

17. Man, the mind and the *Aathma*

STUDENTS and Teachers! Man struggles hard ceaselessly night and day for the sake of bodily pleasures. One who recognises that the *Aathma* (Spirit) is distinct from the body will not be a prey to any troubles. If, indeed, every person in the world recognizes the nature and purpose of human existence, these difficulties will not arise. The Upanishaths declare that if one, who is born as a human, grows up as a human in society, does not know the meaning of the term. *maanava* (man), he is worse than birds and beasts.

Humanness is a marvellous thing. It is boundless. It is significant. The term "man" does not refer only to the physical body. A human being is a composite of body, mind and *Aathma*. To perform with the body, to understand them through the mind, and to have the *Aathma* as a witness to both these---these three constitute *Maanavathvam* (human existence). Action, Awareness and Realisation--these three manifest the inner meaning of human life.

It is a sheer ignorance to equate human existence with the body alone. Students have to understand at the outset how a man should grasp the nature and aim of human existence and have to lead a meaningful life.

First of all, there is the mind. Only the one with a mind can be called man. "As a man thinketh, so he becomes."

The five sheaths that envelop man

Man is enveloped by five sheaths: *Annamaya* (Food), *Praanamaya* (the Life Force), *Manomaya* (the Mental), *Vijnaanamaya* (the Integral Consciousness) and the *Aanandhamaya* (the Blissful). The physical body is sustained by food. Hence it is called *sthuula shareera* (the gross body). Next comes the *Suukshma shareera* (subtle body) which is covered by three sheaths of Life-force, Mind and Integral Consciousness. This subtle body is the basis for the pleasures and pains experienced by man. All experiences of man are based on this subtle body.

Next comes *Aanandhamaya Kosha* (the sheath of Bliss). It is the base for the entire Cosmos. The Cosmic Consciousness that is present in the bodily sheath is called "body consciousness." This means that even in the gross body, *Chaithanyam* (consciousness) is present. The consciousness that is present in the *Praanamaya Kosha* (The sheath of the Life Principle) not only indicates the life-principle, but also proclaims the basis of the vital force.

The third is the *Aathmik* Principle, which illumines the *mind*--*Manomaya Kosha*. The fourth is the consciousness in the *Vijnaanamaya Kosha*. This is the basis for the entire Cosmos. It is called *Chith*, the all-pervading Cosmic Consciousness

Transcending all these is the Pure Divine Self--the Supreme *Purusha*. This is the source of all power. It is the embodiment of the Infinite Will. This is the power that protects the Cosmos. The ancient sages strove to explore the nature of the *Aanandhamaya Kosha* (the sheath of Bliss). They sought to discover how they can experience Bliss.

Maanava* means *Aathma

To begin with, the meaning of the term *Maanava* (man) has to be properly understood. It means *Aathma* (the Self). It is from the *Aathma* that the five basic elements (ether, air, fire, water and the earth) have emerged. Man has brought under his control these five elements. Thereby he has become their master. Failing to comprehend the basic nature of human existence, man today has

become a slave of his senses. The *Vedhaantha* has declared that one can know everything if he knows his own reality. To discover who you are, you have to rid yourself of the external vision. All the experiences based on the sense perceptions are external impressions. These are merely reflections of internal responses. To regard these as real and permanent and to ignore the Divine, which is the permanent entity, is the cause of man wasting his life. Hence, man has to utilise the mind to realise his divinity.

The mind is the cause (bestower) of man's joys and sorrows. It is also the means of man's *Mukthi* (liberation). It is the mind which leads man to progress from the human to the Divine and forget the ephemeral world. The very name, *Nara*, for man implies that he is imperishable. This is the *Aathmik* truth of man. Man, therefore, is not the body, but the immortal Self.

Four levels of functioning of the mind

The mind functions at four different levels. The first is Super Mind. The second is Higher Mind. The third is Illuminated Mind. The fourth is Over Mind. Man can comprehend his real human nature only when he understands these four states of the mind.

