

18. Work for peace

CITIES have today become like turbulent seas, whose residents move in tossing boats surrounded by darkness. For these desperate people the spiritual ideal, shining bright, is the only guide to safety. The countryside is fast getting tinted by the culture of the cities and the distress is spreading everywhere. This is the spirit of the times. Entangled in this spirit, man accumulates all types of desires in his mind which, when not fulfilled, he becomes desperate and ends his life in unspeakable distress. Man forgets that his innermost desire, which he should cherish, is the' desire for good and for God. All other desires are mean and meaningless. Man has been endowed with the power of discrimination between the essentially good and the superficially pleasant, but he does not cultivate that faculty and benefit from it.

The Paandava brothers were highly fortunate. The eldest, Dharmaraaja, rose to be the Emperor. The second was the indomitable Bheema, armed with the terrible mace. The third was Arjuna, son of the Lord of the Gods, Indhra. The Lord poured His Grace on Arjuna and deigned to serve him in battle as his charioteer! In spite of all these advantages, they were subjected to the severest tragedies in life. What is 'the lesson that their lives teach? No one can predict what calamity will overtake one and at what time. Everything depends on the Will of Providence; it all happens according to the Divine Plan.

Renunciation alone can grant immortality

Where exactly does God reside? He is everywhere, in all beings. He is termed Omniscient and Omnipresent. Really speaking, He is love, and love pervades everywhere. That is all we need to know. There is no being without a trace of love. Love leads to *aanandha* (Supreme bliss), pure and lasting. Many seek this *aanandha* through their relationships with other individuals, others try to attain it by amassing fame, power and riches and a few attempt to gain it by renunciation of material possessions and the desire for worldly pleasures. Detachment alone can confer *Aanandha*. The *Upanishaths* proclaim that *thyaaga* (sacrifice) alone can grant *Atarithathwa* (Bliss of Immortality). One has to ignore all bonds of kinship and comradeship, give up all attachment and affection and, in the heart thus liberated, install God in all His Glow. This is the only means to earn everlasting, undiminished *aanandha*.

The Yaadhavas of Dhwaaraka were attached to Krishna by bonds of kinship and they were happy and proud of this relationship. But how did they fare in the end? They fought among themselves and were destroyed. The *gopees* (cowherd girls), however, installed Krishna in their hearts. They overcame their little selves and identified themselves with the Lord. So they realised the Goal. Surrender is the secret of spiritual triumph.

Share your joy with others less fortunate

People praise the late Naaraayana Bhat, the founder of the Lok Seva Vrindha complex of educational institutions, later taken over by the Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust. But praise is no substitute for love. Love must prompt enthusiastic fulfillment of the work to which Naaraayana Bhat dedicated his life.

Bhakthi (devotion) is usually taken to mean repetition of the Name, the recitation of psalms and hymns and rituals to propitiate God and win His Mercy. Even meditation on God and His compassion cannot be termed genuine *bhakthi*. All these spiritual *saadhanas* (spiritual practices) have 'a shade of selfishness darkening them. Vyaasa has declared that service to man is the

highest form of worship. Do not offend or harm anyone, that is true adoration of God; for, in truth, the other is you yourself. Awareness of this Truth is *moksha* (liberation). Share your joy, your wealth and your knowledge, with others less fortunate; that is the surest means of earning Divine Grace.

Perform all acts with as much love as you would offer God. In truth, you eat for the satisfaction of the 'I' in you and dress up to please the self-same 'I.' The husband loves his wife for the sake of the 'I' and the wife adores her husband for pleasing her 'I.' And who is this 'I' that is persistently inherent in everyone? It is God Himself "*Ishwarah Sarva Bhuuthaanaam*" (the Lord resides in the heart of every being), says the Geetha. He is the *aathman* (divinity) in every being. He is the *Aathman* in everyone, the *Paramaathman* (Supreme Soul). You, in your ignorance, have hidden It under the twin sheaths of mind and body, and you believe that the mind and body are the real 'you.' But there are three 'yous'---the one you think you are, the one others think you are and the one you really are. You think you are the body, others think you are the mind, while you really are the *Aathman*.

As all are *Aathman*, sparks of the One *Paramaathman*, do not think evil of anyone for that would mean inflicting evil upon yourself. You heard the statement, '*Sarva dheva namaskaarah Keshavam prathigachchathi*' (Homage paid to any God reaches Keshava). I state now, '*Sarva jeeva thiraskaarah Keshavam prathigachchathi*' (The insult you pay to any living being reaches Keshava), for Keshava is the Inner Reality of all. If you cannot serve others, leave them alone; do not deal dis-service.

Feeding the hungry is the urgent *seva*

Now the cry for peace rings from every heart. From the prime minister down to the beggar, all ask for peace and aspire for peace. But peace cannot be purchased from the bazaar, nor can it be manufactured by industrial undertakings. It can be secured by acts and activities charged with love. Holding a cup of salt water in the hand you cannot, by mere slogans, make it potable and sweet.

This is a holy place because you pay sincere attention to the proper development of the children under your care and devote your efforts to transmute them into sublime individuals and worthy sons and daughters of this sacred land. This is the only means by which we can ensure the welfare and prosperity of this country. Politics is powerless; it cannot save us. Machines and machinations cannot rescue us. Only by installing in our hearts the sacred ideals of Indian culture and marching forward towards those goals, can peace be attained.

Naaraayana seva, which is feeding the hungry with reverence and humility, is the *seva* that is urgent today. The cry for food is being heard everywhere, though if each one worked hard, the problem would not arise at all. We talk of stomachs to be filled, but each stomach arrives in the world with two hands. Those hands, if they are kept idle or unskilled, cannot fulfil their assignment of finding the food for the stomach. Work hard---that is the message. And share the gain with others. The harder you work, the greater your gain, the more you can share. Work hard and, more important still, work together with others in loving kinship.

Alike, South Kaanara District, Karnaataka, 25-1-1979

Let God work through you, and there will be no more duty. Let God shine forth. Let God show Himself. Live God, Eat God, Drink God, Breathe God. Realise the Truth, and the other things will take care of themselves.

Sri Sathya Sai