

7. No mirror, no image

WHEN the word 'Lamp' is uttered, darkness does not vanish; when a patient is told of the properties of a drug, his illness is not cured by attentive listening; when a man suffering the agonies of penury is told of the various ways in which funds can help him to overcome it, he does not feel a bit relieved; a hungry man is hungry, even after hearing a tasty description of a magnificent banquet. If *Sanaathana Dharma* (the eternal religion) is extolled to the skies, as the cure for all the individual, social and national discontent prevalent among mankind, the discontent will not decrease a bit. You must extol it with faith; extol it out of the depth of your experience. You have to experience it and stand witness to its validity; you have to attain the state of perfect and lasting joy. Instead, you have ignored the cure and thus heightened the disease.

Of course, attempts are being made without remission to overcome grief and acquire joy; but success is eluding; and when obtained, it is illusory. Man does not reason within himself about the authenticity of his experience. Constant self-criticism is necessary to avoid pitfalls and entering devious by-lanes. This day being a holy day, you should spend every minute in this intense search. That is why I am telling you about these fundamental issues. For what end is all this effort in life? You spend great effort in inviting your kith and kin, in decorating home, in preparing a feast, in providing music and dance, all for the marriage of the bride and the groom so that they may live together happily ever afterwards, isn't it? So too, all the earning and spending, all the yearning and sighing, all the reading and reciting, are for the individual to be wedded to the Universal, from which it has broken away, so that it may have bliss for ever.

God can be won only by tough discipline

The Universal can be cognised in the wink of an eye; the Bliss is available within a flash; but, you have to know the technique. You may have fresh vegetables, fine rice, excellent *dhaar* (lentil), clean tamarind--all the requisites for preparing a good lunch; but, if you have no knowledge of the art of cooking, of what avail is all this? You must learn, strive," struggle, and then, success will be yours. Start the process, take the first step; listen with attention, ruminate over what has been heard and try to put into practise a thing or two of what has been told.

Nowadays you can bribe your way to success in every sphere. But God cannot be won by tricks or through short cuts. He can be won only by the hard way of straggle, detachment and tough discipline. Yearn desperately for Him, cling steadfastly to Him, fill your mind with His Form, His Majesty, His Glory and His Grace. Man is innately Divine; the Divine comes automatically into his consciousness. But the curtain of *maaya* (illusion) prevents that thrilling contact, that illuminating revelation. This *maaya* is also a Divine Artifice, it is a vehicle or *Upaadhi* of the Lord.

There is a story that once the Lord got angry with *maaya* and wanted 'her' to disappear, for people are being led astray by her wiles. Maaya said, it seems, "I am the veil that you wear; I am the fog that has arisen out of your own will; I am as widespread as You are; I am wherever You are; give me a place where You are not; I shall take refuge there." Each one of you can tear the veil by attaining the knowledge of the Reality of God; or, you can plead by prayer to the Lord Himself to lift it a little so that you may have a vision of His Reality.

Learn and practise Vibhaaga Yoga

Move about in the world like an actor, but be conscious all the time that you are on the way home, to be with the Lord from whom you have come. Whenever the feeling that the drama is real enters the mind, deny it firmly. Do not identify yourself with the role that you play. Such identification will retard your progress.

You must learn and practise what is called *Vibhaaga-yoga* in the Geetha. What does *Vibhaaga* mean as in the Geetha expression *Kshehtra-Kshethrajna-Vibhaaga-Yoga*? *Vibhaaga* means division, differentiation, discrimination, separation of one thing from another. Understand the distinction between the *Kshethra* (the body, the field) and the *Kshethrajna* (the Knower in this body), He who is aware of all that happens, who is witness, the *Dehi* (the embodied) who is above all the dualities of pleasure and pain, good and bad.

The base metal of modern civilisation has got mixed up with the gold of *Sanaathana Dharma*, and so the *Vibhaaga* (separation) has to be done in order to get the pure gold. You acclaim the feat when some one is shot up into space and starts revolving round the earth or racing to the moon. You do not realise that men on earth are being starved of resources by this costly adventure and that it is at the same time being tainted by hate and pride. One single rocket costs as much as the total budget of all the universities of India for twenty years! The net result of all this 'progress' is just this: mankind is living precariously on the brink of a holocaust; it is terror-stricken; man startles at the echo of his own steps!

