

## **BESIDE, BEHIND, BEFORE**

Man is subject to sorrow, from birth to death; joy, or what he calls happiness is an interval between two sorrows, that is all. These sorrows arise as a result of three reasons: *Adhyatmik* (spiritual), *Adhidaiwik* (deific) and *Adhibhautik* (material). The material objects that one craves for, endeavours to acquire and laments when lost are all *Bhautik* and so, the sorrows that sprout out of them are defined as *Adhibhautik*. The senses are the instruments of cognition; one sees an object through the eyes. Yes, but not through the material eye, but with the eye operated by the deity that presides over it, namely, the Sun. You do not see in the dark! The Sun helps you to see; without Him, you are helpless! Each sense and limb, nerve and cell, joint and gland of the human body has a deity that activates it and is resident therein. If these deities are hostile or displeased, the body suffers and sorrow ensues. This is the second reason for misery; the *Adhidaivik*. Then, we have the Self—the witness of both inertia and activity, joy and sorrow, exultation and examination. When you ignore the existence of the Witness, when you divorce your daily life away from the awareness of that seat of peace, you invite sorrow to torment you. That is the *Adhyatmik* or the spiritual quality, the Cross that each man carries along the trail of Life.

### **Three Paths To Gain Awareness Of Divine**

It can be said that these three are the basic reasons for man's appearance and reappearance on earth, to unlearn the delusion and learn the lesson of Wisdom. When any *Mantra* is concluded, the reciter usually repeats, as you must have noticed, '*OmShantiShantiShanti*'—three *Shantis*! Why three? Why Om? Om is the designation of the Universal *Brahman*. Constant repetition of Om and intense meditation on its meaning are recommended for aspirants who seek cognition of the Indwelling Divine. *Shanti* means Peace; and Peace is invoked thrice, in order to allay the three sources of sorrow mentioned already, operating through the individual organism, the deities and the Cosmic Intelligence. There are three paths laid down for the awareness of the Immanence of the Divine: *Karma*, *Bhakti* and *Jnana*. These three are not distinct and diverse; they are composite and complementary. For example, you have the knowledge that Sai is everywhere, seeing all things and knowing every activity of yours. You are devoted to Sai and you are eager to be directed and follow the directions to the best of your ability. And, you desire to utilise the skill and efficiency you have earned for the service of others, because you feel that they are kinsmen of the Sai family, whether they know it or not. It is really very satisfying that you are rendering Seva to the people in various parts of this city, encouraging them along the Nine Directions to deepen their faith in God. Bhajans, study circles, the staging of plays, the singing of *Kirtans* in chorus by groups of devotees along the streets in the early morning hours, these are all commendable

activities. Also, the helpful activities of the Seva Dal. I find that a great deal of time is devoted to the cultivation of talents along fruitful channels of children in Bal Vihars; this is sure to kindle the flame of spiritual yearning in them and beautify their lives with the charm of joy later on.

### **Man Binds And Shackles Himself To Sorrow**

An enormous quantity of precious time is being frittered away now, by man in wasteful, even damaging, task. The effort that is undertaken for these tasks leads nowhere, they only deepen despair or darken the gloom, already filling the heart! People find time to queue up for hours before cinema booking booths or waiting for a bus to take them there! They have no time to spare, for attending a Bhajan session or to join a *Nagar Sankirtan* group! They have time to play cards and sit at the club table, chatting on trivialities for hours together. This is because people live only on the surface or bottom of things, they are either froth or dregs. They shirk responsibilities. They do not introspect, or think calmly of the end for which they are struggling frantically and flippantly. Examine this question, for example: Is man enslaved by external objects and the attraction they exercise over him, or, is it some inner impulse that urges him forward to shackle himself to sorrow? I shall give an example: There are professional monkey-catchers in the villages, who employ a crude device for the purpose. They place in the orchards or gardens infested by the marauders a number of narrow-necked earthen pots, with a handful of peanuts inside each. The monkey approaches the pot, knows that it has the delicious nuts inside, puts its long hand in and collects the nuts in its fist. Now, it finds it cannot take its arm out; the neck is too narrow for the nut-full fist! So, it sits helpless and forlorn and is easily caught and transported! It thinks that there is someone inside who is holding back its arm, when it tries to take it out! If only it had loosened the grip and got rid of the attachment to the nuts, it could have escaped! So too, you are the victims of desire and attachments that the desire entails. You are bound by the shackles you have yourselves fastened around you! Liberation too is in your own hands. Contemplate the unchanging Glory of God; then, the desire for the transient baubles of the earth will fade and you can be free.

