

3.3 PRIDE

WISE SAYING

Each of us must guard against pride and empty boasting, telling everyone about all that we own, and how much we know, and all that we have accomplished. And we must also be aware of the natural wisdom, which is based upon the principles of this fleeting world. (St Francis of Assisi)

From Discourses of Sai Baba

THE CATEGORIES OF PRIDE

Man has to overcome the eight categories of pride -- pride of physical prowess, material wealth, scholarship, beauty, power and others. God's grace is needed to conquer these evil traits because they have such a powerful hold over man. When you wish to overcome a powerful enemy, you have to get the help of someone more powerful than your enemy. Sugriva had to seek the friendship of Sri Rama to overcome Vali after convincing himself of the superior powers of Rama. Likewise, to overcome the power of Maya (the delusion which subjects man to the physical and sensuous), man has to seek the grace of the Divine. Only the Divine is more powerful than Maya. By surrendering to the Divine and developing a heart filled with devotion and love, one can face all the challenges of life. **(010587)**

There are eight waves of pride which obstruct man's attempt to know himself - the pride of caste, of physical strength, of scholarship, of youth, of wealth, of personal charm, of overlordship and one's spiritual attainments. No one discovers that these are liable to disintegrate very soon. Sankara has warned men against placing faith in any of these sources of pride.

"The All-Powerful Time robs you of these in a trice", Sankara has said. Even while laughing and playing as a boy, youth overtakes you, and old age creeps in even while you imagine that youth is still with you. Death waits around the corner, even as old-age overtakes you. **(010625)**

Pride of wealth is another grievous human failing, which causes the downfall of man. All forms of pride, based on birth, wealth, power or scholarship, have to be given up totally. Only when egotistical pride is offered as a sacrifice at the altar of the Divine can man discover his true nature. This is the dedication that is called for as the first step in the spiritual journey. **(160188)**

Be careful: Sadhana (spiritual practice) can foster even pride and envy, as the by-product of progress. You calculate how much or how long you have done Sadhana and you are tempted

to look down upon another, whose record is less. You are proud that you have written the name of Sai ten million times; you talk about it, whenever you get the chance, so that others may admire your faith and fortitude. But, it is not the millions that count; it is the purity of mind that results from genuine concentration on the Name. Your Sadhana must avoid becoming like drawing water from a well, in a cane basket! You get no water however often you may dip and pull the basket up. Each vice is a hole in the basket. Keep the heart pure; keep it whole. *(030169)*

THE OBSTACLES OF PRIDE

As a consequence of pride in one's own strength and power a person might injure thousands, but the pride will injure that person most, being like a devil (difficult to exorcise) that possesses man. Man cannot claim to be man until this ego, that prompts him to ruin others and ride over others, is destroyed by Sadhana (spiritual practice). The Divine in him can manifest only when the dark forces of 'mine' and 'I' are rendered ineffective. To overpower the ego is a well-nigh impossible task. We have heard of the six internal foes that haunt man every moment of his life. But the sense of 'I' and 'mine' are far more deep-rooted. People have conquered the six foes -- lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride and hatred. Indeed there are many who have achieved this victory. But rare indeed is the hero who has demolished his ego and escaped from its nefarious urges. *(111078)*

Pride is the wall that hides the Atma from the Anatma (non-Atma), the curtain between them, between Truth and Untruth. This obstacle has to be removed in order that Unity might be realised and Divinity manifested. Many students develop this pest called pride, for, they have physical charm, educational attainments and monetary resources, but they must be vigilant enough to eradicate it soon. *(310281)*

Of the traits of ego, pride is the most poisonous. But the pride of the scholar, the pride of scholarship, is so thick that it is impossible for them to get rid of it. The dog feels proud of its master's home. So it barks at strangers trying to enter it. Man too is so attached to 'my home', 'my people', 'my property', that he too keeps people away, from the moment he awakes to the moment he sleeps. But, egoism is contrary to genuine human nature. In fact, it is the trait of an animal only.

