

### 13. Purity--the path to Liberation

*EMBODIMENTS of Love!* *Jnaana* (Knowledge) does not mean a mere acquaintance with books. Nor is it worldly knowledge. Only the person who has recognised the oneness of *the Jeevaathma* (individual spirit) and the Universal Spirit is a real *Jnaani* (one who possesses the supreme wisdom). True wisdom consists in the awareness of the rarity of the individual and the *Samashti* (collective whole).

How can a man who is not aware of his humanness recognise the Divinity within him? Hence the first requisite is the recognition by everyone of his human essence. Basing on this truth, Buddha declared that everyone should cultivate at the outset *Samyag-dhrishti* (a pure vision). It is only when man has a pure vision that he can get rid of impurities in the body, speech and mind. It is this purity that can protect man from invasion of impurities through the eyes and the ears. Hence the first requirement for every man is *Samyag-Dhrishti*.

The second quality that is needed is *Samyag-Sankalpa* (pure thoughts). Everyone should have pure thoughts. Only the person who has developed purity in vision can have purity in thoughts.

The third requirement for every man, along with purity in vision and thought, is *Samyag-Karma* (pure deeds). Everyone should do pure deeds. Through pure deeds man is able to recognise his human essence. Man is not merely an embodied being. By his capacity for developing good vision, entertaining good thoughts and performing good deeds, he has the power to transform humanness into Divinity.

A fourth requirement for man is *Samyag-Shruthi* (listening to sacred words). When one listens to unsacred words he can have only unsacred thoughts.

The fifth quality prescribed by Buddha is *Samyag-Jeevanam* (living a pure life). What is meant by "living"? It is not leading a worldly life attached to worldly pursuits. True living means making one's life meaningful by ideal actions. Man's life must be governed by idealism in action.

#### **Real *saadhana* is to remove all impurities from mind**

Next, Buddha declared that everyone should aim at *Samyag-Saadhana* (Achievement of the highest good.). *Saadhana means* elimination of the evil tendencies in man and acquiring good and sacred qualities. True *saadhana* is the eradication of all evil in a man. Study of sacred texts, meditation and penance do not constitute the whole of *saadhana* (spiritual exercise). To remove all the impurities in the mind is real *Saadhana*.

After this comes what Buddha called-Samyag-Samaadhi or *Nirvaana* (Pure Realisation or Liberation). What is meant by *Samaadhi*? It means treating pleasure and pain, gain and loss alike. *Sama-dhi* (equal mindedness) is "*Samaadhi*". To look upon light and darkness, pleasure and pain, profit and loss, fame and censure with an equal mind is *Samaadhi*. Buddha termed this equal mindedness as *Nirvaana*.

It is the recognition of the sacredness of the qualities of all the senses in man that constitutes real humanness. At the very outset, one has to keep the tongue pure. This was referred to as *Samyag-vaak* (purity in speech). The tongue has to be sanctified by refraining from falsehood, slander and abusive speech.

Next comes *Samyag-Dharshanam* (seeing only things that are holy). You must see only things which please your conscience. Seeing all worldly things is not proper seeing at all.

Buddha laid emphasis on seeing good, thinking good, speaking good and doing good. Seeing all sorts of things is not good for anyone. The eyes should be used for seeing only what is pure, what is holy and what is edifying.

### **Buddha's search for Truth**

Although *all Avathaars* (divine advents) have been preaching only good things, men today are content to observe their birthdays without following their precepts. Buddha did not attach any importance to *yajnas* and *yaagas* and other religious rituals. The reason is he felt that it was more important to ensure that the five sense organs were pure to begin with. Buddha sought to find out why the mind gets disturbed. He could not bear to see anyone suffering. He was deeply grieved at the sight of persons afflicted with old age. He was intrigued at the sight of a dead body. None of these natural happenings gave him peace of mind. Buddha considered the movements of the planets and the sun and the stars as natural phenomena. He undertook many spiritual exercises to find out what transcended these natural phenomena. Failing to find the answers by these exercises, he approached many great elders to find the answers. None could give him satisfactory answers. Ultimately he reached Gaya and sat under a banyan tree to meditate on the problems that worried him.

