

31. How old are you really?

The world is full of sorrow and strife; man tries to avoid these and somehow derive a little joy and peace, in the midst of grief and disappointment. It is like digging a well in a sand heap; the deeper you dig, the faster it caves in. And, the whole process has to be repeated again. The piles of sensual desires overwhelm the aspirant and drag him down into grief. The only means of getting lasting joy is *bhakti*; that is the best among the *yukthis* (the paths dictated by intelligence). That alone gives the *shakti* (the strength needed for acquiring unshakable joy). *Bhakti* can grow only on prepared ground. The method of preparation is given in *the Vedhas*, which speak also of things that have to be avoided. The *Vedhas* lay down the lines of conduct, the method of living, the ideals to be followed. You may not all be able to study the *Vedhas* and grasp the meaning. But those who have studied and who are following the teachings and who are overcome by the joy of that experience are here to tell you, in terms that you can understand.

Today, for example, we had the Shaastri, who spoke of the four *Purusharthas* (goals of human life), as mentioned in the Bhagavadh Geetha, which itself is the essence of the *Upanishads*, the latter part of the *Vedhas* called *Vedhaantha*. Of these goals, the final consummation is *moksha*; that is the very crux of the problem of life. *Moksha* means liberation from bondage to both joy and grief, which are the obverse and reverse of the same coin. *Moksha* is the recognition of the truth; but, though it is so simple, it required the cultivation of *viveka*, *vairagya* and *vichakshana* (discrimination, detachment and ability), to know the Truth and escape from the temptation to hug falsehood. *Viveka* is necessary to decide what is *dharma*--the very first of the *Purusharthas*. Each one must decide for himself the *dharma* he must choose for his uplift; this required *viveka*, the recognition of the permanently beneficial source of pure and lasting joy.

Walk with the help of *Bhakti* and *Karma*

Kurukshetra must be made a *Dharmakshetra*. Kurukshetra is the field where brothers fought over a handful of earth; but, it must be made a field for the uplift of man through the practice of *dharma*. It is for the sake of *jnaana* that *dharma* has been laid down. *Bhakti* and karma are the two feet and the head is *jnaana*; walk on with the help of these two.

Now, about *vairagya*. When you go to a temple you break a coconut before the idol. Now, if you try to break the nut as it has fallen from the tree, will it break? No; the fibrous cover has to be removed, and the shell exposed. The fibre protects the shell and prevents the blow from affecting the shell. *Moksha* (liberation) results from the breaking of the mind with all its vagaries and wishes. You have to break your mind but, how can you do it, when the fibrous armour of sensual desires encompasses it? Remove them and dedicate the mind to God and smash it in His presence. That moment, you are free.

The toughest fibre is anger, it is the stickiest dirt. When you get angry, you forget mother, father and teacher; you descend to the lowest depths. You lose all discrimination in the excitement; even Hanumantha set fire to the whole of Lanka when he was incensed by the demons who set fire to the tip of his tail; he lost sight of the fact that Seetha was in the Ashokavana. It was only when he had exulted in achievement for a little while that he remembered it and then he started condemning himself for his anger.

Feel an inseparable unity with the Lord

Another fatal weakness is *dambha* (conceit, egoism, pride), the desire to be talked about, to be praised; people take delight in tom-tomming their achievements and capacities. This makes them ludicrous and pitiable. They want that their names and deeds should appear in the daily papers in big bold letters, as big as My head of hair! But it is not in the newspapers that you should strive to get attention. Earn status in the realm of God; earn fame in the company of the good and the godly, progress in humility, in reverence of elders and parents. If you are for ever in the primary class poring over A B C and D, how can you make out the meaning of what these Pandiths say? These are all subjects beyond the reach of the senses and you must gamer them and cherish them in your minds. Practise them and live in joy.

When the discourses are on here, I find many running about with their beds and reserving space for spreading them. When you go to a temple, you see the idol within but your thoughts are with your footwear that you had to keep outside the outer gate. These are matters that reveal the concentration that you are capable of. Every little point has to be taken care of, lest the benefit of *saadhana* be lost. You cannot get liberation by merely coming here; you cannot get it even by *dharshana*, *sprashana* and *sambhashana* (seeing, touching and conversing). You will have to follow the instructions, the Aajna (the order) and the directions:

You will have to follow the path of Raadha, Meera, Gouranga and Thukaaraam. You must feel an inseparable affinity with the Lord, as inseparable as the wave and the sea. You are really of the same essence, the same taste, the same quality as the sea, though you have the name and form of the wave. The Lord is the *Saguna* aspect (Form with attributes) of the *Paramaathma*, that is the Universe. Butter, when in the milk, is immanent in it, has no separate name~ and form; but, take it out and it has a name and form which makes it distinct from mille Ghee too when liquid has no particular form, but when it hardens, it has a form. So too *Maadhava-thathwam* (Divine state) when it assumes a form, is *Maanava* (Man).