The fully blossomed flower fades and falls apart within hours. Even while a person is proud of his physical strength, mental freshness and intellectual sharpness, old age creeps in, with its debilitating effects. And, wealth? And power over men and things? They are like lightning flashes, illumining only a fraction of a moment. They are here today, they are gone tomorrow. *(250582)*

TURN INWARD AGAINST PRIDE

God is the embodiment of love. Man, who is an image of the Divine, should have love as his basic quality. Why, then, is man infected with qualities like hatred, envy, pride and self-conceit? The reason is man's heart gets polluted by love being turned towards external objects. The image of the Lord cannot be imprinted on a heart that is impure. It is only when man realises the omnipresence and omniscience of God that he can comprehend the nature of Divinity. Only then will he recognize the Divinity within him. *(270862)*

Do not get puffed up with pride when you succeed; do not get punctured when you fail. Be like the tortoise that is able to withdraw its feet under its shell; withdraw into yourself the outgoing senses and be happy in the contemplation of your reality. Be also like the swan, which on coming up from the lake, gives a vigorous shake to its wings, a shake which scatters the water drops off; so too, the spiritual aspirant must shake off the attachments that are likely to grow when the world impinges on him. *(271164)*

Puffed up with pride of wealth or position, men forget the inner Divinity. They are relying on things which are essentially transient and impermanent. A bird swaying on the branch of a tree has no fear because it relies for its safety not on the branch but on its wings. Man, on the contrary, has no confidence in his own Inner Self. He is dependent on others. He is ready to abase himself for the sake of position or office. The basic reason for this lamentable predicament is the ill-conceived craving for undesirable things. Man's desires are limitless. Man is attached to things none of which will accompany him when he dies. He should realise that there is greater joy in giving, than in possession and accumulation. Renouncing is as essential as acquiring. If there is no exhalation of breath in the wake of inhalation, man will not be able to survive. *(SS May 86, 126)*

BE AWARE THAT YOU ARE BUT INSTRUMENTS

Love alone can root out the weed of pride from the heart. Love all, as so many Forms of God, appearing in these various roles. A heart without love is as dreary as a town without a temple. Spiritual pride is the most poisonous of all varieties of pride; it blinds and leads the person suffering from it into ruin. Beware of pride; be always aware that you are but instruments, in My Divine Mission of Dharmasthapanam, the Revival of Righteousness. Try to be more and more efficient as such instruments. The hand that wields the instrument knows how and when it has to be applied. *(130170)*

There is no real ground in any man to feel inflated about himself. When the Lord's feet, eyes, head and hands are everywhere and everything in the cosmos is permeated by the Divine, how can any man feel proud about his possessions or achievements? He is only an instrument of the Divine. Man should strive to recognize the Unity that underlies the apparent diversity which he sees everywhere. *(050987)*

Offer all the pride, all the separateness, all the delusion, all the attachment that the egoism has proliferated into. That is the worship you have to do. Bring to Me all the evil in you, and leaving it here, take from Me what I have, viz., Prema (Divine Love); learn the capacity to see all as 'moved and motivated by the One Paramatma'.

Examine every day what you do and with what motive; then you can yourself pronounce judgement on your progress. Select only pure motives, pure deeds. (270960)

DISSOLVE PRIDE WITH HUMILITY

So long as you have pride, you cannot earn wisdom. Man's behaviour should be like the behaviour of water; whatever colour you pour into water, it absorbs it and it never asserts its own colour. It is humble without conceit. But the behaviour of man is quite contrary. When he does a smaller service or donates the slightest amount, he is anxious that people should know about it. For this, he himself goes about prattling or arranges to get it published. The absence of such pride and ambition is what is recommended as humility. (*Geetha V 197*)

Another fatal weakness is pride, the desire to be talked about, to be praised; people take delight in tom-tomming their achievements and capacities. This makes them ludicrous and pitiable. They want their names and deeds should appear in the daily papers in big bold letters, as big as My head of hair! But it is not in the newspapers that you should strive to get attention. Earn status in the realm of God; earn fame in the company of the good and the godly, progress in humility, in reverence of elders and parents. If you are forever in the primary class poring over ABC and D, how can you make out the meaning of what these pundits say? These are all subjects beyond the reach of the senses and you must garner them and cherish them in your mind. Practise them and live in joy. (101064)