

46. Refrain from asking

*Heaven is not on high, beyond your ken.
It is very much here, in the world of men:
Deny the ego, deep-hid in you;
And, you are 'there' in Heaven on Earth.
For liberation, O man, why plead before
Three crores of Gods is despair?
Deny the ego, deep-rooted in you---
And you are free, no pleading therefore.*

The attainment of the Absolute or *Brahman* is not the end result of a course of spiritual effort. The *jeevi* (individualised soul) is the *Brahman*. *Jeevo devassanaathanah* ----"The *jeevi* is the Eternal Godhead." Even when involved in worldly activities, the individual cannot discard this Reality of his. His belief that he is just a man arises from delusion. The ocean may be known by many names in many areas through many ages, but its nature is unaffected thereby. So too, however many forms and names he assumes and adopts, the *Brahman-principle* persists in him and remains the goal of awareness.

"*Mamaivaamsho Jeeva loke Jeeva Bhoothas-sanaathanah*," says Krishna in the *Geetha*. "The eternal I, a part of Me, has manifested as all individuals." This is what that statement implies. "*Shrunvanthu vishwe Amrithasya Puthraah*" is what Mother *Vedha* declares to all the worlds. Since a person is limited by a body and entangled in the senses, he is bound by ignorance and led to believe that he is a mere man. He is a child of Immortality.

Mind affected by desire is polluted

Ignorance is caused by attachment. Attachment results in identification of the I with the body, senses, mind, etc. Attachment leads to desire; desire results in anger; anger blinds reason and promotes ignorance; ignorance breeds dualities of mine and thine, good and bad, etc.; these lead to activities to make gains, and avoid losses, etc.; these produce consequences of merit and demerit; they have to be consumed in this life or future lives; so one has to go through suffering. *Dukham* (suffering) is caused by *janma* (life) which presupposes suffering. Karma is due to belief in *dwaitha* (duality). *Dwaitha* is the result of *ajnaana* (ignorance), the product of *krodha* (anger). *Krodha* is the child of *raaga* (affection) and *moha* (attachment) is the parent of *raaga*.

Even Arjuna, the greatest Bowman and warrior of his age, became a victim on the battlefield itself of this insidious, false, and enfeebling attachment. The mind obeys the senses and defiles man. It is well-nigh impossible for man to master the mind and turn it away from the objective world. Arjuna confessed to Lord Krishna that the mind was uncontrollably wayward and could not be stilled. The mind has two phases: the unpolluted and the polluted. The mind affected by desire (*kaama*) is polluted; when it is unaffected by desire, it is unpolluted.

For liberation from bondage to desire, the mind is the only instrument available to man. Turn it towards the objective world, you are bound; turn it towards God, you are on the road to liberation. The mind refuses to be calm even for a fraction of a second. When a continuous

shower of stones is falling on the waters of a lake, how can the surface be calm and unruffled? So too, man is throwing stone after stone of desire on the *Maanasa Sarovar*, the calm lake of the manas or mind.

Bhakthas---indeed all *Vyakthis* (those who seek to manifest their inner Reality)---should therefore prevent the stones (desires) from disturbing the equanimity of the mind. The fly rests one moment on the sacred food-offerings on the altar of God and the next moment on filth. The mind seeks refuge in holy thoughts and things; the next moment, it revels in some fearsome foul ideas. The mind is like the elephant. The mahout gives it a nice bath, he scrubs it clean and chains it to a shady tree. But, it gathers dust with its trunk and scatters it all over itself! Man too, urged by the senses, pours into his own mind dust and dirt.

Senses are servants of mind, not master

In fact, the function of the mind is to act as controller of the senses. The role of the senses is to serve the mind, the right relationship is for the servants to obey the master and for the master to rule over the servants. But when the master falls into the hands of his servants, he becomes the victim of all varieties of loss and grief.

