

13. The Inner Temple

Twelve years ago, I remember, we had a gathering of the people of Bukkapatnam here in this temple, in connection with the starting of a high school for this town. The school was started and, thereafter I came often, but every time, since the school is outside the town, I have been coming only to the outskirts! I am glad I have again come into the town today, to this very temple, in order to light another lamp for the benefit of this place.

The group of young men who collected the funds needed for the illumination of this ancient Temple of Lakshminarayan struggled hard indeed, as their report indicates. After all, a single devoted donor could have finished the job. The temple is the repository of *Sanathana Dharma* (Eternal Universal Religion); it is the heart and soul of a village. In former days, a newcomer would ask, “Do you have a temple in this village?” and, if the answer is “No,” he would move on to some other village that had one. Today, however, the question has become, “Do you have a cinema hall in this village?” The conservation and promotion of all the traditional institutions and customs and habits have become imperative, and I am glad that in this place, the young men have taken the lead and are proving good examples to the elders.

Knowledge is growing, but wisdom lags

I shall switch on the electric lights in a few moments, but remember, it is not the Lord within the Temple that need illumination, it is the worshipper. This material temple of stone and mortar might be lit up by means of a few bulbs, but really speaking, everyone is a moving temple with the Lord installed in the shrine of the heart. That shrine has to shine bright and clear. Now, it is plunged in the darkness of falsehood, injustice, cruelty, and pride; it is infested by poisonous nocturnal birds of prey. The lighting up of this structure is but the symbol of the illumination of the heart, the destruction of the darkness of egoism and ignorance, so that the Lord might be revealed in all His Glory.

Lately, there has been everywhere progress in the material field — schemes and plans to increase prosperity and comforts. Schools, hospitals, and factories are multiplying everywhere. But there is no peace in the hearts of people or of society. This is because there has been no corresponding increase in moral conduct. A stick will help a man walk up an incline, but of what use is it to a person whose legs have become defunct? Material prosperity is the stick, and virtue the strength of the feet.

The trouble is that knowledge is growing but wisdom lags. There is an infection of envy, cynicism, and conceit everywhere. People have become the slave of passion and pride. They let their minds drag them wherever it will, though the word *Man* means “He who has control over the mind (*manas*).” Control of the mind can be achieved through spiritual discipline and training. To remove dirt from a white cloth, the washerman soaks it in water, puts in soap flakes, warms the water, and beats it on a stone. He does not make it white; it is white. He only removes the non-whiteness by a certain process. So too, the individual soul is pure, but it has been soiled. It has to be soaked in good conduct and pure character, soaped with meditation on the Godhead, warmed in discriminatory wisdom helped by reason, and beaten on the slab of renunciation. Use the temple and the worship of the Lord done here as per traditional rites for this end. Light is holy, sacred. Do not misuse it for lower ends, but give it its proper value and engage yourselves in holy pursuits.

Take cheerfully all that comes to you

I was away in Uttar Pradesh from the 5th to the 28th of last month, and I found people there full of devotion and faith. Thousands go every day on pilgrimage to the shrine of Badri Narayana, in spite of the expense and the dangers and difficulties, animated by devotion, which gives them strength and courage. When you see them, you feel that the country is still green, that the path of God and righteousness (*dharmā*) is not given up, and that India is alive and strong.

Moreover, the people there, though they are far away from Puttaparthi, do feel the warmth, showing thereby that they are really near, while you here see only the light and are unaware of the warmth. Devotion and faith are the result of culture and not mere physical contiguity. But I must tell you one thing. The names Puttaparthi and Bukkapatnam, surrounded by these little hills, are resounding even in the Himalayas, and it is up to you to justify that fame and that respect. A life lived in love and humility will gain the respect of all and will also be full of peace. Do not ask of life only joy and happiness, but take cheerfully all that comes to you. You cannot insist that the doctor gives you only sweet medicines. Have the hardihood to bear sorrow as resignedly as you bear joy. Remember that death is inescapable, that life is but an interlude, that the world is but a caravansarai, and you will get the strength to pass through the pilgrimage of this birth.

Bukkapatnam, 1961-07-18

Consider first things first. Only then can the true culture of India be restored to its old vitality.

Bharath (India) has known how to exploit the mine of divine Bliss, which lies in the heart of each person. The seers had said that if the mother-land sacred cow, the real mother, and the *Vedas* are revered and used as best as one can, then one would have happiness here and liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

It is because the people of the country followed this path that India has remained India.

Sathya Sai Baba