

GODS AND TEMPLES: SEARCHING OF HUMAN VALUES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RASHTRASANT TUKADOJI MAHARAJ'S GRAMGEETA

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Abstract

India is a country of many countries in which people of different religions, castes and creeds live together. They have different languages, apparels, food, taste and preferences. In spite of these every Indian consider our country as motherland. 'Unity in diversity' is discerned through each and every activity of Indians. The human values are nurtured in Indian people with the spirit of brotherhood and message of universal peace by the great saints and sages now and then. Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj prophesies the applied method of rebuilding of villages. The worship systems of different sects, their oppositions, quarrels and reactions hamper the progress of village. The Indian have strong sentiments about God and easily put blind faith on religious institutions. The priests in the religious institutions have major role to perform in moral stability of any society. But it seems that these priests have different concepts according to their sects and therefore play different roles in the name of unification of Gods; hence their nature and actions vary. Temples are centers of imbibing moral values. If these religious institutions are mended properly, human society would definitely prosper. Hence an honest effort has been made through this paper to focus on human values through the spectacle of Gramgeeta as to how humans can correct and enhance the living by mending principles of life to make this planet a better place.

Keywords: Gramgeeta, village, temple, God, priest, worship, caste, human values etc.

Introduction

Saints since the Vedic Age have endeavored to maintain the spirit of harmony and constantly upheld the morality, through the media of action, devotion and knowledge. Indian saint Rashtrasant Tukadoji is the modern version of these age old traditions with a definite foresight for the better India and human society. He has devotedly worked for the masses especially rural people. His temple is village, Idol is human and worship is service. His family is the Universe and his aim is to chain the brotherhood and to maintain the peace in the Universe. Here the word *village* has a cosmopolitan approach of Tukadoji Maharaj and refers to the whole human society and not merely the human society in rural area. He has devoted his whole life for physical and metaphysical upliftment of the common men in the society.

This great national saint was born in a remote village – Yawali in Amravati district of Maharashtra on 30th April 1909. During childhood, he is blessed and graced by great saints; one of them is Samartha Adkoji Maharaj. He fights against the priest-craft, ill-actions and worst traditions and customs. He advises to uproot the spirit of blind faith and channelizes the thousands in the direction of righteous paths and righteous actions. His writing is also widespread and in many fields. His ninety books are so far published and still there is a vast literature that has not come in the form of books. He has composed about five thousand *bhajans*, four thousand *abhangas* and six thousand *ovis*. He has written more than six hundred articles on

formal and informal education and addressed not less than a lakh meetings and gatherings. In the Indian saints, Rashtrasant is a self-illuminating star; in the social reformer, he is a man of action and in the spiritual field, he is a Yogi. He is a great soul of vision, a great religious revolutionary, a social reformer and a path setter for the followers of humanity. Rashtrasant Tukadoji's Gramgeeta is the master piece for humans that give the message of service and humanity to mankind. It has eight parts covering forty-one chapters. In Chapter XXV of Gramgeeta, Rashtrasant talks about Gods and temples and tries to enhance the living of humans by mending the principles of these religious institutions and clearing the concept of Gods and Goddess.

Discussion

Worship systems of different sects and their oppositions and disputes

Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj says saints are very liberal in their advice and actions. They never make in people any kind of difference. It is their followers who are proud of their sects and pose superiority. Their Gods are also different and never show similarity. There will not be the confluence of their feelings at a gathering when they have different Gods and religions; different systems of worship. The gathering of saints is organized for a short time but due to their different ways of worships, there are differences. A God where lot of wealth is donated has much publicity and people generally flock around its temple but some have different Goddesses to worship. What is the best, impressive and permanent solution for this so that the values of unity be rooted in and affinity raised? This is the severe problem of the followers and hence Gods' unity must be done as early as possible for the village prosperity. Humans respect different religions though they belong to the same race and hence they have varying faith. Their sects have established their own Gods and are identified by their own symbol. One has faith in Ram while others have faith in Krishna and Shankar. They even argue that Goddesses and family deities are superior to these saviors. God's worship varies from person to person- some worship snakes and tigers while others offer goats and poultry birds to please God.