The Raamaayana provides a fine illustration for this danger. Kaikeyi, the queen, was the mistress; Manthara was her servant, her maid, but since the queen was subservient to her maid, a whole series of tragedies happened. Kaikeyi came from a famous Royal dynasty; she was the favourite consort of a famous emperor; she was the mother of a son, Bharatha, famous for his dutifulness and righteousness; she loved her stepson Raama as dearly as her life-breath; yet, despite her own virtue, learning and authority, since she gave ear to her attendant, Manthara, she drew upon herself eternal infamy from everyone. She landed in a situation where her beloved son came to despise her. Even the names Kaikeyi and Manthara have become obnoxious.

The lesson is: we should not allow the senses, who are only servants, to lord over us. If we do so we invite the fate of Kaikeyi. Wherever you are, however rich, learned or powerful, when you advise some one to do wrong, you invite on yourselves the fate of Manthara. Since men yield to the blandishments of the senses, they are becoming Kaikeyis and losing the Divine Nature, the quality of the Master.

Specific role and purpose of mind

The waters of the flowing river are stored by us in reservoirs. But, one has to take care to close the sluices before the water is let into the reservoir. Or else the water will flow out through the sluices and cannot be stored for use. Likewise, the *Aathma-Shakthi* (the Inner Soul Force), has to be let through the *buddhi* (intellect) channel into the reservoir, *manas* (mind). But, that force can be utilised by us for our benefit and for promoting world prosperity and peace only when the five sluices, the outward bound senses, are closed tight. The closing of the sluices is the process which the *yoga shaasthra* of Sage Pathanjali describes as *Chittha Vritthi Nirodhah*---preventing agitations in the mind.

The mind is designed for a specific purpose: achieving the four goals of human existence, *dharma*, *artha*, *kaama* and *moksha*, the attainment of a happy life through righteous means (*artha* through *dharma*) and the cultivation of *kaama* (desire) for *moksha* (liberation).

It has not been designed to promote greed and hatred, pride and possessiveness. This truth has to be believed. The wind gathers clouds and equally swiftly, scatters them. The mind can create

conditions of bondage or of liberation. So, one must slowly loosen the bonds of attachment to the physical body and its components, the senses. The senses rob us of physical and mental strength.

Are all who live in the body and move about with the body attached to it and to the senses, etc., that go along with it? For, God too comes with a body, as *Avathaar*, and when He moves about, He seems to be only human as far as one can see. But, there is a fundamental inner difference. The incarnate God, *the Avathaar*, is unconcerned. He has *upeksha* (indifferent to results). The ordinary man with the body has *apeksha* (yearning for the result). *Mamathwa* (mineness-principle) is human; *Brahmathwa* (*Brahman-principle*) is Divine. You cannot discern the distinction, even when you look or listen. You can understand only by experience. The *Avathaar* has no wants. He has no egoism. He is ever alone in the *Brahmathwam*.

Look at a record or tape

It is blank, silent, same!

Activate it with a sound box

It sings and speaks with fluency.

Avathaar with body and the ordinary man

The Avathaar appears as any other human being, equipped with body, senses, mind, etc. But, consider the vast difference in thoughts, feelings, emotions, etc. *The Avathaar* is the total, the all-comprehensive, the *Poormna* (Full). The human is partial, narrow, negative. But, in the human, the Divine exists as the core and can manifest as Bliss. We pay all attention to the external trappings of knowledge; we do not transform the deeper instincts and impulses inherited from animal ancestors.

Place jasmine garlands, around a monkey's neck,

Dress it in shiny silken clothes,

And seat it on a gem-set throne.

Can it forsake its apish tricks?

Once it was a *vaanara* (monkey); now, it is a *nara* (man). And as man through many lives, crookedness and cruelty have struck deep roots. These cannot be destroyed soon. It is a very difficult task indeed.

