

19. *Asuuya* and *dhweshha* : the deadly vices

ARVATHRA *Sarvaani Bhuuthani Dhehi* ("The *Dhehi* is the indweller in all human beings"). The body is transient. The *Dhehi* is eternal and real. The *Dhehi* is known as such not because it is in a body. The entire Cosmos is the body of the Divine and therefore the term *Dhehi* applies to this Cosmic Consciousness. To realise the nature of this all-pervading *Aathma* (soul), which is the unchanging reality, it is not enough to seek authority from the *Shaasthras* (ancient scriptures) alone. The *Aathma* is not realised through *Shaasthras*. The realisation of the Self has to be obtained on the basis of the authority of the *Shaasthras*, but through one's own earnest *Saadhana* (spiritual efforts). The *Vedhas* (ancient sacred scriptures), *Upanishaths*, *Shaasthras* and *Puraanas* (ancient scriptures of spiritual wisdom, metaphysical treatises and mythological legends) all serve as sign-posts. They indicate the direction one should take. They show the goal that should be sought, but the journey has to be made by ourselves.

The teachings of the Geetha begin in the second canto with the words of the Lord: *Ashochyaan Anvashochasthvam* (You grieve about things for which you should not grieve). Starting with this statement, the Geetha gradually reveals the means by which sorrow can be eliminated. The Lord tells Arjuna: "You are having grief about things over which one should not grieve." The devotee who is dear to the Lord All things in the Universe have five qualities--*Asthi*, *Bhaathi*, *Priyam*, *Ruupam* and *Naamam* (Being, Awareness, Bliss, Form and Name). The first three qualities *Asthi*, *Bhaathi* and *Priyam* are also called *Sath*, *Chith* and *Aanandham* (Being, Awareness, Bliss Absolute). These three attributes are eternal and therefore Divine. For them, there is neither birth nor death. But form and name are artificial creations. Because they are artificial products, they are liable to change. They are like relations in a family. They come and go and are not permanent members of the home. Likewise, joy and sorrow are also family relations, who come and go. To imagine that these passing relationships are eternal realities, and to develop permanent attachments to them, is wrong. These relationships are liable to change and to disappear. To feel grief over loss of such relations is not proper. How is one to recognise the transience and falseness of these relationships? Bhagavaan has indicated in the *Bhakthi Yoga* (Divine Union through Devotion) of the Geetha that the man who has cultivated the 26 good qualities mentioned therein is the devotee who is dear to Him. It is not necessary to cultivate all these 26 qualities. As one stick in a match box is enough for lighting a lamp, even one of the qualities mentioned by the Lord is enough to develop one's spiritual awareness. If some of the important good qualities mentioned in the Geetha are made the basis for our spiritual endeavour, a great transformation will take place in our lives.

The cultivation of good qualities implies getting rid of all bad qualities. Among the latter, two are particularly undesirable. They are *Asuuya* (jealousy) and *Dhwesha* (hatred). These two bad qualities are like two conspirators, one aids and abets the other in every action. *Asuuya* is like the pest which attacks the root of a tree. *Dhwesha* is like the pest which attacks the branches, leaves and flowers. When the two combine, the tree, which may look beautiful and flourishing, is utterly destroyed.

Practise love constantly to get rid of hatred

Similarly, *Asuuya* attacks a person from inside and is not visible. *Dhwesha* exhibits itself in open forms. There is hardly anyone who is free from the vice of jealousy. Jealousy may arise even over very trivial matters, and out of jealousy hatred arises. To get rid of hatred one must constantly practise love. Where there is love, there will be no room for jealousy and hatred and

where there is no jealousy and hatred, there is *Aanandha* (real joy). This joy reveals itself in Beauty. It has been well said, "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever." If you see beauty in any thing, you will derive joy from it. But what is the beauty that one should seek which will be the source of permanent joy? Only God is the embodiment of Beauty that is the source of everlasting joy.

The devotee's primary duty is to seek the nectar of bliss to be got from the contemplation of the beauty of God. The means of experiencing such joy is to cultivate good qualities and get rid of bad traits. Although Arjuna was listening to Krishna's message, he did not fully digest the implications of the message. For instance, during the great Kurukshethra war, one day there was a fierce battle between Bheeshma on the one side and Arjuna on the other. Bheeshma had fallen in the battle. Despite his devotion to Krishna, Arjuna was feeling that he had been responsible for the victory over Bheeshma. As the Sun went down, both Krishna and Arjuna returned in the chariot to Arjuna's camp.

