

8. Bypass the bylane

I OFTEN tell young college students that they may worship a picture as God, but, should not worship God as a picture. They can entertain the concept that a carved stone is God, or that a piece of wood is God. For, in that process, they are raising that substance into that high status. But, I also warn them that they should not degrade God into the status of paper, wood or stone. Of course, God is immanent in every atom and cell of the Universe and if-you are able to recognise Him and adore Him therein, you are indeed blessed.

Do not move towards God, through the world around you. Confirm in your faith that you are the *Aathma*, which is the Divine Spark in you, and then, move into the world as heroes whom success cannot spoil or defeat cannot dishearten. It is not my intention to turn men towards God; for they have already God residing in them. There is no need to proceed towards Him, or call on Him to come from somewhere outside you. Become aware of Him, as your inner motivator (the *Antharyaamin*---that is enough. Travel outward, with the conviction that you are the *Aathma*; then, you will adore the world and not exploit it.

You are bound inextricably with all others

You must realise by constant contemplation that the world is the Body of God. And, you are a cell, in that Body. The prosperity of the world is your prosperity; feel so, act in that spirit; think in those terms. That is real spirituality. The *Saadhak* (spiritual aspirant) cannot cut himself away from the world and escape into solitude, for, the world will follow him into the deepest cave or the darkest forest. The *Saadhak* can claim progress only when he has established in himself faith in the one-ness of humanity. *Ishwarah sarvabhoothaanaam hriddhese, Arjuna, thishthathi*, says the Geetha---"O Arjuna, the Lord is seated in the heart of all beings ."

Ishaavashyam idham sarvam---"All this is enveloped in God." Everything and every being are but waves on the surface of the vast unbounded timeless ocean, which is God. Waves belong to the ocean and depend on it for their individual existence; but, the ocean has no need of waves. Therefore, you are bound inextricably with all else and all others. The world will inevitably react on you; it will reflect your thoughts and plans: it will resound with your cries and creeds. Your thoughts, words and deeds will shape others, and theirs, will shape you. It is your duty to be good, do good, and see good. That is the way to make the world good, and be yourself good.

These ideas and directions are 'the principal constituents of Indian Culture; but, they are honoured today only in the letters. Acts unworthy and damaging the fair name of Indian culture are done with pride, by the very sons and daughters of Bhaarath. Temples are neglected; places of pilgrimage are deserted; the very idea of holiness is ridiculed. Elementary rules of social conduct and individual behaviour, like revering parents and elders, revering teachers and guests, speaking the truth and treading the righteous path are disregarded as unnecessary restrictions on individual freedom.

People obey the whims of the moment

Uncontrolled living habits, unrestrained social behaviour---these are extolled as signs of freedom. It is only freedom to slide into the animal from which man has risen. The education system has not cared to instil the elevating ideas and ideals that fed Indian Culture for ages and so, youth is being guided into the bylanes of sensuous licence. People obey the whims and caprices of the moment; they do not delay to discriminate. When the ideals of detachment and

simplicity were held forth as valid and valuable, India was really strong and happy; but, now, character has lost priority in the educational system. Animals have their seasons and reasons for behaviour; but, man does not pay heed to these. What has happened to the knowledge that has been accumulated by our sages and saints? What has happened to the wisdom enshrined in our scriptures? What has happened to the noble examples of the 'great men and women of the epics and *puraanas*? Since they are ignored, life has become dry, barren and miserable. Restore them in the estimation of the people, and follow their teachings; life will again become useful and purposeful.

Today, we have factions everywhere---at home, between husband and wife, in the school, between teacher and pupil, in society, between group and group. This is deterioration indeed! Peace and harmony between members of the same family are the foundation for peace in the land. The individual must be at peace with himself. Just as the coordinated effort of all the organs of the body is essential for healthy life, coordination between village and village is essential; so too, between State and State and nation and nation. But, the Truth, if only you open your inner eye and visualise, is---there is only one nation, the nation called 'humanity'; there is only one religion, the religion of Love.

Divinity is inherent in every human being

Feel happy that this is your mother-country; love of the country is the basis on which you can build love for the world community. Love expands; it does not limit itself to boundaries. Love your mother-tongue; then, you will discover that all languages are as sweet as yours, for, a language is as sweet .as the tongues of the speakers.

I want you to recognise that the human body has been gifted to you, so that you may use it for the good of the country where you first saw light and tasted love; and, for the good of the culture that your country has treasured for ages so that you may grow in its shade. If you neglect the roots, how can you harvest the fruits? Consider, what is it that gives us safety and security in this enormous structure, this *Vijnaana Bhavan*? We pay attention now only to superficial items like the seats, the cushions, the balcony, the sound systems etc. But, the foundation hidden in the ground, we pass over as out of sight. So too, the culture of *Bhaarath* is the basis of our prosperity, peace and progress.

The whole world is One Single Tree; the different countries are its branches; its root is God, human beings are the flowers. Happiness is the fruit and the Bliss of Self-realisation is the sweet juice therein.

How then can any one justify his anger against another man, or be jealous on account of another? All are fed by the same sap; all share the same Sun; all are Divine. Divinity is not something separate and isolated, which has to be earned by toil. It is inherent in every man, woman and child. By means of some simple practices, and through some little effort, you can tap the springs of Divinity in your hearts.

Some people have asked Me whether *Saadhana* (spiritual discipline) has to supplement study and enquiry. Read the necessary texts, perform the prescribed exercises in logic---are these not enough, they ask! It is like asking, we have laid cables to bring electric current to every part of *Vijnaana Bhavan*; is that not enough? Why bulbs, tubes, and fans? *Saadhana* is the bulb, the switch, the fan! Insulin injection for the diabetic patient is the 'inquiry'; restriction in dietary

habits is the '*saadhana*'. Both inquiry and *saadhana* are needed to discover the Divinity latent in you and to manifest it.

This means that you must devote some time every day, regularly, for study, and for *Saadhana*. Now, you are wasting time till late at night, in clubs and frivolous company. A portion of that time, if spent with God, can confer valuable results. This mother-land has given you a culture that is attracting, distracted people from all parts of the world. Be grateful; study the culture; practise the disciplines it lays down. Serve the poor and the helpless, and those who eke out their livelihood by hard work.

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