated in such and such a direction, that another town is situated in another direction, and so on. The actual walking has got to be done by you if you want to reach a particular town.

So, also, if you are only going to read the texts and if you feel that by reading texts you have not been able to reach the destination, then that is also wrong. You should make an attempt to put into practice what you have learnt from the books. There is no doubt whatsoever that you will then reach the destination that has been indicated in those texts. By spreading the news of the existence of light in the world, is darkness going to be dispelled? Will the poverty

of an extremely poor man disappear by that man just thinking about money? Will the hunger of a hungry man be relieved if he just hears about the sweets that have been prepared? Will the disease of a man be cured, if he just hears about some medicine that can cure him? So, also, it is only when you put things that you have learnt from the texts into practice, is there a possibility of your enjoying and understanding the meaning of the Divine.

You are told that we have to recognise the existence of the three states: that is, the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep state. In the waking state, we are able to utilise the five sense perceptions. We are also able to acquire some results and put them into practice and enjoy something out of that. We also have learnt that in the dreaming state, there is only the mind that is functioning. The five sense perceptions are not functioning. In the waking state, it is not simply the five sense perceptions that are functioning; but as a result of the environment, of the time and of the individuals around us, we are able to understand something much more than these sense perceptions can tell us.

There is a small example for this. We get an idea that we want to go from here to Madras. Are we going to Madras immediately we get the idea? No, we have to fix the right time. At that time, we have to go to the Whitefield station. We have to purchase a ticket and reach the Bangalore City station, then buy a ticket to Madras and get into a train, travel all the night till the next morning, and it is only then that you are reaching Madras. In this process, all four elements —the idea, the time, the reason, and the act of going— have all come together and this would be regarded as one unit. In the dream state, not only are all the five sense organs absent but, these additional things, namely, the time, the reasoning, the person who is doing are all absent.

Let us take another example. You are sleeping in the night in Brindavan. You are dreaming and your dream is about your having gone to witness a cinema in Delhi. In this dream, if you had felt that you had gone to Delhi and that you had witnessed a cinema and also

witnessed a number of people in Delhi, we have to ask ourselves the questions: When did you travel to Delhi? How did you go? Did you go by a plane or did you go by a train? Where was the time? Where is the person who is doing this act and where is the action itself? None of these exist in the dream state. Further, if you ask the persons, whom you had met in your dream, the next day, whether you had met them in Delhi, they would deny having had anything to do with you. They would say that they had not been to Delhi at all. This is not so in the waking state.

If you do something in the waking state, then all the other things, like the time, like travelling, like action, are all present there. But they are not present in your dream state. In this description, we are thinking that what we see and what we do in the waking state are true. On the other hand, in common parlance, we are thinking that what we see and what we do in the dream are not real, and that is only an illusion. But in *Vedantic* parlance, neither what you see in the waking state nor what you see in the dream state is real. This is a matter to which you should give some attention and enquire with some care. Then you will get a glimpse of the nature of truth. So long as you have the feeling in your mind that you are in a waking state and so long as you know that the five sense perceptions are working, you get the belief that what you see is true.

Now you are all sitting here, you are looking at me, you are listening to me. It means that your eyes are functioning, and you are seeing me. It means that your ears are functioning, and you are listening to what I say. Not only that, but the mind is also able to take all that comes to you through the eyes and through the ears, and the heart is able to enjoy all that you are seeing and hearing. You can argue that this is not an untruth and say that you have seen it with your own eyes and you have heard with your own ears. You may say that you experienced it with your heart, and you can thus argue and say that this is true. But after you have had your dinner, after you have gone to your places and you have gone to sleep, then you get a dream. In that dream you go back to your village. What you had

seen in the evening and in the day has nothing to do with what is being seen by you during your dream. In that dream, you are feeling that you are really experiencing your village, your friends, your house in your village, and so on. When you get up in the morning, you do not remember either your village or your house. You think all that was a dream, and you do not attach any importance to it.

