

6. Human Life Is Sacred: Do Not Waste It

ఆంధ్ర సుఖ సకలమునో విష్ణుః
 క్రోధం కుప/స మ య/స హి ష్ణుః
 భక్త సమిపాత్ సుఖ/త్ర త్తం
 'వాం భ స్వ/త తా ద్భవ విష్ణు/త్రమ్,

నాలో నాలో ఎచియుక విష్ణువె
 నీపికతా నా గోపము వక్త్రము
 ఎల్లద సమిపా ద్భవం ముండు
 ఆంధ్ర కే ఆంధ్ర కే మ స విష్ణు త్రము.

*In you and in me, truly there is Vishnu. Your
 anger, devoid of patience, is of no use. You
 can be happy provided you have
 equanimity and equal-mindedness at all*

times. That alone is an experience worth having and you will realise your identity with Vishnu.

Divyatma Swarupas!

Today I have given you one of the important verses from Sankara's *Bhaja Govindam* and I wish to tell you the inner meaning of this verse with a view to clarify some kind of conflicting idea which you may be having in your minds. When we are able to realise and understand the significance of the statement that God in you and in me is the same, that oneness is nothing but the *Atma Thathwa* and that the *Atma* is identical with *Brahman*, the ignorance in us will be removed.

This is the one truth, and this truth is independent of the different forms and different names which we come across in this world. Irrespective of the forms and names, there is a single reality in all that we see and that is *Brahman*. After this, Sankara stated that if you have no patience, your anger is fruitless. Such anger is even harmful to you. That your anger, which arises from a lack of patience, helps your unhappiness to grow is also implied by Sankara. The ability to control this kind of anger will come only when you can develop equanimity of your mind. In order that you may be able to acquire this equanimity of mind, you have to make some enquiry. In the third line of the verse, it has also been said that

you will have such an ability if you can see the oneness of all the creation around you.

The same thing has been said by Prahlada when he asked, who is it that gives the strength to all the persons, weak and strong, human and superhuman, and in fact everyone in this world? He who gives strength to everyone, is the strongest of all. Prahlada taught this lesson to his father. Today, one should understand and experience the oneness of the *Atma* which goes through every form and every living being in the world. For conveying this message, Sankara taught the *Adwaita* philosophy to the world.

It is absolutely necessary for everyone to realise this one supreme thing behind all creation. It is only then, that you will be able to develop equal-mindedness and reach the Divine spirit of equality of everything. We need not doubt at all the possibility of realising this oneness in a manifold world like ours. Because our illusions are closely linked up with our desires, we are given to accept the diversity as real. Thus, we are missing this oneness.

There is a small example for this. In a cinema, we see different kinds of pictures but in fact all these pictures have been put on one film. The differences are not being caused by the electric light. They have their origin only in imagination of what you see. The electric light is only one and the film is only one but because of

the combination of circumstances in which the film is moving in front of the electric light, we happen to see various pictures. In the same manner, various pictures which arise out of sensory organs are being put on the film of our mind. Through this film is passing the intelligence which may be compared to the electric light. The result is that we see so many different things of the world. Because our sensory organs are following the mind and the light of intelligence is being used, we find the world being presented to us in so many different forms.

If these organs are able to go to the heart instead of the mind and intellect, we will then be able to see the true nature of your self and of the world. What is contained in your own mind assumes many different forms and makes you feel that the individual has many different names. Your own illusion causes you to see the diversity of the world. When we make an attempt to realise and understand the real situation and the nature of *Atma*, then the diverse names and forms that you see in the world will no longer trouble you. You will be able to fix your attention to the divine aspect which is one and not many.

For instance, if you think of one individual acting in four different pictures or in four different acts of a drama, assuming four different roles, and if you want to answer the question whether this person is in reality one individual or four different individuals, you have to make some enquiry. Similarly, one individual, that is the *Atma*

Swarupa, either in the waking state, or in the deep sleep state or in his *samadhi* state is feeling that he is having different names and forms and experiencing different situations as in the previous example. He, in consequence, feels and thinks that he is four different persons.

