

37. The Natural and the Artificial

Truth, virtue, peace, and love (*sathya*, *dharma*, *santhi*, and *prema*) are the four pillars of *Sanathana Dharma* (Eternal Universal Religion), the four faces of the Ancient Teaching. Of course, these words are on the lips of everyone, but what they mean is something quite shallow and ineffective. To describe an incident just as you saw it happen is *sathya*; to give water to the thirsty and food to the hungry is *dharma*; to suffer calamity in silence is *santhi*, and to nourish wife and children is *prema* —that is the general interpretation!

But this is all wrong. Truth is something that is not modified by time or space or characteristic. It must be the same forever, unaffected and unchanged. Then alone is it Truth. It should not be proved false by some subsequent event or knowledge. *Dharma* is a body of principles that are fundamental to social stability and individual progress. There are various branches of *dharma* —obligatory duty, duties pertaining to status and stages of life, etc.— but the aim of all is to help one, stage by stage, toward liberation from grief and from the chain of birth and death.

See how grand the conception of each is —compare this with the common meaning that has been so far given.

Then, take the quality of peace (*santhi*). It denotes the capacity to bear success and failure, joy and misery, defeat and victory, with perfect equanimity. And, love (*prema*) is the quality of equality of everyone, of not only nonviolence (*ahimsa*) but the conscious acceptance of the duty of love, because every being is a spark of Divinity, as much of a spark as you yourself.

All lies in the inspiration behind the act

The first step in spiritual training is to curb the power of desires, which prompts the senses to pursue objects. If the wish is for objective pleasure, it harms the individual; if for God, it is good. If a house is set on fire, it is incendiarism; if Hanuman sets fire to Lanka, it is justifiable retribution and a good lesson. If a bandit cuts off your hand, it is injury (*himsa*); if the doctor saves your life by amputating it, it is non-injury (*ahimsa*). Attachment to sense objects makes an act low; attachment to God makes it sacrosanct.

Daksha's ritual sacrifice (*yajna*) was converted into a battle because the Supreme Lord (*Parameswara*) was not present; the Kurukshetra battle was transformed into a sacrifice because the Supreme Lord was present. Daksha scorned the Lord; Arjuna dedicated himself at the Lord's Feet. That was the difference, and that is the explanation. It all lies in the motive, the inspiration behind the act and the word.

Devotion is not like lime pickle, to be used only when you have fever; it is one's daily substance, the vitamin one must have for physical and mental health. Contemplation of God is the main rice dish; the rest are side dishes, appetisers, fillers. Take the tablets of constant thought of the Lord (*namasmarana*), and all the experience of your daily life, the good and the bad, will be digested nicely. You don't eat paddy, do you? You have the sense to remove the husk and then boil the rice before you eat it. So also, why do you take in nature as it is? Remove the allurements it has to the senses, make it just an expression of divine will and then assimilate it.

Have constant thought of the Lord (*namasmarana*) with full faith and pure heart. You forget your nature in the complex tangle of artificiality; you miss the natural (*sahaja*) when you are caught in the net of the artificial (*a-sahaja*). The natural is love, peace, truth, bliss. The artificial is hate, falsehood, war, grief, and greed. You must

discover the spring of your own truth; you cannot play truant for long. After many a birth, even if their number is a hundred, you have to reach the source from where you strayed. Your mind is steady when it is engaged in other activities, but when it is focused on God it begins to waver. It does not like to stop its vagaries, which it will have to do once God enters your heart. Tame it by remembrance of God (*namasmarana*). That is the message I have come to announce. Have God's name on your tongue, the divine form in your eye, the divine glory in your heart—then thunderbolts will pass you quietly by.

Repeat the name of God (do *namasmarana*) in some set manner, with full faith and pure heart. When the country is endangered, it is as bad as when the body is endangered. The Name will give you courage to save the Mother. If all of you strengthen your moral qualities and develop faith in God and *Sanathana Dharma* (Eternal Religion), calamity can never visit this land. Let all believers in God proclaim the value of meditation on God. I shall bless that endeavour; I know that will save you and save the country. That is why I am blessing you on this note of joy.

Srisailam, 1963-12-06

The consequence of *karma* can be wiped out only through *karma*, as a thorn can be removed only by means of another. Do good *karma* to assuage the pain of the bad *karma* that you have done and from which you now suffer.

The best and the simplest *karma* is repetition of the name of the Lord; be ever engaged in it. It will keep out evil tendencies and wicked thoughts. It will help you radiate love all round you.

Sathya Sai Baba