28. Truth and Faith

SATHYAM *Jnanam, Anantham Brahma.* (Truth, Wisdom, Beginning-less and Endless *Brahma). Brahmam* manifested first as *Akasa* (Space); the *Akasa* concretised *as Vayu* (the Atmosphere); the Atmosphere revealed the Fire characterised by Warmth and Energy; fire yielded water; from water, solid matter, earth was produced. Plants grew on earth and fostered man with food. This chain links man with *Brahmam* and persistently draws man up to his distant source.

The gross body of man sustained by food encases the subtle mental and the subtler intellect enclosing the still subtler, *Ananda,* the deepest delight, the innermost urge in man. The progress from the gross corporeal body, which depends on food through the incorporeal sheaths of *Prana,* Mind and intellect until the *Ananda* core is the summum bonum of human existence.

Living beings concern themselves, mostly with only the food sheath, the breath sheath and the mental sheath, they do not have the capacity to transcend the vagaries and volitions of the mind and the memories stored therein. They are promoted more by instinct and impulse, rather than by intellect, which enables one to discriminate and discard what is harmful and hollow. Man alone can exercise this faculty and decide on a course of action which can lead him *to Ananda.*

Great need to cultivate a broad outlook

But, man seldom uses this faculty or benefits by it. He gets lost in a maze of multiplying desires and earns, instead of *Ananda,* frustration and despair. The Ananda (Bliss), for which he is equipped and entitled, eludes him. *Ananda* is Divine. Caught in the turbulence of the worldly stream, he ignores and forgets his inherent hunger and the need to acquire the awareness of the Divinity within.

The destiny of a nation or community is dependent on the moral fibre of the people. Their character must be deep-rooted in Faith and in Truth: Truth must be revealed as unity of Thought, Word and Deed. Jesus emphasised in his teachings the importance of Faith and the damage and the danger of hypocrisy. Joining both palms together and offering *namsakar* is an act of dedication of one's thought and speech. The greeting "Salaam" too is a symbol of surrendering all three.

Christ proclaimed that God is all powerful and omnipresent, the One without a second. His teachings have to be interpreted, understood and followed from the universal point of view. This concept of God should not be narrowed down in an exclusive attitude of mind. There is great need, in a world broken into racial and religious units, to cultivate a broad outlook and large hearted attitudes. Narrow loyalties cause friction and conflict. This is the primary message of Jesus. It grew in him by stages. He looked upon himself, at first, only as a Messenger of God. Later, sensing closer relationship with God, he announced himself as the Son of God. As the awareness of Self developed, through contacts and meditation, he realised his identity with God, and he could assert, "I and my Father are One."

Path of Love is a means of merger

Jesus advised one of his foremost disciples, Peter to live in love, for Love is God. Man can experience God only when he becomes the embodiment of Love, which doesn't seek anything or expect even gratitude in return, Love which becomes sacrifice and service, spontaneously. When Peter listened to such exhortations from the Master, he found a new joy welling up within him and a new meaning in the word joy. 'J' meant Jesus and the letter directed him to love Jesus first.

'O' meant others who must be loved next. 'Y' meant yourself who ought to be loved only last. But, look at the human condition today. Man loves himself first, others next and Jesus last!

When God occupies the mind, the objective world or nature which is only the product of the mind loses its validity and man, the wave on the ocean, lapses in his source. The individual self and the omniself merge in Unity. Every religion seeks to present this basic truth about God, Nature and Man. Every creed is in essence highlighting this fact and the path of Love as the means of merger. So one must respect all creeds and faiths. They are beacons of light guiding pilgrims along the many paths to the Universal Absolute.

Welcome the chance for sacrificing

The three major paths are known as *Karma, Bhakti and Jnana.* There are many rivers in this land which act as channels for carrying life blood to the valleys and plains, like the Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri. Of these, Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswathi have symbolised, since ages, the three spiritual paths to God-realisation. The Ganga represents *Nishkama Karma* or *Karma Yoga* (selfless activity). The Yamuna proclaims the glory of Divine Love, or the path of *Bhakti.* Saraswathi which flows underground, unseen represents the *Jnana Marga,* or the path of relentless inquiry unto the reality. The goal of the inquiry is the discovery of the One without *a second--Adwaitha Darsanam, Jnanam--of* the unity that appears as Diversity. The junction of these three rivers summarises for every child of Bharath, his three duties to himself--disinterested service to fellow-men as an inescapable obligation, dedication and devotion towards God and achievement of constant awareness of the One that manifests as many.

The body is the temple of God and therefore it has to be maintained, unsuffered by disease and distress. It 'has not been offered to man for catering to one's selfish vagaries. Jesus sanctified his body by sacrificing it for saving others. He was conscious of that supreme purpose and duty. With faith in the one-ness of humanity, he stood against opponents and critics and confronted their onslaughts. Every saint an. d prophet who strove to uplift the downtrodden and open the eyes of the blind to. the splendour of God and Grace, had to be ready and willing for the ultimate sacrifice. One has to expect trouble and welcome the chance for sacrificing all that one clings to, while one is upholding Truth and righteousness. Faith in God is the bedrock that can save man from downfall.

When Rama was exiled into the forest, he paid no consideration to the privations he had to encounter there. He was so devoted to *Dharma* that he was unaffected by events. He allowed the vicissitudes of life to flow along, without harming him. The Pandavas are examples to illustrate how calamities and crises can be overcome by faith in God and the equanimity it confers.

God is in search of the genuine devotee

Likewise, Jesus demonstrated and preached the power of faith and, ultimately, invited on himself the supreme sacrifice of life itself. When his disciples started abusing his tormentors, his voice warned them to desist. "All are one, my son! Be alike to everyone." By a vision he granted to Paul who was reviling him, he transformed him into a penitent disciple, full of faith and ardour.

It is only when we look upon the universe as permeated by God that we acquire the strength to fight the force, s of evil. Many persons who engage themselves in prayers and pilgrimages for years wonder why they have not been able to realise God. It is unnecessary to go round the world searching for God. God, is in search of the genuine devotee. The devotee who is conscious of the omnipresence of God will find Him everywhere. He must have the firm conviction that there is

no place where God is not present. That is the real mark of devotion. Meditation and prayer have value as means of purifying oneself. But they do not lead to God-realisation. Unwavering faith in God grants inexpressible Bliss. One should not give way to doubts which undermine faith.

The power of Love is infinite. It can conquer anything. Once while Lord Buddha was journeying, he was confronted by a demoness who threatened to kill him. Smilingly, Buddha said: "You are not a demon; you are a deity! I love you even if you behave like a demon." Hearing these loving words, the demoness turned into a dove and flew away. Love can change the heart of even an inveterate enemy. It is this kind of Universal love that should be cultivated by everyone. There are people professing different faiths in the world--Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Zorastrians and so on. There should be no difference or distrust amongst them, for all of them uphold Truth and *Dharma.*

It was to promote unity among people of different faiths that Guru Nanak started community *bhajans* which generate vibrations of harmony and peace.

Today, the world is bedevilled by conflict and violence. Peace and prosperity can emerge only when people turn to the path of love and morality and lead purposeful. lives. Regard yourselves as embodiments of Love and dedicate your lives like Jesus to the service of your fellow men.

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