

15. Rise From Animality To Divinity

*Man is dogged by two defects
Which prevent him from thinking of God;
He conceals his myriad faults;
And proclaims the minor faults in others.*

Students! Bharath was contributing to the security and prosperity of the world from ancient times by its adherence to the spiritual path. From then to this day, the message: "Let all the people of the world be happy" has been the ideal of Bharath. Many persons in various places, at various times, immersed themselves in experiencing the joy of the Spirit.

Today, because of the influence of modernism and modernity, young men and women treat with levity the very term spirituality. There is a reason for this attitude. Over the centuries, the people in the country were mouthing spiritual sayings, parrot-like, without understanding their meanings, with the result that students today are unable to understand the true meaning of spirituality. Even scholars and men of spiritual eminence have been unable to convey the spiritual message to the young people of today in a manner that is meaningful to them and appeals to their hearts.

The impression that is conveyed to the young people is that spirituality consists solely in good actions like performing *bhajans*, offering *puja* (worship), reciting the names of the Lord, going on pilgrimages and visiting temples. The primary reason for this is the failure on the part of the propagators to comprehend the profound message of the Vedas and Vedangas and realise the underlying truths embedded in the great epics and Puranas.

The true meanings of spirituality

No one among the young men and women today understands what is the meaning of spirituality. They imagine that spirituality means meditation on God, bathing in sacred waters, and visiting holy Shrines. This is not the correct meaning of spirituality. Spirituality means destroying the animal nature in man and making him realise his divine consciousness. Spirituality implies that one should not develop egoistic pride on account of the divine potencies in man but utilise them for achieving spiritual strength. Spirituality calls for the recognition of the manifold capacities manifesting in man as emanating from the Spirit and not from the mind. It means developing the faith that all powers come from the Divine.

Spirituality does not mean proceeding from the human to the Divine. It seeks to unfold the divinity in man. Spirituality does not mean passing from the mundane to the Divine. Spirituality means making man manifest the divinity in him.

People today have the wrong impression that spirituality is concerned with the journey from the mundane world to the higher realm and vice versa. Because of this mistaken view, students today are in a state of confusion about spirituality. Spirituality appears meaningless to them.

Spirituality is the realisation of the role of the Spirit in daily life. It is a way of life. Our entire life is bound up with the Spirit. All the powers of man are derived from the Spirit. It is totally wrong to think that Spirituality is divorced from daily life and that our daily concerns have no relation to spirituality. Nor does spirituality mean leading a lonely and secluded life. True

spirituality calls for the recognition of the oneness of all mankind and to demonstrate the spiritual truth underlying this Divine unity.

All our actions are related to the Spirit

Our entire life is bound up with the spiritual. Whatever one says, whatever one does, whatever one thinks, all of it is related to the Spirit. Spirituality is the expression of the promptings of the Inner Spirit. The good deeds by the external instruments of the body cannot be deemed spiritual.

The very first thing one has to do is to destroy the animal nature in man. Without eliminating the animal nature, all rituals and acts of charity are of no avail. Of what use is it to foster one's animal instincts, while doing acts of charity or conforming to religious injunctions? As a man grows older, his desires also grow, instead of diminishing. Performing external rituals without subduing the animal nature, men are only pursuing wrong courses. However much one may contemplate on God, from time to time he is a prey to *Raaga* (attachment) and *Dweshha* (hatred). These two animal propensities have to be got rid of at the outset.

Strive to overcome the animal nature

People participate in *bhajans*. This is doubtless a good act, but it is only an auxiliary element in spiritual discipline. People take part in *bhajans*, but are they transforming their attitudes as a result? No. All the animal qualities like bad feelings remain along with participation in *bhajans*. Without getting rid of such attitudes, the continuous participation in *bhajans* is of no value. Without removing the animal nature, a singer of *bhajans* continues to be a sinner. The *bhajans* should be used as a means for overcoming the animal nature. Participation in *bhajans* and performing of worship should lead to the elimination of animal qualities. Without the conquest of animal nature, all forms of external worship are of no use.