This is the reason why God assumes the *Avathaar* form and decides to award mankind the power to discriminate between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood. *The Avathaar* does it through precept and example. The scriptures teach that life is unfortunately short. So, the Geetha advises man to appreciate three facts: (1) To be born as a human being is a precious opportunity; (2) To yearn to realise God is another precious piece of good luck; (3) The greatest good fortune is the chance to be in the Presence of God, to be immersed in the service of God and to be engaged in fulfilling Divine commands.

God responds to unadulterated devotion

Sathyabhaama, in her pride, imagined that her Lord Krishna could be appropriated by her if jewels and gems were presented. She piled them on one pan of the balance which was weighing Him. But this was of no avail. Rukmini had effaced herself and knew only the Krishna-principle.

So, when she placed a single *thulsi* leaf with her prayer on the pan, Krishna could be weighed and the pan with Krishna rose up.

Unadulterated devotion, total renunciation---these alone can help us to achieve the awareness of our Divinity. Kooresa was the headman of a village in the days of Raamaanuja. His other name was Sreevathsanka. He revered Raamaanuja, the Acharya of *Visishtaadwaitha* (qualified non-dualism), the great Master of *Vaishnavism*, as his *Guru*. He renounced his riches, lands and home in the village and proceeded to the holy shrine of Shrirangam on the Kaaveri River. His wife Aandaal accompanied him. They had to walk through a thick jungle when night fell. The wife asked him, her voice tremulous with fear, "Are there robbers around?" He replied, "Why should we fear? We have nothing with us for them to rob." The wife confessed that she had with her a small gold cup, which she had brought along to serve water to her husband. Kooresa did not approve of her action. He asked for the cup and threw it far into the jungle, and they proceeded in peace.

God gives unasked what the devotee need.

They lodged in a choultry, near the temple at Shrirangam. Kooresa was far too' exhausted. He had no food throughout the three-day long trek. The wife heard the temple bells ringing to announce the "Presentation of food offerings to Lord Ranganatha." She cried out to the Lord, "Your servant is stricken by starvation. How can you, O Lord, feast on the offerings, knowing how he suffers?" In a few minutes, a procession from the temple reached the choultry. A band of pipers and drummers led the long line of priests and *Pandiths*. The Lord had commanded them to take the food offerings to his devotees at the choultry. They brought silver plates and vessels full of a rich variety of dishes.

Kooresa rose and sat up. He protested "I did not pray for food. The Lord should grant me what I need and pray for, He cannot give me what I did not ask for! How can this Aathma ask the Paramaathma for something to fill the stomach?" Because the temple priests pressed him to partake of the prasaad (food offered to idols), he tasted a little and gave a little to the wife. Then he questioned her, "Did you commit the mistake? Did you pray for food?" She replied, "Lord! I did not ask so. I only had a feeling in my mind, How could you, O Krishna, accept those offerings when your servant is starving?"

God, Giver of All, is the only treasure you need

He who gives when asked and what is asked, is the *Prabhu*. He who gives unasked, what one needs is the *Vibhu*. *Prabhu* means a Lord, *Vibhu* means the Cosmic Ruler. We should not use the *Vibhu* to acquire what we feel we need most. This is the reason why the poet has sung'

Refrain from asking, O mind!

The more you ask; the deeper it plumbs

And the longer it takes for the answer to rise.

Did He not, without being asked,

Fulfil Shabari's anguished wish ?

Did He not bless the bird Jataayu

Who died for Him,

Asking for nought instead?

Thus, Kooresa instructed his mind and earned peace. *Every Avathaar* seeks to raise humanity to the level of Divinity by laying down such paths of devotion and holding forth such examples of surrender.

"I do not know anything other than you." "You are the one and only." When one has this faith, why allow desire to creep in? Why ask for this or that? Have faith in God, the Giver of All, the only Treasure you need; He will fill you with contentment.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 12-8-1982.

*Whenever you get little leisure,
do not spend it in talking about sundries;
but utilise it in meditating on God or
in doing service to others.*

Sathya Sai Babaa