

19. Vision Of God

You are, I know, rather bored by these evening gatherings taking place every day, without break, for it is difficult to listen to the discussion of spiritual subjects and the detailing of disciplinary rules. Some of you are saying that you came to Prasanthi Nilayam for peace and quiet, but you are being subjected to the ordeal of speeches and long sittings. Let me tell you that discourses by these great scholars are very valuable. The speakers here are blessed, and the listeners are also blessed. Why, the listeners are even more blessed, for they can very often follow the lessons that these speakers teach, while the teachers themselves might not be able to carry them out.

There was a *pandit* who led a disciplined life, sticking to a pre-arranged timetable. He woke up from sleep in the early hours of the morning, recited *OM* (the *Pranava*), and later, after ablutions, drank his cup of milk at 7 a.m. exactly. Some days the milkmaid arrived late, for she lived on the other river bank and had to catch a ferry to cross over with the milk. The ferry either started a little too soon or, at times, reached her bank too late, when she brought the milk late, greatly to the annoyance of the *pandit*.

One day, he lost patience and chided her for upsetting his timetable. “Why do you depend on that horrid boat to take you across? Do you not know that, if you just repeat the name of Rama, you can walk across without coming to harm? Rama will see that you do not get drowned.” Next day, the maid repeated Rama’s name and just walked across. Yes, her faith gave her the strength. She did not tarry for the ferry. The *pandit* was flabbergasted, for he did not believe that it could ever be possible for repetition of Rama’s name to work this miracle.

Devotees must ignore their identity and separateness and merge with the ideal; what individually has the servant got? He has nothing; no, not even a trace. The Master is All.

Dealing with both Being and Awareness is divine Bliss

If you stare at the sun for a second and then turn your eye to other things around, you will find that there is a dark patch over them, and you cannot recognise them. Similarly, once you get a vision of God, who is more effulgent than a thousand suns, you can no longer recognise the multiplicity called nature (*prakriti*). The world is black, it is blocked; indeed, you can no longer recognise or deal with variety once you have had a vision of the basic Unity.

Take the screen in the cinema theatre. When the film is on, you do not see the screen, you see only the play. When the show is over, you see just a screen, a screen that has no message —neither voice nor name nor form nor colour nor creed. That is Brahman. The entire rope gives the appearance of a snake in the dark; here, the entire screen was lost in this picture. Brahman is Truth (*Sathyam*); the Universe is Brahman. That is Being (*Sat*); this is Awareness (*Chit*). Knowing this and dealing with both is Bliss (*Anandam*).

I was asked once how anyone can accept the two seemingly opposite statements: “Brahman is truth, the world is false (*Brahma sathyam jagannmithya*)” and “The world is full of Vishnu (*Sarvam Vishnumayam jagath*).”

This was My reply: The powers of people are limited by their experience and knowledge. A person is just a part (*pinda*), while the Lord is Whole (*Anda*), the Force pervading the entire Universe. The *Anda-Pinda Lingam* symbolises this body-limb relationship, the whole-part aspect of God (*Madhava*) and humanity.

The *Sadha-Sivalingam* represents the ever-auspicious *Atma*, which is beyond all dual aspects and concepts,

immanent in all beings and everywhere. It is not negated by time; it is *sadha* (always) and *sivam* (beneficial and auspicious).

A real guru must be full of bliss

The *Jnanalingam* is the sign of the attainment of spiritual wisdom (*jnana*), when the last vestige of the delusion of “I” is wiped off. Even the feeling “I know” is gone. Then you are the *Atma*, pure and whole, entire and enduring, and your condition is best represented by the symbol of the *Atmalinga*.

You have, each one of you, the tremendous power (*sakthi*) of the Infinite Consciousness (*Atma*) in you. Some are able to draw upon it; others just know it is there; others are unaware of the methods of tapping it or even of its existence. It all comes in time, through steady spiritual practice. The child, in time, grows into the father; the father becomes the grandfather, who in turn ages into a great grandfather. The spiritual aspirant rises step by step toward the highest bliss by adhering to the instructions of the guru.

