

20. Non-believers Have No Direct Experience Of Divinity Nor Have They Read About It In Books

The words uttered by elders are like curd and rice. You should accept them in that spirit. If one does not do so, great harm will come to him. This word of Sai is a statement of truth.

Pavitratma Swarupas:

Creation is infinite. Creation has no origin. In this infinite and boundless universe, divinity is all pervading and is therefore extraordinarily interesting. In order to know what *Purushottama* is and what his manifestations are, man has been making several attempts. Since ancient times, such investigations have been going on; and a ceaseless quest is being pursued. Some amongst them have gone through several types of *sadhana* and as a result, have succeeded in securing a vision of the *Paramatma*. Some people had to stop this quest midway, but they came to the conclusion that there was a superior power, and they suspected the existence of the divine. Although such people did not secure a direct vision of the Lord, they strengthened their belief in the existence of the Lord. There is another group of people who keep on saying, without any search or experience, that God does not exist. They habitually deny the existence of God. These three categories have been entering into arguments from time immemorial and this continues even today. Even now, we come across people who have had direct divine experience, people who had only indirect divine experience and people who have not had any experience at all. Those who have had such an experience are being described as believers, those who have had indirect experience

as *asthikas* and those who have had no experience at all as *nasthikas*, or disbelievers. However, by the pressure of *Kali*, there has come into existence a fourth category of people also. This category of people think of the Lord when they have troubles and problems and are in sorrow; but once their troubles and sorrows are overcome, they forget the Lord and even deny his existence. This category should be described as believing non-believers. One can tolerate even a non-believer but not the believing non-believer.

Those who have had direct experience of God rely on their own direct evidence of the existence of God. People who accept authority of the evidence coming from *Vedas*, *Ithihasas* and *Puranas* are described as people who accept the *Sabda Pramana*. Those who do no *sadhana* and who have no experience are the *nasthikas*. They rely for their authority on mere guess work.

The first category of people describe God as being present in the smallest thing in the world as well as in the biggest thing. It is their concept that God is present everywhere and is all-powerful. The second category believe that God comes in human form whenever there is difficulty, injustice and man's bad deeds have become too many. They believe that God responds to the needs of the people. However, then as well as now, there can be no direct proof of God's existence and no one can prove his existence or the absence of God either. If we base ourselves on the experience of the first category of people, we can have some basis on which to accept the existence of God. It is their concept that God is present as the tiniest of the tiny things and as the biggest of the big things. One may ask how we can see the tiniest of tiny particles and the biggest of big things. Air which constantly moves around us is present at all times but are we able to see the particles of air? In that

context, how can we see the tiniest among the tiny? We are not able to see even the small particles that we call atoms. How then can we see the particles smaller than that? Now let us ask if we can see God as the largest amongst the large things. The sun is much bigger than the earth and is many millions of miles away. Even if we travel at 500 miles per hour, we will still take more than 200 years to reach the sun. Also, there are millions of such suns. Everything that is at such a great distance appears as small as a tiny star. These stars are like our sun and, in some cases, even larger. They appear as if they are close to each other. The distance between one star and another star is again very large. If we take as much time as 200 years to one sun, how much time will we take to reach all the stars. Thus, we are unable to see either the tiny aspect or the large aspect of the creation itself. How then can we see God?

In this world, there are three distinct types. These correspond to *thamo guna*, *rajo guna* and *sathwa guna*. It has been said in the *Vedas* that if you want to recognise and understand the aspect of *Paramatma*, you have to cross the dark boundaries. Although the reality is only one, many people who have had direct experience thereof, have described it in several different ways. The *Vedas* say that the truth is one but people describe it differently. In our own home, the same individual is being described as father by the son, husband by the wife, son by the mother, father-in-law by the daughter-in-law and grandfather by the grandson. Because of different bodily relationships, the same individual is described by different names. In the same manner, wise people, *yogis* and persons who had experience have described God in different ways. God has no particular name or form. The *Vedas* have described God as one with a thousand heads, a thousand hands and a thousand legs. If we want to get an idea of such a God, each individual will describe him in conformity with his concept and his ideas. So

far as men are concerned, they wish to recognise God in human form. Unfortunately, with the development of science, people have come to say that we cannot consider any living person as God, and that God can exist only as a non-living entity. A body with life in it is *Shivam* and a body without life in it is *Savam*. Is it not foolish to regard a corpse or a dead body as *Shivam*? The situation today is in such a wrong mess. Godhood takes a human form with the specific task of instilling faith into and showing the path of truth to humanity.

The *Vedas* have taught us that in all this confusion, there is some peace and in that peace there is a divine light and that is God. The same thing can be expressed by saying that in *thamo guna*, there is *rajo guna* and in *rajo guna*, there is the *sathwa guna* and in the *sathwa guna*, we see God. In this manner of looking at things, true *sathwa guna* generates from *thamo guna* itself. There is one example for this. On a good mango tree, there are a number of unripe mangoes. The quality of the mango is no doubt good; but if you try to eat it when it is unripe, it will be sour. After some time, even an insect will appear within the fruit. When the mango comes to ripe stage, there will be in the fruit a certain sweetness and sourness together. When it is completely ripe, it will fully develop sweetness. Thus, although it is a good quality mango, it will taste sour in its early stages, and, in that stage, you should not discard it saying that it is sour. We should protect the same thing until it fructifies into good fruit. In the same manner, the *thamo guna* can be compared to an unripe youthful stage. In due course, it will grow and become ripe. This stage is of the *rajo guna*. It is because of this that in the stage of youth, one will find a lot of wavering. Out of such wavering, you will develop superior knowledge and wisdom. In adolescence, wavering nature and wisdom coexist. When one ripens into old age, the same qualities will ripen into *sathwik gunas*. It is not enough if