God has pledged to protect His devotees

Arjuna asked Krishna to get down from the chariot and go to the house. In his conceit, he was regarding himself as the master of the chariot and Krishna as only the charioteer and according to the customary practice, the charioteer should first get down and only then the master could get down. Although Arjuna repeatedly asked Krishna to get down first, Krishna told Arjuna that he should get down first. Ultimately, to avoid an unpleasant tiff with Krishna, because he would need Krishna's help for the next day's battle, Arjuna got' down from the chariot. Krishna asked him to get into the house immediately and after Arjuna had gone in, Krishna jumped out of the chariot. Immediately the entire chariot went up' in flames. Seeing this, Yudhishtthira and Arjuna asked Krishna the reason for such an extraordinary event.

Krishna replied: "None can understand the nature of Divinity or the sports of the Divine. The Divine has no self-interest. God has pledged Himself to protect His devotees and uphold them. In today's battle all the deadly arrows which Bheeshma had aimed at you were all kept pressed under my feet and because of this, these arrows did not cause any harm to you. If I had got out of the chariot first, these deadly arrows would have reduced you to ashes. Being unaware of this truth, you wanted me to get down first from the chariot. On hearing these words from Krishna, Arjuna gave up his conceit.

Many forms of jealousy and their consequence

Jealousy expresses itself even in the form of finding faults in the Divine. It manifests itself in many forms. If one has earned a better name than another, jealousy develops towards him. Some people are even jealous of those who are more handsome than themselves. Students even envy others who secure more marks in the examination. The jealous person cannot bear to see anyone who is better placed, more handsome or prosperous than himself. This is a sign of human weakness. Once jealousy takes root in a man's mind, it, in due course, destroys all his other achievements. It promotes demonic qualities. It dehumanises the man. It reduces him to the condition 'of an animal. Because of its egregious evil tendency, jealousy should be rooted out from the very beginning. You must learn to enjoy at another's prosperity and happiness. This is a great virtue. It is one of the teachings of the Bhagavathgeetha. In the ninth canto of the Bhagavathgeetha, Krishna tells Arjuna, "Oh Arjuna, be free from the evil of jealousy. Become an *Anasuyaka* (one who has no jealousy)."

A person free from jealousy can convert Divinity itself into a little babe. This is illustrated by the story of Anasuuya. When Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara came to her to test her chastity and purity, the three Divinities were turned into infants by the power of Anasuuya's purity. By freeing oneself from jealousy, one can even conquer the qualities of *Sathwa, Rajas and Thamas* (quality of purity, passion and inertia), Jealousy not only does harm to others but is also self-destructive. For the man filled with jealousy, there is no sleep and he cannot even eat heartily. It is like a consumptive disease which weakens a person from inside. It is a wasting disease which is widespread in this *Kali Yuga* (age of conflict). It is because of jealousy that man is a prey to *Ashaanthi* (peacelessness).

What Buddha taught to his devotees

Once Buddha set out to seek alms. He was approaching a village where there were a number of devotees of Buddha. At that time, some wicked persons confronted him on the way and abused Buddha in various ways. Buddha sat on a rock nearby without proceeding with his journey. He addressed his traducers: "Dear children, what is the pleasure you derive from abusing me?" Without giving the reasons, they continued abusing him in worse terms. Buddha sat down saying, "If abusing me gives you pleasure, enjoy at yourselves." Exhausted by their abuse, they were preparing to leave. At that time, Buddha told them, "I stayed here all the time because if I had gone to the village, my devotees there would not have spared you, if you had indulged in all this abuse before them. It is to save you from this calamity that I had put up with all your abuse, given you a free rein and stayed here."

"If we want to please others, we have to do many things and even spend a lot of money. I am happy that today without incurring any expense or taking any trouble I could give so much pleasure to all of you! What a fine day for *me!*" exclaimed Buddha. "You have derived joy from abusing me. So, I am the cause of your joy. I have given you satisfaction thereby. To bring comfort and happiness to people, many build choultries, dig wells, or do other charitable acts. But without undertaking any of these acts, I have been able to give great satisfaction to these evil-minded men. This is a great achievement, indeed," observed Buddha.

Jealousy is a canker that is self-destroying

Buddha also brought home to them another lesson. He asked one of them: "Child! A beggar comes to your house asking for alms: 'Blessed mother, give me food!' You bring some food. If the beggar says, 'This is not the alms I asked for, and I will not accept it' what will you do?" The man replied: "I will keep back the offering." Buddha said: "In the same manner, you attempted to offer me the *bhiksha* (alms) of your abuse. I did not accept it. To whom does it belong? It remains with you. So, you have only abused yourself, not *me*," said Buddha.

If a registered letter is addressed, to some one, who declines to receive it, the postal department 'will deliver it back to the sender. Similarly, if you criticise someone or hate somebody, if the other person remains unaffected and unperturbed,' your criticism and hatred come back to you. Jealousy and hatred do more harm to those who entertain these feelings than to those towards whom these are expressed.

Jealousy is a canker that is self-destroying

Once a sage was cultivating a beautiful garden growing a variety of flowers and fruits. Even in him egoism reared its head and in its wake jealousy also took root. When these two were present, hatred also joined the evil brood. Seeing this, the Lord, who felt that a sage wearing the saffron

robe and claiming to have renounced all attachments, should not entertain such evil qualities, entered the sage's garden in the guise of an old Braahmana to reform the sage.