Virtue is the life-breath

When you are immersed in yourself, you are happiest. The child in the womb is in *Soham* (*I am He*); but when it is born in the world, it starts the question, *Koham* (*Who am I?*). For it forgot its truth; it identifies itself with the body and the senses. Until it becomes a *jnaani* (person of realisation), it will never regain in *Soham* knowledge.

Maanava can become *Maadhava* by engaging himself in *Maadhava karma* (action dedicated to God); he can then discover his *Naaraayana thathwam* (Divine state). What is the use of doing only *maanava karma* (human action) or even *dhaanava karma* (demonaic action) and claiming that man is divine? Virtue is the life-breath; character is the backbone. Without that, no meritorious act will fructify. A characterless man is like a pot with many holes, useless for carrying water, or storing it. Renounce and win peace; have and win troubles.

There was a man living in a ramshackle hut when a huge big storm came along threatening to scatter it to the far comers, he sat inside and prayed to *Vaayudheva* (wind god). "O Vaayu! Abate thy fury," but the storm raged wild and furious. He prayed to Hanumaan, the son of the wind god Vaayu. "O Hanumaan, soften the fury of your father and save this poor fellow's shelter," and the storm blew with even more ferocity. Then he prayed to Raama to command His servant, Hanumaan, to persuade the wind god to reduce His overpowering sweep. He found that too had no effect. So, he came out of the hut and coolly said,

"Let it be pulled asunder and lifted by the' storm out of sight. I do not care." Thus, he got his peace of mind back.

The eagle is pestered by crows so long as it has a fish in its beak. They swish past that so they could steal the fish out of its mouth. They pursue the bird wherever it sits for a little rest. At last, it gives up the attachment to the fish and drops it from its beak; the crows fly behind it and leave the eagle free. So leave off sense pleasures and the crows of pride, envy, malice, and hatred will fly away, for they want only carrion.

Practise renunciation from now on

The snake moves in curves, not in a straight line; man too when he is following the senses has to move in a crooked path. He has greater poison in him than the snake; his venom is to be found in his eyes, his tongue, his hands, his mind, his heart, his thoughts---whereas the cobra has it only in its fangs. The cobra raises its hood and sways in joy when it hears music; so too man when he realises the stage of *niruvikalpa--steady* unchanging establishment in the Ultimate Reality---dances in heavenly bliss.

Practise renunciation from now on, that you may set out on the journey when the call comes, you don't know when. Or at that moment, you will be in tears, when you think of the house you have built, the property you have accumulated, the fame you have amassed, the rifles you have won. Know that all this is for the fleeting moment: develop attachment for the Lord, who will be with you wherever you go. Only the years that you have lived with the Lord have to be counted as life; the rest are all out of count. An old grandfather of seventy was asked by his seven-year old grandchild, "Grandpa! How old are you?" and the old man replied, "Two!" The child was struck with wonder and looked a picture of doubt. The old man replied, "I have spent only the last two years in the company of the Lord; until then I was plunged in the marshland of pleasure seeking."

Realise the Indweller in the body

Bhrigu asked *Varuna* what the Lord does and *Varuna* (rain god) replied, Thapas (penance). For, he explained, "He is in all the five kashas (sheaths)--the *Annamaya*, the *Praanamaya*, the *Manomaya*, the *Vijnaanamaya* and the *Aanandhamaya koshas* (sheaths of material, vital energy, mind, knowledge and bliss). He digests the food in the body and the food in the mind. He is ever active, creating, fostering and transforming. You must realise the *dhehi* (the Indweller), in the *dheha* (body) and the *Naami* (person designated) by the *Naama* (name). There was a wife who got bangles of gold made when she became a widow-, for, she argued, her husband had now become indestructible like gold, whereas he was, while alive, breakable, like the glass bangles she wore then. He had merged in the *Akshara Brahman* (Indestructible Supreme Reality).

