

26. Good Company Enables You To Retain Your Goodness

Just as a rat gets trapped in the cage because it is unable to resist the temptation of the bait in the cage, so also man loses the great happiness and bliss that comes out of the knowledge of Brahman, unable to give up his wanting to enjoy the many sensuous attractions of this world.

Prema Swarupas:

A human being is like a seed. As a seed grows into a plant after sprouting, as the plant becomes a tree when it becomes bigger, so also a human being is born, then he grows and changes and transforms, acquires the fullness of human nature and ultimately, through various stages, will reach his destination.

Man has got two kinds of knowledge. One type of knowledge is that which relates to the day-to-day world. The second type of knowledge relates to the higher world, the world of spirit. The first has been described as that which helps you to carry on your daily life or earn your livelihood. The second one takes you to the ultimate destination, the objective of all life. By using the knowledge which relates to the world, you can carry on your daily life. By such a process, you generally enhance your reputation and your position in the society in which you live. You also use this knowledge in order to fulfil your responsibilities and your duties. It can also be described as the knowledge which enables you to live

peacefully in the surround-ing world. By this means, you can acquire the ability and strength to live well.

The second type of knowledge which relates to the higher world, the world of spirit, enables you to answer questions like, Who am I? Why have I come here? What is the basis of life? What is the secret of my birth? and so on. To enable you to answer such questions, we use the second type of knowledge. To answer these questions, you have to see the oneness in all creation. The worldly knowledge and spiritual knowledge are really one and the same and are inextricably connected with each other. They are like two faces of the same coin. They are like two wings of one bird. They are like the two wheels of a cart, and you must understand that these two are not distinct or separate. We should co-ordinate these two branches of knowledge and see the connection between them and conduct our life accordingly.

Although we are deeply involved in matters relating to the day-to-day material world, we should remember always our connection with the world of the spirit, and carry on our work with full knowledge of the world of the spirit. Several times we see a woman who returns home with a pot full of water on her head, yet keeping her balance. So also man, although in-volved in fulfilling his daily commitments and duties in the material world, should keep his attention, at all times, fixed on the matters of spirit and maintain his equanimity.

While a dancer is dancing, she carefully moves her limbs according to the rhythm and yet she pays great attention to the essentials of her dance. So also, man, fulfilling his daily duties and doing his daily work, must yet keep his attention fully focused on spiritual matters. That kind of attention has

become very rare these days and we do not find it even as an example to cite.

Even an individual engaged in *dhyana* begins to think of so many things, and cannot concentrate his attention on the objective. His attention wavers. This is simply the result of weakness in one's own devotion. If one's faith is strong, there will be no doubt whatsoever in being able to acquire such concentration.

The citizens of Bharath have learned to worship people. They have not learnt to understand them. They are worshipping *Avathars* like Rama and Krishna, in the faith that God is born in human form in this world when such an *Avathar* appears. They have not understood that Rama, Krishna and *Avathars* like that are only ideal examples of human individuals. Such divine people who are born in the community constitute ideal examples of human beings, and the moment we learn to practise what they demonstrate, we should have learnt and understood them. A weak person who is not in a position to understand even human nature and human aspects, how is he going to understand the aspects of divine nature? It is only when we can understand Rama, Krishna, etc., as ideal human examples, can we elevate them to the position of divine *Avathars*.

Today, we are worshipping such *Avathars* in the form of idols and photographs; but we are not following the ideals they gave us. As we have learnt to accept that the *Avathar* and the Godhead are identical, so also we should accept that the ideals they have set for us should be practised.

Unfortunately, today we are addressing an *Avathar* as God. We keep on repeating the word 'God' and we worship

Him, but we do not accept His commands and His statements. We simply keep them aside. That kind of worship, which is not accompanied by practice, should be regarded as mere exhibitionism and not devotion.

In this world, a large proportion of people want to look for an easy path. They want to enjoy happiness without any effort. Without making any effort and without practising true *sadhana*, nothing can be achieved. They are unable to recognise this basic fact. Like dogs which compete with each other and run away with a small quantity of food, these opportunists compete with each other, and they do everything to snatch an opportunity and run away with it.