The story of the sage and his ego

The Braahmana saw a tree and praising its beautiful flowers and fruits, he asked the sage who was responsible for raising such a fine garden. The 'sage replied: "Oh, Venerable Braahmana This garden has been created by me by indefatigable efforts, night and day, caring for every plant like a child. Every tree was planted by me and reared by me. All the pruning and laying out of the garden are my handiwork." And so on, he was boasting that "everything is my work, my achievement." "All these flowers and fruits I am growing for the sake of others," he said.

The Braahmana left and shortly thereafter a cow entered the garden and caused havoc among the flower plants. Seeing this from a distance, the sage hurled a big stick at the cow. The moment the stick hit the cow, the animal died. The sage inwardly feared that he might be guilty of the sin of *go-hathya* (cow slaughter). Meanwhile, the old Braahmana returned and, seeing the dead cow, exclaimed: "What a pity! Who could have killed the poor cow?" The sage replied: "It is all God's Will. Otherwise, will the cow lose its life, even if someone wanted to kill it?"

Immediately the 'Braahmana said: "You reared the garden and you made the flowers bloom. But when the cow dies, God is responsible for its death, Is it? You claim credit for all the good things, but when anything untoward happens you attribute it to God. Your conceit is totally unbecoming." The Braahmana then 'revealed His true form and said: "I am not. a Braahmana. I assumed this form only to remove from you the ego that has taken root in you."

To experience God, fill yourselves with Love

Everyone should strive to rid himself of egoism, jealousy and hatred. This elimination cannot be achieved by mere study of books. Constant effort is required. By cultivating love and dedicating all actions to God, these evil traits have to be got rid of. As long as jealousy remains, to the slightest extent, it will destroy every good quality in us. That is why the Geetha teaches that the total elimination of jealousy is a primary requisite for the *saadhak* (spiritual aspirant).

It is only when one's daily life is governed by the cultivation of virtues and the promotion of an environment conducive to spiritual effort will it be possible to grasp the meaning of Self-realisation. The Over-Soul is subtle and all-pervading. Its effulgence is everywhere. It is not embodied in any particular object. It shines everywhere. There is light in this hall. What is the source of this light? It is the lamp that is burning somewhere. The flame of the lamp has a form. But the light emanating from it has no form. The *Aathma* (Divinity) has effulgence but has no form or name. It can assume any name or form. Forms and names are sustained by the *Aathma*.

There is an electric bulb which gives light. An electric fan produces breeze. Different machines are operated by electricity. All these appliances are varied in their forms and functions. But the power that makes them function is one and the same. Likewise, the *Aathma-Principle* demonstrates its oneness in all the myriad entities in which it assumes various forms and names. Just as there are bulbs with varying wattage and serving different purposes, there are differences among living beings. But the current running through all the different bulbs is the same. The variations in the amount of light that comes from them are due to differences in the capacity of the bulbs. Likewise one who 'is filled with love shines radiantly. One lacking in love resembles a dim light. To get more light the bulb has to be changed, not the current.

Death is sweeter than the blindness of ignorance

God is the embodiment of Love. If you wish to experience God, you have to fill yourselves with love. Through Love alone can you experience the embodiment of Love that is God. The man filled with jealousy and hatred is like a blind man who cannot see the sun however brightly he may shine. He cannot see God however near God may be. Blinded by ignorance, the man filled with jealousy and hatred cannot hope to see God, like a blind man groping for something which **is** near him. The man filled with good qualities like truth, love, absence of jealousy, ego and hatred, can see God without searching for Him. He becomes a *Jnaani* (a man of spiritual wisdom). It has been well said: Death is sweeter than the blindness of ignorance.

Students, who have to develop their character and conduct during their youth, should give no room for evil traits like jealousy. They must feel happy when other students do well in studies or sports. To feel jealous towards a student who has come first is a threefold offence. The first offence is one's neglect of studies; the second offence is to entertain jealousy towards the better student; and the third is to lament over one's own failure. Students should not have such narrow ideas. They should learn a lesson from Dhuryodhana's fate. Because of his hatred and jealousy towards the Paandavas, he brought about the complete ruin of himself and his family.

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The significance of yajna, dhama and thapas (sacrifice, self-control and penance), of sahana, saadhana, samyama (forbearance, spiritual discipline and restraint), of the great Mahaavaakyas (Vedhic dicta) enshrined in the Vedhas, of the three Yogas bhakthi, karma and jnaana-- s elaborated in the Geetha, of the Dhaivi and Asuri (godly and demonic) natures--all these and many more of the fundamentals of Indian culture have to be taught to the children in schools and colleges. They must be encouraged to practise them, for their own as well as for the country's good.

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