you simply attain advancing age. Along with age, good ideas, good thoughts and good feelings must also arrive. Only then, will life develop sweetness. Therefore, we should make certain efforts to promote the *sathwik* qualities even in the stage of *thamo guna*. This *sathwik* state has been referred to as *Sathya*. The first step is “*Sathyam vada*,” or speak truth. In order to reach this stage, you must undertake to perform *dharma* or “*dharmam chara*.” But today, this process has been reversed. We are only speaking of *dharma* instead of practising it, and we are preaching truth instead of speaking truth. In all the platform speeches, we utter words like *prema*, *dharma*, *sathya*, etc., like parrots; but in practice, it is *sathya* that is discarded first.

People are afraid of telling the truth. One is afraid even to know the truth about himself. If someone else points out an untruth, we make an attempt to cover up the untruth. In these circumstances, how do you speak the truth? Since we are not able to do this, we say, “*Sathyam vadha*,” i.e., kill the truth or destroy the truth. Students: truth is the most basic aspect. It is even more fundamental than the atom. The word “truth” is the basis of even the atom. We cannot see the atom, which is very small. We cannot see the universe, which is very big. But we can certainly see the truth. Truth is the foundation for everything. It is said, “*Sathyam Nasthi Paro Dharmaha*.” There is no *dharma* other than the truth. Direct your life’s journey on the sacred path towards *Parameswara*. In this journey, truth must be your vehicle. Then, you will be able to see that truth itself is God. When we talk of non-believers or believing non-believers, they follow their path only because of their ignorance. Their path is highly individualistic and has no authority. One’s own experience is the best authority in aspects relating to God. For one who has tasted a sweet, you can explain how a sweet tastes; but for one who asks you to describe the form of

sweetness, how can you do so? Your experience should arise from direct knowledge and that is the best authority. Under no circumstances can evidence from guess work or hearsay become more important than direct experience. Students must recognise this clearly.

In the word *Nastika*, there are two parts, *Na* and *astika*. Here the negative “*Na*” comes first and negates the aspect of “*asti*” or existence of the divine. In this word itself, we can see the existence of God. There is one more example. We can say that a particular form is not here, only if the form exists somewhere. If we say that this flower is not a rose, obviously a flower called a rose with a certain fragrance and form must exist somewhere. It is only because of the existence somewhere of a rose, that we can say that this flower is not a rose. Similarly, if we say this is not God, it means that there is a God somewhere and you are saying that this is not God. This is only a jugglery of words. The non-believers will say, “There is no God.” The believers will say, “God is now here.” According to the non-believer, “God is no where.” If you put “W” close to here it becomes “God is no where” and if you take “W” further away and put it close to “no,” it becomes “God is now here.”

We should never depend upon an authority which is totally based upon an individual fancy. For the citizens of Bharath, the *Vedas* have been the authority. For Christians, the Bible has been their authority while the Muslims accept the Koran as their authority. Thus, each religious group has a sacred text which is their authority. Among the citizens of Bharath, there are two groups called Saivites and Lingayats. The *Lingapurana* describes Shiva as one who has a Bull for His vehicle. The *Vishnupurana* says that Garuda is the vehicle for Ranga. While these groups quarrel like this, the Christians

say that God is like a bright shining star. Thus, each one takes the authority available to him, but amidst all this, we should see that God is indeed nothing other than basic truth. Wherever we may go, the one and only one truth takes different forms.

The *gopikas* and *gopalas* developed such faith in the omnipresence of God, and they believed that God existed everywhere and in all places. When they went to drink water from a pond, they found Krishna there. When people, out of jealousy, gave them poisoned milk, they found Krishna even there and they thought of him. If Krishna is not present in our heart, we cannot see him at all even though he is really present where we look for him. But if he is installed in our heart, then we can see him everywhere. If we wear coloured glasses, the entire world will appear coloured. If you keep blocks of salt in your mouth and eat some sugar, can you get the sweet taste? If you then say that sugar is salty, where does the fault lie? It lies in you and in the salt that is in your mouth but not in the sugar. If you are suffering from high fever and eat some sweet, you will naturally find that it is bitter. The bitterness comes from the fever that you have within you and does not belong to the sweet.

The situation today is such that people who are sitting on the bank of a river are preaching to you about the depth of the river. They have not experienced the river. In another example, it is like people giving you a lecture about good food, without actually tasting the food. Basing ourselves on the words of the blind and lame people, are we justified in attempting to cross the river? The blind man has not seen the river; the lame man has not crossed the river. The non-believers are like the lame and the blind. They have no direct experience of divinity nor have they read about it in books. They start with lack of belief as a faith and they come together

to promote this aspect. Students should recognise this truth and conduct themselves in a manner which is right. Put your faith along the path of *dharma*, accept the injunctions of the elders and give happiness and joy to the elders and to yourselves. If you accept such conduct, your life can become an example to others.