

4. Spiritual basis of human values

BORN as human beings, growing as human beings, men have forgotten the value of human existence. Developing religious differences, fostering demonic tendencies, they are destroying peace. What is the state of human life today? The foremost thing that should exist is respect for human values. However great an intellectual may be, however great one may be as a scholar or a man of learning, one has also to acquire humanness. With out humanness, scholarships and intellectual eminence are of no value.

It is only when men cultivate humanness that society will shine with radiance and the nation and the world will progress. Humanness can be promoted only through spirituality and not by any other means.

Just as a seed can sprout only when it is planted in the soil and watered, human values can grow only in a spiritual soil. If a man wants to cultivate human values he has to apply the manure of spirituality to his heart, water it with love so that human values will grow. Human society needs essentially fellow-feeling and unity. When these two are present, humanness will flourish.

The five principles of Yama (sense control)

Wherefrom are human values to be derived and how are they to be developed? Human values are born along with human birth. They exist in union. Unfortunately, man today separates himself from human values and yet wants to live as a human being. To recover human values, man has to take the spiritual path.

In spiritual *saadhana*, there are eight *Yogik* disciplines to be observed: *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Aasana*, *Pranaayaama*, *Prathyaahaara*, *Dhyaana*, *Dhaarana* and *Samaadhi* (sense restraint, observing rules, seating posture, breath-control, withdrawal of senses from objects, meditation and Super Conscious state). Of these, the first is *Yama*. It is enough if this single discipline is observed. All human values are comprised in it. Humanness is embedded in it. *Yama* includes the *Pancha Praanas* (five-breaths), *Pancha Bhoothas* (five elements), *Pancha Koshas* (five sheaths), *Pancha Thathvas* (five basic principles), and *Pancha Ruupas* (five forms). The five forms are the form of *Gaayathri*. The five basic principles are: *Ahimsa*, *Sathya*, *Brahmacharya*, *Astheya* and *Aparigraha* (Non-violence, Truth, Celibacy, non-stealing and non-possessive qualities). These five constitute *Yama*. The first is *Ahimsa*. Buddha attached the great importance to *Ahimsa*. He considered it the foremost *Dharma* (duty). "*Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah*," declared Buddha.

Wider meaning of *Ahimsa*

What does *Ahimsa* signify? It is not merely refraining from causing harm or injury to others. It implies also refraining from causing harm to himself. One who harms himself cannot avoid harming others? Whoever desires to observe *Ahimsa* must see that he does not do violence to himself. How is this to be ensured? By constantly examining whether his conduct is right or wrong. For instance, in the matter of speech, he must examine whether his words are causing pain to others or not. He must see that his looks are not tainted by evil intentions or thoughts. He should not listen to evil talk. All these cause harm to the individual.

Hence, everyone should see that he gives no room for bad looks, bad hearing, bad speech, bad thoughts and bad actions. How do you determine what is bad? By consulting your conscience. Whenever you act against the dictates of your conscience, bad results follow. The conscience is the form of the Divine within everyone. Whatever you do, the conscience tells you whether it is

right or wrong. However, to ascertain the directive of the conscience you have to wait for some time. You should not be in a hurry. When you want to say something, you must consider for a moment whether it would be proper Or not and then speak. When you want to listen to something, you must examine whether it is good or bad to listen and then decide what is proper.

You should be careful not only with regard to how you react to the five elements, but also with regard to your food. Excessive eating does violence to the body. Moderation in food is conducive to happiness. *Ahimsa* (non-violence) is thus what confers happiness on you. That which hurts you is *himsa* (violence). Nor is that all. Even in drinking water, you should observe restraints. Likewise, one's entire life should be governed by the principle of non-violence. Many germs die when one takes a bath or walks or does any other action. Even in the process of breathing many germs die. Violence is present in all these activities. Therefore, to avoid the consequences of such involuntary violence to living creatures, one is advised to dedicate all actions to the Divine. But there is no meaning in dedicating to the Divine conscious acts of violence. The conscience will not approve of such conduct. In *Vedhaanthik* parlance, the conscience is called *chith*. It is also called Awareness. Awareness is total understanding. This total understanding is within the capacity of every human being. Everyone must strive to express this awareness. Thus, *Ahimsa* is the primary duty of man.

Adherence to truth

The second duty is *Sathya* (Truth). Truth is not merely telling the facts about what you see or hear or know. These are temporal truths. In its full sense truth can be applied only to what comes out of your heart in its pure and unsullied form as the voice of conscience. This *Sathya* (truth) is also called *Ritham*. It is true for all time--past, present and the future. It is not affected by changes in time or place. It is unchanging and cannot be suppressed. Truth is its own proof. It is the form of the Divine as declared in the *Vedhik* saying: Sathyam, Jnaanam, *Anantham Brahma* (Thath, the highest Wisdom and Infinite--that is the Absolute Self). Truth is thus the second human value.

