

11. "Seek Ye First"

All worldly pleasures are transient and temporary. Very often they result in sorrow and disappointment. God alone is the source of enduring bliss. The purpose of human birth is to realise the inherent divinity in man.

Once a great Maharaja (ruler) held a big exhibition of paintings and art products. The finest works of art were on display. The exhibition was open to one and all. The Maharaja announced that anyone could walk in and take away whatever one liked. Large numbers of men and women went to the exhibition and took back with them whatever they fancied.

Among them was a lady. She saw everything in the exhibition. She came out through the main door without taking anything with her. The Maharaja noticed that of all the persons visiting the exhibition she was the only one to come out empty-handed. He was curious to know what the reason for this was. He asked the lady: "Madam, how is it you have found nothing to interest you in the exhibition? There are so many attractive things on display. Was there nothing that pleased you?" She replied: "There are innumerable desirable things in the exhibition." The Maharaja asked: "But was there nothing which you wanted?" "No," she said. The Maharaja said: "If that is so, tell me what you desire and I shall give it to you." She said: "Maharaja, will you promise to give me what I want? Is your offer genuine? Will you keep your word?" "Certainly," replied the Maharaja. "If that is so, I want only you," said the lady. True to his word the Maharaja surrendered himself to her. When the Maharaja himself became hers, all that was in the exhibition also became hers.

The whole Universe can become yours

This cosmos is a vast exhibition. It is the creation of the Lord. All are entering this exhibition and taking whatever they choose. Some seek jobs, others wealth and so on. They are content to take objects of their choice. But no one asks the question: "Swami!. If I take away one thing or another, what is it that I gain? If You become mine all these will become mine." When you have entered the Cosmic exhibition, you must seek the Divine. Then, the whole universe becomes yours. You must seek that which is lasting and unchanging. There is no meaning in going after one thing after another. There is no end to that process. There is no satisfaction in that. What you acquire today, loses its charm the next day and you desire something new. But once the Divine is attained, all things are obtained.

In the cosmic exhibition, you are seeing, hearing and experiencing innumerable things. You experience depression, confusion and disappointment. You have no contentment. "*Asanrupto nijo nashtah.*" (Lack of contentment is the true loss). The man who is not content is continually experiencing loss. There is no limit to desires. One feels hungry, another is thirsty. If the thirsty man is offered water, he is not satisfied, he wants a cool drink. When he is given a cool drink, he is not satisfied, he wants ice cream. And so on. He is not satisfied with anything.

There is no end to desires for material things in the world. To get rid of these desires, man must turn his mind towards God. That is the way to achieve contentment and lasting bliss.

Discourse to the students of the Sathya Sai Institute at Nandanavanam, Ooty, 16 Apr 1988

Many people think of God only when grief overtakes them; of course, it is good to do so; it is better than seeking the help of those who are equally liable to grief. But, it is infinitely better to think of God in grief and in joy, in peace and strife, in all weathers. The proof of the rain is in the wetness of the ground, the proof of Bhakti is the Shanthi the Bhakta has--Shanthi that protects him against the onslaughts of success as well as failure, fame and dishonour, gain and loss.

Sathya Sai Baba