

### 35. Transmute every minute

THE path of spiritual discipline which is most beneficial to man is laid down in a simple and sweet manner in the great scriptures of ancient India. They explain through example and precept the Divine Principle inherent in the Universe, and inspire mankind to gaze with awe and reverence at the handiwork of God and His inscrutable, *leda* (divine miracles). They prompt man to march along the pilgrim road of sacrifice, in the happy company of sages so that, before the body falls, the Vision of the Eternal can be gained and enshrined in the heart for ever.

The narratives and descriptions which these books contain purify the *ichchaa shakthi* (the urge to desire) latent in man, and sanctify the *kriyaa shakthi* (the urge to act), and finally invigorate and clarify the *jnaana shakthi* (the urge to know). By this process, man attains *chiththa suddhi* (the purification of the consciousness). It is only in the consciousness that is so transformed that the *Aathma* can be reflected and understood. So, every religion has, as its technique, this transformation, this cleansing process. Every religious classic has this as its aim.

#### Uttering *dharma* without practising it is hypocrisy

The Mahaabhaaratha, for example, is basically the story of the five vital airs of man (the *Pancha-praanas*) overcoming the hundred obstacles in the path of upward progress; the eldest of the five Paandava brothers is Dharmaraaja (Morality, Righteousness); he is ably supported by Bheema (physical strength devoted to divine service and charged with devotion), Arjuna (steady pure faith in God) and Nakula and Sahaadheva, who represent steadfastness and equanimity. When these Five are exiled, the Hasthinaapuram (body) is inundated with *Adharma* (unrighteousness). In the Mahaabhaaratha, the need for practising *Dharma* is illustrated with the help of a series of critical situations and dilemmas, which, in one form or other, harass man.

The *Upanishaths* exhort man: "*Sathyam vadha; Dharmam chara*" (Utter Truth; pursue *Dharma*). But man is content with uttering *Dharma*, and the *vadha* (killing) of Truth! Mere utterance without the intention or effort to practise what is uttered is hypocrisy, which ruins the character and degrades the personality. The deer in a forest met in a conference and passed a resolution defying hounds and calling upon all deer to stand firm and beat back their attacks. But, even when they were acclaiming the resolution, the hounds bayed and they fled, mover, seconder, supporters---all. No one stayed at the place where the conference was held!

The sheep bleat, "May, May, May"---a sound which in *Samskrith* means, "Mine, Mine, Mine." So, they suffer the consequences of this attachment to I and Mine! This is the result of the fundamental illusion, which hides the fact of temporariness and imposes an artificial sense of permanence on all objects and objective pleasures. There was a monk near Haridhwar who had given up for years both hearth and home and was living on alms; he used to heap all the food he collected on a flat rock that jugged out of the Ganga and used it as a plate from which he took his meal.

#### Intellectual feats do not win mental peace

One day, the monk came to his rock and found another monk sitting there, taking food! He got enraged at this trespass on his 'property'. Then the new-comer said, "Alas! you have renounced all sense of 'I and mine'; you have shaved your head so that you may not be recognised by erstwhile companions; you yearn to be free from all bonds; but, you have tied yourself up this rock! How can you swim across this Sea of *Samsaara* (worldly life of repeated cycles of birth

and death) with this rock round your neck? You are leading a life of hypocrisy." That opened his eyes to the error.

Gopichand's mother encouraged him to tread the path of renunciation and fortitude as a preliminary to self-realisation; she tested his accomplishment, after he had been for some years with the sage *Bhartruhari*: one night, she put on a male dress and laid herself in the place where her son used to sleep. Gopichand grumbled and asked the stranger to find some other place, as that bit of space was 'his.' When she tried to test *Bhartruhari* in the same manner, the response of that sage was only to remove himself to a distance. He uttered no word. So, she knew that her son had a long, long way to go.

The wise will not give place in their hearts to covetousness and possessiveness. They know that there is a *kshethrajna* who is the motivator of this *kshethra*---a knower-of-the-field who is the master of this 'field.' Vyaasa, who collated the *Vedhas*, composed the aphorisms that demarcate the Divine Principle (the *Brahmasuuthras*) and wrote the *Mahaabhaaratha* reputed to be the fifth *Vedha*, could still not win mental peace. Those were but intellectual feats, flights of poetry and philosophy, but not floweres that blossomed from authentic experience. At last through the prompting of Naaradha, who taught and practised *Bhakthi-maarga* (the Path of Devotion) he immersed himself in the contemplation and description of the grandeur and glory of Godhead. The *Bhaagavatha* was the result of this yearning of Vyaasa.

