

10. Enjoyment through sacrifice

The entire cosmos was created from Truth;

It is sustained by Truth and merges in Truth;

Know ye, that this Truth is the

Immaculate Reality pervading Everything in the Universe.

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love. Ekam Sath Vipraah bahudhaa Vadanthi" (The Reality is one, the wise speak about It in many ways). Although the Truth is one, the sages used to give it different names. Truth is not any one's private property. It is not related to any one nation, nor to any particular faith. Nor is it related to a specific time. Truth transcends the bounds of space, time, religion and country. In adhering to Truth, people of all countries, of all religions and of all times, have equal right. Truth does not follow anyone. Every human being has to follow Truth.

The primal grandsire of humanity, Manu, expounded this Truth. Because man is a descendant of Manu he is termed *Manuja* (the offspring of Manu). Manu laid down the rule that man should be prepared even to sacrifice his life for the cause of Truth. But owing to the ravages of time, place and circumstances, we are witnessing the opposite of Manu's injunction. For today's man, falsehood has become sweet and pleasing. Truth has become repugnant.

All things emanate from Truth

Man today is making all efforts to understand innumerable things, but makes no attempt to know the basic Truth. All enjoyable and pleasurable things come from Truth. In ancient times, the rulers reigned over their kingdoms on the basis of Truth. They held fast to the dictum: "Truth is character. Truth is the religion. Truth is life itself. Truth is penance. Truth is God." Man's weakness today is proclaimed by his failure to adhere to this eternal Truth and by his pursuit of ephemeral and unreal things.

Manu gave to the world yet another profound declaration: "*Sathyam brooyaath, Priyam brooyaath. Na brooyaath sathyam-apriyam*" (Utter the Truth. Say what is pleasing. Never tell what is truthful but unpleasant). This means that you should not speak an untruth because it may be pleasing to one. Nor should you speak out the truth when it is likely to hurt a person's feelings. Every man should speak the truth, but it should be truth that is pleasing. In the Gita it has been stated: "*Anudvegakaram vaakyam Sathyam Priyahitham cha yath*" (In speech, the words should not cause any excitement, they should be true, pleasing and well-meaning).

When you see a blind man, you know that he is blind. This is true. But because it is true, if you hail him as: "Oh blind man!," you will be causing him pain. As soon as he hears the word "blind," he feels distressed. No doubt what was said was true, but it distressed the hearer. Likewise, on seeing a lame man, if you accost him as "Oh lame man," you will be causing him pain. In the name of truth, one should not utter words which cause pain to others.

When a person's conduct is not proper, he is bound to lose his inherent nature. Hence, if one seeks to develop his essential human qualities, he must follow the path of truth and love.

Karma is the basis for Jnana

The Upanishads are like the crown for the *Vedas*. Among the *Upanishads* the *Isaavaasyopanishad* is foremost. This *Upanishad* is in the form of *mantras* in the *Sukla Yajur Veda*. Upto the 39th canto, the *Yajur Veda* is concerned with the *Karma Marga* (the path of rituals). From the 40th canto, the exposition of the *Jnana Marga* (the path of Supreme Knowledge) begins. This canto starts with the *Isopanishad*. *Jnana* presides over *Karma*. *Karma* is the basis for *Jnana*. The *Upanishads* seek to reconcile and coordinate the *Karma and Jnana* paths.

Man has to perform the actions ordained for him by the scriptures. Good actions have to be performed with good intentions. No room should be given for the desire that the doer alone should enjoy the fruits of his actions. Nor should he entertain the conceit that it is because of his actions that certain results have been achieved. This sort of egoism should go. Such attachments and egoistic feelings result in bondage.

How to combine bhoga and thyaga

The Isaavaasyopanishad declares that whatever *bhoga* (pleasures) one wants to enjoy, he should do so in a spirit of renunciation. In daily life, enjoyment and renunciation do not go together. The *thyagi* (renunciant) is not interested in enjoyment of sensual pleasures. *The bhogi* (the pleasure-seeker) will not think of renunciation. In such a situation, how is it possible to combine enjoyment of pleasures with renunciation or sacrifice? It is in this context that the *Isaavaasyopanishad* has declared that when every action is free from the sense of *Ahamkara* (egoistic doership) and all enjoyment is free from attachment or desire, there will be no difference between enjoyment and renunciation. Hence any enjoyment associated with the ego and with attachment will be enjoyment without sacrifice. When ego and attachment are absent, the actions are free from self-interest and hence are tantamount to acts of sacrifice.

Every man, therefore, should perform actions according to the prescribed rules and lay no claim to the fruits of those actions. This is the spiritual teaching of the *Isaavaasyopanishad*.