People expatiate on the greatness of Bharathiya scripture and praise the glory of the Vedas. But all scriptures are intended to promote right practices and not merely to be used as texts for reading. Of what use is it merely to read these scriptures as a routine ritual without practising their teachings? The sacred books of the different religions--whether it be the Vedas, the Bible or the Koran--are intended to promote spiritual practices and not be used for ritualistic reading. Even eminent scholars treat these scriptures only as texts for *paaraayana* (ritualistic recitation). It is because of the mistaken notions of these scholars that young people today have failed to grasp the true import of spirituality.

All the spiritual propaganda that is carried on today is totally divorced from practice, with the result that spirituality has made little impact on the youth today. The young do not get a compelling vision of spiritual truths. Here is an illustration.

In ancient times, people used to perform *Yagas* and *Yajnas* (religious sacrifices). These sacrifices were being performed according to the rules laid down in the scriptures. But while conforming to the prescribed procedures, few understood the inner meaning of these sacrifices. All their lives were spent in external observances. In the performance of sacrifice, they used to offer cows or other dumb animals as *bali* (sacrifice) and propagated the view that such offerings were in accordance with spiritual injunctions. This was a great mistake. These were meaningless practices.

Offer your animality to God

What does *pashuthva* (animal nature) mean (when it is used with reference to the sacrifice of animals)? *Pashuthva* (Animal nature) refers to *Jiva Thathwa* (one's way of life). The manner of living in which *dehabhraanthi* (delusion regarding the body) is prevalent is *pashuthva* (animal existence). What is the delusion regarding the body? It is the identification of the body with the Self (the "I"). This is the mark of the animal nature in man. The real meaning of animal sacrifice is the sacrifice of the animal nature in man. Everyone has to get rid of *Ahamkaara* and *Mamakaara* (egoism and the sense of "mine"). Without sacrificing these animal tendencies, sacrificing dumb animals is unworthy of human beings.

God accepts the bad and gives good in return

The word *bali* is used with references to the sacrifices in *Yagas*. What is the *bali* that is to offered in the sacrifice? It is the offering of one's bad qualities and bad thoughts as an offering to the Divine. How can one offer bad things to God? God alone can accept such offerings and give good things in return. No one else in the world will accept the bad and give what is good in return. This kind of exchange is possible only for the Divine. An example for this may be had from ordinary life.

There is a soiled and tattered currency note with you. No one is prepared to accept it from you. But when it is tendered to the Reserve Bank, which issued it, it is bound to accept it and issue a new note in return. Likewise, who is competent to accept one's bad thoughts, perverse feelings and evil intentions? Only the Almighty can accept them. He is the Spiritual Reserve Bank that will accept the soiled notes of your mind and give in return good currency (in the form of good thoughts).

Hence, offerings should be made only to those who are competent to receive them. All bad thoughts and feelings should be offered to God so that we may receive, by His grace, good thoughts and feelings in return. Spirituality, thus, means transforming one's life into an ideal one by offering one's bad qualities to the Lord and receiving from Him good qualities in return.

In ancient times they used to perform *Aswamedha Yaga* (Horse Sacrifice). What does the "Horse Sacrifice" mean? By *Aswam* (horse) is meant that which is restless. The horse cannot remain steady even for a moment. It will be always shaking one part or the other of its body. The horse is an animal which represents the unsteady mind. The word *Medha* in *Aswamedha* literally means the mind. Thus to perform the Horse Sacrifice really means to offer the restless mind to God.

Meaning of horse sacrifice

The horse is not only restless but it also runs fast while riding thereon. So also, man's mind is both restless and very fast-moving. That is why Arjuna complained to Krishna (during the Gita dialogue) that the mind is restless, strong, obstinate and dangerous. Such a highly fickle mind which is comparable to the horse (an animal) should be surrendered to God as a sacrificial offering. This indeed is the real meaning behind the Horse sacrifice. But nowadays everyone is misguided by the outer meaning only, and nobody takes the trouble of knowing the inner meaning.

