

## Know Thyself

It is but natural to enquire about the name, village, address, etc. of a person with whom one has to travel or whom one has to accompany for some time. This acquaintance gives freedom from worry and at the same time paves the way for depending on mutual help in emergencies. A total stranger looks suspicious.

One's own entity always remains with oneself. Its physical and mental aspects are so close that they remain with the self round the clock whether one is awake or asleep. Wife is called by many epithets like life partner, better half of the husband, two bodies-one consciousness, etc. but, she too remains with the husband for a few hours that too at some distance from him. Children come near once in a while for specific purposes but they are considered one's very own and one has to share their pleasures and pains. A person is always worried about the future of his children and, as far as possible, plans ahead for it. It is strange that our inseparable instruments of expression like the body and the mind, which are always there with us, are neglected by us. Seldom one enquires about their purpose.

The soul has embodied itself in the material plane with some purpose. Do we understand the purpose and consciously and resolutely pursue it? Whenever a bungalow or a vehicle is given to an officer, he is told that these are to be used for official purposes and not for personal work. If any officer defaults and rents out a portion of his bungalow or uses his vehicle for private purposes, it would be considered immoral and willful infringement of the rules for personal gain and will attract suitable punishment.

Human life is precious. It is a unique, artistic creation of the Creator. Such a boon is not available to any other creature on the earth. No other creature is endowed with the faculty like the human intellect, or with two hands with ten fingers that can be creatively and dexterously used? Which other creatures have the ability to stand erect and walk on two feet? Who is capable of earning their livelihood and accumulating the surplus for later use? Which other creature uses clothes and houses? Who else other than man possesses the wisdom to develop an organized family and social order? Whose senses possess such sensitivity? Who possesses the intricately fashioned living garment like the human body? The fact that a human being has been blessed with special faculties sets him apart from other creatures. Thus it becomes evident that human life has been given to us for some specific purpose willed by God. We must concentrate on clearly understanding this purpose and then live life in the light of our true identity as a spark of Divinity. If appropriate efforts are not made to know our true selves through the special faculties and instruments gifted to us for this search by our Creator and we squander away these divine gifts in sense-gratification, it would be a betrayal of our spiritual inheritance leading to endless suffering and pain.

In order to get started on this pilgrimage of self-discovery, we will have to wake up out of the stupor of self-forgetfulness – Maya. Here is what Mahayogi Sri Aurobindo has said about self-effort in the path of self-discovery in his marvelously inspiring words:

"In all that is done in the universe, the Divine through his Shakti is behind all action but he is veiled by his Yoga Maya and works through the ego of the jiva in the lower nature.

In yoga also it is the Divine who is the sadhak and the sadhana; It is his Shakti with her light, power, knowledge, consciousness, Anand, acting upon the adhara and, when it is opened to her, pouring into it with these divine forces that makes the sadhana possible. But, so long as the lower nature is active the personal effort of the sadhak remains necessary.

The personal effort required is a triple labor of aspiration, rejection and surrender- an aspiration, vigilant, constant, unceasing- the mind's will, the heart's seeking, the assent of the vital being, the will to open and make plastic the physical consciousness and nature;

rejection of the movements of the lower nature- rejection of the mind's idea's, opinions, preferences, habits, constructions, so that the true knowledge may find free room in a silent mind,- rejection of the vital nature's desires, demands, cravings, sensations, passions, selfishness, pride, arrogance, lust, greed, jealousy, envy, hostility to the Truth, so that the true power and joy may pour from above into a calm, large, strong and consecrated vital being, - rejection of the physical nature's stupidity, doubt, disbelief, obscurity, obstinacy, pettiness, laziness, unwillingness to change, tamas, so that the true stability of Light, Power, Anand may establish itself in a body growing always more divine; surrender of oneself and all one is and has and every plane of the consciousness and every movement of the Divine and the Shakti.

In proportion as the surrender and self consecration progress the sadhak becomes conscious of the divine shakti doing the sadhana, pouring into him more and more of herself, founding in him the freedom and perfection of the divine nature. The more this conscious process replaces his own effort the more rapid and true becomes his progress but it cannot completely replace the necessity of personal effort until the surrender and consecration are pure and complete from top to bottom.

Note that a tamasic surrender refusing to fulfill the condition and calling on God to do everything and save one all the trouble and struggle is a deception and does not lead to freedom and perfection."

(From: The Mother p.8-11)

---

When American philosopher Thoreau was on his deathbed, his aunt came to meet him. She asked whether he had apologized to God for his sins and whether he had prayed for peace.

Thoreau smiled and said that he had never in his life diverted from the path of righteousness, as far as he remembered and that he had never infringed the Divine principles, hence there was no reason for him to tender an apology to God.