

14. Your image in His eye

MAN preens himself that he knows everything; but when asked about himself he hangs down his head in shame. Man knows the news of every land but he is ignorant of the nuisance that he himself is to himself and others. He is moving in darkness, but, yearning for *aanandha* (bliss). He does not know the means of securing *aanandha* prayer, *seva* (selfless service), study of spiritual texts, meditation, silence. He has no faith that he is *aanandha* and that *aanandha* is his own nature. He is blown off by calamity; for he has no strength to withstand the blow. Faith in the God within is the toughest shield against the thrusts of fate. Nests laboriously built by birds are torn away by storms; the fragrant petals of flowers are felled by rain. Defeat and victory are the obverse and reverse of the same coin; when you welcome one, you have willy-nilly to welcome the other too. Forbearance, compassion and incorruptible virtue are the three pillars of a happy life. Only such a life can be called civilised; the rest is barbarian existence.

This meeting began with a Prayer. Good. But, prayer for some benefit or gain should not be addressed to God. For, it means that God waits until He is asked! Surrender to Him; He will deal with you as He feels best and it would be the best for you. God does not dole out Grace in proportion to the praise He receives! When you pray for a thing from God, you run the risk of condemning Him, if for some reason the prayer is not answered the way you wanted it to be, or as quickly as you wanted it to be. This contingency arises because you feel that God is an outsider, staying in some heaven, or holy spot, far away from you. God is in you, God is in every word of yours, every deed and thought. Speak, do and think as befits Him. Do the duty that He has allotted to the best of your ability, and to the satisfaction of your conscience. That is the most rewarding *puuja* (ritualistic worship).

Inner cleanliness is Godliness

When you stand before another, his image is in your eye, and your image is in his; haven't you observed this? You are in me, I am in you, that is the truth this phenomenon proclaims. When you have faith in this, and when you cultivate love, humility, reverence for life, and tolerance, you are on the right path. When you are not on this path, that is to say, when you are travelling left, you are certainly left out, when it is a question of sharing Divine Grace.

The body is the temple of God, isn't it? Well. What does the priest do in the temple every day? First, he cleans the utensils and sacred vessels in the shrine. He sweeps the room and washes the altar. The senses are the utensils for the *puuja* of the God within; they have to be cleaned and assiduously kept free from dirt. Inner cleanliness is Godliness. That is possible only through sense-control, and mind-control; or what amounts to the same *saadhana*, dedication of all desires and activities to God. There are various habits which can be learnt in order to ensure equanimity. When some one insults you or defames you or ignores you, accept it with a smile; this is the way of the world; it is basically ungrateful, ill-mannered, they are doing me a good turn, my strength is under trial, I should not yield to anger or resentment, tell yourself such invigorating things, and be quiet, with a smile of triumph on your lips. There was a *sanyaasin* (mendicant) once who was roundly abused by a gang of mischievous young men. He said, "Carry on! Enjoy yourselves! I see that you are very happy at the chance. This is exactly what I desire for you." When you do not accept the insult some one casts on you, it goes back to the person who indulged in it first; a registered letter that is not accepted returns to the sender. Do not damage your mental peace, by receiving the letter and reading the contents. Refuse to receive it. You have a chance of

correcting the wrong-doers too; accept it and you join the gang of mischief-makers. So, be warned!

Perform duty as an act of worship

When God is recognised as dwelling within, every one will perform his duty. as an act of worship. Children have to revere their parents, that is their duty. Parents have to bring up their children as bright and willing citizens capable of earning their own food and helping others in distress; if they shirk this duty, they have failed in their worship. They should not also spoil them by allowing them too much of freedom and catering to their fancies. I know many parents who dote on their children,

and admire them when they learn the bad habits of gambling or drinking! They do not curb them, when they swagger about in the bazaars, teasing and bullying those who pass by. They do not instil into the young minds the attitude of reverence towards property belonging to others. As a consequence, their children land themselves in trouble, and then, the parents repent and curse themselves for their unpardonable foolishness.

Lean on your own strength and skill

There is also another responsibility that devolves upon the parent. He must live the householder's life, as laid down in the *Dharma Shaasthras* (Scriptures on Righteousness), so that a picture of a pure happy life may be imprinted on the young mind. If the parent is a drunkard; a gambler, and a cheat, no amount of textbook ethics can cure the son. I like children and the young innocents. I will not allow them to be blamed. The fault lies wholly on the shoulders of the elders, the parents the leaders who shape the norms which they imbibe. Dhritaraashtra, the blind father, encouraged his hundred sons in their nefarious plots to bring about the destruction of the five Paandava cousins and thus paved the way for their own total annihilation. He did not teach them by precept and example, the lessons of love, sacrifice and contentment.

