

51. The three sorrows

MAN has to encounter sorrow from three sources while here on earth. The scriptures mention these and warn men against them. They refer to them as *Aadhyaaathmic* (individual personal), *Aadhikhowthic* (external elements) and *Aadhidhaivic* (super natural). Here *Aathma* means the corporeal self and so, the first group of sorrows afflicts man through physical and mental illnesses. The second is derived from *bhuutha*, which means 'that which is created' and that group of sorrows is derived from living beings like snakes, wild animals, worms, insects, etc. The third word is *Aadhidhaivic*, where *dhaiva* means a deity presiding over a force or phenomenon in Nature. So the third group of sorrows trouble man through calamities like floods, drought and storm.

Aadhyaaathmic sorrow is caused by the human body, the home of countless microbes, and other parasitic beings. No one can be free from these disease-inducing causes. But, one can easily overcome this sorrow by developing feelings of compassion towards all beings and thoughts which thrive on Love and spread love. Illness, both physical and mental, is a reaction on the body caused by poisons in the mind. An uncontaminated mind alone can ensure continuous health. Vice breeds disease. Bad thoughts and habits, bad company and bad food are fertile grounds where disease thrives. *Aarogya* (good health) and *Aanandha* (bliss) go hand in hand.

Virtue alone will bring the Grace of God

A sense of elation and exultation keeps the body free from ill-health. Evil habits in which men indulge are the chief cause of disease, physical as well as mental. Greed affects the mind; disappointment makes man depressed. Man can justify his existence as man only by the cultivation of virtues. Then, he becomes a worthy candidate for Godhood. It is progress in virtue that announces the progress of man towards Divinity. Virtue also confers freshness, skill, and long years of youthfulness. The years you spend in College are the crucial ones when you have to start cultivating the virtues which are divine. That is the reason why I am emphasising before you the relationship between virtue, health and happiness.

Once you slide into evil, there is no escape; you will be caught in the wheel of despair. Virtue alone will bring to you the Grace of God. Remember that nothing is so precious as Divine Grace. Thyaagaraaja dismissed the gifts of heaps of precious gems because he valued the Presence of God as more than all the wealth of the world. A healthy heart is the temple of God. Its health is proportionate to the purity of the food taken and the purity of one's thoughts, words and deeds. Moderate food and moderate speech are the twin boons one should win by one's own exertion.

Aadhikhowthic sorrow is caused by lower living beings, like flies, ants, mosquitoes, bugs, etc. It may be difficult to get rid of these, but one can practise mental restraint through *yoga* (divine communion). *Yoga* is explained as the prevention of the agitations of the mind. When the mind is withdrawn from contacting the outer world through the sense-media, no anxiety or agitation can affect the persons. The mind has to be withdrawn from both praise and blame, for they make you either proud or angry. Pride is deplorable and anger is disastrous. Be always the same and watch with a balanced mind the ups and downs of life.

Samaadhi is a characteristic of the mind

Think of the transience of life and the triviality of wealth, power and fame. The body is a compound of elements; they have to fall apart. I am now directing that you be taught some

Aasanas in *Yoga*. They will help you to maintain health of body and mind. You can acquire equanimity thereby, and earn genuine *Aanandha*.

Aadhidhaivic sorrow is the result of natural calamities. In order not to be affected by these, one must practise *Samaadhi*. *Dhee* means 'the intellect.' *Sama* means 'equal.' Attaining *Samaadhi* does not involve falling fiat, shaking the limbs or losing consciousness. It is not a dramatic trance. It is a *characteristic* of the mind, an outlook one has developed, to observe all events and persons without any attachment or aversion. This stage of the consciousness of man is also called *Nirvikalpa*, that is to say, devoid of *vikalpa* (reaction, response). The person who has mastered *vikalpa* is free from wish, want and desire. So, he has consciously trained his mind not to respond to attraction and or react to repulsion. When the mind reacts, favourably or otherwise, to external or internal urges, it undergoes slight *vikaaraas* (distortions). Therefore, it cannot achieve transformation into divinity.

The unseen is the base of the seen

Aathma (divinity) is deep in the core of the consciousness of man. We do not keep gold, jewels and valuables in the verandahs and quadrangles of our homes. We keep only pots and baskets there. We keep the jewels in an iron safe in an inner room, away from public gaze. The body is liable to fall, rot and get burnt. When age increases, we say that he is declining year by year, and nearing his end faster and faster. In the box called the body is treasured the *Aathma*. The sea keeps its valuable pearls deep down, near the bed. It scatters cheap shells on the shore, where people can pick them. So, to perceive the *Aathma*, you have to turn your inquiry inwards.

Siddhaartha was a Prince, who commanded vast wealth. Bhagiratha too was a big Ruler. But they turned their vision into inner levels of consciousness. They gave up wealth, status and luxury and lived in seclusion to devote themselves to the search for Truth. Can you condemn them for this? No. They made their lives more precious by that step.

I do not discourage you from mastering the subjects relating to this world. They help you to understand the world and its ways. But the various faculties of study---Chemistry, Physics, Botany, Mathematics---are only branches, twigs, leaves, flowers and fruits of the tree. You are now engaged in watering the flowers and leaves; instead, you have to water the roots, which you do not see. The unseen is the base of the seen. Every one of these subjects of study is a tributary stream. They finally flow into the sea, the *Aathma Vidhya* (Science of the Self).

Gist of Convocation Address given by *Rishis*

Aathma Vidhya has to be studied by every one of you. Or else you cannot free yourselves from the three sorrows which torment you. *Sathyam Vadha, Dharmam Chara* (Speak the truth; observe righteousness); revere the mother, revere the father, revere the teacher, revere the guest--that was the gist of the *convocation* address given by the *rishis* on the conclusion of studies to the pupils in the hermitages. Now Convocations have become occasions for demonstration of indiscipline and irreverence. You have to restrain such tendencies and reform yourselves. Listen to the elders who have your good and the society's good at heart. Make *Shruthi* (sacred text) into *Smrithi* (*body of traditional law*)--that is to say, treasure in your memory the good advice you have listened to and try to practise the same, until it becomes part of your character.

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Character is the measure of man. Character insists on keeping vice and wickedness at a distance. Life not sanctified by character is a house without lamps, a coin that is counterfeit.

Sri Sathya Sai