Super-Mind: An internal enquiry has to be made to understand this. This calls for turning the external vision inward. When this is done, it is realised that the physical body is inert. The mind is a reflecting mirror. *The Buddhi* (Intellect), *Chittha* (Will) and *Ahamkaara* (Ego) are aspects of the mind. All these are subject to change. But they are based on something that is unchanging. The first conclusion to be drawn from the internal enquiry is that there is an unchanging divine entity in man.

From this realisation, one proceeds to the awareness of a Cosmic Divine. This realisation comes out of the recognition that the Divine Consciousness experienced by the individual is also present in all other individuals. This is the Cosmic Power. The all-pervading Divine Power is one and the same. There is no second power. Bodies may be multifarious like electric bulbs. But the energy that makes them shine is one. When this truth is realised, you have the awareness of the Cosmic Divine.

It is not enough for one to realise his true Self. He cannot seek his individual salvation. He must experience the oneness that underlies the multiplicity in creation. Only when that oneness is realised can the true meaning of humanness be understood.

At present, all man's endeavours and enquiries are limited to exploring the physical, the vital and the mental. The journey ends there. Man has proceeded only upto the mind. But he has to go beyond it to the Over-Mind.

How far can the mind take you? It can take you upto the extent comprehending the *Jagath* (physical world). The mind is needed for understanding the variety of physical objects and phenomena in the world.

But as long as man confines himself to the powers of the mind he remains as a human being. But, to rise to a higher level, he has to become *Amanaska--one* who transcends the mind. He should progress towards the Super-Mind.

The limitless potencies that man possesses

The Super-Mind is related to the *Suukshma shareera* (subtle body). In the subtle body, the senses, the mind, the intellect, the will, the ego and the physical body are absent and only *Chethana-shakthi* (consciousness) is present. One has to proceed further to the *Kaarana*

shareera (the causal body). The Causal body contains the power which can control the body, the senses, the mind, etc.

This means that man possesses within himself all potencies, man's powers are limitless and astonishing. Nothing in the world is beyond his comprehension. Man today appears as a highly knowledgeable and vastly capable being. But these capacities only proclaim his powers over the physical forces of Nature. There is, however, an unseen, unknown, unmanifested infinite power within him. This is the Cosmic Power in man. It is all-pervasive. It is in every human being. Only when one goes by the form, there is an apparent distinction between the microcosm and the macrocosm, like the difference between the air in a balloon and the air in the vast atmosphere outside. But when the balloon bursts, the small air inside becomes one with the infinite air outside.

Human bodies are like the balloon. The infinite potency within each body is regarded-as-infinitesimally small. But this potency is a part of the universal Cosmic power.

"*Aanoraneeyaan Mahathomaheeyaan*" (minuter than the atom and vaster than the vastest), declares the Upanishath. But the power in both is the same.

However, though the thoughts of the mind, the actions of the body and the role of the *Aathma* as Witness appear as disparate, yet they are all integrally interrelated. The differences are in form, but the bliss that is experienced is one. Hence, the Upanishaths declared the truth of the One in the Many.

Humanness and divinity are same

Humanness is not separate from Divinity. Both are one. So, in the second stage, when you develop a broad vision, you experience the feeling of the oneness of the individual, of the Universe and God. This is called the Divine Universal Form. How do you cognise this? Not by perceiving the myriad diversities among objects, but by recognizing their underlying unity, the recognition of the divine in each of them. This means that human beings are not to be seen as so many innumerable separate entities. The *Chaithanya* (Consciousness) that is in each of them is one and the same Universal Consciousness. It is all-pervading. For example, the air that a man breathes is not exclusive to him. It is the same air that is breathed by others. The air that is all-pervading is inhaled by each according to his needs.

Judging himself by the limitations of his body, man considers himself a weak and powerless being. Once he is conscious of his Divinity; he will realise his boundless potentialities.

Cognition of inner reality

Therefore, the first requisite is for man to realise his divinity. The students have to find out who they are (their inner reality). Modern education, however, attempts to teach everything about the world except what they are. This is sheer ignorance. Along with the stupendous progress of science, there is a corresponding growth in ignorance. Such lopsided growth of science can only result in ignorance of the reality. As long as men are immersed in differences and discord, they are only steeped in ignorance.

