

22. Power of the spirit

ON THE vast ocean, countless waves are continually forming and disappearing. Each wave has its own form and shines in many colours. But none of them is separate from the ocean. Likewise, all the myriad beings in the world have their different names and forms but are all tiny droplets from the infinite ocean of *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (The Cosmic Being-Awareness-Bliss).

All beings are manifestations of the Divine. "*Atmavaath Sarva Bhoothaanaam*" (All beings are akin to the *Atma*) declare the Bharatiya scriptures. They have affirmed that the *Atma* principle is immanent in all beings as sparks of the Divine. They have shown that the Spirit is One in all beings. Our sense organs are not the *Atma* (Spirit). Through the senses, things can be seen or touched. But *Atma* is separate from the senses. The eyes can only see. The ear has only the power of hearing. The tongue has only the power of taste. Each sense has a distinctive power of its own. It cannot discharge any other function. The eyes cannot hear, nor the ears see. Only the divine Spirit possesses all the potencies of the senses.

The unity of *Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram*

The Atma is infinite. It has been described as "*Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram*" Truth, Goodness and Beauty. From a worldly point of view, these three qualities appear to be different from each other. But there can be no *Sivam* (Goodness) without *Sathyam* (Truth). Without *Sathyam* (Truth) there is no *Sundaram* (Beauty). Beauty imparts effulgence to an object. Truth reveals its real nature. Thereby its *Sivam* or usefulness is brought out. The unity of these three aspects reveals the Divinity of the *Atma*. Like cloth and thread, which have their basis in cotton, the *Atma* is the basis for all three. Truth dons the mantle of *Sivam* and appears as *Sundaram*. The three terms are descriptive but refer to the same object.

There are four words: *Prema* (Love), *Soundarya* (Beauty), *Maadhurya* (Sweetness) and *Sobha* (Brilliance). They are descriptive terms. When the heart melts, love flows from it. When love matures, it turns into beauty. When the taste of Beauty ripens, it is sweetness. In that experience of sweetness everything appears brilliant and shining. The whole process may be likened to what happens when a flower ultimately becomes a ripe, sweet fruit. Ripeness is all. The Spirit is all sweetness.

Hence, the devotee sang:

*Your eyes are sweet
Your words are sweet All is sweet,
Oh Lord of Mathura Sweetness,
sweetness everywhere.*

It is this Divine sweetness that illumines the world. This Beauty, Sweetness and Bliss are all within you. When you turn your mind to God, the whole universe will wear a new aspect. Without this internal change, all changes in the external physical world are of no avail. Only when the individual changes, the world will change.

Sages gave right advice to the rulers

It is because of the spiritual life led by sages in the past that in olden times the country was blessed with timely rains and all people enjoyed peace and prosperity. The people led righteous lives and were happy and contented.

It is because people have strayed from the path of righteousness that today they are beset with discontent, disorder and misery. The kings in ancient times had for their counsellors great sages, men of virtue and wisdom, who gave the right advice to the rulers. These sages were totally selfless and had only the public well-being in view.

The sages were adepts in the practice of *mantras* and *yantras*. Pursuing *Brahma-Vidya* (the knowledge of the Spirit), they acquired great powers through *mantras*. They were endowed with these powers because they knew how to use them for righteous purposes. The *yantras* (weapons) which they wielded were surcharged with the potency of *mantras* and hence had tremendous power. These weapons were used only for the good of the world and not for selfish purposes.

There were two kinds of education in those days. (1) Education for promoting the well-being of all people in the world. (2) Education for causing harm to others. The first type of knowledge was known as *Brahma Vidya*. The second type was known as *Rakshasa Vidya* (demonic knowledge).

In today's education, as long as selfishness and self-interest are dominant, education will be of no good to the people. Along with academic education, there should be *tapas* (spiritual discipline). The ancient sages held that knowledge and penance should go together. All actions done as dedication to the Divine become *tapas* (spiritual austerity). All selfish actions are *Tamasic* (evil-minded).

The Universe is an echo of God

A student had stated that there were three kinds of love: Physical, mental and spiritual. In fact, there are no three types. Love is only one. But according to the object of one's love, it appears to be different. When this love is directed towards God bliss is experienced and it achieves fulfilment. When love is prompted by selfish feelings, joy and sorrow inevitably follow. Hence all actions should be done as an offering to God.

Scholars have expressed different views regarding the *sthoola*, *sukshma* and *kaarana sareeras* (gross, the subtle and the causal bodies). In my view the gross and subtle bodies are like twins, resembling sound and its echo, an object and its image. In certain *places*, when you raise a cry you hear the echo. In other places it is present but not audible. The whole universe is an echo of God. It is like a mirror which reflects the image of God.

Just as your own voice is reflected back by the echo, your actions return to you as reactions. Hence, you should learn not to abuse anyone or harm anyone. Good and bad are nothing but reflections of your own inner being. It is on the basis of this truth that I advise, people to be good, see good and do good as the way to God.

Right use of knowledge

Today great advances have been made in science and technology. But human character and morality have not made corresponding progress. Knowledge without discrimination is dangerous. Atomic power is being harnessed for destructive purposes. How much could be done for improving production and raising the condition of the people if all this energy could be used

for peaceful and productive purposes. Knowledge should promote people's well-being and not cause harm to them.

Students should realise the differences between one nation and another. Each country has its own special features and its own problems. The same system or remedy will not suit all countries. Four persons may go to a doctor complaining of trouble in the stomach. Each case has to be diagnosed individually and the treatment should vary according to the needs of each person. It may be a pill for one person, an injection for another and an operation for a third. Likewise, each country's problems should be solved with reference to its conditions and needs. The same prescription should not be applied to all.

You must remember that the acquisition of academic education does not make you great in anyway. Today there are many people all over the world steeped in poverty and squalor. You should not be content with satisfying your own wants. You must strive to relieve the poverty and misery of your fellowmen.

Through knowledge, you acquire humility. Through humility you become worthy of responsibility. Through responsible positions you get wealth. Through wealth you must practice righteousness. Righteousness ensures your well-being in this world and the one beyond it.

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The world is now living apart, in compartments, on the basis of race, religion, colour, creed, caste, convictions, etc. Those who question the validity and value of these compartments are themselves in a compartment by themselves. Metal pieces heaped together are still pieces; they have not become one. The world has become united only in the form of heap; it has not been melted in the crucible of love and moulded in the image of God.

The hearts of all men must be purged of hate. Speeches and writings cannot bring about the unity of man.

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