Be eager to come to the rescue of others

Man feels that he is the master of the Universe and that the Universe is existing only under his sufferance. How then can he have peace? This conceit will bring about his fall; man must be humble and realise that he knows so little; even about himself. Without the knowledge of his own self, What is all the lumber now filling his brain worth? Make yourself humble, pure, useful for others. That way lies peace and joy.

Today is *Shivaraathri*. Take the ideal of Shiva. When the devastating *Haalaahala* poison emerged from the ocean, life on earth was threatened with immediate and total destruction. Shiva offered to drink the poison and save the world. His throat is blue ever since, for the poison has pervaded the area. Be eager to serve, to help, to come to the rescue of others. For this, one must cultivate *Sahana* (Fortitude, Equanimity). Otherwise, life will be as miserable as resting in the thick shade of a tree infested with red ants! If impatience, anger, hatred, and pride overcome a person, of what avail are other accomplishments? In the firmament of the heart, the Names of God must shine as stars and the confidence arising out of the knowledge of *Aathma* must shine like the Moon when it is full and bright.

This is critical time for the people of India, when the self-confidence arising from self-knowledge is most necessary. Both men and women have to earn this knowledge and treasure it. Men should give up the attitude of putting down women. They are not 'servants' to be lorded over; they too have self-respect and individuality. In fact, women have devotion, sympathy, the spirit of sacrifice, fortitude and other virtues in greater measure than men. But yet, the feeling that if their advice is taken, it is somehow demeaning, is prevalent among men. This must be given up. Pay respect to spiritual excellence and intellectual discrimination, wherever it is evident.

Yearn to reach the stage of perfect Bliss

The highest awareness to which all spiritual effort leads is: "*Brahma sathyam, Jagan mithya*"--- "*Brahman* is real, the world is mythical." Every atom and cell is a bundle of energy, expressing the Divine will. Matter and energy are not really separate. It is all one Will concretising, pervading, prompting and continuing. To experience the world as such, one must transcend all dual categories and reach the unique, unitary base, identifying It and establishing oneself in It. When the eye is filled with *Jnaana* (Vision of God), the world will be seen as *Brahman* (the Eternal Absolute). Then the world and the entire complex of being and becoming will assume one colour, the *Brahman* colour, and you will have perfect equanimity, unaffected by any modification. No mirror, no image! There is only the Person, the *Bimba*, alone. Yearn to reach that stage of perfect unshaken Bliss.

This stage can be known and appreciated only when you strive to be in the company of *Saadhakas* (spiritual aspirants) and Saints. When a sandalwood tree is felled by an axe, the axe edge too smells of sandal! That is the nature of the good: they bless even those who harm or malign them. Do not pay attention to the cynical laughter and cruel criticisms of the wordly-minded. When a kinsman lands at your door, if you rise to welcome him and speak words of welcome, he will enter and stay; but if you do not cast a look of recognition at him, he will be so hurt that he will turn back and go. So too, do not heed the comments of the foolish. They will then revert to those who indulged in them.

I am also the target of such comments! People do not understand the ways of God. How can they know why a particular event takes place at a particular time in a particular manner? He alone can know. But, people try to sit in judgement and talk ill, when for example, some one dies of illness at this place! How can any one escape death? Even *Avathaars* (Divine Incarnations) cast off the physical form when the task for which they have come is over. It is the height of foolishness to lose faith in God when some one you cared for dies. The sentence that he earned is over and he is released. No one is born and allowed to live for the sake of another. Do not therefore allow any circumstance to affect your faith in God, who is your strength and solace.

So, I advise you to utilise every moment of your lives in the most beneficial manner; to serve your fellowmen to the best of your capacity; to cultivate love towards all mankind; to give up hate and malice. Believe that your God, the Form that you revere, is in everyone and sanctify every act as worship of that Form. The *Bhajan* will continue throughout the night; share in it and fill your mind with the thoughts of the Glory of God, the Glory that you yourselves are.

Mahaa Shivarathri, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 9-3-1967