

### 38. Well or ill

The *Aarogyani layam* (hospital), whose anniversary we are celebrating today, is superfluous if the *Aanandanilayam* (the abode of bliss) is efficiently utilised by you, for when the mind is immersed in *Aananda*, the body will not suffer from illness. The body is the vehicle which you have to use for attaining the state of bliss and so, it has to be kept safe and strong for that high purpose. It is an instrument for spiritual effort, which has been earned by the merit of previous births. Every moment, it is proceeding towards dissolution and so time should not be wasted in vain pursuits. It is even better to think of the body as mean and low, rather than raise it to the level of the be-all and end-all of life. Treat it as a wound, which has to be covered by bandage (clothes), treated with drugs (food) and washed (drink); you can get rid of this inordinate attachment, only by that method.

You can get real urge and inspiration to serve others only when you get rid of the identification with the body. When a man suffers from acute stomach pain, his eyes water. Why? Because, the various organs---eye, stomach, etc.---are all of the same body. So too, when one man suffers, your eyes must shed tears and you must be urged to alleviate it. This will happen if you know that you and he are limbs of the self-same Divine Body. The idea of difference (*bheda bhaava*), arises on account of the ignorance of the Truth. When people get angry, they gnash their teeth, but, they take care not to bite the tongue, for the tongue is theirs; if by chance, the tongue is bit, they do not knock the teeth out, for the teeth is theirs. So too, the sick man, the poor man, the suffering man, the illiterate man, the wicked man, are all limbs of the same body, of which we too are parts. The same current activates all. To realise this and to merge in that Unity is the purpose of this life in the human body.

#### **The hall-mark of devotion**

For this consummation, the seeds of *vishaya vaasana* (attachment to sense-objects) have to be scrupulously got rid of. A field may look barren and dead; but the first shower of rain will convert it into a green carpet; the seeds of grass in the soil sprout at the touch of dampness. So too, at the first contact with temptation, the *vishaya vaasana* of people sprouts and prevents the growth of spiritual discipline.

To visualise the Lord as resident in all and as responsible for everything (for He is the Director of the Play) is the hall-mark of devotion. There was once a devotee who arranged in his house a week-long *Paaraayana* (reading with explanatory elaboration) of the Bhagavad Geetha. Every one thanked him for this signal service and complimented him on his devotion. On the second day, a cow died in his shed; he stopped the discourse, because he felt that the cow died as a consequence of the novel programme he had arranged. Now, what relation can there be between the death of the cow and the devotion of the man? The devotee must be free from worldly desire, from anxiety to preserve cattle and wealth, through his devotion. It is surrender to the Will of God, acceptance of whatever happens, in spite of the fullest utilisation of the faculties man is endowed with.

A devotee who was worshipping the Lord in the form of Shiva, and another, who was revering the Vishnu form met once and entered into conversation. The *Vishnubhaktha* moaned that those who worshipped Vishnu lost their properties, money, cattle, lands and houses for some unknown reason, through mysterious ways; but, he said, the *Shivabhakthas* were adding to their wealth, their cattle multiplied, their lands developed fast. The *Shivabhaktha* moaned that Shiva was not

granting that same boon to His devotees! Those who lose their properties will be free from the bother of kinsmen, they can rush to God for succour, unhampered; they have no burden to bear.

### **Do not reduce spiritual effort to empty routine**

When a man dies, if he dies indigent, no one would claim kinship with him. But, if he leaves behind some property, many will fight over his corpse for the privilege of performing the last rites. The giver of the boon knows its use and its benefits. You are not to judge it, for, yours is the short term view. He knows the past, the present and the future.

Spiritual practice must be done sincerely, with a full sense of responsibility. It must not be reduced to mere empty routine. There was a Brahmin once who returned from overseas after a few years spent there in studies; his father had insisted that he should repeat the holy *Gaayathri manthra* 108 times, both morning and evening, every day, as he used to do before emplaning for the West. But, now that spiritual effort had become a hollow ritual for him; his vision got blurred, his skills had increased. So just to satisfy his old father, he repeated the *Gaayathri* once and said ditto, ditto, ditto, a hundred and seven times, thereafter!

You cannot save yourself by tricks; spiritual effort is a hard process.

### **Janaka's dream that led to his illumination**

Reality can be grasped in a flash of illumination, as happened to Emperor Janaka. One evening, Janaka was in his Durbar Hall, surrounded by his courtiers and a bevy of female musicians; they sang sweet melodies and the Emperor enjoyed the music so well he slept off, while on the throne. No one had the temerity to awaken him', they all quietly slipped into the inner apartments, lest their talk and movements should disturb him. He was left alone with an attendant and the queen. At about midnight, he screamed pitiably and awoke at the sound. His queen ran towards him; the Emperor asked her, "Is that real? Or is this real?" She could not find an answer to this question, for how could she know which was 'that' and which was 'this'? The Emperor asked every one the same question; in fact, he spoke no other word. That question was continuously on his lips. News spread that Janaka had gone mad; there was mourning everywhere. A sage who heard of this came to the palace and was brought to the Imperial Presence. He assured Janaka that he will answer his question provided he told him what he saw in his dream, while sleeping on the throne and why he screamed so.

Janaka had a dream. He dreamt that rival kings joined forces and invaded his dominion and captured his capital and that to save himself from them he ran into a forest. Fleeing from his foes, he had no food for days together. He was too exhausted to move. But, hunger dragged him on. When he came to the outskirts of a tribal village, he saw a man washing his plate after taking food; he shouted to him asking for a few particles. The man gave him a small morsel, but, as bad luck would have it, a crow flew in at that moment and snatched it away! That was the reason why he screamed in agony.

