

### 53. The ultimate attainment

*When man acts on earth the way he speaks*

*He is no longer man, he is a noble soul*

*When man doesn't act the way he speaks*

*He is no longer man, he is only a beast.*

Bhaarath has sought to ensure the peace and security of nations for generations through instruction on spiritual development. She herself has been an example to others for spiritual virtues. 'May all the worlds be happy' is the prayer echoing from the *Vedhas* through centuries and over the globe. The sages, monarchs, scholars, and women of past ages dedicated their lives, in order to solve the fundamental problems of the human situation and promote world prosperity. They accepted sacrifice as their duty and destiny. Due to the degenerated time-spirit of today, self-interest has polluted the thoughts, words and deeds of man! He acts as if things and persons have to be sought and loved, because they are useful for him. This is only another instance of selfish love. Man is activated by desire; he plans and designs to win what he desires. Human life is a process where man awaits the harvest of the desires he sows. The desire has to be not for self-advancement but for peace, happiness and prosperity for all. Only then can the *Vedhic* prayer mentioned above be realised.

Time is but a mirror that reveals to us our fancies or our fantasies. It has no preferences or originality. It has no ideas of its own or sympathy with others. The joy or grief that time presents to us is only the reflection of our own deeds, good or bad. The reflection may appear in the mirror quickly or late. The seed turns into a tree only after years, and the fruit takes a few more. Every deed is a seed that inevitably yields fruits, either sweet or bitter, which one has to eat in joy or grief. So, man has to resolve to do good, see good, hear good and be good.

#### **Nothing is outside or beyond *Brahman***

For, goodness is the real nature of man. Bad tendencies are unnatural; they are imposed by circumstances. Through sheer bad luck, man is welcoming the accretions and ignoring the core. One has to place his faith on the Divinity that is in everything, always and everywhere. The *Vedhas* declare:

*"Poornam adhah Poornam idham*

*Poornaath Poornam udhachyathe*

*Poornasya Poornam Aadhaaya*

*Poornam eva avashishyathe."*

'That is wholly Divine. This is wholly Divine. From the totally Divine arose the totally Divine. When the totally Divine is taken from the totally Divine, the total Divine remains.' "That" means "the thing afar, apart", "the entity that is beyond the reach of the human instruments of perception." "This" means the visible world, the objective world, cognisable with the senses and amenable to experience. This too is as divine as the *rest*. *Aasthi* (Existence, Is-ness), *bhaathi* (shining) and *priyam* (endearing), (*Sath*, *Chith* and *Aanandha*). are the characteristics of Divinity and these three are found in everything. Only the form and the name are transitory, subject to change.

This silver tumbler can be converted by the smith into a cup or plate or just a lump of metal. But, silver is, is knowable, is likeable. It is *Aasthi-Bhaathi-Priyam*. A lump of jaggery is sweet; a bit or a pinch of jaggery taken out of it is also as sweet as the lump. They are all 'totally sweet' and 'totally jaggery,' Similarly the Cosmos which the Divine projected is Divine; the *Jagath* is *Brahman*; nothing is outside it or beyond it. This is Truth because That is Truth. This is as true as That. No one can assert that This cannot change and That has to change. A person decides out of his own limited experience that This is bad and That is good, but since all is equally divine, the distinction is not real.

### **Divinity is inscrutable**

What exactly is the Divine? What are its characteristics? How can it be defined? No person can claim authority to announce the attributes which mark out Divinity, the activities through which Divinity can be identified, and the Form in which Divinity can be recognised. And no one has the power to assert that no other attributes or activities or forms can be divine. It is sheer effrontery and foolishness to make pronouncements on the nature and work of God. When Divinity is immanent in everything, conscious and unconscious, in every form of being and becoming, how can a thing be condemned as bad or commended as good?

Water quenches thirst and also drowns people. Fire gives light and warmth but also burns and reduces things to ash. Sound terrifies and also thrills. They are all three Divine; Divinity is inscrutable. The Divine will is ever free and fresh. The divine has no selfishness or pride or greed or envy. But, you suffer from all these illnesses. So, your judgement is narrow and crooked. The Divine can function as It pleases and wills, for, It has no wants.

Every object maintains its inner genuineness. When it does not, it degenerates. When fire loses its capacity to burn, it reduces itself to cold coal. Sugar can no longer be sugar if it loses its sweetness. God is identified with heat in fire and sweetness in sugar. You may deny God or affirm God---that is dependent on your predominant mood. But, God is in all.

God is all. You may accept or reject but Divinity will adopt any means it wills in order to revive reverence for scriptures and observance of morality. You cannot gain by discussing about the means and pronouncing your opinions on them. You have only to cultivate Faith and exult.

### **God is described as the farthest and closest**

*Vishnu*, the name of the Lord, means "Present everywhere." The question is asked. "Why then is He not seen?" But, do we see the air which is all around us? Can we say then that there is no air at all? God is also said to be minuter than the minutest and vaster than the vastest. The *Taithireeya Upanishadh* describes God as: "that which has nothing bigger, and that which has nothing smaller." It is in accordance with this statement that Thyaagaraaja sang: "Thou art in that, as in Brahma, Shiva and Keshava, O Raama." *The Vedhas* also describe Him as the farthest and the closest. Some one dear to you may be in America but your love keeps him close to you. When your neighbour is an enemy or a stranger to you he is 'far' away. It is the mind that pushes and pulls, hates and loves. You are what you feel. Take me as an example.