Different deities are worshipped by devotees of different creeds; some make God from gold and carry on by selling them in need. Those devotees are debased who scarify animals to deities and enjoy meats in the name of Goddess sipping wine as holy waters. Many devotees employ watchmen because they are afraid of dacoits as their Gods are made up of stones with seat of gold. They do not find God at its place because their eyes are focused on jewelry of which idols are decorated. Whatever is liked by devotees; with them idols are decorated. Some comment that God is pleased and satisfied by worship. There is a big question whether it is a virtue or vice but no one takes care of it. Everyone thus follows a blind faith and loses truth and its spirit. Some says golden necklace is beautiful while others, pearls shine on crown. Some comment that golden bright luster is attractive while some say satin cloth is superfine. Some get satisfaction by sleeping God on velvet and closing doors from outside. They go further that God cannot have sound sleep unless messaged his feet. It seems that the spirit of these devotions is respected outwardly. People worship God in different ways as they like – some claim that Ram is superior to Allah and vice versa and in this mad fight they break idols and kill one another. One religion condemns another saying your God has sixteen thousand wives and how he can uplift people. No one practices the real advice, discord only for idols and go to court in the name of our Lord. This is done by the person of every creed and sect. Thus they lose rational thinking and become atheist.

Sentiments about Gods and different concepts of priests

Some claim that God exists everywhere and is awake at holy places. He comes to our rescue if one has firm faith in him. Our understanding about Gods and Goddesses has corrupted in this way. The priests and priesthood are the main culprits behind this. They take the support of texts and thus move the whole society to degradation. How would people realize God if they worship him blindly according to the norms prescribed by priests? God is realized if one has inner faith in him and that comes naturally in our daily life. The greatness of God is seen on the greatness of the saint who has built the temple. If a saint worships even a stone, people worship it as a God, thus raises his importance and there becomes a gathering of people. Lord Vitthal's Pandharpur would not have become a great holy place if Dnyandeva and other saints visited this place. The whole cosmos is pervaded by God. Though he is divine we sometimes feel that he is away from us because of the selfish priests. This has become our way of life and hence the real spirit is destroyed. We have lost the way of worship and started running after the wealth. We assume that God is great whose temple has much property and we become pleased when much wealth is spent for its beauty. God does not become great by beauty or on the size of a temple nor even by the ringing of a bell twenty-four hours. He does not become great by lighting lamps, homa-havan, natural scene, big fair or by wealth or donations offered by rich donors. God is great by our faith; greater by the height of faith. He is equally pervaded by our inner spirit of Godliness.

Nature and actions in unification of Gods

God is one but appears infinite; he acts in different forms, observes same everywhere if we see him in the form of human service. All Gods have the same spirit and the same is worshipped by all. They are seen in different forms but their principles are same. Ram and Rahim are same; Krishna and Vitthal are same. We call Ram when he holds a bow in hand; Krishna when he has a flute on lips; Vitthal when he keeps his hands on his waist. Just as the same light radiates from different lamps, in the same way the same God incarnates in different forms with the sole aim of well-being of this cosmos. At the hour of great crisis, these Gods scarify their lives so that no gentleman remains in pain and any poor, hungry. Those human beings who perform this Yeoman Service, they are named as the incarnations of Gods by the people on this earth. That is Gods domain whom to protect and whom to destroy. He always stands by the truth; offers justice and saves virtues. If this is the eternal truth, why should we quarrel for idols? Why should we spoil the names of Gods for our selfish cause? Everyone should know that all Gods be equally respected and no one be isolated irrespective of their class and creed. At every moment the followers of Gods be convinced that the principles of building all temples and importance of idol worships is same and that is well-being of the humanity. Because of this human will realize the eternal truth and follow the principles of the foundations of temples.

Temples are Centers of imbibing moral values, their falsehoods and a way of their reform

Humans in general are spiritually attached with temples. These temples are responsible to increase differences in people. If these temples are demolished completely, their devotees will unite in the name of God. But it would not solve the problem. One cannot unite people by hurting their feeling. Hence it is better to revive the principle of constructions of temples. When mind turns to devotion, he attains the state of pleasure and this can be possible in monastery or a temple. All these holy places inspire the spirit of God's existence in human's mind and hence saints lay their foundations to build people's characters. Sometimes a human being loses peace of

mind, at such times he visits a temple and remembers the lives of great men. Their spirit of work helps to receive the satisfaction in our works. Man sometimes loses a spirit of work, temple inspires him to rethink and awakens the spirit of work and he again starts working.

