

46. **Have no desh: seek no upadesh**

Raamakrishna Rao spoke of the work being done by the Prashaanthi Vidwanmahaasabha in propagating the teachings of the *Vedhas* and *Shaastras* among the people and arousing in them the *Aathma-consciousness*, which is the greatest single factor enabling men to have courage and confidence in the midst of the travails of life. The discourses of the Pandits during the session of the Vidwanmahaasabha are only reminders; they have to kindle the thought-process (*vichaarana shakthi*), in the listeners; then only can they be considered beneficial.

In fact, the truth regarding God, man, nature, etc., is so simple that a few minutes of quiet contemplation can reveal it to any one of ordinary intelligence. Everyone will admit that anything which undergoes change cannot be truth. Truth must remain as truth, in the past, present and future. Now the world and all objects of nature are constantly being subjected to change---building up or breaking down, evolving or mutating, flowing or festering, growing or dying. How then can it be true? The subjective feelings, attitudes, impulses, beliefs instincts, intuitions---these too are changing; they are pleasant one moment, unpleasant the next moment; the same thing is welcome at one time, repulsive at another time; malaria makes sweet things turn bitter; jaundice turns all things yellow. So, there must be something stable and permanent and eternal as the background, the base, the foundation, for this changing scene to appear on. Appearance is untrue; reality is eternal.

Have the thirst to know the Creator

Again, a few minutes of investigation will convince any one that he is not the body which he carries about with him, as the snail carries its home; he is not the eye or ear or tongue; he is not the mind or intelligence for, he refers to them as "my mind is not in it" etc., meaning that he is separate from his mind; "my intelligence failed me", meaning that he is different from his intelligence. He is a witness; it is the body that dies; he survives; he is reborn when he takes on a new body. Physical beauty is just a matter of health; a couple of days of fever or purging makes an angel a scarecrow. Insanity pounces upon a genius some day and reduces his talk to unintelligent blabber. When the mind is deranged, the eyes see strange sights that are not there; the ears hear eerie noises that never were.

It is only when man discovers the ultimate unchanging base that he can derive permanent peace; until then, he too will have to swing and sway in the changing world, between joy and grief.

Like Vivekaananda and Naagamahaashaya, people must be urged by the thirst to know the Creator behind Creation, the person behind the puppets. Naagamahaashaya started from the attitude of *Daasoham* (I am the servant), and he made himself so small by shrinking his individuality that he was able to wriggle out of the shackles of delusion and escape into the Universal Eternal Truth. Vivekaananda, on the other hand, started from the attitude of *Soham* (I am He); he made himself so vast and grand, that he broke the shackles and merged with the Supreme Sovereign Truth. When you have earned *that jnaana* of the identity of your reality with the reality behind the Universe, *Maaya* (illusion) cannot affect you. The fly sits on all objects, fair and foul; but, it does not sit on fire, for, it will be scorched to death.

Man does not belong to anywhere except God

There are many who have stacked libraries in their brains; who have visited and venerated all the holy places between the Himaalayas and the Cape; who have sat at the feet of every one of the

contemporary sages and saints; who have performed all the rites prescribed in the sacred texts, but, who do not know the answer to the simple question: "How to bring about the union *between jeeva and Brahmam*, the individual and the Universal?" Or rather, they do not set about the practice of what they have heard or learnt. The erection of temples, the installation of images or idols, the pomp and show, fireworks and fanfare, processions and pedantries---these are helpless in the realm of *jnaana*.

When a seeker went to a *Guru* for some *Upadesh* (instruction), he inquired what he had read so far; when the man said, "I have read the *Sundarakaanda* of the *Raamaayana*, the *Bhagavad Geetha*, and the *Yogavasishta*", the *Guru* said, "Why then do you want *upadesh* from me? If Sri Krishna speaking through the *Geetha* has not succeeded in creating faith in you, what can poor I do?" and sent him off. When a man has known that he has no *desh* (native land), why should he crave for *upadesh*? Man does not belong to anywhere except to God. That is the *desh*. Journey to His *desh* or his native land, is his mission in life.

The best *upadesh* (spiritual instruction) is the *Pranava*, the sacred syllable *OM*, which summarises many principles of theology, philosophy and mysticism. Little children just learning to toddle about are given a three-wheeled contraption which they push forward, holding on to the cross-bar. The *OM* is such a 'vehicle' for the spiritual child. The three wheels are a, u and m, the three components of the *manthra*. *OM* is the primal sound inherent in the lifebreath.