Some may try to argue that in olden days animals were sacrificed during *Yajnas* and *Yagas* (sacrificial rites). But they are not correct. Only a few ignorant Pandits (scholars) and misguided elders used to indulge in animal sacrifice. But those who recognised the inner meaning of this

ritual used to give prime importance to the sacrifice of the beastly qualities in man while performing such religious ceremonies. The sum and substance of the various religious observances is to destroy the animality in man. Here is one more example to illustrate this point.

Inner significance of Nandi in form of Easwara

In temples of Easwara (or Shiva), you find Nandi (image of bull) in front of the deity. What is the inner significance of this? The usual reply you get is that Nandi is the *Vahana* (vehicle) of Easwara; as if He could not afford to have a better vehicle than a bull. This is a wrong idea. The truth is that just as the *Lingam* is the symbol of the Lord (Easwara), Nandi (bull) is the symbol for *Jiva* (individual soul). Therefore, just like the Nandi, man should turn away from *Prakruthi* and direct all his attention towards Easwara only.

There are some more meanings for this symbolism. For instance, it is said that no one should stand between Easwara and Nandi. One should have the vision of Easwara by looking through the space in between the two ears of Nandi. The underlying idea is that through the *Sadhana* of using its ears to listen about Easwara alone, the animality in the bull becomes transformed into divinity and because of its merger with Easwara it is called Nandeeshvara (Bull-God). Thus the lesson of the symbolism is that man should also try to merge with God, by following the example of the Nandi.

His Story is History

Students! Try to understand the correct meaning of what is recorded in the *Charithra* or history of Bharath which is highly sacred. *Charithra* (history) is derived from "*charayalu*" (the actual actions) of people but not from mere writings or discourses. Practising, experiencing, enjoying bliss, and sharing the bliss with others--is *Charithra* which is called History, in the English language. In other words, "His Story is History." It means that the story of God is History. Students should understand such inner meanings. What is meant by *Rama Charithra* (History of Rama)? What Rama did during His lifetime is His *Charithra* or History. How He had mastered His senses and mind during all the vicissitudes of life, how He was neither elated by pleasure nor depressed by pain, how He accepted His exile into the forest with the same happy countenance with which he had prepared Himself for His coronation. This story of His which describes His equanimity under all circumstances of pleasure or pain and loss or gain, is what is known as History.

Running towards pleasures and fleeing from pain is characteristic of animality. An animal rushes towards you when you show it the green grass in your hand, but it will run away from you when you show it the cane in your hand. Thus, attraction to what appears to be good and repulsion from what appears to be bad is the nature of animals. But man should be prepared to confront both with equanimity because in this worldly life these pairs of opposites always go together. No one can separate pain from pleasure, sorrow from joy, or loss from gain since they are inextricably intertwined. We can never find anywhere unadulterated pleasure or pain separate from each other. The fruit of pain is pleasure and vice versa.

When a son is born, the father celebrates it as a great festival, distributes sweets to all, and dances with joy. But when that son dies, he becomes depressed with sorrow. Thus the same son is the cause of both joy and sorrow to the father. Birth and death are the root causes for joy and sorrow. But, for whom are these births and deaths? Death is for that which is born, and birth is for that which has died. If there is no birth, there is no death. This body is the root cause for birth

and death as well as for *Ahamkaar* and *Mamakaar* (the feelings of "I" and "Mine"). Only because the father had seen and experienced the form of his son, he is afflicted when that form of his son is taken away from him. The very same "father" had never wept for that very same son before the latter was born in that form.

Do not forget your divine source, *Aatma*

Today we are fascinated only by the form. We are being tormented by this transient form which is but a reflection. We are to take cognisance not of the form but of our divine source. *Aatma* (Self) is our source, which is also called *Adhyaatma*, because it is *Aadhi* + *Aatma*, i.e. the *Aatma* which is *Aadhi* (the beginning or source). Hence we should get back to our source. Then alone can we experience total (unalloyed) bliss.