### **"Ahimsa Paramodharmah"**

Because Buddha did not interest himself in the study of the *Vedhas* or in the performance of *yaagas and yajnas*, he was dubbed an atheist. This is utterly wrong. Buddha was a pure hearted person. When he was born, a renowned astrologer had predicted that he would be either a great king or a great renunciant. On knowing this, Buddha's father, Shuddhodhana arranged to keep out of his son's sight all unseemly worldly sights of happenings in this world. From his childhood, Buddha could not bear the sight of anyone in pain. He was saddened at the sight of the old ill-treating the young, of men in authority harassing the people and the big fish swallowing the small ones. He realised that it was wrong for anyone to cause harm to others. Hence he declared: "*Ahimsa Paramodharmah*" (Non-hurting is the Supreme *Dharma*). No one should cause hurt to others by speech, action or in any other way. According to him true *Dharma* (Righteousness) consists in refraining from causing harm to anyone in thought, word or deed. Truth is God. Buddha taught that people should adhere to truth and uphold it.

Among Buddha's teachings the foremost were *Sathya* (Truth) and *Dhaana* (Righteousness). These two are the teachings of the *Vedhas*: "*Sathyam vadha, Dharmam chara*" (Speak the Truth, practise righteousness').

The name given to Buddha at the time of birth was Sarvaartha Siddha. Shuddhodhana got his son married to Yashodhara, daughter of his brother-in-law, Shuddhabuddha. He apprehended that his son may become a recluse and turn away from the world if he was left to himself. But Buddha did not feel that a married life was the proper thing for him. Buddha felt that man was bound by various attachments in worldly life. Friends and relations were the cause of this bondage. Various human relationships were the cause of sorrow in the world. So he declared: "*Sarvam dukkham dukkham*" (All is sorrow) He also declared: "*Sarvam Kshanikam, Kshanikam*" (everything is momentary). "*Sarvam nashyam nashyam*" (everything is perishable).

Buddha felt that nothing was truly lasting. Parents were subjecting their children to various kinds of bonds and making their lives miserable. As soon as the children come of age the parents are keen to get them married. They do not know what kind of happiness he can get from married life.

What happiness have they derived from their own married life physically, mentally or otherwise? No person, however intelligent, thinks about this matter. Even eminent scholars do not care to examine whether it is worthwhile pursuing sensuous pleasures instead of seeking what is beyond the senses. Buddha felt intensely unhappy that his parents and others combined to commit him to the bondage of married life. One day, at midnight, Buddha left the palace, giving up his wife and young son, Rahul.

### ***Nirvaana is the only truth***

He abandoned everything out of the conviction: "There is no mother or father, no kinsman or friend, no home or wealth. Awaken yourself!" He resolved to find out something which transcends all worldly relationships and pleasures.

Buddha asked himself: "What is this life? Birth is misery. Old age is misery. Wife is a cause of sorrow. There is misery at the end of life. Therefore, be alert and awake."

Happiness is not to be found in any of the things of the world. Everything is fleeting. Man is wasting his life in the pursuit of petty ephemeral pleasures. *Nirvaana* is the only truth. It is the sense of oneness with all life. To turn the mind towards that which is permanent is *Nirvaana*.

Before he attained *Nirvaana*, Buddha summoned his stepbrother Aanandhabuddha. Buddha's mother Maaya Dhevi passed away on the seventh day after his birth. Shuddhodhana's second wife Gauthami, brought up the child. Because he was brought up by Gauthami, he was named Gauthama Buddha. At the age of 28, he gave up everything and turned a renunciant. What is the significance of this step? Buddha declared: "*Sangham sharanam gachchaami*", "Hands in the society, head in the forest." He renounced everything to think about promoting the well-are of society.

He declared: "*Dharmam sharanam gachchaami*." What is this *Dharma*? "*Ahimsa paramodharmah*." *Dharma* means causing no harm to anyone.

### **The decline of Buddhism**

Basing his reachings on these two declarations, Buddha went about preaching his message. Buddha's message spread to many countries like Tiber, China, Ceylon, Burma, Thailand and Japan.

In course of time schisms developed which led to the decline` of Buddhism.

Buddha's emphasis was entirely on purity in every aspect of daily life. Purity in vision, purity in thought, purity in speech and purity in action. He considered the spirit of sacrifice as true *yajna*. Sacrifice is the means for attaining *Nirvaana* (freedom from the bondage of mundane existence). Buddha was totally opposed to anyone being forced to lead a worldly life against his will.