Every time we breathe, we say *Soham*; 'so' when we inhale and 'ham' when we exhale, meaning "He-I", instilling into ourselves the conviction that "He" who is all this external world, is "I" who is all this internal world, the conviction of Unity. During deep sleep, when the senses, the brain and the mind are dormant and defunctionalised, the "He" and the "I" are not cognised as separate; the *So* (He) and the *ham* (I) both fade and the sound *Soham* is transformed into *OM*, indicating the merger of the external with the internal into one Truth. *OM* has also many other significances and the meditation on the *OM* is a valuable *saadhana* for the seeker of reality. It is like the seven colours of the sun's ray merging into one colourless (white) brilliance.

Egoism breeds greed and hate

The ego is the enemy number one of spiritual progress. Egoism is the chief executive of the *Kali Raaja*, the sovereign of the *Kali* (Iron) Age. It is the egoism and its attendant evils that stalk the world today. Egoism breeds the scourges of greed and hate. Even leaders of ascetic orders and heads of monastic institutions suffer from egoism and indulge in the pastime of competition and conflict with other orders and institutions. Some of them wear elaborate outward symbols of spiritual splendour, especially when the camera is aimed. There is a popular adage which says that a *saadhaka* must eat like a dog and wander about like a fox, meaning that he must be content with whatever he is able to get and rest wherever he can.

Man is but an instrument in God's hands; his plans can win through only when they are in line with His. And, what are His plans? His commands? They are declared in the scriptures, which are revelations of His plan made to the purified intellects of saints. They are also declared by His *Avathararas*, who appear in human form so that they may speak to men in their own language to win their confidence and lead them and teach them.

Be in the world, but lessen your attachment to it

Man has to become Divine, the Divine from which he has come. So, he has to lessen his attachment to the world, not by cutting himself off, but, by being in it as an instrument in His

hands; by subduing all tendencies towards egoism that raise their heads in him; by single-minded attention to the dictates of God called *Dharma*. Edison the scientist concentrated so much on the solution of the problems that worried him that he left untouched for days together the food and drink that was pushed in through the doors of his laboratory. You must have the same concentration and *shraddha*, while engaged in *saadhana*.

The best *saadhana* is to discover your Aathmic reality and to recognise your kinship in the *Aathmic* fold with all others. The body has to be kept trim until this is achieved; its purpose too is just this. Keep it light and bright. It is a boat which can take you across the sea of illusion, of false multiplicity. Don't add to its weight by attachment to things and others; then, it is in danger of sinking during the voyage.

Naamasmarana is the most effective *saadhana*. Remember with each name the glory behind the name. Escape from the clutches of anger, jealousy, hatred, malice and greed. Do not seek to discover other's defects; do not gloat over them; when others point out your defects, be thankful; or keep quiet as Buddha did.

Treat both praise and blame with indifference

Now that I mentioned it, I shall explain that incident in some detail. Buddha was seated alone one day, and later, some men gathered around him. One among them who did not like his teachings and the effect they had on the people got up and started a tirade in very vulgar terms against him. Buddha sat smiling, listening to all that calumny, without a single gesture of disapproval. The man got frothy in the mouth through rage, his vocabulary was fast getting exhausted, his tongue began to show signs of overwork, but Buddha only asked him with a smile "Brother, have you finished?" The man said, "You have no sense of shame; you do not show any trace of resentment."

Then Buddha said, "If a kinsman comes to your door from a far distant place, and when you see him, if you so much as say, "Hello," he will enter in, deposit his things in the house, and stay on as your guest; but, if you do not notice him, if you ignore his arrival, he will return along the road that brought him and you are rid of him, isn't it? So, too I shall take no notice of this tirade; let it go the way it came". Praise and blame are but twists of verbiage, the magic of words in the clever hands of flatterers or traducers. Treat both with a grand indifference; then, your real worth will become patent.

Prashanthi Nilayam: Dasara, 4-10-1965

Silence is the first step in Saadhana:

*By loud talk you undermine your own
peace and disturb others.*

Do not cause more noise than necessary.

SHRI SATHYA SAI