

## 40. The holiest task

WHETHER one is a renowned scholar with expert knowledge of the deeper levels of religious lore, or a monarch revelling in the brilliance of palatial luxury, or a hero of many battles, or a miserable victim of poverty---if one has no devotion to the Lord one does not deserve homage, honour or attention.

The physical body, the senses, the mind, the intellect---these are all to be considered as the clothes we wear. We are advised to control our senses but this can be done only when their true nature is analysed and known. When that is not known, various obstacles present themselves.

The body is known as *dheha*, which means 'that which is consumed by fire.' It is burnt on the pyre when life departs and consumed by the flames of desire when life persists. It burns on 'the pyre of anxiety and fear, even when alive! There is another word, *shareera*, meaning 'that which wastes away,' which also means body. While living, it is afflicted by wants and wishes which rob it of peace. When dead, it becomes dust. Starting its career as a ball of flesh, it soon appears as a tender charming baby and an active child; it transforms itself into a straight, strong, attractive youth and is reduced later to the pathetic shape of old age. Hence it is named *shareera*; and person, who lives in it, is known as *shareeri*.

### **It is our duty to keep the body in good trim**

The body is a house taken on rent by man. We know how the owner of the house persecutes the tenant in order to compel him to vacate it when the rent is not paid, or when payment is delayed, or when the tenant does not maintain the house with care and when he damages it through negligence or sheer wantonness. Therefore it is our duty to keep the body in good trim and avoid the wrath of the owner. The owner will certainly appreciate a considerate, courteous and cooperative tenant. The tenant can win the owner's love and respect by means of his own goodness. This will help your faith and earnestness. Then do not get up suddenly and start moving about, resuming your avocations. Loosen the limbs, slowly, deliberately and gradually, before you enter upon your usual duties.

Do not get discouraged that you are not able to concentrate long from the very beginning. When you learn to ride a bicycle, you do not learn the art of balancing immediately. You push the cycle along to an open field and hop and skip, leaning now to one side and now to the other, and even fall with the cycle upon you on many an attempt before you are able to ride with skill and to never more worry about the balance. Then automatically you are able to make the necessary adjustments to correct the balance. After getting thus skilled you can ride through the narrow streets and lanes and do not need an open field. You can negotiate your vehicle through the most crowded thoroughfares. So, too, practice will equip you with a concentration that will sustain you in the densest of surroundings and the most difficult situations.

### **The most effective form of meditation**

As regards the technique of *dhyana* (meditation), different teachers and trainers give different forms of advice. But I shall give you now the most universal and the most effective form. This is the very first step in spiritual discipline. Set aside for this at first a few minutes everyday and later go on extending the time as and when you feel the bliss that you shall get. Let it be in the hours before dawn. This is preferable, because the body is refreshed after sleep and the peregrinations of daytime will not yet have impinged on you.

Have a lamp or a candle with an open flame, steady and straight, before you. Sit in the *padhmaasana* (lotus posture) or any other comfortable posture in front of the candle. Look on the flame steadily for some time and, closing your eyes, try to feel the flame inside you, between your eyebrows. Let it slide down into the lotus of your heart, illumining the path. When it enters the heart, imagine that the petals of the lotus open out one by one, bathing every thought, feeling and emotion in the Light, and so removing darkness from them. There is no space for darkness to hide. The light of the flame becomes wider and brighter. Let it pervade your limbs. Now those limbs can never more deal in dark, suspicious and wicked activities; they have become instruments of light and love. As the light reaches up to the tongue, falsehood vanishes from it. Let it rise up to the eyes and the ears and destroy all the dark desires that infest them, leading you to perverse sights and puerile conversation.

### **Visualise God in the all-pervasive Light**

Let your head be surcharged with light and all wicked thoughts flee therefrom. Imagine that the light is in you more and more intensely. Let it shine all around you and let it spread from you, in ever widening circles, taking in your loved ones, your kith and kin, your friends and companions, your enemies and rivals, strangers, all living beings, the entire world.

Since the light illumines all the senses everyday, so deeply and so systematically, a time will soon come when you can no more relish dark and evil sights, yearn for dark and sinister tales, crave for base, harmful, deadening toxic food and drink, handle dirty demeaning things, approach places of ill-fame and injury, or frame evil designs against anyone at any time. Stay on in that thrill of witnessing the light everywhere. If you are adoring God in any form now, try to visualise that form in the all-pervasive Light. For *Light is God; God is Light*.

Practise this meditation as I have advised regularly, everyday. At other times repeat the Name of God (any Name fragrant with any of His many Majesties), always taking care to be conscious of His Might, Mercy and Munificence.

### **Advanced Meditation on Soham**

Resolve on this holy Shivaraathri to visualise the Shiva who is the Inner Power of all. With each breath you are averring, '*Soham*,' (I am He). Not only you, every being avers it. It is a fact which you have ignored so long. Believe it now. When you watch your breath and meditate on that Grand Truth, slowly the 'I' and the 'He' will merge, *Soham* will become transformed into *Om*, the Primal Sound (*Pranava*) which the *Vedhas* proclaim as the symbol of the *Niraakaara Parabrahman* (Formless Supreme Reality). That *Om* is the *Swaswaruupa* (own natural state)--- the Reality behind all this 'relative un-reality.'

This is the genuine *saadhana*, the final lap in the progress of the seeker. But there are many preliminary laps, each one of which requires much stamina and steadfastness. For example, I would advise you to dwell always on one Name of God, one personification of one of His innumerable Attributes of Glory. 'Then there is the expansion of your love, the removal of hate and envy from your mental composition, seeing the God whom you adore in every other person as. intently as you see Him in yourself. Then you become the embodiment of love, peace and joy.

*All India Bala Vikas Gurus Conference, 21-11-1979*

*When you say, Thath thwam asi (Thou art That), you must have the traits of That which you claim to be. You say, "that and this" are the same; then, reviling 'that' or revering 'that' is the same as reviling 'this' or revering 'this'.*

***Sri Sathya Sai***