

26. Out of the workshop

THE Universe is the best University for man; Nature is his best teacher. With an observant mind he can learn many lessons from rivers and hills, from birds and beasts, from stars and flowers and from trees. The trees offer cool shade to all who seek it; they do not deny it to anyone on the basis of caste, creed or colour. They offer their fruits to all, irrespective of their social or economic status. Of course, every state is now engaged in planning for prosperity. Prosperity is to be welcomed but that alone is not enough. Prosperity without the will to share it will only breed fear and anxiety.

Human nature is an amalgam of animal, human and divine characteristics. Love, compassion, humility, charity---these are all divine. One has to cultivate these, in order to be at peace, with oneself and others. These spiritual qualities are the real life-savers for man. It is for this reason that *Bhaarathieya* culture places much emphasis on them. They elevate humans into the status of the Divine.

Scholarship does not confer "real education"

These qualities are not the products of scholarship. Mastery of various fields of knowledge about the objective world leads only to the greed for wealth, for luxury, for fame and for the accumulation of authority over others. It urges man to lead a life of uncontrolled licence. Scholarship does not Confer "real education." Virtue and character---these alone reveal the educated person, eager to engage himself in self-less service. Morality has to be practised and not simply be talked about.

The *Gurus* (preceptors) of old taught only from experience; they loved their pupils and sought to correct their faults and failings, in order to make them happy and useful. When the pupils finally left his home the *Guru* exhorted them to follow two *Suuthras* (guidelines) which were as essential for life as the two *nethras* (eyes)---*Sathyam radha, Dharmam chara* (Speak the truth; Walk on the path of righteousness). The *Guru* had the faith that the *shishya* (pupil) would take the advice to heart, for, he himself was the living proof of their value and validity. The *Guru* usually takes great care to remove from the heart of the pupil the weeds of evil habits and tendencies, to implant therein the seeds of love, to insist on *saadhana* (spiritual discipline) for purifying his mind and to render him strong enough to overcome temptations of all kinds.

Sathya (truth) sustains the Cosmos, *dharma* (virtue) protects and promotes the peace of mankind. All activities have to be infused with the ideals of *sathya* and *dharma*. *Dharma* never suffers decline; only the practice of *dharma* declines. So, Divine Incarnation takes place to restore faith in *dharma*, to revitalise the practice of *dharma*, and to demonstrate that the practice of *dharma* confers peace, joy and prosperity. If *dharma* is ignored, it amounts to sacrilege, for *dharma* is God and God is *dharma*.

People see God in a picture, an icon, or a plaster of Paris figurine but God is most manifest in *dharma*. Only those who believe in *dharma* can be called 'the faithful;' those who do not are the genuine atheists, though they indulge in profuse use of the word 'God.' They may spend enormous sums for pilgrimages and for rituals and ceremonies but that will not take them any nearer God. What profit can they earn in the spiritual field, if they adore God and at the same time, insult and injure their fellowmen?

Virtue is the wealth to be won

One has to visualise God in every living being and worship Him through love. Therein lies the supremacy of man. Ownership of enormous wealth is a dangerous burden; authority over many men is a dubious asset. Love is the most precious treasure to be sought after. Virtue is the wealth to be won. Raavana won the Grace of God but as boons from Him, he prayed for paltry, personal, fleeting pleasures, which ultimately led to his ruin and the destruction of the entire Raakshasa (demonic) clan which followed his footsteps. The Kauravas shaped themselves into embodiments of aggressive greed and so were exterminated on the field of battle by their cousins - the Paandavas who were the embodiments of justice and humility.

Faith in the ideal develops, love; love develops peace-and serenity; they lead to God; God confers unshakeable *aanandha* (Supreme bliss). Man seeks, but his efforts reward him with pain, for they are directed towards the accumulation of riches, or of power or fame of any kind. Man must possess a source of detachment which will prevent him from getting entangled beyond escape in the coils of greed, envy and hatred.

Each one of you must be a hero in action

Once you are reinforced by love and compassion and charged with this sense of detachment, from the consequences of duties well done, you can plunge into activity that can defeat the forces of injustice, cruelty and untruth. You must, each one, be a *Karma Veera* (a hero in action). Stand on your own feet; do not imitate others. Do not be a slave to the fickle mind, pursuing the senses. Follow the dictates of your intellect.

You have been in this workshop for one full month. Return to your homes now, full of reverence, humility and the eagerness to serve those who serve others but with no one to do them loving service.

You must have noticed three hands in the wall-clock. When the second hand which is the most active moves 60 paces, the minute hand performs a little jump and advances one bit. When the minute hand moves 60 paces, the hour hand has advanced a twelfth of the circumference. All the activity of the two other hands is to serve the hour hand which progresses silently and steadily. The second hand represents the body which has to be active and alert. Its round of activity is for the purpose of serving the minute hand, the heart. When the heart fulfils its duty of purification and clarification, the hour hand reveals the time. That is to say, the *Aathmic* (divine) principle manifests itself.

Whatever you have imbibed here from the lectures of scholars and devotees, from contact with fellow-students of other States, and from these evening discourses, try to put them into practice. I direct you to practise at least one or two of the lessons instilled into you. (1) Do not keep in your memory the good you have done. to others and the evil others have done unto you. (2) Revere your mother and father; do not cause them grief; pay them grateful, homage. (3) Develop your contacts with the villagers and be engaged in improving their living conditions and in strengthening their faith in God. This is the reason why "Village Service" was a part of your daily programme in the Camp. (4) Join the Sathya Sai Seva Dhal Organisation nearest your home and try to learn from it the best way of channelising your skill and enthusiasm.

Always meditate on the Oneness that interpenetrates this apparent Diversity. "Brothers and Sisters" you repeat before every gathering. But, the brotherhood that existed between Raama and Lakshmana is absent now. That was the Supreme Stage. Now, brothers named Raama and

Lakshmana fight for property and spend it all in litigation leading up to the Supreme Court The real ideal should be the higher one--the ideal of Oneness, the other being only you in another Form, with another Name.

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