Do not lean upon others; lean on your own strength and skill. Live on your own earnings, your own resources. Self-reliance is the best food for growing young men. It is best to live with honour for just a day than with dishonour for many decades; better a short lived hamsa (swan) than a century-lived crow. The *hamsa* is adored by all; the crow is detested and stoned off. Do not crave for the property of others or for things that can be got by trickery or dishonourable means. Earn by the sweat of your brow, then, you can be proud and happy, when you spend it.

Life is a mosaic of pleasure and pain

Then again, I will advise children not to read horror comics, books on crime and sex, and novels of vice and wickedness. Avoid also films, for though they may be advertised as very educative and inspiring, the producers, in their greed for profits, smuggle in low vulgar debasing scenes in order to please raw untrained minds. Don't allow the virus of vice to infect your brains. If that happens you descend to levels worse than the beasts. Do not imagine that it will be possible for you to live happily, without any anxiety or bother. Do not build castles in the air, and hope to live in them. Life is a mosaic of pleasure and pain; grief is an interval between two moments of joy, peace is the interlude between two wars. You have no rose, without a thorn; the diligent picker will avoid the pricks, and gather the flower. There is no bee without the sting; cleverness consists in gathering the honey nevertheless. Troubles and travail will haunt you, but you must not allow them to deflect you from the path of duty and dedication. When you go back after some years here to your villages, seek out the Sathya Sai Seva Samithi or *Bhajana Mandali*, in

the place; join that *Sathsang* (good company). Share the *Aanandha* (bliss) of the *seva* (voluntary service) that they do---visit the patients in the hospitals, read nice story books sitting by the side of the patients in the beds, write letters for them, and generally be kind and friendly to them in their loneliness and pain. Go to the slum areas, move like lighted lamps full of love and sympathy, and help the people there to get things done which will improve their health, add to their income, and advance their education. When the sugar of Divine thoughts is added to the routine tasteless water of daily life, it becomes *sherbet*, and delightful to drink. So, do so yourself and help others to do so.

Man is the image of God; when you injure His image, when you discard him, or dishonour him, or keep him at arm's length, how can God confer Grace on you? "Mine is mine, yours in yours"--if you declare, God too will keep you beyond the reach of His love. Annie Besant said once that more than man seeking God, it is truer to say that God is ever seeking man, a man who loves and serves His Children, and treats them as endearingly as He does.

Look out for chances to serve others

Many are dispirited at their poverty, or misfortune; they hang their heads and fold their arms, and blame God for their plight. It is like the magnet and the piece of iron. The iron weeps that the magnet does not draw it. "I have no legs to walk, no wings to fly, no muscles to crawl or creep! How can I reach the magnet?" it wails. The magnet replies, "you are encrusted with rust, dust, and layers of mud; get rid of them and automatically, without any other ado, you can contact me and be with me for ever." It is sheer audacity to say, with all the rust and dust on, that God has no power to grant Grace; nor is it a sign of intelligence to say that God has no compassion in Him. Examine yourselves, purify the heart and fill it with love towards all men and God will be with you.

God is not somewhere away from you, some one distinct from you. He is in you, before you, behind you, beckoning, guiding, guarding, warning, prompting, the Inner Voice speaking ever with you. You need not seek Him, He is there ready to respond to the call from the heart. Call on Me and I am always by your side. Prizes were given today only to a few boys; I wish to give prizes to all of you, when next I come. So behave that the Grace is deserved. Look out for chances to serve others, speak soft and sweet, revere your teachers and all elders, study well to the best of your abilities, do not waste a single moment in idle talk or pastimes. That is the message I leave with you today.

The world is a huge house of correction

Dear Children, Embodiments of Purity and Holiness, I am glad I am able to meet you again and spend some time with you. Bhagavantham said that this day is My birthday, being the Monday of the month Kaarthik, the day according to the Hindhu Calendar Celebrations at Puttaparthi and elsewhere are done on the 23rd of November, since that is the date according to English Calendar. But, Bhagavantham said that you must congratulate yourselves on this coincidence.

Four days are said to be days of luck; man must be congratulated if he gets this luck. The first is the day on which brothers and sisters, kith and kin are sitting around and attending a domestic festival showering joy on all. The second is the day on which one gets the chance to feed the hungry, the distressed and the defectives who cannot earn the wherewithal for livelihood. The third is the occasion when one gets the atmosphere and the opportunity to meditate on God. The fourth is the day on which a great person comes to us and instructs and inspires towards the

higher life of the spirit. They feed the mind with *aanandha* (divine bliss) and teach us to overcome the obstacles towards God-realisation. You have today the great good fortune of being in the Divine presence, a gift which is the most precious man can acquire.

Chance circumstances have brought you into this remand home; but, do not get disheartened. The others who consider themselves free are also in jail, for, the world is a huge house of correction. When a prisoner is transferred from one place of confinement to another, say, from Raajamundhry to Waarangal, he will have a police constable on each side of him, isn't? Whenever he moves about, these two will be with him. When he can journey without these two, all alone, then, he is free. All men have two constables ever with them; they are the symbols of his sentence of imprisonment. They are *abhimaan* and *mamakaar*---the egoistic feeling and the pride of possession.