What happens in our daily life is slightly different in that we do not have four different names for the different roles we play during our life. In effect we are giving importance to the form and the name which we have in one of these four states—the waking state—and we ignore what happens to us in the other three states. Again, to be able to realise that what exists in these four states is one and the same *Atma Swarupa*, we will have to go through some exercises of the type prescribed as *yoga*. By *yoga*, we also get equal-mindedness. By the good deeds done in our previous births, we get the Vishnu *Thathwa* or the aspect of Vishnu. In order that we may get these two qualities, the aspect of equal-mindedness and the aspect of Vishnu, it is necessary that we have to pay heed to the injunctions laid down in the *Vedas*. We have also to follow the paths that have been prescribed by the *Sastras* as well as the paths shown to us by the elders. Because we have trained ourselves in seeing only the external world, we have lost our capacity to develop inner vision.

The tree which gives us what we want has been described as the *Kalpavriksha*. In this description, a tree has changed into *Kalpa*. A tree is something which

perishes. *Kalpa* is something which is permanent. It is surprising that we associate a tree which is perishable with *Kalpa* which is permanent and imperishable. The ocean which is the source of such valuable things as diamonds and pearls and which teaches you aspects which are quite close to God, is often described in terms of a common thing like salt water. The moon who hands in coolness and comfort to man becomes feebler and feebler during certain periods. Thus, agencies which have been handing in valuable things to humanity are sometimes being described by names which are not quite just or appropriate. The names we use are not even natural. The permanent *Atma* resides in this impermanent body which is neither clean nor attractive. However, the organs which depend on the body, the mind which depends on the organs, the intelligence which has an association with the mind, all seem to follow the body, birth after birth. For that reason, some qualities which come with the organs, the mind and the body, seem to remain with us as residuary ones in each birth of ours. The crow eats bitter leaves and takes pleasure in so doing. The cuckoo eats tender mango flowers and enjoys the sweetness in them. Ordinary people, in their foolishness, enjoy trivial things. They will be deriving pleasure from the illusory world. On the other hand, people who have developed equal-mindedness will be enjoying permanent things like being close to God.

The experience which man goes through in his waking state and the experience which man goes through

in his dream state are entirely different. If we try to find the cause of our dreams, we get the answer that sleep is the cause of our dreams. If we do not sleep, there is no occasion for us to get dreams. For people who are sleeping in illusion, there will be all kinds of dreams which are in the nature of illusion. For people who have steady minds, there is no such illusory sleep and therefore, they will not be having dreams of illusion. They will be enjoying the bliss of realisation and the recognition of oneness.

Good or bad, happiness or sorrow, and such other things which appear to be different and the opposites of each other are in reality one and the same and are like two reflections of the same object. Our *Vedantins* have said that there is only one thing and that is *Brahman* and there is no second to that one *Brahman*. We may ask how we are experiencing diversity and missing the oneness in a situation where there is only one thing, namely *Brahman*. If I ask a question, "Who amongst you is Krishna?" someone will respond by saying, "I am Krishna". If I ask a question, "Who amongst you is Rama?" someone else will respond by saying, "I am Rama". In this conversation, you see that Krishna and Rama are names appropriate to different individuals with different forms but in the replies, all of them say "I". This "I" is common to all of them. This "I" is everywhere. Therefore, if one is able to understand that "I" is everywhere, it is easy for him to grasp the real

significance of the common element. This sacred sound “I” is appropriate only to the *Atma*. Since the same *Atma* is present in everyone, equal-mindedness is possible for everyone to acquire.

These differences are not intrinsically present in various things. It is only our likes and dislikes of these things that make them look different. If various attributes are really inherent in things themselves, then everyone should either like a particular thing or dislike a particular thing. Likes and dislikes are in you and not in the objects. No one has the capacity to decide what is right and what is wrong. Today, while deciding what is good and what is bad, people are imagining that they are in a position of authority and they have the right to determine what is good and what is bad. This is only being ignorant. A particular thing may be liked by some and disliked by others. If this quality is in the object itself, then how can the same thing be liked by some and disliked by others. The likes and dislikes are coming from within the individuals and from the thoughts they have in their minds.

There is an example for this. We drink water that is cool, sweet and tasty. Similarly, we eat fruits which are sweet, attractive and tasty. Such water and such fruits are regarded by us to be good and we therefore eat or drink them. But within minutes, this water gets converted into urine and the fruits get converted into excreta both of which are regarded as bad and we reject them. How are we going to decide what is good and what is bad?

What we believe to be good is turning bad within a few minutes.