Man has lost the ability to discriminate between the permanent and impermanent things. Because of the absence of such discriminating power, man simply gets excited and acts in a state of excitement. They are not even able to recognise that excitement is a weakness in them. If their desires and their ambitions are fulfilled, they are happy and contented. If their desires and their ambitions are not fulfilled, they get excited. They do not even try to find out the reason why their desires have not been fulfilled.

At first, they should enquire whether the desires and the ambition which they have, are those which they need and are good for them. Unable to have the discriminating power, they develop desires which they should not develop. When such desires are not fulfilled, they begin to accuse God and put the blame on Him. Such people feel very happy if they get what they want and are constantly giving trouble and harm to other people. Such people always look down but they never look up. Without taking any trouble and without making any effort, they want to get things which do not belong to them. How can

people, who have such bad qualities, ever take a path which is beneficial and healthy? Truly, young people like you should recognise the two great and sacred qualities of morality and sacrifice. So long as we hanker after things which are material and which are around us, our condition will be like what it is. We should make an attempt to understand and enquire into questions like, who is man? What is the purpose for which he has come into this world? We keep on talking about sacrifice. We repeat the words *prema* and *ahimsa*, but do not really practise them. We pretend to have faith in God. We keep on expressing and announcing that we have faith in God. If really you have faith in God, you will not do such things. Whatever one does, appears to be done only for the purpose of promoting his own selfish interest or the selfish interest of his own family. He has a narrow mind and has not got in his mind the aspect of selfless work and wanting to do something useful for others.

There are many unfortunate people who are not able to utilise the sacred opportunities that come their way. For one who cannot enjoy happiness and bliss, what does it matter what opportunity he gets? For a dog which can only lap out water, what is the use of a river with a large quantity of flowing water? We really get many sacred opportunities on occasions in our life. Without using those opportunities and discussing their values, we waste our time and our life.

Students:

For the past one month, you have learnt many things which are necessary for a man to live happily. Things that you have listened to in the past one month, and situations that you have now come across and seen, should get imprinted in your minds permanently. Only then, will you be able to follow the sacred path; and your life can be an ideal example to others.

There is a small example for this: It is quite common that either in excitement or in a state of temporary happiness, people take a different view at the moment. This can be called a temporary or transient type of *vairagya*. There was a person in Northern India who was running a flour mill. Once he went to a place where a good *Hari Katha* was being told. The author of the *Hari Katha*, the story of devotion to God, stated in the very beginning that there is no gift greater than the gift of food. He also asked, is there a God who is greater than mother or father? Is there any moral conduct nobler than following truth? Is there any *dharma* greater than you showing kindness where it is needed? Is there anything more profitable than keeping company with good people? Is there a greater enemy than anger itself? Is there a disease for a human being worse than being indebted? Is there any wealth which is better than continued reputation? He further stated that the consequences of giving food to a hungry man will be such that great good will come out of them.

The owner of the flour mill, after listening to these statements, returned home and thought that by giving food to needy people, he will benefit by some good consequences and started action that very day. While doing this, he had a very narrow and sinister idea. He had a lot of wheat flour which was rotting for several months in storehouses. He started taking out that wheat flour and making some bread out of it so that he can distribute it to poor people. The rotten flour was so bad that even ants and insects would not care to eat it. The wife of the owner of the mill was a very good lady. She was also a very devoted person. She, in many ways, was telling her husband, "What is the use and what is the purpose of distributing such wheat flour? We have so much flour in our mill. Why don't you take the good flour and feed only a few people? Why give

bad flour to many people?” But these words did not make any impression on the householder.