If you bring a fish and keep it in a gold vessel studded with all the nine precious gems, it will not at all feel happy. On the contrary, it will struggle restlessly to get back to its source, namely, water. So also, we have strayed away from *Aatma*, our source. Having been enticed by the worldly pleasures like wealth, gold, vehicles and other properties, we are forgetting our very source. When we deeply ponder over this matter, the fish seems to be more intelligent than man. Why? Because that fish has not forgotten its source, while man who, despite all his education, intelligence, culture and sophistication, has forgotten his source.

Our bodies are like vessels. Whatever changes the vessels may undergo, our source will never change. For example a silver plate, a silver tumbler and a silver box--the names and forms of these three articles are different. The ways in which they are made use of will also be different. But when any one of these three articles is melted, what remains is silver alone. In other words, in spite of the change in the names and forms of the articles, there is no change in the silver which is the common substratum of all of them. Similarly whatever names and forms we may assume, the common substratum of all these forms will continue to be the same *Aatma* which is changeless. Always remembering this fact is what is called "Spirituality."

Reduce your desires to escape from miseries

Sacrificing your ego is *Sathwik* (pure and noble), while sacrificing any animal is *Thamasik* (impure and ignoble). Today you need to enter into the *Sathwik* life and sublimate your human nature into divine nature. This, indeed, is the primary goal of your life's journey. Every man undertakes the usual pilgrimages and other routine good activities like charity, etc. But all these will not save him from worries, until and unless he gives up *Ahamkaara* and *Mamakaara* i.e. "I" and "Mine."

A rich man bundled up all the necessary luggage in his bed-holder and started on a pilgrimage. He visited Kasi (Benares), Prayag, Haridwar, etc. Although tired with the day-long journey, he could not sleep during the nights. During the day time, he used to have *darshan* (the holy sight) of beautiful images of Gods and Goddesses and bathe in the sacred waters of holy rivers. He was happy that by these religious activities his sins were being washed away. However, when he investigated into the reason for his not getting sleep during the nights, he found that there were lots of bugs in his bedding. He should get rid of those bugs. Then only he can have sound sleep. In the same manner, in our bedstead called the body there are any number of bugs, namely, endless desires of various types. As long as these desires are there, one cannot escape from miseries wherever one might go. One should, therefore, reduce one's desires.

Do not entertain imaginary aspirations

Students of today are the victims of several kinds of desires. No sooner does a student step into the college than he thinks of getting his degree immediately and going abroad for higher studies. You should not give room to such fanciful desires which will sap your mental powers. During your stay in the college, concentrate whole-heartedly on your studies. Don't entertain all sorts of unrealistic and imaginary aspirations. What is supremely important is the present.

Whenever undesirable feelings like anger, hatred, jealousy etc., raise their ugly heads in you, crush them down forthwith. For instance, when somebody criticises or abuses you, you will get angry immediately. But you should not react to such things on the spur of the moment. You must coolly reflect thus: "Am I having in me any defects which he has pointed out? In case these defects are in me, will it not be a mistake on my part to criticise or abuse him in retaliation? Suppose there are no defects at all in me, then why should I get angry?" When you reflect like this, your anger will leave at once and you will become calm and cool.

"My life is My message"

Students! I am an ideal example in this respect. That is why I say, "My Life is My Message." Many will be criticising Me, while many others will be praising Me. But I am neither depressed by their criticism nor elated by their praise. Why? Because, if some people mention about whatever qualities are actually in Me, I need not pay any attention to them; if anyone attributes to Me what is factually not in Me, I need not be worded about it. For instance, if someone calls me "*Butta Thala Sai Baba*" (i.e. Sai Baba with a basket-like crown of hair), I should by all means accept their remark because I have such a bushy hair on My head. On the contrary if anybody accosts Me as "*Batta Thala Sai Baba*" (i.e. baldheaded Sai Baba), why should I accept it? I have no bald head. So if defects which I do not have are pointed out directly even in My very presence, I do not accept them; hence I am not upset by them. That is the fight "determination," indicating self-confidence. It is not good for you to be either elated or dejected by others' remarks, without having confidence in yourself. So, first and foremost, you should develop self-confidence.