### **Faith In God Has To Be Stable And Strong**

Ask anyone the question—How do you provide for yourself in your old age? The answer will be, *“O my son is well placed; I get the interest on my deposits; I have a pension; I have lands from which I can draw what I need,”* etc. But, no one answers, *“I rely on God!”* Without faith in God, without Divine help, how can any of these give succour during the stormy voyage through life’s declining years? Faith in God is the secure foundation on which hope has to be built. The faith has to be stable and strong. The feeling that God will come to our rescue has to be vivid and vital,

motivating and activating all that we do or speak or think. Service rendered to others in this spirit will be a great source of joy to you as well as to the recipient. First, you must engage yourself in *Karma-Jijnasa*, the discriminating selection of activity; then, you have to enter the region of *Dharma-Jijnasa*, the search for the eternal laws of the spirit that mould and shape the waves of consciousness. Last, you penetrate into the problems of liberation through *Brahma-Jijnasa*, the *Sadhana* that convinces you of the reality of the One and the unreality of multiplicity, the apparent world based on the real *Brahman*.

### **Train Yourself To Like What You Have To Do**

There is no doubt that volunteers, Seva Dal members, Bhajan leaders and participants, and everyone else who is engaged in the activities of the Sathya Sai Organisation are on this path, at different stages. Most of you are in the first stage, the *Karma-Jijnasa* stage, able to distinguish the right from the wrong so far as your activity is concerned. Nature, the Individual, and God – of these three entities, *Karma-Jijnasa* has to consider all three, whereas *Dharma- Jijnasa* has to do with the last two and *Brahma-Jijnasa* deals only with the last, viz. *Brahman*. Remember the last stage, even when you are in the first, for, that is the end of the journey, the Goal. When you have the Goal in view, wherever you are, it will fill you with genuine joy. Do not seek to do things that give you sensual or temporary satisfaction only. Do not crave to do what you like, but train yourself to like what you do, or what you have to do. It is *Sadhana* (spiritual discipline), when you willingly undertake work that promotes your real welfare. Then only can Nature and the individual self be eliminated and the *Brahman* alone established in the consciousness. Now, you have to cultivate the attitude of the servant of the Lord. Work is worship. In that spirit, you offer service to others, whom you have to adore as embodiments of God. It is this attitude that gives maximum satisfaction to the pining heart.

### **Basis Of Radha-Krishna Relationship**

Two *Gopis* were moving about on the sands of the Yamuna, talking about Krishna and lost in the contemplation of His Sports and His Majesty. Of them, Neeraja had a doubt suddenly arising in her mind, *“When I practise identity with Krishna and feel that I am Krishna, I am afraid that I will lose the thrill of being with Him, conversing with Him and hearing His sweet voice. I long to be distinct from Him, and to taste the Love and Glory that He is.”* Then, Sarala, her companion, consoled her and said, *“No! Your fears are baseless. For, Krishna too is contemplating on you and your purity. By the time you are transformed into Krishna on account of the Sadhana of identity, Krishna would have become ‘you’, as a result of His longing for you and so, there need not be any apprehension in your mind!”* Prakriti is *Dhara* (Earth, Creation). Think of it always. Long for it. Pine for *Dhara, Dhara, Dhara* and you find you are pining for Radha, Radha. So, Radha is the Becoming and Krishna is the Being; the

desire of the Being to become, the longing of the Became for the being—this is the Radha-Krishna relationship, which has been sung by seers and poets, condemned and caricatured by ignorant critics, appreciated and apprehended by aspirants, analysed and realised by sincere scholars of spiritual lore. You are the image of the Supreme *Atma*, the image that is reflected in the body that is part of *Prakriti* (Nature). Your body is kith and kin of all the objects that surround you in nature; your body is an object among so many. The original Divine Spirit, the individualised spirit, which is the image, and the objective world of which the body is a part—these are the three entities called *Ishwara-Jeeva-Prakriti*. Success in *Sadhana* is won the moment you are able to either deny the objective world as a Delusion or recognise it as nothing but the Supreme Spirit itself.