She was waiting for a good opportunity to teach her husband a lesson and when the opportunity came one day, she prepared bread with the same rotten wheat flour and put it in her husband's plate when he came to eat. He was very angry and very excited. She used good and soft words and she explained to her husband by saying that whatever work is done, the consequences of such work will have to be accepted by us either in heaven or in hell. The kind of seed which we plant, will determine the nature of the plant that will come out. She said, “The kind of gift which you are giving these days is very bad, and the consequences of such wicked acts of yours will take you to hell, and there they will undertake to give you this kind of bread. When such a situation comes about, you will have to eat such rotten bread for the first time. It will be difficult for you to do so, and it is better to accustom yourself to eating rotten bread from now on. For you, to get good bread at that time will be impossible. In order to give you that practice, from now onwards I am giving you such bread.”

The work that we do today will determine the consequences that we will enjoy in the future. You must do good work and get good out of it. Can we plant the seeds of lemon and expect to get mangoes? Can we expect to plant the seeds of mango and get lemons out of that tree? It is right conduct for a human being to recognise this and promote sacred ideas, sacred thoughts and do sacred work now, so that he may reap the sacred fruit in future.

Students:

By tomorrow, all our programmes will have been gone through and you have to return to your own places. When you

go back to your places, in order that you may be able to show your life as a sacred ideal example, you will have to collect and acquire the strength here. If your thoughts remain sacred only so long as you are here and when you go back, depending upon that environment, if your thoughts and ideals change, truly you have not acquired anything of a lasting nature.

When your parents see you, they should see the transformation in you and be very happy. All the bad ideas and the old thoughts should have left you. If damaged and dilapidated cars go to a workshop and return from the workshop in the same dilapidated condition, what is the use of taking them to the work-shop? At least from today, all the bolts, nuts and screws that have ceased to work in you should be left in Brindavan, and you should reappear outside with new bolts, new nuts and new screws. By such a change of ideas in your heart, you should set an example so that people with whom you come in contact should also be able to change their habits.

Students:

What we talk of as a present-day world is not permanent. This is purely a *mithya*. We do not know when and at what moment and in what way, our end will come. For the satisfaction of such a transient human body, we are devoting all our resources, all our energies. Whatever we may acquire, all those acquisitions have to be given up some day or other. Whether we live or whether we die, we should carry a name which is full of reputation. What remains permanently in this world is only your name and reputation. Do not let yourself be subdued by the thoughts. I will do this, I will do that, I will acquire this and I will acquire that. These are simply imaginary words spoken in the air. You must make good use of the time

that has been given to you by living in this society and by doing service to the people in the country.

For having joined the Summer Classes and for having spent your time in this sacred environment, the sacredness of the environment should permanently get imprinted in your mind.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

There is no need to establish a new society. It is our duty to recognise what good already exists in us. Sai organisations have no selfish interest in them. They want to help all religions and all *jivas*. They are acceptable to everyone. They have not been established for the sake of promoting a name. It is not as if there are no individuals in the organisation who are selfish. But you should not care for such people and such ideas. You should become selfless and should join the organisation with a selfless spirit. So long as you are in this environment, you may feel that these are very sacred and good ideas. The moment you go outside and enter the external world, it becomes different. Your ideas are bound to change when you go out. But when the company outside is also good, then it is possible for you to retain these sacred ideals for longer periods.

There is a small example. If you have a pot made up of mud containing water and if you store it for sometime, you will find that in a few days, some of the water will get evaporated. The reason for this is that this pot of mud will exude the water to some extent. It exudes the water because the external environment of this pot is very dry. On the other hand, if this pot which is full of water is stored in an environment of water, this water is not going to be exuded. In the same manner, when you have filled the pot of your heart with spiritual essence, even though you were non-believers in the beginning, because

of that spiritual essence in the pot of your heart, you have enjoyed an environment which is full of spirituality. If you then go into an environment which is full of spiritual essence, your faith and belief will not get evaporated. If this can be done for a few years continuously, thereafter, there is no danger of the essence in your heart being diluted.

You are still young. In your young minds, there is a tendency to waver a little. If one wants to explain the nature of a young man, it can be compared to the behaviour of one hundred monkeys. Taking this into consideration, when you go back, you should join the Sai Organisation and in that good company, you should do good to the rest of the world.