Man must go beyond the lower mind to the Over-Mind. This is quite possible. There is nothing that is beyond human capacity if man has confidence in himself. But he is weighed down by the doubt whether he can accomplish anything great with his limited physical abilities. The body is finite, but man is not. When the limited body is placed next to the "I" (*Nenu*, in Telugu), the

individual is lost in the limitations of the body forgetting the potentialities of the Self (the "I"). All doubts in man arise from this error. Man has to realise the impermanence of the *dheha* (body) and the immortality of *Dhehi* (the Indwelling Spirit). That Spirit is the Divine.

The human body is called *Kshethra* because the Indwelling Divine is *Kshethrajna* (the Knower of the Field). He is the embodiment of the *Aathma*. Students should understand the nature of the *Kshethrajna*, the Divine Knower, within each of them. Students should have self-confidence. This means that they should get rid of the barrier that separates them from the Self, namely the body-consciousness. Then they will experience the bliss that is beyond all the sheaths enveloping the human body.

Students should realise the Cosmic power that is possessed by each individual. They should not be misled by the limitations of the form. If man did not possess great abilities, how could he have made so many wonderful discoveries?

Spiritual development needed

While man has made astonishing progress in science and technology--in the realms of nuclear energy and electronics--he has been steadily going down in the moral, social and spiritual spheres. You have economic development on one side. On the other, you have divisions of class, caste and creed, language and territory. Unrest among students is growing. It is the animal nature in man that breeds these divisions. There are in man four traits' the animal, the demonic, the human and the divine. Man is developing his intellectual abilities, but not his divine attributes.

Man has to develop faith in himself and in God this is the secret of greatness. Students should not consider themselves weak and imbecile beings. Rely on your Conscience and not on the impermanent body or the fickle mind. Make faith your life-breath.

***Aathma* is the source of all strength**

The Aathma (Conscience) is the source of all your strength. The reality is manifested in you by the "SOHAM" that is produced by every breath. This "SOHAM" is also known as *Hamsa Gaayathri*. *Hamsa* (the Swan) is credited with the capacity to separate the milk from the water with which it is mixed. *Hamsa Gaayathri* is recited to separate the body-consciousness from the *Aathma*.

Gaayathri signifies the mastery over the senses. *Gaayathri* has two other names--Saavithri and Sarasvathi. Saavithri is the master of life. Sarasvathi is the presiding deity for *Vaak* (speech). The *Gaayathri manthra*, "*Bhur-Bhuvah-Suvah*," refers to the *body--Bhur, life--Bhuvah and Awareness---Suvah*. "*Bhur-Bhuvah-Suvah*" does not refer to three worlds outside man. All the three are in him. Hence, man is not an ordinary being. He is *Chaithanya-Svaruupa* (the embodiment of the Cosmic Divine Consciousness).

This jewel of divinity is being bartered away by man for petty carnal pleasures. This is totally wrong. If one recognises his godliness, he will be engaged in godly' actions. This transformation must be effected in human attitudes. Man should transcend the mind and reach t. he state of *integral--Chith*. It is total comprehension of humanness. Out of that comprehension emerges *Aanandha* (Bliss).

All the discord and violence in the world are due to differences arising from selfishness- This selfishness should go. This calls for adherence to universal truth, which is common to all humanity and valid for all time and places.

The ancient sages proclaimed two eternal verities: "*Sathyam Vadha' Dharmam Chara*" (Speak the Truth; Adhere to Righteousness). These were regarded as two eyes for man. Today man has lost these eyes and is helpless. Man has to realise that he has emanated from the Divine *Aathma*.

Students should develop a universal outlook and seek to serve all without regard to race or religion. That is the true purport of education. It must lend to realisation of the Self that is in everyone. Education should lead to elevation of the consciousness. Make use of Summer Course for the purification of your minds so that you may lead selfless lives. For this, there is no other path but the Spiritual.

Discourse at the Institute Auditorium, Brindhaavan on the occasion of the inauguration of the Summer School on 20-5-1993.

Service without the idea of self is the very first step in the spiritual progress of man.

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