### **Purify The Mind To Cognise God In Everything**

In ordinary day-to-day arithmetic, three minus one is equal to two; but, in the arithmetic of the *Atma* the three (*Ishwara-Jeeva-Prakriti*) minus one (*Prakriti*) is equal to not two, but one (*Ishwara*) for, when the mirror (the *Prakriti*) goes, the image (*Jeeva*) also disappears! When the mirror is eliminated, two entities disappear, the mirror and the reflection it can cast. And you merge in the Divine! The path of *Seva* that you have chosen now will lead you gradually to the stage when the mirror can be transmuted beyond existence, by means of *Vairagya* (renunciation). When you see the Idol as God, you transmute the stone out of which it is calved, of which it is composed, out of existence; the stone has been eliminated, when you see only God in the shrine! Purify and cleanse the mind so that wherever you turn, not only in the shrine, not only in the idol, but, in everything, at all times, you will cognise only God; then, the mind becomes your best friend, your most efficient instrument of liberation. The mind plays infinite pranks, and so, it is labelled as an ape. There is another characterisation also, not so popular. It is referred to as a snake. For, it does not move straight. It sizzles over the earth, in a zig-zag course. The mind delights in crooked stratagems, and clever contrivances. It avoids the straight path of veracity and sincerity. Again the snake injects poison, and grabs living beings that come in its way. But, the mind-snake can be charmed into innocence. The snake charmer uses the *Nadaswara* instrument and when he blows music out of it, the snake sways its hood entranced; so too, the mind will sway in unison with the music that emanates from the *Namaswara*, the recitation of the Name of God! The mind projects on others its own defects and deficiencies. That is its deadliest effect on our progress. One has to overcome this nefarious tendency.

### **Inward Vision Alone Can Reveal The Truth**

The sage Paramananda had ten disciples, each a notorious example of sloth and stupidity! On their travels, they came across a river, which they waded through, to

the other bank. The water came up to their necks in some places, and so, when they struggled on to land, they decided to find out whether all had arrived safe together. They feared that some of them must have been swept away by the swift current. Fear and the consequent confusion heightened their native stupidity. At last, they discovered that one of them had been washed away, for, whenever each of the ten counted the others standing in a line before him, he left himself out and found only nine men before him. All ten confirmed the conclusion that one of them had disappeared in the flood! And, the ten wailed for the last man and were so plunged in sorrow that the hullabaloo they raised brought a farmer to their side. He asked them why and got the answer that of the ten who waded across, one was drowned! The farmer saw that there were ten men before him! They challenged his verdict and he demonstrated how they counted and verified that one had really been lost. The farmer told them that each one had omitted to count himself. *"The outward vision was wrong; the inward vision alone can reveal the truth,"* he advised them. We are trying to discover God searching for Him throughout the Universe, but, we omit to investigate His existence within ourselves, as the very core and keystone of our Being. When you discover yourself, all wailing ceases and you attain supreme happiness. This is real self-knowledge. You come to know that you are a spark of the Divine Flame. Very soon, you realise that others too are sparks from the self-same fire. How then can hate or anger or envy or greed survive in the sunlight of this Vision?

### **Have In View Always The Glory Of The Goal**

You are now having your feet on the very first rung of the ladder, which will take you to the heights of Bliss and Peace. The climb is arduous and full of the dangers of slips. But, you have to bear them in steady perseverance, having in view always the glory of the Goal. How much agony the stone has to suffer in order that it might be turned into an exquisite entrancing Idol! Even this chair was a block of misshapen wood; it was sawed, planed, cut, shaped, fixed and smoothened, and it suffered all that torture so that it could serve us and get the joy of the service. The saints Jayadeva, Tukaram, Kabir, Gauranga, Ramakrishna, Ramdas—all had to go through travail and tragedy, so that they could see God and merge in Him. They have won permanent niches in the temple of human memory. Take the instance of Pundalika. He had such impregnable faith in the *Vedic* injunction to revere the mother and the father (*Matru Devo Bhava; Pitru Devo Bhava*) that he refused to serve Lord Krishna when He appeared before him (as Vitthala) to shower His Grace; for, at that time, he was engaged in massaging the feet of his parents! He would not interrupt that service even for a split second to touch the Feet of the Lord. His Guru Tukaram came in at that moment and admonished him for being so adamant in the observance of the *Vedic* rule. *"My God is just now here, before me, asking that the feet be*

*massaged! Let this God who has come wait, until these Gods are served. This God has put in His appearance only now, but these have been with me ever since birth. I feel the Divine Presence in them every day of my life, and I recognise them as Divine!"* The service he rendered to his parents pleased Krishna so much that He stayed on, and still stays on at Pandharpur!