The Upanishad also demonstrated that actions performed in this spirit transform *bhoga* (enjoyment) into *yoga*. *Yoga* is the divine culmination of the results of spiritual exercises and disciplines.

True meaning of Yogakshemam

In the *Gita*, Sri Krishna declared: "*Yogakshemam Vahaamyaham*." In ordinary parlance *yogakshemam* is understood as referring to the well-being derived from the family, possessions and pleasurable objects. To apply the term *yoga* to such mundane benefits is totally inappropriate. *Yoga* is the state that is realised by one who, born as a human being, engages himself in various spiritual exercises to experience the transcendental Divinity. *Yoga* thus means the attainment of that Divinity which is not easily attainable. It refers to the envisioning of that which is beyond the physical vision.

Yoga means experiencing that Divine, which is not visible to the eye, or audible to the ear, is beyond the reach of the mind and the heart, by a process of spiritual discipline. It is the process of making manifest in one's experience the unmanifested divinity.

Kshema means safeguarding the *yogic* experience which has been realised through spiritual efforts. *Yogakshema*, therefore, means acquiring experience of the transcendental Divine and

endeavouring to preserve it. Such a transcendental experience may be described as *bhoga* (enjoyment) associated with *thyaga* (sacrifice).

It is essential for man to pursue *Yoga* associated with *Thyaga*. It is only through such sacrifice that the Divine can manifest in man. Hence man should strive to realise the Divine by not ignoring the message of the *Upanishads*.

Man is not merely a composite expression of body, mind and spirit. He has what is known as *Prajna-sakti*, the faculty of "Constant integrated Awareness." Everyone should take note of this *Prajna-sakti*. This "awareness" pervades the body, the mind and the *Antahkarana* (the inner instrument). What is *Antahkarana*? It is the combined expression of the mind, the *Buddhi* (intellect), the *Chitta* (will) and the *Ahamkara* (ego). The mind is the instrument of continuous thought. "*Sankalpavikalpaatmah manah*" (The mind is the repository of thoughts and doubts). If you take a piece of cloth, you find that it has threads in its warp and woof. The mind is like that cloth. If you remove the threads from the warp, there will be no cloth. Likewise, when thoughts are removed the mind will be functionless. This process has been described as going beyond the mind.

The different facets of the mind

Chitta is concerned with *chinta* (contemplation). *Buddhi* (intellect) is the power of discrimination. It is the Divine faculty by which one determines what is transient and what is permanent. *Ahamkara* is the identification of one's self with the bodily form. To regard the body as himself is *Ahamkara*. Hence, the mind, the intellect, the will and the ego are all different facets of the mind. The different terms relate to the different roles played by the mind. *Antahkarana* does not refer to something distinct.

All our sense organs are externally visible and function externally: the eyes, the ears, etc. The mind, the intellect and the will operate internally and are internal instruments. Therefore, they are called *Antahkarana* (internal instruments). By renouncing the responses of the internal organs, the enjoyment of objects perceived by the external senses becomes a form of sacrifice. Hence, the first task is to purify the *Antahkarana*. This purification process calls for appropriate action. The *Chitta* cannot be purified except through right action. "*Chithasya suddhaye karmah*," declares the *Veda*. *Karma* (the prescribed actions) have to be done for purifying the mind. This means that one's *Satkarmas* (good actions) should be performed without the desire for the fruits thereof. There should be no trace of self-interest. This has been described as *Nishkama Karma* (desireless action). This is also termed enjoyment coupled with renunciation.

The Isaavaasyopanishad has expounded this form of action in various ways. One should not refrain from action. Man has been endowed with a body for performing actions. Right action renders Time itself holy. Time is associated with *karthavyam* (duties). Proper use of Time, right action and the performance of one's duties together constitute the primary goal of human life.

Use the body in the service of the Lord

As against this truth, how is man utilising his life today? Perpetually he is steeped in selfish and self-centred pursuits. How, then, can he experience the enjoyment associated with sacrifice? Such selfishness converts *bhoga* (enjoyment) into a *roga* (malady). Man should aim at becoming a *yogi* and not a *bhogi* (pleasure-seeker). What really constitutes pleasure? Is it eating, drinking and indulging in sensual enjoyment? For protecting the body, food is doubtless necessary.

Raiment is needed for protection against cold. But beyond these basic needs, to pamper the body is futile as it is essentially composed, of decaying elements. Instead of pampering the body, man should use it in the service of the Lord.

