

### 33. Books as benediction

SIX books, in five languages, were dedicated to Me now, by the authors or publishers. So, this is an appropriate occasion to put the question to ourselves, "Why should books be written, published and read?" Books must reveal, inspire, educate, inform, lead and guide. Yes; but, what should they reveal? Whom should they inspire? How must they educate? What information should they contain? Where should they lead? To which place or stage must they guide the readers? These questions have to be answered before we can pronounce the book good, the trouble and expense worth while and the dedication well done.

Those who believe that there is an all-knowing God who rules and regulates the Universe---science has progressed from certainty to doubt, about its capacity to explain the Universe---have to admit that each one is born as a result of His Will. Therefore, there must be a Divine Purpose in life. Man must know the way to attain God, must be led and guided to attain Him, must be educated to rid himself of distractions on the path, must know that, which if known, all else is known. The rest is all secondary, incidental, unnecessary. The *Vedhaantha*, meaning "the goal or finale of the *Vedhas*," is the repository of this knowledge, the knowledge of God and of the journey which leads to Him. The different hypotheses about His Nature and characteristics and how to test their validity, the different disciplines that will render the intellect of man sharp enough to grasp the Glory of God, the immeasurable thrill that the revelation of the Glow of God as one's own inner glory will confer, all these are indicated in the *Upanishads*, which form the *Vedhaantha*. Every good book written by Man is acclaimed so because it has a vein of this golden glory in its pages.

#### **Spiritual knowledge alone can give peace and happiness**

*Vedhaantha* means the final product of the fund of knowledge---liberation. The final product of milk is ghee---for, when milk is heated, curdled, churned and the resultant butter is clarified, ghee is secured and it cannot be turned into anything else. That is the end-product. *Vedhaantha* is *Jnaana*---the knowledge that reveals, that loosens 'the knots of the heart' and the bondage to external objects, that discloses in a flash the Unity that is the Truth of all this multifarious Creation. That alone can give *shaanthy* and *sukha* (peace and happiness). Man can be happy only in vastness, in overflowing into greater and greater power and magnificence. People run up to Nainital or Kodaikanal or Mussorie during summer, in order to escape the heat of the plains. So too, people seek vastness, in order to escape the stuffiness of 'individualised' life. They want the Eternal, the Absolute; not, the temporary and the particular. So, books must deal with the eternal verities, the absolute certainties, the vast immeasurable joys.

The fascination that the temporary has over the mind is called *Maaya* or Delusion. For example, under the delusion that white or greying hair is something to be ashamed of and postponed, men and women dye their hair---though for all other purposes, white is considered more desirable than black! The mind is never still fixed on any one ideal. It is ever wavering, flitting from one object to another, hopping from one satisfaction to another. To allow oneself to be led by the mind and bypass the intelligence is the folly called *Maaya* (illusion). The world is a labyrinth in which man has become entangled; he must find a way out. The mind, however is no guide, for it is an aimless wanderer.

#### **See God face to face in all beings**

The camel eats thorns and is happy. Man too suffers untold misery as a result of his search after

objective pleasures; but he does not seek a way out. He is not aroused into activity to overcome the pain of the thorns in his mouth. The pain makes him resolve now and then to desist, but, that is but a momentary vow. There is no strength behind that resolution. When disgust develops into determination, the habit is terminated, the effects are washed off in the tears of repentance and the mind is eliminated. The Lord is ever behind you. Turn back from the world---He is face to face with you! Cultivate enough strength of mind to know its weakness and to surrender your all, to the God whom you see face to face in all beings and at all moments.

He does not calculate the cost of the 'all' which you surrender at His feet. He examines the spirit in which it is surrendered. Shankaraachaarya stood before a house with his begging bowl. The old lady who lived there was struck by the effulgence on his face that betokened a realised soul; but she had nothing which she could drop in that bowl. She wrung her hands in despair; she cursed herself; she wondered why the distinguished mendicant had come to her door, instead of going to the doors of the affluent. Then she remembered she had a single myrobalan fruit, the last !of a handful she had plucked from a tree in the jungle a few days earlier. When she felt thirsty, she used to eat a fruit. She brought it out and, with tears flowing in her wrinkled cheeks, she dropped it into the bowl. Shankaraachaarya was touched by her contribution; the Lord willed; a shower of golden myrobalans fell in the yard in front of her hut. She was placed above want even without her asking for it. That is the way Grace works.

### **The Lord is Love inexhaustible**

You know the various acts of Grace that Krishna conferred on the Paandavas; but, if you know how Krishna came first into the Paandava group, as friend, guide and saviour, you will realise that Grace is showered unasked by the Lord. Parikshith put this question to Sukha, the narrator of the Bhaagavatha episodes: "How did Krishna and His elder brother Balarama first meet my ancestors?" Sukha said, 'They were present at the *Swayamvara* (choosing of husband by the bride herself) of Dhroupadhi, where the Paandavas were also present in the guise of Brahmins. You know that Dhroupadhi was to wed the archer who could successfully hit the revolving fish figure put on a tall post. When the men of the warrior caste failed in this test. Brahmins too were allowed to try their hand if they wished. Arjuna succeeded and won her hand for all the five brothers. They were living incognito in a potter's home. Krishna knew that the winners of this Royal Princess were His kinsmen and so, He went to the potter's hut with his brother. He announced Himself as Krishna and gave them very wise counsel about their future course of action."

The Lord is *Prema---Love-unsullied*, inexhaustible, universal. He has no predilections or prejudices. You have no reason to fear Him; fear rather the tendencies in you that drag you into vice and sin. Books that prompt persons to love God and fear vice are most beneficial. Love towards God must be witnessed by love towards man, for man is the visible manifestation of God, a manifestation whose grief and pain you can understand as akin to your own.

Such books can come only out of hearts that pine and pray. Lead that life and the lines will emerge.

*Prashaanthi Nilayam, 6-10-1967*

*When you cultivate the attitude that you are the body, the body will demand from you more food, more variety in food, more attention*

*to appearance and physical comfort. A large portion of the food now consumed is superfluous; man can live healthily on much less. A good deal of effort and expenditure now spent to cater to taste and to social pomp can be given up, and health too will improve thereby.*

***Sathya Sai Baaba***