All festivals and functions of human beings should be celebrated in collective spirit in temples with a faith. Temples are built by our great ancestors with the super divine objects that the spirit of love be spread all over and virtues be well honored. A temple is a place of villagers' pleasure. It's a perfect source of divineness to inspire a divine work. Temples are the schools for education wherein classes can be run. Hence the temple funds collected should be utilized for the cause of public education. Through this village culture should be awakened that in turn may raise love and build character. Temples and monasteries used to be the centers of education in ancient days. Now the original principles of temples seem completely vanished. Temples, holy places have become shops and worship has become the object of earning wealth. Donation-pots are kept in the temple to earn bread and butter. Many a times cattle are huddled in the temple producing dust and dirt in the premise; no worship, no incense nor lighting, only smoke of tobacco is piped. Priests play a game of leisure, even whores sing and dance. Now halls of temples have become dens of notorious activities of criminals. Gentlemen of villages are afraid to enter into temples. Ladies visit temples to listen holy books in a blind faith but their attention is towards recreations. Nobody attains balanced state. Disputes are raised and common men are in confusion; priests quarrel with visitors for donations. If this is the scenario of temples, what is the use of it? It seems that temples are not doing well as per the principles for which they have been established. No doubt, there are few ideal also devoting for the noble cause of humanity.

Dissolution of delusions and differences, means of development and unity of people in the unity of Gods

It is therefore, villagers should take a decision to check such kind of worst activities. Temple funds available should be utilized for their village reconstruction. If the priests are not worthier and their behavior, not in order, they must be replaced by all village people uniting against them. Temple action plan should be prepared for this sake and informal education should be started. Seriousness should be brought at that place to support virtuous traits. No new temples should be constructed except repairing and cleaning of old temples. The same should be utilized for service works to make our mind peaceful. Temples should be made neat and clean to get visitors a mental peace. Libraries, dispensaries and schools should be opened in temple premise and the arrangement for worship of idols should be done for visiting devotees. It would not be reasonable to say that the followers of particular creed should enter temples and not others stating reason that it defiles our deity; it multiplies our sins if our God is touched by others. These thoughts come in the minds of sectarians and enormous traders. These thoughts hamper the development of villagers. Hence such thoughts should be destroyed completely and temples should be opened for all humans who come to visit there.

God is the savior of the worst and never runs away from them. All humans are his children and he equally treats them in different ways. He has neither caste nor creed; he is always after his devotees. He is of all people and occupies the whole cosmos; he dwells at each and every place. Therefore, temples should be opened for all. Whoever wants to make his life sacred, he has a right to enter temples. Every temple should have the committee of village of which every villager will be the member. The preaching endeavor of these temples should be such that the status of every villager will be higher. At these places daily congregational prayers should be arranged on fixed time and everyone's pains and pleasure should be expressed here. Discourses should be

arranged regularly to enhance the national spirit and to become ideal human beings complementary to each other. The lives of human beings would be brightened by organizing best programmes: quoting examples of great seers, telling best historical events, discussing future plans etc. Village temple should be maintained nicely as a humanity development center and that would be the true wealth for preservation.

The object of temples' construction should be to raise pure love among people and to bring nearer all humans. Then, there will not be any differences among creeds nor any kind of ism. Temples are built by saints and seers to realize that God is in people and everywhere. Hence every deity should be well respected. Every human can become deity by divine actions and qualities. Once the people realize the concept that faith is God, he will get pleasure and the same will be found everywhere and then there will not be any opposition to any deity. Village temple funds should be utilized to make village prosperous because God likes the service of his beloved children much. All Gods follow the same principles- service of human beings and spirituality of Self-Nature. If these thoughts are imbibed and followed in practical life, no one will disturb the process of development.

Conclusion

If the original principal of God and temple is realized, every temple will surely support for the unity of all people. People in true sense will realize the importance of Gods and temples; there would not be any kind of chaos among the people on the basis of caste, creed, religion and deity. Human society will unite in the name of God. The actions of every human being will be enhanced and rewarded and everyone will contribute to make this globe a better place to live in. In a true sense, it is the realization of Gods and temples and exhibition of human values, experiencing the golden age.

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