You can ever be free from worries and fears

Man is a prisoner of his senses so long as these two keep him under guard. Man strays away into misery and pain, because he loses the sense of value, and runs after the temporary and the trivial. He ignores the voice of God that warns and guides from within, and pays the penalty for the transgression. Life is to be dedicated not for mere food and drink, or mere catering to the cravings of the senses. It has to be devoted to the attainment of the *aanandha* that God alone can confer. Of course, worries and fears there will always be, along the road that you take from birth to death. But, you can ever be free from both, provided you have as the Giver of Light, the name, Sai Raam. At least from now on, recite the name and dear children, you will have joy and peace. Never care for the obstacles that may come your way; the name will clear the path.

The *Gopees* (milkmaids) of Brindhaavan were chastised and punished by their parents, parents-in-law and even husbands for taking the name of Krishna, but, they had the name printed on their hearts, just like the pictures in the books you read, and they could not remove the Name, just as you would find it impossible to remove the picture from the paper! When you have the Name in your heart and on your tongue, you will never go astray, your hand will be clean, your eyes will be bright, your face will beam with courage and self-confidence. Man has been endowed with *jnaana* (spiritual knowledge), the capacity to distinguish what is good and bad, for himself, for the family into which he is born and for which he is indebted for bringing him up until adulthood when he was a helpless dependent stripling, for the village where he first saw light, for the country which gave him the rich heritage of culture, and **for** humanity of whom he is a valuable, a significant member.

God will never desert His obligation

Every culture has a body of customs and conventions laid down by the sages, to maintain peace and prosperity in the community. They are tested in the crucible of experience, and they are often grouped under the word, *Dharma* (duties). Or, they are known as *neethi* (ethics). To go against them-is to break the rule which binds man to man, and man to God. When you have not grown enough and understood how hard it is to work and earn the fruits of work, it strikes you as easy to take hold of some one else's book or pencil or money and derive satisfaction therefrom. This tendency leads you to trouble, and to this place. Resist that temptation; be bold; tell yourselves that it is wrong, it will disgrace your parents, the reputation of your family, of your village, of your country and its ancient culture. If you feel you must have something to be happy, pray to God; "God! You have the responsibility to keep me healthy, happy, good and intelligent; give me

this thing, which I believe is necessary for my happiness; but, if you think, I am wrong, give me whatever you think best." God will never desert His obligation; He will feed you and foster you.

Once a *sanyaasin* (ascetic) was proceeding to the forest for austerities, so that he may win the Grace of God. He saw a cow being led by a villager; drops of milk were shedding from its udder! He asked the villager, why? The reply was, "She is about to calve; this is the indication; the milk is already flowing so that the calf may have its milk, as soon as it is born." The *sanyaasin* then realised that God will give him, too, wherever he was, the thing most needed for his progress; He knows best, He is all-knowing, He is compassion itself, he felt; so, he turned back and contented himself with prayers and the constant contemplation of God as Providence.

Food got by foul means will injure you

Have patience; do not in your hurry to enjoy cheap joys fall into error and unrighteous deeds. Have faith that God will add unto you all joys that you desire for and deserve. People ask of men for favours; they extend their hands towards others and plead *dhehi* (give). But, *dhehi* also means, "He who dwells in the *dheha* (body), that is to say, God!" So, don't humiliate that *Dhehi* by calling out *dhehi* before others. Ask Him; say *dhehi* to the *Dhehi*; He will respond generously, graciously.

Food got by foul means, clothing procured through falsehood, these will only injure you. Do not think that ease and comfort are the main things in life. Disappointment, disease, distress are the lot of all, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, young and old. They are the common lot of all. Let not your pure, immaculate hearts be rendered dirty by falsehood and wrong. Do not soil your tongue using it for uttering dirty words. Utter the name of God; it acts like a spark which can burn into ash a big hill of cotton! All evil thoughts, and wicked plans and plots will disappear like fog before the Sun when the Name of God is remembered sincerely. As soon as you are back in your villages, join the nearest *Seva Samithi* (service unit) and share in their *seva saadhana* (effort of service) and spend your days in *sathsang* (holy company), so that you become good and useful sons of the land.

God is the refuge of the forlorn. This day, some devotees came to Me and impressed Me to spend some time with them. But, it is your call that I answered. I have spent more than an hour and half with you; but, I am not satisfied. I am sorry a good deal of time was spent in reaching this place; that could well have been spent with you. You are fortunate to keep Me so long with you. Remember the directions given to you, and start the *saadhana* of *Naamasmarana* (spiritual discipline of remembering God's Name) this very moment.

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Of course, you can and do announce, "I surrender my mind, my thoughts, my feelings and imaginings, to God." But your monkey-mind escapes from your hold; how, then, can you capture it and claim it and surrender it to God? What authority do you possess to offer something you are not master of?.

Sri Sathya Sai