Develop prema (divine love) towards the Lord, the *Parama-prema* (Supreme divine love) of which He is the embodiment. Never give room for doubts and hesitations, for questions to test the Lord's *Prema*. "My troubles have not ended; why? Why is it that He did not speak to me? How is it I did not get a room for staying here? Why did he not call me?" you whine! Do not think that I do not care for you or that I do not know you. I may not talk to you, but do not be under the impression that. I have no prema. As a matter of fact, it is to give you the chance of *dharshan* that I move along the verandah from this room to that. Whatever I do, it is for you, not for Me. For, what is it that can be called Mine? Only you.

Hold fast to your chosen deity

So, do not get shaken in mind; do not allow faith to decline. That will only add to the grief you already suffer from. Hold fast--that must be your vow. Whoever is your *Ishta dhevatha* (the chosen deity)--Vishnu or Raama or Shiva or Venkateshwara--hold fast to Him. Do not lose the contact and the company; for, it is only when the coal is in contact with the live embers that it can also become live ember. Cultivate nearness to Me in the heart and you will be rewarded. Then you too will acquire a fraction of the Supreme *Prema*. *This is the* great chance. This chance will not come your way again, beware of that. If you cannot, if you do not, cross the sea of grief now, taking hold of this chance, when again can you get such a chance? Really you are the fortunate few-, out of millions and millions of people you have come, though no one specially invited you to be present here. That is what I call the mark of destiny.

Now, engage yourself in spiritual discipline, spiritual thoughts, spiritual company. Let the past go its way. At least from now on, seek to save yourself Never yield to doubt or unsteadiness. That is a sign of ignorance. Have faith in any one Name and the Form indicated by that name. If you revere Shiva and hate Vishnu, the plus and the minus cancel out and the net result is zero. I will not tolerate the slightest hatred of any Name or Form. The wife has to revere the husband, but that does not mean that she has to hate his parents or brothers or sisters.

You can never attain the Lord through hatred of one or more of His many Forms and Names. If you throw contempt at the God that another reveres, the contempt falls on your own God. Avoid factions, quarrelling, hating, scorning, fault-finding; they recoil on you. You find fault in others because you have faults in you. Remember every one is a pilgrim towards the same goal; some travel by one road, some by another. Raavana, Sisupaala, Danthavakra---they too reached the feet of the Lord, by inviting Him to end their earthly careers.

Seek the good in others

Learn to speak little and to speak soft. That will reduce the chances of getting angry. Seek the good in others and the evil in yourself. When I am defamed, I never get incensed, for it is only the tree full of edible fruits that is attacked with sticks and stones. Moreover, without scorn and contempt, greatness will not shine and Spread. It has always been so, whenever *Avathaars* have come. When you hear the word, Rasala mango, you conceive of a sweet juicy fruit; but, when you have the fruit actually in hand, you are pestered by doubts whether it is really Rasala, whether it will taste sweet or sour. But, I never care for praise or blame; I just discard both. I am ever intent on the task for which I have come, the laying down of *Sathya maarga* (path of truth), of Dharma and the spread of the knowledge and practice of Dharma.

The Prashaanthi Vidhwanmahaasabha is just one of the instruments for this task: the task of making the *Kali yuga* (present Iron age), a *Kritha yuga* (past Golden age). Stage by stage as the task unfolds, the sound of detractors will also cease; when fully fried, the *pappad* will make no further noise. Only the frying *pappad* makes noise. You too should avoid contact with the unfried minds; do not develop either hatred or envy. Have love and charity towards all.

Know what exactly is your duty

This aged Shaasthry is a sweet fruit, ripe with age and experience; he knows and has actual experience of the life laid down in the Geetha. When I asked him to share his wisdom with the world, he was indeed happy beyond words. He is exulting over the opportunity he has got to

partake in the revival of *Vedhic* scholarship and in the re-establishment of Dharma. He knows and I know, and no one else knows, the intensity of his joy at the chance he now has secured. He has but one desire in him now, a very sacred desire: to see the era of *Dharma* established on earth through My *Sankalpa* (Will). What a rare relationship is this, between him and Me! It is *Sanaathana Sambandha* (eternal relationship); hence he got Me.

Some things happened today to make Me speak in this strain and I wanted all of you to know what exactly is your duty to yourself and to others. There are some men who are like moths, who must bore through whatever they come across, silk or cotton or wool; there are others who are like bees, who seek only honey. The lotus attracts bees from afar, but the frogs that skip around it on the lake know nought of its beauty or fragrance.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 10-10-1964