The third is *Astheyam* (non-stealing). *Astheyam* means not stealing the properties of others. Property should not be confined to physical objects like a book. When you need anything, there is nothing wrong in your taking it with the permission of the owner. To take or use any object without such permission amounts to stealing. Even to criticize someone in a way that harms him also amounts to theft (of his good name). It is common among students to borrow a friend's camera and use it. When the camera is damaged, the responsibility for getting it repaired is that of the user. In this manner, you can understand how the concept of stealing applies to even trivial incidents in daily life. This is the third duty.

The true meaning of *Brahmacharya*

The next duty is *Brahmacharya*. *Brahmacharya* is interpreted in many ways. One meaning is remaining unmarried. This is not the correct meaning. The true meaning of the term is "Moving in Brahman." *Brahmacharya* means ceaseless contemplation of God. *Charya* means moving or treading. *Brahmacharya* means "moving in Brahman." Mere bachelorhood is not *Brahmacharya*. A married man is called *Girhastha* (house-holder). There is *Brahmacharya* even in a house-holder's life. This consists in his leading the conjugal life with the wife *alone--Ardhaangi*. If a married man leads a promiscuous life he is not observing *Brahmacharya*. Even in thoughts and looks, one should observe continence. *Brahmacharya* acquired its importance because of its strict observance by our ancient sages.

Unconsciously or otherwise men tend to waste their energies. All these are lapses from *Brahmacharya*. Sense control is vital in practising continence. It is easier to conquer Indhra (the Lord of gods) than to subdue the *Indhriyas* (senses). Control of senses is an important human value. It is because these vital disciplines were observed by the sages and others since ancient times, they continue to be cherished to this day. Bhaarath has passed through innumerable vicissitudes in its long history, including foreign invasion. Nevertheless, by and large, the people have managed to foster the human values.

Subtle implications of *Aparigraha*

The fifth discipline is *Aparigraha*. This means not accepting things from others. You have every right to receive gifts or other things from your parents. You are the product of your parents and hence you can accept from them whatever they give. *Aparigraha* has certain subtle implications. For instance, it is not proper to accept gifts even from one's uncles or in-laws or even from one's brothers. When any gifts are received from these relatives you have to requite them by equivalent presents. Today the *Aparigraha* role is blatantly violated.

For instance, boys when they get married after their education, receive dowries at the time of marriage. This is very wrong. It even amounts to a sin. A girl who has been brought up well is offered to a young man in marriage. That itself is a great gift. Why should one ask for money along with the bride? The parents of the girl may give her whatever they choose. But the bridegroom should not expect or accept anything.

This is the attitude one should have towards gifts from others. It is because many of these immemorial injunctions have been given the go-by that today Bhaarath is experiencing various troubles.

No limits to gifts from God

Gifts can be accepted from parents, the preceptor and God. These are the exceptions to the rule of *Aparigraha*. From these four, you can receive anything. But even from the parents you should not seek to get anything by compulsion or litigations. What is offered by the parents with love should be received with love. There are limits to what you can receive from the parents. But there is no limit to what you can receive from God. You can accept anything from God because He is the Lord of everything. He can free you from sin and redeem you from the consequences. God encompasses all relationships and hence one should identify one's self with God. "You and I are one." Attributing relationships like mother and father to God sets binding limits to the association between God and man. In the vast ocean of *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* (Being-Awareness-Bliss), the myriad human beings, with different names and forms, are like waves. But as the waves are made up of the same water as the ocean, all human beings are sparks of the Divine.

Sath-Chith-Aanandha are present in every human being. People out of their ignorance go in quest of *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* elsewhere. *Ajnaana* (Ignorance) is the cause of *Aviveka* (stupidity). Stupidity is the cause of *Ahamkaara* (egoism). Egoism gives rise to attachment. Attachment leads to hatred. Hatred gives rise to Karma (action). Karma is the cause of birth. The original cause of the chain of processes leading to birth is ignorance.

What is ignorance? It is the state of *bhinnathvam* (divisiveness). To regard "That" as different from you is ignorance. To differentiate God from yourself is ignorance. All are fragments of the Divine, sparks from the same flame. When the sparks are near the fire, they retain their heat and

light. But when they are away, they turn into charcoal. Likewise, when one is near God, *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* will be in him. When he is remote from God, he will lose the attributes of the Divine. He will be immersed in ignorance. It is not mastery of books and scholarship which makes a person a *Jnaani* (a knower of the Supreme Truth). "*Advaita dharshanam Jnaanam*" (To perceive the One without a second is Knowledge).

