

3. Lamps lit from the same flame

YOUR sister from America was telling you about her experiences as a practitioner and teacher of *yoga*. There are two roads to fulfilment' *Praarthana* and *Dhyaana*---*Prayer* and Meditation. Prayer makes you a supplicant at the Feet of God; meditation induces God to come down to you and inspires you to raise yourselves to Him. It tends to make you come together, not place one in a lower level and the other on a higher. *Dhyaana* is the royal road to liberation from bondage, though by prayer too, you earn the same fruit. Meditation needs concentration, after controlling the claims of the senses. You have to picture before your inner eye the Form on which you have elected to contemplate. Or, as Indhra Devi has said now and as she is teaching her pupils in the West, you can elect to meditate on a Flame, a steady straight Flame of Light. Picture it as spreading on all sides, becoming bigger and bigger; enveloping all and growing in you, until there is nothing else except light. In the glory of that all-enveloping Light, all hate and envy, which are the evil progeny of darkness, will vanish. Know that the same *jyothi* or light is in all. Even he, whom you were treating as your worst rival, has the selfsame light in his innermost heart.

Be brothers in pilgrimage with all others

When you see in a house, on the walls of the shrine room a picture of Mine, do you not feel a wave of reverence and kinship, surging within you? You may not like him for any other reason, but this picture will bring him closer to you though the owner of the house may be your rival in the professional field. So, too, know that every other person has in his heart of hearts a picture of the God you revere. Recognise it and reconcile your misunderstandings; close up all gaps and be brothers in pilgrimage, encouraging and inspiring each other along the arduous road.

Or, if you have Me as the object of meditation, sit in a comfortable pose, which is neither irksome nor flopping, let your mind dwell for some time on some good *sthothras* (hymns) or incidents from the sacred stories, so that the senses escaping into the tangles of worldly worries may be quietened and subdued. Then, with the Name on the tongue, try to draw with the brush of your emotion and the hand of your intellect, a picture of Swaami, slowly, from the cluster of hair to the face and neck downwards, spending time in contemplating each as it is getting drawn and when the picture is full, start from the feet up to the head again, so that your attention is never for a moment diverted from the Form you love to meditate upon.

By this means, it can never go astray. When a golden image is made of Ganesha, for example, the head is gold, the feet are gold, the silk cloth that is worn is also gold. Every part of the picture drawn is Divine. That picture must, by this process of deep concentration, be imprinted on the heart, so that like picture printed on paper, it cannot be peeled off or erased. Do not change the pose in which you have started picturing; do not draw today a Swaami sitting and tomorrow a Swaami standing or walking or talking. If it is Krishna, do not change from a Toddler-Krishna with butter in His palm to a Cowherd-Krishna with a Flute, or with the *Govardhanagiri* raised over His head or a *Geethacharya* as the Charioteer. Have one Form; that is ample help.

Delusion of 'two' should disappear, all is one

Invitations are sent out, bands strike music, flags are hung, guests are fed, announcements are made---all with the intention of having many witnesses for the marriage of the groom with the bride. Similarly, festivals, holy days, vows, rites, pilgrimages, fasts are to invoke the blessings of the good and the godly upon the marriage of the soul with the Oversoul. The fundamental rite is

simple; the recognition by the soul that it is the Oversoul overcome by the illusion that it is not. That is the stage of *Samaadhi*, equal awareness, equipoise, levelness of consciousness devoid of ups and downs.

Indhra Devi will instruct you in *yoga* practices but I wish to emphasise that great care is to be taken to keep the mind of the student of *yoga* free from blemish. The mind is like a camera; when the lens is turned against any object and clicked, the picture of that thing gets printed on the slide. So, be ever vigilant; turn it always towards the holiest of objects, God, and click.

When the holy Ganga is near, why wallow in the cesspool? Contemplate on God in any form and stay pure.

Merge yourself with the whole of creation; allow the whole of creation to enter the portals of your mind in one happy joyful family re-union. Envy, which like a mistletoe saps vitality out of all *Saadhana*, can creep in only when you feel your neighbour as different, distinct, disturbing. You do not feel your hand as a nuisance, because it is yours, a part of you. Your neighbour is also as much you. All men are lamps lit from the same flame which is God.

From one tiny seed, the giant banyan tree bearing billions of tiny seeds is born. God alone knows the secret of His mighty Majesty. Out of the one seed called *Brahma*, all this Universe has emanated, with each country as its branches and each individual as one single seed. That is why it is said that *Ishwara* resides in the region of the heart in all beings. The seed is hard inside the fruit; when the fruit gets rotten, the seed does not rot. The *Aathma* is unaffected by changes in the complexion of the body. Man has come with a definite allotment of time to engage himself in activities which will award him Liberation and merge him in the Universal of which he is a drop. Remember this mission.

