

23. Lead or Gold

WHEN the Unmanifested *Shakthi* manifests in an individualised Form, it is a source of *Aanandha* for those who recognise it as such, as you heard just now, from the experience of Dr. Tiberg, who has come from America. She has studied the ancient *Shaasthras* of India and has spent many years in this country; she knows that the mission of man is to realise himself as Divine and merge in the ocean of Divine Bliss. *Jnaana* is the treasure that man has to accumulate, so that he can so realise and merge. Cows may be of different breeds, or colours or sizes; but, the milk they yield is the same, the world over. So too, all religions, whatever their origin or extent of influence, are all means to teach man this process.

Now, the law of human behaviour has become "each for himself;" this is because the fact that all are "one-in-God" is not known and realised. This is the product of *Saadhana*; the conviction is of slow growth, but it has to be acquired. Dhurvaasa, the great sage who is famous in the epics for his asceticism, is also known for his anger when he is slighted or thwarted by others. He was so sensitive, so egoistic, so uppish, that he forgot the unity of all-in-God. He was ready with a frightful curse when any one showed disregard for his inflated ego. Of what avail are all the years of austerity? Surrender all you have and gain, to Lord. Sometimes, when you have some extra cash with you, you hand it over to a trusted friend, saying, "Keep this for me; I am afraid I may spend it soon if it is in my hands; I cannot trust myself." God is the friend on whom you can put your trust. So, hand over to Him all that you have---and be free and happy. You do not do it now, since faith is wanting.

Happiness of material origin is short-lived

Man still believes that *Aanandha* can be got from the external world. He hoards wealth, authority, fame and learning, in order to acquire happiness. But he finds that they are fraught with fear, anxiety and pain. The millionaire is beset by the tax-gatherer, the cheat, the donation hunter, the house-breaker, and his sons and kinsmen who clamour for their share. Happiness of material origin is short-lived and has misery as its obverse.

Struggle to realise the *Aathma*, to visualise God; even failure in this struggle is nobler than success in other worldly attempts. The buffalo has horns; the elephant has tusks. But what a difference. To live in the body, with the body, for the body is the life of a worm; to live in the body, with God, for God, is the life of man. The dull, activity-hating *Thaamasik* persons cling to the ego and to kith and kin; their love is limited to these. The *Raajasik* (active, passionate) persons seek to earn power and prestige, and love only those who will contribute to these.

But the *Saathwik* (the pure, the good, the equanimity-filled), love all as embodiments of God and engage themselves in humble service. Pundaleeka was one such. He was massaging the feet of his old mother when God appeared before him! He did not interrupt the service, for he was serving the same God, in his mother! Thukaaraam declared to Pundaleeka that it was God who had manifested before him; but Pundaleeka did not waver. He asked God: to wait for a while, until he had finished the service of the God he had started serving.

Proceed from the known to the unknown

The prompting inside man to love his mother is an expression of the Divine Nature in him. If there was no spark of the Divine in man, he would not have loved at all. A person who loves is a theist, whether he goes to a temple or church, or not. Pundaleeka was not guilty of sacrilege, for

he was actually worshipping God in His most accessible Form---his mother. You have to proceed from the known to the unknown. Then the love expands in ever widening circles, until it covers all nature, until even plucking a leaf from a tree affects you so painful that you dare not injure it. The green vitality of the tree is a sign of the Divine Will, which sends its roots deep into the soil. The roots keep the tree safe from storms, holding it fast against the violent tug of the wind. So too, if the roots of love in man go down into the spring of the Divine in him, no storm of suffering can shake him and crash him into disbelief.

As a lump of sugar sweetens every drop of water in the cup, the eye of love makes every person in the world friendly and attractive. The simple milkmaids of Gokul saw each other as Krishna; such was their overwhelming love for the Divine Incarnation. The Bhaagavatha, where their Love and the Love of many other seekers of the Lord are described, is a text-book of Divine Love, *Bhakthi*. The Mahaabhaaratha, which describes the exploits and excellences of Krishna, is a text-book of *Dharma*, of the ethics of social and political life, as corrected and straightened by the supremacy of the Right. Begin loving service, this day this moment. Each act will urge you to the next, for the thrill is so inspiring.

The best service and the best time to render it

There was a king once, who questioned many a scholar and sage who came to his court, "Which is the best service and which is the best time to render it?" He could not get a satisfying answer from them. One day while pursuing the forces of a rival king, he got separated from his troops, in the thick jungle; he rode a long way, exhausted and hungry, until he reached a hermitage. There was an old monk who received him kindly and offered him a welcome cup of cool water. After a little rest the king asked his host the question that was tormenting his brain: "Which is the best service?" The hermit said, "Giving a thirsty man a cup of water." "And, which is the best time to render it?" The answer was, "When he comes far and lonely, looking for some place where he can get it."

The act of service is not to be judged, according to the cost or publicity it entails; it may be only the offering of a cup of water in the depth of a jungle. But the need of the recipient, the mood of the person who offers---these decide whether the act is gold or lead.

Fill every act of yours with Love. Let no one suffer the slightest pain as a result of your thought, word or deed. Let this be your *Saadhana*. It will surely help you to achieve the Goal.

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