"Happiness is union with God"

It is only when you manifest the bliss that is in *your Sath-Chith-Aanandha--that* you can call yourself *Vyakthi*, the manifested individual. The term *Vyakthi* cannot be applied to all and sundry. He alone can be called *Vyakthi* who manifests the invisible divinity within him.

What is meant by *Sath-Chith-Aanandha*? *Sath* is "Being", that which is eternal and unchanging. Sugar has the quality of sweetness, which remains in whatever form it may be used. For purposes of analogy, sugar may be described as *Sath*. *Chith* may be compared to water. It has the quality of mobility. When sugar and water are mixed, you have neither sugar nor water as such, but a new product, syrup. When *Sath* and *Chith* come together, you have *Aanandha* (Divine Bliss). People imagine that this bliss is to be found in jobs, marriage, property or progeny. That is not the case. You hope for happiness in one thing after another: education, jobs, marriage, children and so on. But happiness eludes you. The only enduring happiness is got by oneness with the Divine.

The answer to the question, "Where is happiness?" is "Happiness is union with God." Students tend to forget this, in the pursuit of worldly pleasures. It is only through the ripeness of experience that this realisation can come. For instance, you see a barren field in the summer. After a night's rain, you find grass coming up. Wherefrom did it come? It is from the field. What was present in the form of seeds in the earth came up as grass after the rain. Likewise the bliss within you will sprout when you water your parched heart with the rain of divine love.

Do not underrate the powers in the atmosphere

Scientists today have made many astonishing discoveries. But they lack peace. They have failed to understand the *Vedhaantik* truth about their true nature. Hence they are unable to experience the bliss of the Spirit that is in them. People should not underrate the powers present in the atmosphere. For instance, it is filled with radio waves coming from different broadcasting centres. But the waves maintain their individual wave length and do not collide with the others. This electrical energy is divine. It is one of the secrets of creation. The body is like a radio set. When you do not tune in properly by concentration you will not get the right station. Concentration is essential for every kind of activity in life. Students should realise how much can be gained by reducing one's desires. They may experiment in a small way with reducing the consumption of coffee. They will find that their memory power increases. As desires are reduced, their will power will grow. This *Ichchaa-shakthi* (will power) is being undermined today. The result is their ability to act is also reduced. Consequently, even the *Jnaana-shakthi* (the power of wisdom), is also lost.

Place your faith in God

Students! Understand that there is no free will for individuals. They are constrained by various limitations. God alone has total free will. All others are bound in, one way or another.

Whatever one's efforts, the ultimate outcome lies with Providence. Therefore, place your faith in God and do your duty, wherever you may be. Do not cause any harm to others. Observe continence, avoid covetousness and lead a good, righteous life. A bad habit, which may seem trivial in the beginning, may develop into a menace in later life. Correct such faults in the initial stages. Pursue spiritual exercises with the same enthusiasm you have for sports and studies.

(Bhagavaan related at length the story of Ghora Kumbhar and his final mergence in the Lord of Pandharpur, Paanduranga. Bhagavaan pointed out how God's grace was needed for the *Rishis* to obtain a vision of the Divine, or get the opportunity to speak to God. The *Rishis* later took birth as monkeys to converse with God and again took birth as gopikas and gopaalas to have contact with God).

The purpose of the Sai *avathaar* is different from that of Raama and Krishna because the forces of good and evil are now present in every human being and the process of transformation has to be effected in a context very different from the previous yugas. In the *Kali Yuga*, the process of transformation has been individualized. Everyone has to correct himself. "Child! You have to save yourself. I am present within you as a witness." This is the Lord's message. Hence, everyone should try to reform himself. You have to decide what is right and what is wrong and give up what is bad.

The ways of God are inscrutable. You should not ascribe to God motives which are a reflection of your own feelings. Hence, self-enquiry is essential. Embark on the Divine path with sincerity. You will emerge as leaders in the world.

I have high expectations regarding your future. Revere your parents, serve society and protect the nation. It is to produce such students that I am devoting three-fourths of my time to them. Carry out Svaami's injunctions. Earn a good name. Uphold the prestige of the Sai educational institutions. That is the gratitude you can show to Svaami. Do not think of the pens and other gifts you received. Remember only that Svaami gave you good sense. Develop both goodness and godliness. Beyond these two, there is nothing greater which education can do for you.

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