This good or bad is the result of your own creation. However, when we look at various things in nature, as a result of changes that take place sometimes, they take different names and forms. Gold, for example, when taken out of the earth, in its natural condition, does not have much value. When we refine this natural mineral in many ways and purify the gold, it acquires considerable value. If we take the view that whatever is natural is the true form, then we have to explain why natural gold, after treatment and purification, acquires a greater value. Things or objects which, in a raw condition, have undesirable qualities attributed to them will shed those bad qualities and become good after purification and treatment.

In the same manner, we can regard eating, sleeping and moving about as natural attributes of an individual. This individual, who is born with some good and some bad qualities should not think that there is no opportunity or process by which he can purify himself.

Let us take an expensive wrist watch you are wearing, as an example. You should question yourself as to what in this watch deserves the money that you have paid for it. Is it the bolts, the nuts, the jewels and so on that you are paying for or is it the basic metal that you are paying the price for and so on. If you put this watch in fire, the net result will be that you will get

metal and metallic ash worth only a few paise. But a skilful workman who understands the technique of making a watch, has used his expertise to convert a small bit of basic metal into a costly watch capable of keeping correct time. This is the process of purification by which he has got a valuable watch out of a valueless metal. This process by which one is able to purify the metal and turn it into a watch is what we pay for.

In the same manner, when an individual is born as an ignorant person, there is a process by which he can purify himself. This process consists of seeing good people, listening to good people, speaking to good people and following the advice of good people. This process can convert you from being an ignorant person to being a *Paramahansa* or a knowledgeable person.

Just as after having acquired a valuable watch, you will carefully use it and preserve it so that it gives you good service, so also, once you have acquired the valuable quality of being a wise human being with equal-mindedness developed in you, you must also know how to preserve these great qualities and make use of them.

It is by accumulating the benefit of many good deeds in many earlier lives of yours that you are now born as a human being. Because you are not aware of the great good treasures that you have thus accumulated as a result of which you have the reward of your present life, you are not assigning the necessary value to human life. If you are only aware of the extent of the goodness

of your previous births that has brought to the stage of your present life, you will never waste this present life.

There is another interesting example for this. An individual took a watch which was out of order to a watch repairer. The watch repairer said that the watch was very old and that it would cost a lot of money to repair the watch. He said that the repair would cost at least two times the original price of the watch. The owner said that he would like the watch to be repaired, even if it would cost so much. The watch repairer thought that, since the owner was insisting on this old and worn out watch being repaired, the watch was probably a lucky one. He replaced the old parts with new parts, repaired the watch and gave it back to the owner. When asked to pay the price of repair, the owner gave the watch repairer two slaps. The persons standing by handed him over to the police and when the police asked him to explain why he beat the watch repairer, he said that he was asked to pay for the repair of the watch twice the price he paid originally when he acquired the watch. Since he had not purchased it but had obtained it by giving one slap to a person, he gave two slaps to the watch repairer. If that man really knew the value or importance of his watch, he would not have given the watch for repair.

Similarly, today we do not know the value of our own human body. We are devaluing it and wasting it in a purposeless manner. To think that somehow we got this human body, more as an accident than for a purpose,

and to think that we should feed it with all the pleasures like eating, drinking and so on, and then let it wither away and die is a great mistake. It is not proper to spend our life in such a thoughtless manner. Amongst all the animals that are born in this world, to get birth as a human being is a very difficult thing.

Having obtained a sacred birth as a human being, if we conduct ourselves like animals and birds, we will then be wasting our lives and not justifying God's gift to us. One has to recognise the ultimate truth that the divine *Atma* exists in all. It is only then that you will justify the human birth and drive away the ignorance from your mind.

It is possible for one to refer to and describe something which is not *Brahman*, but no one can say that this is *Brahman*. That which is eternal truth, that which is unchanging, that which is pure knowledge and that which cannot be described by using words is *Brahman*. *Brahman* is the only truth and that is shining in the shape of *Atma* in all different forms of living beings. It is only when we recognise this truth, that we will be able to attain the stage of Vishnu. It is to enable us to understand and attain this stage of Vishnu that Sankara had handed over the beautiful set of *Bhaja Govindam* verses to the people.

శ్రీమద్భగవద్గీతా ప్రథమోఽధ్యాయః
 అహంకారమును వదిలిపెట్టెను
 సమస్తమును జూచి సమాధిని జూచెను
 సుఖమును జూచి సుఖమును జూచెను