When Buddha was going round begging for alms as a mendicant, his father, Shuddhodhana, called him and said: "Son! Why are you going about as a beggar? I am a king and you are leading the life of a beggar. This is not proper at all." Buddha gave him a fitting reply. "Sire, you are *Brahman* and I am *Brahman*. You are not father and I am not son. Both of us are *Brahman*. In the phenomenal world, you belong to the lineage of rulers. I belong to the lineage of renunciants. All those who follow my ideals are all renunciants. Your lineage is based on *Raaga* (attachment). My lineage is based on *Viraaga* (renunciation). To those who have attachment, it becomes a *toga* (disease). To the renunciants, detachment becomes the means to *Nirvaana* (liberation from bondage)." Buddha taught his message in this way to his father, wife and son.

### **True meaning of the Buddhist prayer**

The Buddhist prayer must be properly understood. When the Buddhists say: "*Buddham sharanam gachchaami, Dharmam sharanam gachchaami, Sangham sharanam gachchaami,*" the real meaning of the prayer is: You must divert your *Buddhi* (mind) towards *Dharma* (right conduct). And the right conduct should aim at serving society. When this is done, society gets purified.

It is not enough to read the lives of *avathaars* and messiahs. their teachings should be put into practice as much as possible. People must gradually outgrow their material attachments and develop divine love.

Shuddhodhana tried to protect his son from all external worldly influences by keeping him in the palace and not even sending him to school. What happened ultimately? Buddha decided to renounce everything in quest of the truth about human existence and he declared *Ahimsa* (non-harming) as the supreme good.

What is it that people need today? These are three things: A heart pure and white like the moon, speech soft and sweet like butter, a face that is loving and kind. These are lacking in the world today. The entire atmosphere is frightening. There is harshness in speech. There is no softness in the heart. The heart should be pure and soft like butter. Today, on the contrary, people are hard-hearted. Fill your hearts with compassion. Let your speech be sweet and truthful. You will then be truly human.

### ***Ahimsa* is the supreme virtue**

Buddha taught one great, truth to the world. He declared that it is not what the *Vedhas* and Scriptures say that constitutes truth. People should bear in mind that non-harming is the supreme virtue. Do not cause harm to anyone by thought, word or deed. The tongue is given to you to utter truth. Jayadeva exhorted his tongue to manifest its sweetness by chanting the names of the Lord Govindha, Dhaamodhara, Maadhava.

Whatever be the number of religions, their goal is one and the same. (Svaami sang a song pointing out how faiths may be many but God is one only). To carry on daily life in the world people pursue many vocations. But does all this constitute real living? Can a life led without remembering God be called life at all? What kind of life is it where there is no purity, no morality and no spirituality. Morality and integrity alone can lead to *Nirvaana* (liberation). Today these two are absent. People must strive to base their lives on *Neethi* and *Nijaayathi* (morality and integrity). They should become, as Jesus said, messengers of God.

*Embodiments of Love!* We are celebrating today Buddha Purnima or Buddha Jayanthi. What does *Purnima* (fullmoon) signify? It signifies wholeness. When the mind is filled with love, it achieves fullness. As long as the mind is filled with darkness (evil thoughts) there is no meaning in celebrating Buddha Purnima. Get rid of this darkness. Without the light of love in the heart, what use is there in having illuminations outside? Light the lamp of the Divine in your minds. Banish hatred and envy from your hearts. Man is the victim of two evil planets: attachment and hatred. To escape from their grip, the only way is to cultivate love.

*Discourse in Sai Ramesh Hall, Brindhaavan, on 15-5-1997.*

*Temples are intended to instruct men in the art of removing the veil of attachment that lies over their heart. That is the reason why Thyaagaraaja cried at the temple in Thirupathi, "Remove the veil within me, the veil of pride and hate." The fog of Maaya melted away before the rays of grace and so, he could discern and describe the image of Divine charm in the song, "Shivudano Maadhavudano" and drink deep this sweetness of that Form. The churning of his heart by the Divine formula produced the spark of Jnaana, and grew in to the flame of Realisation.*

*Baba*