

14. The five-letter Mantra

MAN is the only being endowed with the unique weapon of the mind. Whoever is able to master it will be victorious in life. A slave of the mind cannot achieve happiness or peace.

The body with all the sense organs, made up of the five elements, is the dwelling which the mind has established for its fulfilment. It is like an armour. The mind is the basis for the body. It is the cause of all worldly activities and experiences. A body without the mind is like a school without a teacher, a crop withering for lack of water, a temple without a deity, an electric wire without the current--utterly useless and lifeless.

Men are generally prone to regard the mind as intimately bound to the body. Believing that the body, a composite of the five elements, is real and permanent, they devote all their time and actions to its well-being. Life is wasted in pursuing mundane objects. The highest realisation consists in using the *Buddhi* (intelligence) to acquire *Vignana* (the higher wisdom) and conquering the mind through that wisdom. The Upanishad declares: "*Prajnaanam Brahma*" (Realisation of *Brahman* is the highest wisdom). This consummation is attained only through *Sathsankalpas* (good thoughts).

Sathsankalpas constitute the most precious possession. They are charged with immense power, purity and divinity. They are life-giving and life-sustaining. They will yield the desired fruits according to the way they are used.

Transformation of sinners to Saints

The mind, it should be noted, is not like a blank paper. It is a palimpsest which carries on it the imprint of the experiences and actions of many past lives. It manifests as a reflection of the *Atma* (spirit). *The Atma + the Mind = Man. Man - Mind = Atma.* The mind is the cause of man's bondage or liberation. If man can fill himself with good thoughts in any situation, his life will become sanctified. Hence, it is necessary for everyone to see how he can cultivate good thoughts and make them govern his life and actions.

The prime requisite for the cultivation of good thoughts is *sathsang* (association with good people). The scriptures have expatiated on the value of good company with appropriate examples. Ratnakara was a highway robber who supported his family by attacking wayfarers and robbing them of their possessions. Such a person was so completely transformed by association with the seven great sages (*Saptarishis--Vasishta* and others) that he later became Valmiki, the great *Adi Kavi*, who wrote the epic "*Ramayana*". Not only was he the first among poets, but he achieved the same status as the sage Vyasa. The Seven Sages hailed Valmiki as *Sloka daata* (the giver of the sloka), coming after the *Lok-daata* Bhagavan, (the giver of all things).

Another example: During Buddha's time, there was a very cruel and wicked man known as Angulimala. Like Ratnakara, he was also engaged in waylaying travellers, robbing them of their wealth and cutting off their thumbs to use them as a necklace round his neck. The Buddha was able to reform even such a cruel man and turn him into a spiritual seeker.

Power of faith

Gauraanga belonged to a community called *Jagaayi-Maadhayi*, who were noted for the wicked ways and their cruelty. Through his association with holy men, he became a great devotee of the Lord and acquired the appellation *Chaitanya* (as he was always immersed in Krishna Consciousness). He devoted his entire life to glorifying God in song and dance.

Thus through all ages there have been men who have been transformed into saints and sages by associating with good and holy men. Coming to more recent times, we have many good examples. In Tamilnadu, some decades ago, there was a young lad, belonging to a poor Brahmin family. At that time Gandhiji was emerging as the leader of the national struggle for freedom. Everyone was talking about the lawyer who was voicing the country's aspirations and demonstrating its determination to win freedom from foreign rule. The Brahmin boy's mother was keen that her son should become a lawyer like Gandhiji. She told him: "My dear son! You should study like Gandhi and try to relieve the sufferings of the poor. You must become a great hero like him. You must adhere to *Dharma* and fight for justice." From that day, the young lad devoted himself to his studies remembering his mother's advice. He resolved to become a lawyer and serve the poor and the distressed. He overcame innumerable difficulties and handicaps. As he could not afford lamps at home, he used to study under street lamps and prepare for his examinations. Often he had to go without food. Once, on the eve of an examination, he was studying under a street lamp when he felt drowsy. As he could not afford a cup of tea--though it cost very little those days--he washed his face with cold water from a tap and continued his study. He passed the law examination with distinction.

Need for faith in God and good resolution

He always kept in mind his resolve to live up to his mother's words. He worked with several seniors at the Bar, picked up practice and progressed as lawyer. He had a deep faith in God. Whatever difficulties he encountered, he regarded them as intended by Providence for his own good. Because of his faith in God and association with good men, a great change occurred in his career. He was appointed Judge of the Madras High Court--the first Indian to be chosen for that honour. It was a fitting recognition for his character and abilities. Such was the career of T.Muthuswamy Iyer.