You should tell the guru, “If you can help me, do so. If you cannot, do not give false hopes and mislead me. Confess your immaturity. I can then seek some other guide. Do not pretend to be a teacher when you are not even a good student.”

Ply the guru with questions, examine the guru’s daily conduct, clear your doubts; then cultivate faith in the guru you have won. Many gurus are guided by their students and followers and warned by their disciples not to state certain views in public. These gurus act according to the dictates of people in power or people with money. A real guru must be like *Sadha-SivaLingam*, full of Bliss welling up from the consciousness of Divinity.

Do not harm your inner nature

As long as you are in ignorance, as long as you are untrained and lacking in knowledge, you cannot taste the Bliss; you cannot attain it. You are still bound by the three-corded rope: the black cord of inertia (*thamas*), the red cord of passion (*rajas*), and the white cord of equanimity (*sathwa*). Deny that you are bound, and the rope falls away. Hence, regulate your life in such a way that you do not harm your inner nature. That is to say, live in constant contemplation of your kinship with others and with the universe. Do good to others, treat all nature kindly, speak softly and sweetly, and become a child devoid of envy, hate, and greed. When your ego crosses the threshold of your family or group and takes kindly to those beyond, you have taken the first step to cross the threshold of illusion.

Whoever has tasted that joy will thenceforward crave that only. How can the individual soul stoop to something less? How can the Truth be grasped when you are steeped in falsehood? How can a fish experience the sky? How can nectar and poison, day and night, God and the devil be together?

Uddhava, when he came among the cowherd maids (*gopis*), discovered that Krishna was roaming in “their hearts” without a moment’s respite. They were seen scanning the dust on the roads to discover a footprint of Krishna, so that they could fall down and worship it! Radha was the greatest devotee of all; she saw all footprints as Krishna’s own, including even hers! Really, is there anyone who is not He? Any form that is not His? Any name that does not connote Him?

Uddhava exclaimed, “I have no need of Narayana; I am content with this vision of the glory of the devotee.”

For the sorrow and fear of today, the same prescription also holds: See Him of the Form of Siva in all; then all will yield joy and peace. That is the truth. The rest is false. Yama (God of Death) comes with delusion. Siva is seen; then Light dawns.

Love will destroy the roots of ego

Egotism is delusion (*maya*). How can you get rid of it? The field looks a dry waste, with no sign of green, and you feel proud that you have pulled up all the grass by the roots. When the showers come down, they sprout again. Love (*prema*) will destroy the roots of the ego. Plant love, protect it, foster it, and enjoy its fruits. Remove envy, hate, and greed from your heart, for they will smother the seedlings of love.

Have faith; faith will grant you all that you need. How can you build your faith on a mound of sand? The deeper you dig the sandy soil, the greater the risk of the sides slipping down and burying your faith in doubt and denial. Listen to the call from within; believe that it is the call from Mathura (Krishna's birthplace).

The Lord too condescends to grant you the chance to develop faith. Why did Krishna raise the Govardhana Hill and keep it aloft? It was to announce His truth and His nature, to instill faith and to implant courage. It is just a sign, as is each one of My acts. There is no task that I cannot accomplish, remember, no weight that I cannot lift. You have faith in Rama and Krishna because of the books that describe a part of their achievements and the experience of the spiritual aspirants who attempted to delve into their mystery. You have not demanded direct proofs of Divinity from either Rama or Krishna, have you? Have faith first, and then you will get proof enough. Take up the discipline of the recital of the Name.

Why drag out your existence as a mere consumer of food, as a moving burden encumbering the earth? Eat, but transform food into good deeds, good thoughts, and sweet speech; move, but do not cause pain to others or add to their misery. Do not condemn yourselves as weak, sinful, conceited, wicked, outlawed, mean, etc. When you so condemn yourself, remember you are actually condemning Me, who is your Inner Self. Live so that with every breath and step you come nearer and nearer to Me.

Prasanthi Nilayam, 1961-10-22

Fasting (*upavasa*) means that all your thoughts and deeds and words on those holy days must be about God, that you should spend the day "near" Him, "in" Him, "for" Him. It means that eating, sleeping, and other bodily avocations have to take a secondary role, and meditation and repetition of God's Name have to take the main role.

Sathya Sai Baba