

23. As you sow, so shall you reap

ALL the pains and pleasures man experiences are the results of his own actions and not due to any act of the Divine. God is only a witness. God is like a postman. He delivers to you whatever letter is addressed to you. The grief or joy you derive from the contents of the letter are your own. Likewise the suffering or happiness one experiences are the results of one's own bad or good deeds and are not derived from God.

However, there is the operation of special grace on certain occasions. When you pray to God with a pure heart, without a trace of selfishness and with sacred feelings, God confers special favour. Moreover, when a person has done some unique act of sacrifice in a previous life or at any time in the past, the Divine confers an appropriate reward for it at the proper time.

Krishna came to the rescue of Dhraupadi when Dhuryodhana attempted to disrobe her, by making her sari endless, in return for the readiness with which Draupadi tore off a piece from her sari to bind the bleeding finger of Krishna.

The spontaneous magnanimity of Karna

Even a noble and large-hearted hero like Karna became an accomplice of the wicked Kauravas because of his association with them. Students should avoid bad company. To illustrate the spontaneous magnanimity of Karna I would relate an episode where Krishna had contrived to bring home to Arjuna the extent to which Karna was prepared to sacrifice himself to satisfy any one who came to him for help. Krishna assumed the form of a *Brahmana* and came to Karna on the battlefield asking for some gold. As the only way he could satisfy the *Brahmana* was to pull out his two golden teeth to give them to him, Karna did not hesitate to do so. He got them washed in Ganga water aiming an arrow at the ground and making the river spout forth. Arjuna, who had a high opinion of his own prowess and devotion to Krishna, felt humbled at the sight of Karna's boundless generosity.

The ways of the Divine should be properly understood. God exists not for one nation or one community. God incarnates on earth for the benefit of all mankind. Each one gets the reward according to his deserts, As are his actions, so are the fruits thereof. Hence before doing anything, one should consider whether it is right or wrong. One should see that no harm occurs to anyone on account of one's actions. This is not easy for one who is attached to the pleasures of the body. All sorrow is related to the body and worldly desires. You experience desires in the waking state. In the *sushupti* (deep sleep) state one is totally unaware of even the body and of the phenomenal world. Hence there is no sorrow in that state.

Rely primarily on the power of the Divine

By constant contemplation on God the mind should be turned away from mundane desires That is the way to get rid of both pain and pleasure. Man has to make up from the sleep of ignorance and realise his divine essence *Sath-Chith-Anandha*. To the extent worldly desires are reduced, to the same extent bliss will be experienced. Simultaneously with the control of desires men should also get rid of Ahamkaara (egoism).

Men today are filled with fear because they have no confidence in themselves. A bird can brave a storm because it has faith in its wings. But man succumbs to the slightest reverses of fortune because he does not rely on the power of the Spirit. People must rely primarily on the power of

the Divine. With confidence in the Self, they should devote themselves to good deeds. This is the purpose of life. Every step you take must bring you nearer to God.

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