Students! If anybody asks you, "who are you?" You will reply, "I am a man." This is only a half truth. What is the other half of the truth? It is: "I am not an animal." Thus, the full truth is: "I am a man; I am not an animal." When you recognise the second half of the truth that you are not an animal, you will not give room to any bestial qualities in you.

If, in this impressionable age, you firmly establish such sacred ideas and feelings in your heart, you will turn out to be ideal persons in this world. All histories are sacred--whether they pertain to Bharath, Islam or Christian. It is in their followers that you find all sorts of omissions and commissions. They are full of animality. That is why the hatred between one religion and another is ever on the increase. However, there is nothing wrong with the religions per se. All religions have preached good things only. Men should recognise this fact and conduct themselves accordingly. What is wrong with religions if only your minds are good? Good and bad are creations of your mind only.

Transform from animality to divinity

You should not be misguided by the worldly and superficial meanings, and forget the inner meanings. This is the crux of spirituality. The waywardness of your mind prevails in the gross state of wakefulness as well as in the subtle state of dreaming. How can you change such a fickle

mind? If you keep away from animality during waking state, then animality will not enter even in your dreams.

Students! Embodiments of Love! In the first instance, try to understand correctly the meaning of spirituality. You should transform your nature from human to divine. You must direct your attention to God. Nandi could become Easwara, only because it turned its attention to God. Similarly, Hanuman, the monkey, and Garuda, the bird, became dear to the Lord. Therefore, if you get rid of your animality, you will become Pashupathi (the Lord of all beings).

Some tips to control anger and hatred

You should not become a victim of the feelings of anger, hatred, ego or pride which may arise in you. When such feelings arise in you, sit silently for a few minutes. Instead of doing so, you must not give vent to your anger by scolding or beating others as you like. How to put this into practice? As soon as you get angry, you should immediately leave that place and go out into the open and quietly walk a furlong. Then your anger will disappear. An easier method than this is to stand before a mirror and look into your own angry face. You will dislike your own face and look upon it with disgust or aversion. Then try to laugh heartily and your anger will leave you.

If you find it difficult even to do this, go into your bathroom and turn the water tap on. To the accompaniment of the tune of the sound created by the water flowing from the tap, begin to sing a good song. Then your anger will certainly disappear. Or else, drink a glass of cold water. Like this, you have to seek ways and means of regaining a calm and peaceful mood. Instead of doing so, if you allow your anger to grow, restlessness will also grow along with that anger depriving you of peace of mind. You should never give tit for tat, or word for word.

The less you talk, the more will become your mental power. With the increase in your mental capacity, there will be increase in your power of discrimination too. Consequently, you will give up "individual discrimination" and resort to "fundamental discrimination." Because of this, you will begin to consider the good of the world at large rather than your own individual welfare. You must cultivate such broad feelings from this young age itself.

Strive to gain "practical knowledge"

What is the reason for the students of Bharath taking to wrong paths and becoming victims of unrest? They are not making any effort to understand matters in the proper perspective and to act accordingly. One should try to understand everything thoroughly, and not rash forward blindly into all matters. Then only you will gain "practical knowledge," and that will guide you along the desirable and sacred path. You will find guideposts here and there on the roadside, to indicate which path you should take to reach any particular place. The ups and downs in the path can be experienced only by those who tread the path, but not by the guidepost. Most of the books today are like the guideposts. However, you must not be like mere guideposts. You should actually practice and get the experience.

Expand your love

Students! You can gain all things through love alone. Without this love, you cannot obtain anything. Love can win over even the strongest of enemies. True love is desireless and natural. It is based on the *Aatmic* relationship. A small example for such love: a mother is walking along the street, carrying her young baby. If you happen to be walking behind them, that child will smile on seeing you, and naturally you will also smile at the child. Who is that child and who are you? Although there is no relationship whatsoever between the two of you, the child is able to

make you smile. What a profound bliss would you experience in such love! If you weep, you have to weep alone. But if you laugh, others too will laugh. It is such love and bliss that will make you one with God. Therefore expand your love and thereby experience expanded bliss.

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