*I am 'yes' to those who say 'yes';*

*I am 'no' to those who say 'no',*

*'No' and 'Yes' are words you speak.*

*From Sai it is always 'yes', 'yes', 'yes'.*

Due to one's attachment to the body in which one is enclosed, egoism grows deep and *the Aathma* is not believed in. The Thelugu proverb says, "When boiling milk rises, it falls into the fire." The lesson it enshrines is: "Pride reduces one to ashes." Humility can be built only on a foundation of charity, detachment. *Thyaaga* (sacrifice) gives man the greatest joy. He who is ever ready to sacrifice his comfort for helping another, is the genuine devotee. People cling to comfort and luxury and high life. But, for how long can they so cling? You cannot run a race, when a mountain faces you. The world is bound by time and space and your stay too is for a limited period. To seek joy in the world of objects is as foolish as gathering dewdrops from lotus leaves mistaking them for diamonds or wading through mirages hoping to collect water in pails. Joy, pure and plentiful, can be earned only from God and through obedience to Divine laws and directions.

### **One has to discharge his duty fully and correctly**

While they were in exile living in the forest, one day Seetha noticed a golden deer. She was fascinated by it and she prayed to Raama to go after it, catch it and bring it for her. Raama set out from the hermitage, directing Lakshmana to be on guard and not to leave Seetha alone on any account. The golden deer was the decoy employed by Raavana to draw Raama away from the hermitage, so that he might kidnap her. The deer (*Mareecha*, the demon) cried out, imitating Raama's voice asking Lakshmana to go to his rescue. Seetha concluded that Raama was hurt and appealed to Lakshmana to go to his rescue. Lakshmana knew Raama too well to be scared. He was a true servant of the Lord. So, he stuck to his duty.

When the call was heard again, Seetha could not contain her anger at Lakshmana's intransigence. She used unspeakable words to persuade Lakshmana to disobey Raama. "Are you plotting to possess me on Raama's death?" she asked. Lakshmana could not bear the imputation; he left her alone and moved towards the place where the voice came from. Therefore, what was to happen, happened. When the brothers returned, the hermitage was empty, and Seetha has been kidnapped. Raama told Lakshmana, "You disobeyed me, acted against my order and this calamity was caused." Whatever happens, however critical the situation, one has to discharge fully and correctly the duty laid upon one. Whatever the enormity of the calamity that threatens, one should not budge. Lakshmana repented all his life for the lapse.

### **Acts of God are for the world's good**

A question may be raised here about the golden deer. Did not Raama know that it was a decoy, a demon in that form, sent by Raavana to help him in his evil design? Of course, he knew it all. He knew that the episode was but the prologue to the completion of the task on which he had come. He could bring Seetha back from Lanka and, in a moment, he could turn it into a heap of ash. But, he got Sugreeva as his ally and did various other things to retrieve her and punish Raavana. Why? In order to accomplish the welfare of the world, foster righteousness among men, and cause destruction of the wicked, the Lord can freely choose.

Persons who are unaware of the ways of God cannot understand this. God can on His own involve Himself in activities which serve as ideals and guides for mankind. If Raama had not devised the drama of the golden deer and Seetha's abduction, how could the devotion of Hanumaan be immortalised?

Take the *Krishna Avathaar*. Are there grounds to doubt His divinity and suspect Him to have been a thief, a liar or a gallant? God has no prejudice or partiality, no preference or aversion. When He is All, what can He steal? Whom can He desire to have? Imputations such as these emanate from individuals suffering from greed, envy and lust. One moment you declare "God is One. God is Truth, Purity, Stability, All-knowing, the Witness, Beyond Feelings and Thoughts, Devoid of the Three *Gunas*" and the next moment, you impose feelings and faults on the same God? How, then, can you understand the acts of God? We must welcome them gratefully and gladly, for whatever is done, or whatever is not done, is for the world's good.

People who picture God as partial and unjust are only describing themselves. People assert that God is in the ant, as much as He is in the Cosmos. They adore ants and feed them, place rice grains around ant-holes on the ground. But, let an ant be bold enough to sting, it is killed that very moment. The animal in man overpowers him and he cannot restrain himself. He does not act in conformity with his words. Love alone can reveal that there is a spark of Divine in him.

### **All our acts must be offerings to God**

You should not construct a picture of God according to your needs and norms and then complain that God does not conform. God is all-powerful, all-knowing and all-pervading. How then can limits be prescribed for Him? It would be foolish to judge Him, it would be sinful to impute blemishes. The evil tendencies, attitudes and habits that have persisted through many lives and continue in this life also prompt people to hold such conclusions. No one has the authority to lay down rules regulating God's deeds.

God is inherent in every living being, in every non-living thing. No distinction can be posited, for all are God. In order to grant joy or enable man to derive joy, God plays pranks, designs and directs dramas. He causes tears and quenches tears; he cures madness and inflicts madness. He exorcises the mania for fame and fortune; He inflames the mania for God and Grace.

This day is *Poornaahuthi* Day when the valedictory offering in the sacred Fire concludes the seven-day-long *yajna*, or what may be called also *thapas* or *saadhana*. *Samaapthi* is the word used for 'conclusion.' But that word has a more significant meaning: *Aapthi* or attainment of *Sama* or equanimity or balance, as when the river merges in the sea or the self merges in the Self, the *jeevi* merges in *Brahmam*. The river loses its name and form, the water loses its taste and flow, when the sea is reached. All acts of ours must be elevated to the level of *yajna*, offering to the Lord, That is to be the goal, the consummation. Nothing else is to be desired or expected. When the offering reaches God, the person is most happy because the God is in Him.

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*Sacrifice is sweeter than enjoyment. Sacrifice should become the aim of life. Only through sacrifice can one attain peace. Sorrows do not flee from us as long as the mind is not at peace with itself. Agonies dwell forever within us. Without the tranquillity of the soul any amount of wealth cannot be of any use. Surrendering the fruits of action with a dispassionate mind is eligible to be termed sacrifice. Purity of mind alone can confer upon it tranquillity.*

*Sathya Sai Baaba*