In a sense, man is filled with diseases of every kind. Hunger is a disease for which the remedy is food. Thirst is a disease for which the cure is water. Even the desire for happiness is a disease. And the remedy for it is right action and chanting the name of the Lord. Man should seek to overcome *roga* (the diseases to which he is subject) by resorting to *Yoga* (spiritual discipline). The *sastras* have declared that the man who takes only one meal a day is a *yogi*. The man who takes two meals a day is *bhogi* (pleasure-lover). But the man who eats three times a day is a *rogi* (a sick man). One who eats four times a day is a living corpse. People spend most of their time in actions to fill the stomach and not in efforts to lead a happy and sublime life.

Students! All things in the world are perishable including the body. But there is something which endures even after death. These are the ideals for which one has lived. You must all strive to lead ideal lives. It is these ideals which remain enshrined in the hearts of the people over generations.

Experience real joy in sacrifice

You must understand that when you limit your desires, keep the welfare of society in view, and seek to discharge your duties, you will be realizing the objective of combining enjoyment with sacrifice. In fact, the bliss that is derived when one renders service to others is beyond measure. It is by such sacrifice that real joy is experienced. When anything is done in expectation of a return, such joy cannot be got.

Bear in mind two things. You must forget the good you have done to others. Remembrance of such good deeds gives rise to expectations of return or a feeling of envy. The other thing which you should forget is the harm done by others to you. Brooding over the harm done by others will only give rise to feelings of hatred and retaliation. Forgetting then and there the harm done by others will free the mind from evil thoughts.

The Bharatiya tradition has been based on four basic beliefs: (1) Every action has its inescapable results. (2) Belief in the role of *Avatars*. (3) No one can escape from the consequences of his actions. (4) A firm belief that there is something sacred in everything in the world. Purity, patience and perseverance are the requisites for accomplishing anything. Cultivate these three qualities. Students must embark on this exercise from now on and develop the habit of combining pleasure with sacrifice.

The more you give, the more you grow

The true secret of enjoyment lies in sacrifice. Sacrifice has also been declared to be the only means of achieving immortality. Giving up what is taken in is a law of life. It applies to breathing, food and other things. Likewise, the wealth which one acquires should also be given back to society. Wealth includes not only riches, but every other form of acquisition including knowledge, scholarship, and skills of various kinds. The knowledge you have acquired through education should be imparted to others. It is by such sharing that your education gets enriched and purposeful. If you do not impart the knowledge you possess, it becomes useless. This means that the more you give, the more you grow.

Students! You are mostly interested in the process of development in life. But you should remember that simultaneously there is a process of decay at work. Every day that passes brings

the ultimate end of life nearer. Hence everyone should seek to perform all his duties every day. Ramakrishna Paramahansa devoted his entire time from sunrise to late in the night on the contemplation of the Divine form of the Lord. Before going to bed he would look here and there and feel that yet another day had gone by without his having the vision of the Lord. Thus every moment of every day he experienced the anguish of lacking the vision of the Divine. The ancient sages experienced similar anguish in their penance for realisation of the Divine.

Good actions and good thoughts are necessary to achieve realisation of the *Atma*. Our body is like a wall clock. It is when a large number of good acts are done by the body, represented by the movements of the second hand in the clock, that the mind, represented by the minute hand, moves once. It is when the mind engages itself in pure thoughts that the *Atma* (the hour hand) experiences bliss.

Seek to experience the Divine bliss

There are three basic things in the world: the earth, space, and light. These three are essential for sustaining the individual *jivi*. Water and air provide the food. Without these five, life will be impossible. Where there is the *Atma*, you will find water and air. The *Atma* can exist without water or air, but water and air cannot exist without the *Atma* (the Divine). The *Atma* is eternal, immaculate, effulgent and all-pervading. It is not dependent on anything. It sustains and supports everything. The five basic elements are sustained by the *Atma*. They proclaim the glory of the *Paramatma* (Supreme). Every moment we enjoy the benefits derived from the five elements. If we have no air to breathe, we will be suffocated. Air is present all around us, but it is not visible to the eyes, nor can it be grasped by the hand.

The Divine is equally all-pervading, but cannot be seen or held. It can only be experienced like sugar dissolved in water which cannot be seen or taken out, but can be tasted. When you experience the Divine by *sadhana*, it is equivalent to direct perception. Embarking on the process of Self-realisation, seeking to experience Divine bliss, performing the spiritual exercises prescribed for getting near to the Lord and merging in Him, when you develop selfless love, only then the Divine, who is the very embodiment of Love, will be experienced. Love will not grow in a field barren of love. Where love does not grow, the fruits of love cannot be gathered. That was why the *gopis* prayed to Krishna to shower the nectar of His love on their parched hearts by playing on His flute.

Students! Illumine the entire world with the light of your love. Today the world is devoid of love. There is hatred between man and man. The world has to be redeemed through love.

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