

Spirituality must be made wholesome to enrich the mind

prabhāta-raśmih

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Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru.

For some days, in the evening satsang, I have been taking some verses from Ashtavakra Samhita. It is called Ashtavakta Gita also. It consists of altogether 20 chapters. It is a conversation between king Janaka and Sage Ashtavakra. King Janaka is a distinguished knower of truth even today as far as seekers of truth are concerned. While he was a Raja, he was also a great knower. Vedavyasa Maharishi sent even Suka Maharishi to Janaka's palace in order to learn and complete his knowledge of the Self. So, he is an illustrious person. Generally, the knowers of truth are whole time ascetics but in the case of Janaka, he was sitting on the throne and while being a king he became an illustrious knower.

Ashtavakra Samhita is a text where the Subject of Self-Realization and the outcome of Self-Realization, namely, the resultant benefits for an individual concerned are discussed from various angles and from the discussion they have made especially with regard to some relevant verses, all of you must have known that it is not so much what you believe in that matters. On the other hand it matters fully what you do with such a belief – how does the belief act in your mind, in your intelligence, in your character, behavior and interactions. There may be a devotee of God and he may be going to the temple. What of it? At least that much he does. So he is good. But by going to the temple, by becoming a devotee, by worshipping the Lord, what is the net effect on his mind which is the source of all activities and interactions, which is also the terminus of all activities and interactions. What are the effects we want to produce in the mind? The mind should become pure, it should become transparent, all the dross, all the blemish, all the stain of the mind should be dropped. Like clear crystal water, the mind also should also become *saattvic*. The *saattvic* mind is known to generate confidence, nobility, expansion, great magnificence, kindness, liberality, resourcefulness, unyielding faith in oneself as well as in the world. All these are the qualities of a pure mind. Do you have

them? While you live in this world you will have to interact with various factors- persons, places and events. Is your mind capable of doing it? Or does it find confrontation, discomfiture, difficulty and stifling. The human society will always consist of a variety of people. Some will be good, some will be bad, some will be wicked, some will be notorious. None of them should be able to rob your peace and well-being. How to reinforce the mind to have that kind of flexibility and expansion so that it will be able to assimilate all kinds of variety the society is?

May be you have a child who himself is not up to your expectations. Maybe you have a married partner who is not fully compatible with you. May be when you look at your own parents you are not happy with all the facets of their personality. Whether it is in your family or the society at large which is the larger family of which you are equally a member, it makes no difference. "If I am good the problem is not solved. All people should become good, then only I am happy." But it will never be. So, what if some people are bad? It is just like myself becoming bad. So, I have to co-exist with the bad people. What is that factor which will enable you to do so? Why I am mentioning this? You may have devotion, you may have spirituality, you may pursue religion, you may pursue any other system of thought or process. What matters is how the pursuit brings about changes and correction in your mind, intelligence, character, behavior and interaction. This is an important point.

Ashtavakra Samhita looks at the whole subject from various angles and presents the truth. The truth remains the same but the presentation has got different grounds, different insights. This is one point I thought I should explain to you so that you know it. Every time the focus, so far as you are concerned, should be your mind. And the focus should imply what? There must be progressive enrichment for the mind, no matter what the day is and how you spend it. The day should have been enriching. It should be enriching to you and also enriching to the world so far as your performance and your contribution is concerned. What is this enrichment? It is greater well-being, greater expansion, greater inclusion in your mind of more and more people and the world at large.

Then you must have elevated level of thinking. Always become benevolent. Be good to others. In place of selfishness, you should have selflessness, in place of possessiveness you must become dispossessive. Instead of being egotistic you should become humble and you should be given to ego-effacement. These are very simple and beautiful qualities. One thing is there. No stealth is possible either in religion, or in devotion or in spirituality or philosophy. What do I mean by that? You may say "I am good." That saying will never be alright. If you are not good, your statement will victimize you. Some situation will come whereby the truth will be exposed. So, you cannot delude

yourself to think it is so, it is not so, unless you are mentally out of order. Devotion is such a beautiful item, it is such a beautiful pursuit. Spirituality is even more so. Religiousness equally so. Philosophy, definitely so. Such a beautiful pursuit.

I always consider bhakti to be a treasure. But alas, nobody is able to make it a treasure. They are satisfied by chanting the name of God, visiting some temples once in a year or once in a month or once in a week and they come away. You are living for 24 hours of the day and visiting a temple or doing a prayer for 10 or 15 minutes out of 24 hours of the day! Every day you will climb 1 foot but fall 15 feet. This is what will happen. So our methodology must be such that "my devotion will become extensive and wholesome. As I feel in the matter of going to the temple, so I should feel in the matter of going to the market or going to the professional front and doing my work." Why don't you extend your devotional orbit, your devotional prevalence to cover the whole activity of the day? This should be your outlook. I think there is no stealth possible here at all. The mind has to become pure, you have to become truthful, you have to become righteous, you have to become loving, amiable, kind, considerate, sacrificing and all that. I think it is such a beautiful item. I don't know why people are not able to either absorb it or they are reluctant to hear about it. Such a beautiful item!

Arjuna was a great hero, had done a number of wars. In spite of it he was not able to fight when he came to the battlefield. Then Krishna instilled in him that exclusive note of devotion whereby his mind suddenly became pure and intelligence became clear. Arjuna was able to fight the war. But for Krishna's instructions, he would have been still in the battlefield of Kurukshetra, not fighting. So I think it is something very good. Until you are able to understand it to be good, sweet and delicious. I don't think you are anywhere near bhakti. Bhakti is so nourishing, so enriching a treasure. You have to make it a treasure.

Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru.

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