That was why he asked, "Is that real? Or, is this real?" The hunger was as real as the throne; ruling over the Empire is as real as the loss of empire was, in the dream. The sage told him, "That is unreal; this too is unreal. That was a *swapna* (dream-state) this is *jaagrath* (waking-state)---both are *mithya* (illusory); not false, because they are relatively real, though not absolutely real; they have temporary reality, a reality that is negated by subsequent investigation and experience. But, you dreamed, you woke, you screamed, you asked; therefore, you existed during both stages; so you alone are real. The 'I' that persists in all the three stages---

waking, dream, deep sleep--- that 'I' is the only reality: it is the 'I' that appears as all this manifested Universe."

### **The saadhana that will reveal the Reality**

In the *sathya*, there is no *mithya*; but, in the *mithya jagath* (illusive world) you have to search for *sathya* (truth) and experience it. You can do it if you rid your mind of all modifications and modulations. Let it be transformed from its present complex confusion into something like the sky, which does not bear any mark though millions of birds fly through it and thousands of planes move across it. Be unaffected, untouched, unattached. That is the spiritual discipline which will reveal the Reality, and which will ensure both physical and mental equanimity.

When I heard the Report that was read now, I was not happy. It said that last year, the number of out-patients treated was 22,000 but, this year it had increased to 23,000. Illnesses are caused not so much by the food people eat or the conditions in which they live, but by mental weakness and mental attitudes, prejudices and predilections. Desires, disappointments, despair-- -these also cause diseases. For many illnesses, filling the mind with the thought of God is the curative drug. For the rest, regimented diet, sleep, pastimes and activities are effective cures. The *Shaastras* (scriptures) taught this regimen and the proper mental attitudes and their teachings are invaluable at the present time.

### **Welcome inspiration from any quarter**

Give the body the attention it deserves, but not more. Some people advise that you should cultivate disgust towards it; but, that is not beneficial. Tend it as an instrument, use it as a boat, as a raft. Disgust is not a desirable attitude towards anything in creation. Everything is God's handiwork, an example of His Glory, His Majesty. Consider the crow, for example. You dislike its cawing but, what does its cry "*Kaav, Kaav!*" mean? *Kaav* in Telugu, means "Save, protect". It is reminding you to pray to God. It is praying so, itself, all the while. What a great lesson it teaches!

You know the Raamayaana story, of the crow that teased Seetha, that drew upon itself the ire of Raama, that flew in terror all round the world to escape His arrow, that finally fell before both Raama and Seetha in total surrender (*Kaav, Kaav*); it was saved thereby. The story says that its eye was damaged by the anger of Raama, but it was granted enough compensation. They both, Raama and Seetha, fondled it and blessed it, pardoning it for its impudence. The cow too when it voices forth "*Ambaa! Ambaa!*" is calling on the Mother, the *Jagadamba*---the Mother of the Universe as well as its own Mother. Welcome inspiration from any quarter, for your own improvement.

When you cultivate the attitude that you are the body, the body will demand from you more food, more variety in food, more attention to appearance and physical comfort. A large portion of the food now consumed is superfluous; man can live healthily on much less. A good deal of effort and expenditure now spent to cater to taste and to social pomp can be given up, and health too will improve thereby. "*Mitha thindi, athi haayi*"---"Moderate food gives excellent health". Gourmets only reveal their *Thamoguna* (quality of inertia and indolence). Eat to live; do not believe that you live in order to eat.

### **Methods of avoiding illness**

Another method of avoiding illness is to diminish mental worry. Now, I find people are increasing their worries, and getting anxious about things that they do not understand; nor can

they correct them or reform them. The radio, the newspaper and other means of communication or information cause so much fear and discontent, that worry and anxiety are increased and the mind of man gets weakened. Parents talk about their anxiety before their children and so, they start worrying.

There was a six-year old boy who came to Me the other day, weeping, because his father was involved in debt and was being pestered by his creditors. His father must have lamented before the boy, "Poor fellow! How am I to feed you and clothe you and pay your fees and buy books for you? I am sunk in debt". The boy said that even in the class room, he was worried about the father and his debts. You must not allow the boys to know about all this; their tender minds will be harmed by fear and anxiety. Their health also will be affected.

Fear is the biggest cause for illness. When you have slight temperature, you start imagining that it is the beginning of some serious fever. You say to yourself someone whom you knew had also a slight increase of temperature, which later became serious and led to complications and so, you become more prone to illness than formerly. Think rather of the instances where fever was prevented or overcome; think of the Grace of the Lord that restores and saves.

Resolve that relying on His Grace, you shall be free from illness from this moment. Transfer the faith that you have in drugs to God; put your trust, not in medicine, but in Maadhava. I am astounded at the number of people resorting to tablets and tonics. Resort to prayer, to *saadhana*, *japam* and *dhyaanam*. They are the vitamins you need; they will restore you. No tablet is as efficacious as *Raamnaam*. I shall give you *Vibhuthi* (sacred ash) and that will cure you. Now, you are in two minds, like the man who had to leave his shoes outside the temple. He stood before the shrine with folded hands, muttering a *sthothra*, but his mind was filled with anxiety about the safety of the shoes he had to place outside. The hospital is for those who have faith in drugs and doctors. But, what can drugs and doctors do without the Grace of God? The day will surely come when the hospital will be superfluous, since all will be healthy and free from illness, accepting the *Saadhana* way, the Ananda way, to peace and happiness.

*Prashaanthi Nilayam: Dasara, 26-9-1965*

*Love as thought is Truth,  
Love as action is Righteous Conduct,  
Love as feeling is Peace,  
Love as understanding is Non-violence.  
Love is selflessness,  
Selfishness is Lovelessness.  
Love gives and forgives,  
selfishness gets and forgets.*

**SHRI SATHYA SAI**