

39. The Turn Of The Key

The task now is to install *dharma* in every heart, to shed light on every road, through the revival of *Vedanta*. The world is like a famished person waiting for a feast. It is like the parched land waiting for rain. I have seen and felt the atmosphere of this land surcharged with discontent and dishonesty; I have seen it from Kanyakumari to the Himalayas. That is why thousands like you seek sacred sight, touch, and talk (*darshan*, *sparshan*, and *sam-bhasana*). I am only surprised that thousands are denying themselves the chance.

People are daily growing more and more greedy to know more about the lives of others, more extrovert, in fact. People want to escape from themselves by interesting themselves in others. They do not want to worry about the details of their own life or the problems of their own rehabilitation.

Of what benefit is all this burden of information that you seek to carry in your head, this knowledge of the various regions of the world, without a knowledge of the region of your own self, the centre of all the interest that you evince? It is no good wandering all over the world, contacting people of various races and getting engrossed with earning and spending without being able to know your own identity!

To win bliss, spiritual discipline with detachment is essential

The tree of the human body finds its fruition when it yields love (*prema*). That sweet gift is the reason it grew and had to be fostered. It drew its substance from the earth and the sun. What does it give in return for the gifts it got from both of these as well as from the human community? Love. The fruit is sweet, but the rind can afford to be bitter. The rind of anger, malice, envy, and greed has to be peeled off before the fruit is put to use. Use the bitterness in you to preserve and develop the sweetness within yourself.

From the experience of saints and sages, you can realise that the joy got from the external world is infinitesimal when compared with the bliss won through spiritual discipline. To win that bliss, spiritual effort full of detachment is essential. When boring is done to draw water from the earth, the pipe has to be kept free of air so that the water can rise up. If air enters, the water will not rise. So too, be sure that attachment to worldly things does not mar your spiritual efforts. Love will not well up if sensual pleasures and personal pride invade the mind.

As long as life persists, you will be caught up in heights and depths, good and bad, rights and wrongs. Duality is inevitable. It is even necessary.

A hero shines against a background of villains. Prahlada's faith had to be tested against the background of Hiranyakasipu's denials. The Pandavas demonstrated the strength of meekness only when they faced the savagery of the Kauravas. A city has pipes for the drinking water as well as for sewage. A person has a system of arteries as well as veins, for the circulation of pure and impure blood. Both contribute to the health of the individual.

Yoga is often turned into disease (roga)

The fault is this. You know that a thing is improper, but still you continue to do it, curbing your conscience and suppressing the nobler impulses. The world is all set for profit as the quickest means of attaining joy. High profit, quick profit, easy profit. Why, when measuring or counting, you don't start with "one" but say instead "profit". The next one is two, of course, but the idea with which you start is profit and not service!

The problem should not be how to live glamorously so that you make others envy you but how to live gloriously or, better still, how to die gloriously —so gloriously that you are not put to the humiliation of dying again. What do you take with you when you die? Mahamud of Ghazni instructed his Vazir to take his corpse to the burial ground with both his hands raised, so that people should see that he came with empty hands and went with hands as empty as when he came, even though he had plundered the wealth of a hundred cities.

Spiritual effort has to be taken up under the direction of an expert who knows your health and temperament well. Over-enthusiasm and irregularity are both to be avoided. If discrimination plays false, spiritual practice is a snare. A little forgetfulness of the limits of heating may spoil a kiln of bricks, a few extra handfuls of washing soda will ruin a bundle of clothes in the wash, a few extra words with the neighbour regardless of time and a whole potful of rice is over-boiled and wasted. Vigilance, care, circumspection —these are very important for the spiritual aspirant. Yoga is often turned into *roga* (disease) for lack of continuous self-examination.

Attach yourself to the larger Self

A man weeping because he has been bitten by a cobra in his dream can be cured by just being woken up! No doctor is needed. So too, when Arjuna, who was suffering from ignorance (*ajnana*), was given spiritual knowledge (*jnana*), he recovered and did his duty. The pain and the snake will both disappear if the dreamer is awakened. He is only imagining that a snake bit him.

When you invite a blind man for dinner, remember that you have to lay two plates, not one for one guest only, for he will be certainly accompanied by a guide. The blind man is Arjuna, and the guide is good knowledge (*sujnana*). *Sujnana* will lead him aright. Both are in the same person. However, Good knowledge has to take charge and lead.

Turn the key to the right, it is unlocked. Turn to God and righteousness, and the lock opens, the chain falls away. Turn the key to the left, and you become bound, the bolt falls in, the chain holds fast. It is just a question of the point of view —outlook or inlook? Out-query? In-query?

For all this, the prime need is faith. Faith in yourself! You can move mountains in the social level if you conquer your mind in the individual level. Curb your powers and make them run along useful channels; that will result in joy for you and others. To get that faith, know your Truth. To know your Truth, attach yourself to the larger Self, of which you are a part, by constant remembrance of the Name (*namasmarana*).

Dhronachalam, 1963-12-08

To obtain the attitude of surrender, of dedication, you must have faith in God. This world is His play; it is not an empty dream. It has purpose and use. It is the means by which one can discover God. See Him in the beauty, the grandeur, the order, the majesty of nature. These are but shadows of His glory and His splendour.

Adoration of God leads to the knowledge that He is in all. When you experience that there is no Second, that is spiritual wisdom (*jnana*)!

Sathya Sai Baba