At the time of your dream, what you saw was true. When you were awake, what you saw when you were awake was true. Which of the two is really true? Is what you have seen in your waking state true? The truth of what you have seen in the waking state does not exist in your dream. The truth of what you have seen in your dream does not exist in your waking state. What you have seen in the day is not contained in the night dream. What you have seen in the night is not contained in the day dream. Both are untrue. But however, you are present in both. The truth is only yourself. What you saw in the day is the day dream and is not true. What you saw in the night is the night dream and is not true. Your self, which has been the witness in both places, is the truth. What is changing, namely, what you have seen in the dream or what you have seen in the waking state, cannot be true. There is another supporting argument for this.

You may ask, how is it that what we see during the waking state is also being described as a kind of dream? How can it be? It is all right if it is on one day or on two days. We are living through several years, fifty years, sixty years, and all that we see during these fifty or sixty years in our waking state, cannot be a dream. I will give what you sometimes experience in your dreams as an answer to this question. One has had a dream. In that dream, he saw that he was just then born. In that dream he found that after he was born, he had grown into a child, he had become an adult, he had entered the classes in Whitefield, he had gone through all the summer courses, gone back home, got married, got a child, the child had grown and he got that child also married; and that son after his marriage got another son who becomes his grandson and all these were seen by him

in the dream. So, in the waking state if he was to have been born and if he was to have reached a stage when he could have claimed a grandson, he must at least have spent 40 to 50 years. In the dream, the events that he was born, that he had grown, that he had a grandson and that he could play with his grandson, which would have taken at least an experience of 50 years in the waking state, had all been handed to you in that one dream. The experience relates to 50 years; but if you see the actual time of the dream, it was only two minutes.

If we make an enquiry and ask, where is this experience of 50 years and where is this time of two minutes, we will get the answer that the time of two minutes relates to the scale which is applicable to the waking state whereas the experience of 50 years relates to the time that is applicable to the scale of dreaming state. So what was equivalent to two minutes of time in the waking state was 50 years of experience in the dream state. What prevents us from accepting 50 years of experience in the waking state as equivalent to two minutes of experience in the dream state? We should not think, therefore, that because we are experiencing all this over a long period of 50 years in the waking state, this is not a dream.

Thus, in the scale of time, which belongs to God, or, in the circumstances and environment, which is of the Divine, the standards and the scales of time that we are used to in our ordinary life do not apply. There is no point in taking the prescriptions, which we are accustomed to in the matter of time and space in our normal life, into the Divine world. All that becomes irrelevant.

You may get another doubt. You may ask a question that if what we are seeing is all a dream and if all our waking state actions are to be treated as a dream, then why should we do these things at all. Why should we do any *sadhana*, or *bhajan*, etc., in order to attain *moksha*, if all this pertains to the dream state? Even in the dream state, some kinds of dreams have the capacity to wake you up immediately and push you into the waking state. For example, if in a dream you see a lion chasing you, because of such a dreadful dream

you are suddenly forced to get up and you are in the waking state. Thus what has happened in the dream state has enabled you to get into the waking state. In the same manner, in the waking state also if you regard it as one dream, then a situation may arise when, by the grace of God, you are quickly pushed from the waking state into the state of *jnana*. Just as for the dreaming state, this is a waking state, if you believe the waking state also to be a kind of a dreaming state, then the *jnana* state is a waking state for this dreaming state. That is why all the seers and *rishis* have told us to Awake and Arise and come to the state of realisation. The *Upanishads* are also preaching that we should Awake and Arise and approach a state of realisation. We should now ask ourselves, what is this sleep from which we should awake? This sleep is not the ordinary kind of sleep. This is the sleep of ignorance.

Therefore, the things that are contained in our *Upanishads* and the pathways that the *Upanishads* have been indicating to us are to be well understood by you and you have to put them into practice. The contents of the *Mandokya Upanishad* tell you that *OM* is just one word. This is by its appearance a small word but it contains very deep and important ideas. In the text of *Mandokya Upanishad*, there are only 12 *mantras*. These 12 *mantras* contain the essence of all the *Vedas*. Although they do not tell the way in which you have to do your *Karma Khanda*, they tell you in an excellent manner the aspects of *Brahman*.

This *Upanishad*, more than any other, contains all the important issues and these will be taught to you in future classes. Even if we are not able to read the *Vedas*, this *Upanishad* alone shows us the path for liberation. Thus, the one and only *Upanishad* that can offer to us the knowledge of oneness or *Adwaita* is the *Mandokya Upanishad*.

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