### **Experience The Divine In Yourselves First**

Before you experience the Divine in every being in the Universe and in every cell and storm, you have to experience It in yourselves. Each act, word and thought must be charged with that awareness. There was a millionaire once who was bothered by two aches, one in his stomach and the other in his head! He was diagnosed and treated. He was examined and treated by a galaxy of medical experts; he consumed heavy loads of drugs, and underwent hundreds of injections. But, the aches persisted, with greater vigour than over before! At last, a Swami (monk) arrived at the scene of his agony. He spoke very kindly to him, and pronounced the fault to be in his eye! Set right the eye, and the head on top and the stomach below would both behave very sweetly! To improve the eye, concentrate on only one colour. Concentrate on green, he suggested. Do not let your eyes fall on red or yellow, or any other colour. The millionaire got together a group of painters and purchased barrels of green colour and directed that every object on which his eye was likely to fall be painted thick green. Just as the *Ashtagraha* calamity (the ominous astrological phenomenon of eight heavenly bodies reaching a straight line in space, which was sought to be avoided by superstitious persons through ceremonials of exorcism) resulted in a rich harvest for priests, the millionaire's malady resulted in a rich harvest for paint craftsmen.

### **Clarify Your Eyes To See God In Everyone**

When the Swami came back to him after about ten days, the craftsmen ran toward him with a bucket of green paint, for he wore a red gown! He wondered why, and got the answer that their master dare not cast his eye on any colour other than green, lest the aches may return! The Swami reprimanded the patient, and said that he had wasted lakhs of rupees as a result of his monumental stupidity. *"If only you had purchased a pair of green spectacles, worth perhaps four rupees, you could have saved these walls and trees and pots and fans, and chairs and sofas and also a pretty large share of your fortune! You cannot paint the world green."* Change your vision, and the world will appear accordingly. Let the eye be charged with the Divine, it will see all as God. It is foolish to try to shape the world; shape yourself as the embodiment of Peace, Love and Reverence. Then, you will see all as Love and Compassion and Humility. Your work, as Seva Dal members and as volunteer helpers, must correct your vision; clarify your eyes, enable them to see God in everyone; then, that awareness will transmute every word, thought and deed of

yours into a benediction. Cleanse the heart, by listening to spiritual discourses; seeking the company and comradeship of the righteous, the simple, the sincere, the seekers; and by cultivating goodness of character and sweetness of disposition. Fill your hearts with the sweet fragrant waters of *Prema*. Then, every act of yours, every word of yours (which are like the water drawn from the tank through the taps – tongue, hand, brain, etc.) will be sweet and fragrant. If the tank is filled with pollution, how can the word be helpful or the thought beneficent or the deed commendable?

### **Seek Chances Of Helping Others**

Embodiments of the Divine! All these days, you discharged the duties willingly undertaken, in the right spirit and with real sincerity. I am very pleased with you. You can draw nearer to the Divine if you continue to mould your lives in the pattern, even after this urgency passes off. You are setting a good example to Sai volunteers in other parts of the country. Of course, something turns up now and then even in your work which is not quite up to the mark, some reservation, some twist or turn or speech or action, which had better not been! But, this is quite natural and can be corrected with some cautious watching. I know that you are serving with so much enthusiasm and joy, because it is Swami's work and Swami's service, in which you feel you are engaged. As a matter of fact, Dharmakshetra is yours, your own home. And, your hearts are My home! Swami will safeguard the purity of your heart which is His home! Now that you are carrying on this part of His Mission so satisfactorily, Swami will bless you with His Presence, around, beside, behind and before you. I shall be here again in the course of this year; for, I appreciate the work that you and all others connected with the Dharmakshetra are carrying on. Meanwhile, remember three things always: Continue Seva, wherever you are. Seek chances of helping others. Never lose an opportunity of using your skills and enthusiasm for the alleviation of sorrow, pain or distress. Again, do not omit to neglect or postpone your own particular spiritual Sadhana – study, *Japam*, *Dhyanam*, *Bhajan*, *NamaSankirtan*(recapitulation, meditation, group singing of the name and glory of God), and other such disciplines. Above all, have the faith that Swami is with you, at all times and all places.

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