When devotion to God is coupled with good resolutions, anything can be accomplished. As in the case of Muthuswamy Iyer, there are instances of young men in other countries who started their careers to earn a living by polishing shoes or selling newspapers or washing dishes in hotels, but who rose to high positions because of their good resolutions and their unswerving faith in God. Some of them became great scholars and led dedicated lives.

Man has unlimited potentialities

In Britain, there was a poor lad who used to make a living by writing addresses on covers for illiterate persons and to give tuitions to children. Each time he wrote an address, he used to say: "May God bless you." He used to tell the young children before they went back to their homes after their lessons: "May God shower His grace on you." He had firm faith that some day God would raise him to a position where he would be able to render service to the people. He always told his young students: "Have faith in God." He himself had firm faith in God.

In course of time, he became the Prime Minister of Britain. He was James Ramsay MacDonald. From a poor address writer to the Prime Ministership of Great Britain--what a change in fortune wrought by the grace of God!

The union of good resolutions with faith in God is like the coming together of the positive and negative ends of electric wires; through this combination, any great thing can be accomplished.

We do not realise the unlimited potentialities of man. Not only in respect of his physical form, but also in regard to his intelligence, man is far above all other beings on earth. He can achieve whatever he wills to do. He can even become the master of the world. But superficially man appears as weakling. The life of man is subject to certain limitations. However intelligent one may be, one should not forget that one's life is governed by these limitations. One should use the intelligence one is endowed with, within the limits inherent in the human condition, to lead an exemplary, ideal life. If the intelligence is not properly used life becomes futile.

Talents are misused for selfish purposes

Owing to absence of right thinking and right attitudes, the powers of the intellect are being misused now. Talents are being employed for selfish purposes. Though man has prodigious intellectual ability, it is being used for wrong purposes. Self-interest and self-centredness are distorting men's outlook and leading them astray from the righteous path. Truth and integrity are at a discount. Moral standards are declining. Caste and credal differences are mushrooming. Parochial differences are breeding mortal enmity and hatred. The spiritual consciousness is weakening. Envy and hatred are reigning supreme. Fear of sin has given place to fondness for sin. Anything spiritual is viewed with levity.

What is the reason for all this? Absorbed in sensual desires and worldly pursuits man has lost all sense of morality and goodness. He has lost sight of his own divine nature. Greed has turned man against man. Bad thoughts and ill-conceived desires have wrought havoc.

Concerted efforts must be made to change this situation by influencing men's thoughts and attitudes. The primary requisite is to develop the will power of people along right lines. When the will power (*ichhasakti*) is developed, other powers like discrimination, intelligence, retentivity, articulation, analysis, contemplation and creative action, can be developed. Without a strong will, nothing can be accomplished. Will power is needed to get rid of entrenched habits like smoking. Through will power, desires of all kinds can be brought under control. The ancient sages were able to conquer all desires by austere penance, renouncing all worldly objects. The will should be directed towards God.

Deepen your faith in God

Faith in God is the bed-rock on which one's life should be built. All the scriptures one may read, all the rituals one may practise, the mastery of the Upanishads or the Gita, will be of no avail if there is no deep faith in God. They will be mere physical or intellectual exercises only. They may even strengthen the delusions regarding the body-mind complex.

Deepen your faith in God. Without God how can all the marvels in the cosmos be accounted for? By whose power are millions of stars held in their places? How does the earth turn on its axis without an axle? How does the wind blow to give gratuitous comfort to one and all? These phenomena are beyond human power. All these are the work of the unseen Power acting from behind the screen. It is the Unseen that sustains the seen. It is the power of God.

Eight types of *Gurus* and their functions

Today is the sacred day of *Guru Poornima*. Bharatiyas have held the view that one should try to sublimate one's life by seeking a *Guru* and acting according to his teachings. There are eight types of *Gurus*: 1) *Bodha Guru*; 2) *Veda Guru*; 3) *Nishiddha Guru*; 4) *Kaamyā Guru*; 5) *Vaachaka Guru*; 6) *Soochaka Guru*; 7) *Kaarana Guru*; 8) *Vihita Guru*.

Bodha Guru teaches the *Sastras* and encourages the pupil to act upto *sastraic* injunctions.

The Veda Guru imparts the inner meaning of *the Vedas*, establishes the pupil in spiritual truths and turns his mind towards God.

The Nishiddha Guru imparts knowledge about rites and duties and shows how one's welfare here and in the hereafter, can be ensured.

The Kaamyaa Guru makes one engage himself in meritorious deeds to secure happiness in both the worlds.

The Vaachaka Guru imparts knowledge of *Yoga* and prepares the disciple for the spiritual life.

The Soochaka Guru teaches how the senses are to be controlled through various types of discipline.

The Kaarana Guru reveals the unity of the *jivi and the Atma*.

The Vihita Guru clears all doubts, purifies the mind and shows how Self-realisation can be attained.

