

Faith in oneself and in the scriptures

Many people are disheartened by the fear that such merger is beyond their reach in this *Kali* age (the era we are now in), however much they may try. But this is a kind of weakness, and nothing more. It is not a question of the path of communion (*yoga*) adopted; whatever the path, if one has faith in oneself and faith in the scriptures, the goal is bound to be won. Some pretend to have faith in both, all the while doubting them in the heart of hearts. Each one can discover for themselves the measure of their faith by the results. If the experience of merger is absent, it is due to the absence of these two kinds of faith. They must be in one, as the very breath of existence. Only then can one succeed in spiritual practice and attain union (*aikya*).

Of course, those without faith are without anything. They cannot benefit by advice. The present state of affairs is due to men losing faith in themselves and in the scriptures. Even those who claim to have faith do not conduct themselves according to the scriptures and nourish them. Consequently, goodness and purity (*sathwic* quality) have gone out of the world, and wicked habits and degradation have gained the upper hand. If this atmosphere is to be transformed, and if the world is to enjoy security and peace, every pious God-fearing person (*asthika*) must cultivate faith in themselves and in the scriptures and practise in their own life the disciplines enjoined in the scriptures.

Naturally, some modifications may have to be made out of consideration for the place, the time, and the individual, but the fundamental outlook and significant meaning should not be changed. The means by which those ideals are to be reached may be changed, but not the ideals themselves.

Suppose a child refuses to swallow a pill when it is in bed suffering from fever and clamours for a banana instead. Do you know what to do? Don't omit the pill; instead, insert the pill inside the banana and offer it to the child to be swallowed. Its desire is satisfied, and also the fever comes down. The fundamental has not been discarded; it has remained unchanged. Only the method of administering it has been modified.

So too, in the midst of the crazy habits and behaviors of today, there is no use presenting the scriptures in a language that is unfamiliar to most people. The scriptures can be explained in easy, understandable language, and the fundamentals will not be affected by this. Then, the scriptures can be practised, understood, experienced, and enjoyed. Consequently, faith in the scriptures will also be strengthened, and peace will also be stabilized upon faith. So, every believer (*asthika*) must practise the important directions of the scriptures and demonstrate in their life the sweetness of such a dedicated life, so that all others might appreciate the truth and value of the ideals and disciplines.

Big personages, claiming to be great, declaim about the *Vedas*, the scriptures, and the *Atma*. They freely quote the similes and metaphors contained in the books, but, by their conduct, they diminish their lustre. When the eyes are closed, of what use is it to fill the rest of the body with vital consciousness? Not even a single step can be taken forward. Similarly, with the eye of faith in the scriptures closed, what can one practise if asked to carry on?

Therefore, from today on, readers who are aspirants in the spiritual plane should try to grasp the basic meaning of the scriptures. They are a sacred guide along the road. If the scriptures are not believed, the reality will elude them. To understand the meaning, one must have peace and fortitude. Peace is of great assistance in this. If only the great personages would explain the scriptures in simple, easily understandable language to the ignorant, then discontent and disquiet would disappear and belief in God would increase. Harmony would grow between people. Nourishing the scriptures will promote the nourishment of the welfare of the world.

To nourish the scriptures, speak the truth (*sathyam vada*); to nourish the world, speak pleasantly (*priyam vada*). If these two maxims are kept in view and practised, no greater discipline is needed. It is only in an atmosphere of peace that such sacred maxims can be put into action.

To earn that calmness, steady effort and harmony are essential, in the same manner as for nourishing the scripture and the world. When peace is acquired, then all is equanimity (*sama-rasa*). Equanimity is the very nature of peace. Everyone should be endowed with that peace and that equanimity and should establish an age of belief devoid of non-scriptural behaviour, attitude, conduct, habits, and character.

For this purpose, an army of spiritual aspirants has to be trained in ashrams and centres of piety. This is the responsibility mainly of those who run the ashrams, for they must have faith in themselves in order to train the army along sound lines. Otherwise, things will get more confounded. The elders and the "great", the so-called big personages, are responsible by their practices for the evident loss of faith in scriptures and oneself and the consequent discord and disquiet. Hence, they must all gird up their loins to reestablish and restore peace.

Devotion is the very fountainhead of this peace, so if everyone plants it in their heart and nourishes it with care and constant attention, a harvest of goodness and harmony can be reaped. The path of devotion is the best, under present conditions.

That is why the *Bhagavatha* is saturated with devotion. Without devotion, the Lord cannot be understood. Divine power (*sakthi*), however high and mighty, has to assume the human form itself if it intends to protect and foster the world. That form alone will be suitable for all to listen to, learn from, honour, and serve. Those without devotion will take that form as merely human, for they cannot grasp the absolute or Supreme reality principle (*Para-thathwa*). This is why it is said in the *Gita*:

The foolish disregard me when I assume human form, not understanding my higher nature as the great Lord of beings.

Avajaananthi maam muudha maanusheemthanumaasritham, Param bhaavam ajaanantho mama bhuthamaheswaram.

Men are failing to keep steady faith in such invaluable declarations; this is the worst sacrilege.