See that you are strong and unshakable inside

Time, regularity of time, is an important factor in *dhyaana* or *yogic* practice. Stick to the same time every day. If for any reason, say, a train journey, you are Unable to keep to the schedule, remember at the same hour Prashaanthi Nilayam, recall to memory the thrill of *dhyaana* there at that hour and fill yourselves with the holiness. That will give as much joy as real *dhyaana* at Prashaanthi Nilayam. Know that the external is only the reflection of the internal. The *bimba* (object) is inside and the external world is but its *prathi-bimba* (images). See the Lord within; see the world as the reflections He casts. This *jnaana* (spiritual wisdom) alone grants *liberation--Jnaanaath eva thu kaivalyam*.

Of what profit is it to plaster all the wall space in your home with pictures of Swaami when He is not installed in your heart? You declare that Swaami is *Sarvaantharyaami*---that He moves, from inside, every thought word and deed. You; cry out, "Swaami, are you not aware of my grief?." You do' not cry out, "Swaami, are you not aware of my errors?" These you dare hide from Me, as if I do not know! Such devotion is just show, arranged for exhibition only. You may have a finely painted door; but if it has been eaten by white ants inside, it will disintegrate at the first knock; it cannot stand weight or pressure. See that you are strong, hard, unshakable inside; outside polish is not needed. Let the roots penetrate deep into the real core of your being.

How to meditate on the Lamp and the Flame

The aspirant who goes along the path of *bhakti* finds at the gate of the mansion of the Lord, the Mastiff, *maaya*, blocking his entry. He has to cry out in his helplessness, "Swaami, come and take me in," so that the Lord, out of His divine pity, comes down, pushes the Mastiff aside and

gives him lasting refuge in His Presence. The *jnaani* (liberated person), on the other hand, overcomes the Mastiff by becoming himself the same as the Master.

Indhra Devi said that when you meditate on the Lamp and the Flame, you must visualise that the Light spreads and illumines the parents, kinsmen and later, friends and even enemies. There is no need to remind yourselves of physical relationships, which are causal; convince yourselves that the light within you is spreading all around you, encompassing all, lighting millions of lamps in all lands and climes. Remove the hardness, the imperviousness that hides and smothers the light inside you; that is the most difficult and the most essential task for the aspirant. The *Aathmajyothi* (Light of Self) will shine only when the *Dhehabhraanthi* (false idea of body) is absent. How can the *Aathma* shine when you identify yourselves with material encasement?

The reality is Param-aathma (Super Consciousness) only. It had the first inkling of desire Ekoham bahusyaam---"Being One, let many become"; and all this manifested from It, of It, by It. For there was nothing other than It. This body is like the earthen lamp, in which the impulses inherited from previous births are the oil and the ego is the wick. When Jnaana lights it up, the oil is consumed more and more quickly and the lamp burns brighter and brighter. Finally, when all the oil is exhausted, the wick too is burnt out. The earthen lamp is then thrown away and becomes dust.

Do not be harsh towards anyone

Do not try to start as an adept in social service unless you have won this Aanandha and *Shaanthi* yourself. First self; then, help. Love is God; live in Love. People ride on elephants into wild life sanctuaries to watch elephants! Being on elephants they seek elephants somewhere else. So, too, man being himself the residence of God, seeks God outside himself, in the complex entanglements of Nature. See your *Ishtadhaivam* (chosen Deity) in all. Raamakrishna Paramahansa did not disturb the cat when it drank the milk offering placed before Mother Kaali in the temple. He saw it as the Mother. When Kumaaraswaamy saw a finger-nail mark on the cheek of Paarvathi, he was shocked; on enquiry, His Mother told him that he was himself the tormentor for he had pinched and scratched a cat while playing not knowing that all beings are the Mother in those forms. In every being there is Sai, so do not hate any one; do not be harsh towards any one.

Do not unto another what you do not like to be done to yourself. For the other is really "you." Even if another uses foul language against you, be calm and sweet; say, "Oh, I am so surprised that my behaviour has given you that impression." Smile in return, do not take it to heart; remind yourself that even Swaami is not free from these peculiar beings who revel in falsehoods. Smile when you: hear these revilings and be calm. That is a sign of your meditation progressing fast.

Preserve your physical and mental health

Preserve your mental health by this supreme unconcern. Preserve your physical health also, for ill-health can be a great nuisance to the spiritual aspirant, a great handicap. The body will refuse to be ignored; it will thrust itself upon the attention, if it is beset with disease. The body is the car, the senses are the mechanical parts and through the petrol---the *saadhana*---you have to keep it going. When you have finished your meditation, do not get up all of a sudden. Loosen the tension slowly, massage the joints a little if necessary, after you have got rid of the tension, sit quietly at the same place and recall to your mind once again the thrill of *dhyana* and repeat *Om Shaanthih, Shaanthih, Shaanthih*, feeling the Peace within you.

Today is Tuesday, called *Mangala-vaara*, the auspicious day. It is called so because Hanumaan conveyed the good tidings of Raama coming to rescue her on that day to Seetha; she declared, "Let this day be named *Mangala* from now on." This was the day of the week when Raavana, the evil force that caused much terror, was overpowered by Raama and killed. So, I bless that you too will overpower and destroy the wrong tendencies and attitudes and progress fast on the path of *saadhana*.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 22-1-1967