



Teachings of the Eastern Masters

The Importance of a Human Birth

In this wonderful universe, God has created billions of creatures inhabiting heaven, hell, earth, ocean, sky and other intermediate regions. As we all know, four things are common to all the creatures, e.g. food, sleep, fear and sexual union. In the case of man, he is endowed with a special faculty, e.g. knowledge, with the help of which he can attain God-vision, which is impossible in any other species. It is for this reason that gods envy the human species and aspire to be born as men on earth, so as to get their final deliverance.

Attainment of the Supreme is really the highest achievement of human life. Or else, what is so wanting in the existence of dogs, pigs and other animals? The dogs also fill their bellies and go on procreating to their hearts' content. Then what is the great significance of a human birth, when both a dog and a human being are in the same position? If nurturing the physical body and copulation alone are the means of fulfillment of the ultimate goal of human existence, then this human birth is meaningless, indeed!

Some say that there is nothing worse than the human body, which is full of filth, mucus, phlegm and dirt and which is subject to decay, disease and death. But, unpropitious, destructible and transient as this human body is, it is the only instrument of attaining God, the home of all sanctity. Varied are the species of created beings, but that of the human being is the highest among them. For it is only possible for the humans to think, "Who has created us? From where do we come?" and the like.

God was happy to create the human being, thinking that man will use his discretion and wisdom, will embrace renunciation and detachment and will worship Him. A magician is very clever. He never performs his tricks before an audience that is ignorant. He anticipates an audience that will

appreciate the secret of his deftness. Similarly, after having created innumerable birds, animals, trees, worms, and insects, the Lord of this creation was left with a feeling of great astonishment and regret thinking that all His achievement was meaningless.

"Not a creature knows for certain, what is My purpose as the Lord of the Universe, in creating this sport! Until therefore, a creature is created with so sharp an intellect as to understand and admire the incomparable glory of my work, all this achievement of mine is in vain!" So, the Almighty created a being in human form. He thought, "With the power of his discriminating intellect, man will know Me. He will be amazed with the knowledge of My inconceivable grandeur, as also My unexcelled prowess and will realize that the entire universe is but a sport of My Maya (illusion). Only he will be able to acquire knowledge, reflect and meditate upon Me, and be filled with awe and wonder. And that will bring My sport to completion. The happiness of the spectators is in itself the fullness of My sport. Seeing My perfect control over the world, man will feel fulfilled."

It is by a plenitude of great good fortune, and by accumulating scores of meritorious deeds that this human body is acquired. Hence make the most of this opportunity you have. By greatest good fortune one gets a human birth, and by great accumulated merit is one born as a person drawn to the spiritual path. But God's Grace alone brings one to the feet of the Saints. Rare, indeed, is the perfect gain to have all three!

Commentary

Our highest purpose in life is realization of union with God, of our identity in and as Him - fully human and fully Divine. As Jerry talked about at the 5 Day Retreat, this does not involve rejecting or negating our individual natures and the world. They may be "illusions," in the sense of being impermanent, but they are God's illusions and manifestations of Himself. In fact, He specially endowed the human race with the capacity to appreciate and enjoy His infinite varieties and creativity in manifestation.

There are infinite varieties of experiences in the world of the "blue," but we have been blessed with the opportunity to witness Him in His many forms and enliven His essence in every person, place and circumstance.

This is the first in a series of teachings and sayings of Shirdi Sai Baba and other Eastern Saints, with a little of my own commentary. I'll be sending them twice monthly. Today's quotation is from Chapter 8 of the Shri Sai Satcharita, which is a book about the life and teachings of Shirdi Sai Baba. He is my primary Guru teacher and the spiritual love of my life, so I'm very happy to have the opportunity to share His wonderful stories and teachings with you! If you are interested in further information about the books and resources I'm using or wish to contact me with other questions or feedback, my email is erinw326@comcast.net.

Love,

Erin