#### **Analyse your habits on the touchstone of morality**

The *Bhaagavatha* has given rise to many who call themselves as Bhaagavathars, since they expound the text, but the Divine thrill that Naaradha and Vyaasa felt is not shared by them in the slightest degree, because they do not expound from experience. They proclaim that God is the indweller and motivator in all the beings, while all the while planning and scheming for profit! Stop a while and examine your habits and activities; analyse them, evaluate them on the touchstone of morality, truth, love and fortitude. Give up all that drags you down into evil, strengthen all that lifts you and takes you nearer to Me. Do not be disheartened that you have to suffer the consequences of what you have done.

Last night, you saw Dhruva being blessed by the Lord, in the drama enacted by the little boys of the *Vedhashaasthra Paathashaala* (school where the scriptural texts and classics are taught). The harsh words uttered by his step-mother were the immediate provocation for the boy retiring into the forest for austerities, in order to win from the Lord the favour of his father's love! But, when the Lord did actually manifest Himself before him, the boy had no resentment or desire left in him; so, instead of asking from Him the geegaws that he had once coveted, the boy asked for the Bliss of Merger with the Lord Himself)The *Raajasik* (influenced by passions) and *Kshathriya* spirit (the warrior eager for martial victory) of vengeance and competition with his step-brother had left his mind, during the austerities! But the Lord reminded him of his original intention and bade him go to his kingdom and please his mother, before he rested as the Pole Star in the sky! (Dhruva, though quite a lad, won the favour of the Lord, who raised him to the position of Pole Star). Dhruva engaged himself, though a boy, in *saadhana* that drew the Lord near him.

#### **One has to go through the crucible of joy and grief**

Ideals must become higher and grander. Desires must become more and more selfless and sublime. Attachment must be transmuted into nobler and subtler emotions. The story will be gripping only when there is steady development towards the denouement. That is why one passes

through the crucible of joy and grief and emerges all the purer and stronger for the experience. When a child's growth is stunted, it causes grief, when he starts to grow normally it causes joy; when the growth is abnormal, it causes grief again. The swing of the pendulum makes life interesting; it is a gymnasium, a school.

One has to retire behind the curtain, sooner or later; so, while on the stage, win the esteem of the Director, by playing your role to His satisfaction, trying not to spoil His play, by your lisping or slipping words. Be like the tortoise, which can live in water or land. That is to say, cultivate the inner calm that helps you to be with the thought of God, whether you are amidst men or alone. *Ekaantha* (solitude) is when you are not aware of the crowd around you. It is what you create out of the solitude of your own mind. Here, for example, where you are undisturbed by others, each of you has perfect *Ekaantha!*

### ***Nagrasankeerthana is Bhaagawatha in practice***

This is the practice I want to teach you. And, then there is another. That is the practice of *Nagara sankeerthana* (going round the streets in the early hours, singing devotional songs) in your villages. The benefits that accrue from this are too many to be recounted now, within the time available. In short, it is *Bhaagavatha* in practice. When the senses of man are yet dormant after the night's sleep experience, you move out along the quiet streets, sharpening the intellects of the listeners and sanctifying the atmosphere by the recitation of the glories of God. It is an invaluable restorative to both body and mind, for yourselves and others. Every song is a sword that cuts the knots of laziness. It is a fine piece of social service to remind all of their duty to the Almighty who watches over them and who gave them the gift of a new day.

Laziness is the bane of modern civilization; people want rest, they complain of overwork, they talk of being tired. I am showing you by My example how you must fill every moment with useful beneficial activity. You talk among yourselves, "O, Swaami is having his rest-hour; Swaami is sleeping." But I have never craved for a minute's rest or sleep or relief. Shall I tell you at what time I feel restful, relieved, content? When I know that you are all earning supreme bliss through detachment and spiritual discipline, not until then.

I am ever engaged in some activity or other for your benefit. Things that I could get one, I do not entrust to others; I do them myself, so that they may learn self-reliance and get experience thereby. I have always your progress, your comfort, your happiness in mind. You can note it in the slightest act of mine. I do all work pertaining to me. I open all letters addressed to Me and they are legion.

### **Those who lead must themselves follow**

You see Me getting up from this chair and moving back-stage, now and then. Let me reveal to you that this is not due to any desire to avoid listening to the speeches of the distinguished persons who address you or to my getting tired or the need to have a sip of water. It is only to give you a chance to change your postures, to relax your limbs and adjust them for another hour or so of intent listening. If I am before you, I know you do not feel like doing these and I know how many of you are putting up with long hours of sitting taut in the same position, in this closely packed gathering.

There is none to question Me if I do not act; there is nothing I would lose if I do not engage in activity. Nor have I any great urge to be acting. But, yet, you see Me very active. The reason is I must be doing something all the time, for your sake, as an example, as an inspiration, as a piece

of training. Those who are leading must themselves follow; those who command must themselves carry out what they expect others to do. I am engaged in activity so that you may learn to transmute every minute into a golden chance to ennoble yourselves into Godhead.

*Prashaanthi Nilayam, 24-9-1968*