Of these eight *Gurus*, *the Kaarana Guru* is the foremost. Through various teachings and practices, he helps the individual to progress from the human to the divine consciousness. Only the divine can act as such a teacher. All other *Gurus* can be helpful only to a limited extent. There are, moreover, persons who claim to be *Gurus*, but who are really after the disciple's money. They trade in *mantras* and *tantras*. Self-realisation is not to be got through *mantras or tantras*. Only by the purification of the mind can the Omni-self be realised.

God is present in everyone

"Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagath" (The Universe is permeated by Vishnu). *"Sarvam Brahmamayam Jagath"* (Everything in the Cosmos is *Brahmam*). Vishnu and *Brahmam* refer to one and the same, Universal Consciousness which pervades everything in the Cosmos.

The Divine is present in everyone. Holding firmly to this belief, one should not cause harm to anyone because he would be causing harm to God who is present in everyone. Today we talk about peace in the world. How can that peace be found outside? It has to be found inside you. How can you find peace in a world which is in 'pieces'? Holding the atom bomb in one hand, is there any meaning in talking about peace? When you are haunted by fear how can you have peace?

You can have real peace only when you throw away the atom bomb. Real peace can come only when thoughts about the world are replaced by thoughts of God. God is the author and the guarantor of peace. Only when we rely on God can we have genuine peace.

"God is"--the powerful five-letter *mantra*

On this *Guru Poornima* day I do not intend to give you any *Ashtakshari* (eight letter) or *Panchaakshari* (five-letter) *mantra* based on any particular deity's name. Nor am I enjoining you to study any Upanishad, or the Gita or the *Brahma Sutras*. There is a simple five-letter pronouncement. "God is" (*"Devudunnaadu,"* in Telugu). Make this your sheet-anchor. If you go on reciting it, thinking over it, acting up to it and conveying it to others, immersing yourself in

the bliss of this experience, you will be making the greatest contribution to the welfare of the world. (Swami recited a poem on the glories of God's creation to prove "*Devudunnaadu*").

Consider this *mantra* as the message for this *Guru Poornima* and proclaim it in all circumstances and at all places with all the conviction and strength you can command. The world can be turned into an earthly paradise if you strengthen your faith in God and demonstrate it in your actions. You must have the courage and determination to face any kind of problems and difficulties. By propagating this *mantra* you can promote the love of God and the fear of sin among the people. The *mantra* "God is" can be more powerful than a *mantra* based on any particular deity's name. Moreover, mere repetition of any *mantra* is of little use. Greater than the power of *mantra* or *yantra* is the power of a pure heart (*chithasuddhi*). Your faith must stem from the heart, which is the seat of the Divine.

In the Gita, the Lord has revealed in which part of the body the Divine resides. He has declared that taking the form of Vaiswanara, the Lord enters the body of every being to consume food and digest it. This means that the divine dwells in the stomach, digests whatever food is taken and supplies nourishment to all parts of the body. If bad food is eaten, the effects will be bad. The digestive energy turns our pure or impure, products in the system according to the nature of the food supplied to it.

Keep the five-letter *mantra* as constant companion

Spiritual disciplines determine the character of a person. Character determines the destiny--- whether good or bad. Character is built up by constant practice of good actions. Actions, in their turn are based on one's thoughts and intentions. Whenever any thought arises in the mind, one should examine whether it is right or wrong, whether it will do good to society or cause harm to it. Actions should be based on such enquiry. It would be wrong to blame anyone for our misfortunes. Our thoughts and actions alone are responsible for our plight. If one entertains pure thoughts and does all actions with firm faith in God, he will be favoured with God's Grace.

Have this five-letter *mantra* as your constant companion and strengthen your faith in God. This will lead in due course to God-realisation. Unwavering faith in God will promote *Atma-sakti* (spiritual power) and confer indescribable bliss. Doubts should not be allowed to sprout. Faith is essential for accomplishing anything in life. Without faith, even ordinary things in life are not possible.

From today, develop your faith in God; engage yourselves in dedicated service to society and make your lives purposeful and helpful to those in distress or need. Remember that whomsoever you may serve, you are serving God. This is my benediction for all of you.

Discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on Guru Poornima day, 21-7-1986.

Who is a real friend? It is said that a friend is one who helps you when you are in need. What is real help? Is it to help you to go to the cinema? There are two qualities that a friend should possess. He should be like the sandals that protect the feet, like the eyelids that protect the eye. A true friend is one who always protects you from danger and keeps you safe from all evil. The kind of pal who tells you how to get away from police is not a real friend. A real friend is one who sees to it that right from the beginning you don't

get into any kind of trouble by ending into evil company and getting lured into committing wrong deeds.

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