

THE COMING AND GOING OF ALL THINGS

by

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“In the beginning, there was knowledge, but there was no knowledge of another. Then came the knowledge of another, but not the knowledge of the many. Thereafter came the knowledge of the many, but not judgment of the one by the other. Then, finally, came judgment and evaluation of one by the other, and here we are, what we are.” Thus goes an ancient Master’s saying.

These gradations of experience may be regarded as the process of what we call creation. In these few sentences, creation is explained. Though it is stated so simply in a few lines, the implications of these processes are so variegated and involved that everything conceivable can be said to be included in every phase of it, in this gradational coming down of that which is, which was, and shall be, into what is seen now at the present moment.

The freedom of man, the salvation of the soul, is supposed to be a traversing of the very same path through which God may be said to have descended into the form of man, and all that the world consists of. The return of man to God is the movement in a reverse order, from the direction that creation took when the One deigned to appear as this vast involvement.

The word 'Samsara' is significant suggesting entanglement and an immense difficulty felt in disentangling oneself from the involvement. It is not an ordinary type of impasse that we are finding ourselves in these days. It is almost an unthinkable and ununderstandable abyss into which we have come down; and, here, in this condition of involvement in the way mentioned, there is not merely a physical or social involvement merely, but there is the worst of things that has happened, the involvement of what we consider ourselves to be in our essentiality, namely, our own consciousness, our own understanding, our intelligence, and the product of our educational career. In essence, anything that is worthwhile in us, meaningful and significant in our lives, is so involved.

There is a submerging of human individuality into this oceanic abyss of involvement and there takes place a tentative awakening of itself by coming to the surface of this ocean occasionally when we seem to know a little bit of the processes of the world. Our understanding of whatever is meaningful in life is conditioned by the dip that consciousness has taken in this ocean of involvement.

We have already sunk into a mysterious kind of the waters of Lethe, as they call it in Greek mythology, the waters of death, or the things into which we have dived, and got up into a consciousness of there being a kind of life in this world. Do you know that this world is called the world of death, Mrityuloka? It is never called the world of life. Though we are all alive, it is never called a life of any standing meaning at all. You will be wondering how this world is a world of death. Why do we call it Martyaloka or Mrityuloka? Because even the life we are living is a form of death only. It is not actually life that we are living. It is an unending preparation towards a catabolic activity in which the psycho-physical organism is engaged, and from moment to moment we are dying.

In this instance I may cite an occasion that arose many years back, when emperor Aja lost his queen, and he beat his breast, hit his head on the ground, cried before his

great Master, Guru Vasishtha, "I have lost the very meaning of my life; I have lost symphony, rhythm and meaning. I have nothing with me. I have lost everything." This was the expression of king Aja before Vasishtha, the omniscient seer. And what was the reply of Vasishtha to this cry of the king, that he had lost his dear and near, his only value in life? Kalidasa, in his Raghuvamsa, in his own poetic style, tells us what this reply was: "*Maranam prakritih saririnam vikritir jivitam uchyate budhaih.*" This was the simple, open answer of Vasishtha to the king who was wailing over the joy he lost and the sorrow that had descended upon his head.

What is the meaning of this half-verse? Anything that is embodied is nothing but an embodiment of death only, because anything that is complex has to get decomposed into its original components. As a building is made up of its own ingredients known as building material, anything that is born, – it may be human or anything else, anything that is composed of elements which precede it in the process of creation, has to revert to that out of which it has been made. The building has to return to the condition of bricks one day or the other; it will be only the original that it was. It cannot be the Taj Mahal or anything that attracts your vision of grandeur, because this grandeur of human perception, the beauty of things and the value of life itself, is the tentative presentation before our blinded eyes of a shape or a form taken by causative factors which are precedent to things and to our coming into this world, whatever be our importance in life. Vasishtha held that death, thus, is what is natural to things; it is life that is unnatural!

The birth of an individual into this world is actually a birth into the waters of death. No one can escape this possibility. And the meaning behind this drama of coming and going is to be sought in the few sentences I uttered in the very beginning – that in a gradational coming down of the Ultimate Reality into the present condition of life in the world, there is a final involvement. No one can know how one is involved in this world. Whatever be your understanding and knowledge of things, you cannot know

how you are involved. We have a poor, schoolboy's understanding of our involvement here. A person may have debts to pay; he will say, "I have some involvement." He has a family, and he is in an involvement. He has to work hard in an office; and he will say, "I have an involvement." These are little involvements of a totally extraneous nature.

But there is a real involvement which is the source of our bondage, properly speaking. Working in an office, maintaining a family, or paying a debt, is not so serious an involvement, because you may discharge these obligations in some way. But there are certain obligations in our life with which we are born. "*Sahayajnah prajah srishtva purovacha prajapatih, anena prasavishyadhvam esha vo'stvishtakamadhuk,*" says the Lord in the Bhagavadgita. We are born 'together with' an obligation. 'Sahayajna' means "togetherness of birth with an obligation in the form of a sacrifice." The 'togetherness' of coming into this world with a sacrifice or a necessity to sacrifice is called 'Sahayajnatva'. Now, this becomes a necessity on our part, merely because of the fact of our involvement in an ununderstandable, mysterious impasse.

We can never be happy permanently in this world, whatever be our efforts to be happy, for the simple reason that we cannot diagnose our own illness. May be, there *are* means of this diagnosis. But one cannot be one's own doctor; in a similar manner, we cannot know what our problems are, though we attribute our difficulties to events that take place outside. There is no 'outside' in this world, The meaning of involvement is the abolition of anything as external or internal. There is no thread in the cloth which can be called external to the other threads, because they are intertwined in such a way that everything is involved in everything else. So, one cannot be called the 'other'; the 'otherness' that we perceive is an error, and the cause of this error in perception in the form of a conviction of there being something outside us is the reason also for the involvement.

It was said that there was the perception of the many. But we cannot have merely the knowledge of the many and remain quiet without any dealings with the many, because the very knowledge of the many implies a necessity felt at the same time to relate oneself to the many. I cannot simply know that you are sitting there, I have to feel a sense of relation to that which I see. This is the beginning of involvement. And, the freedom of the soul, our final salvation, we may say, consists in our disentangling ourselves gradually from the network of this involvement, which is a hard task, indeed. Sometimes Samsara is compared to a quagmire. A quagmire is a kind of marshy area where, if you keep your foot, you will go in. And if you try to lift your sunk foot with the help of the other foot planted on it, you will see the other foot goes in. And so both feet go in, and you can be sunk neck deep. And you do not know what will happen to you. This state of affairs is called the quagmire-involvement, and our life is something like that. Often, by ancient masters, life is compared to involvement in a quagmire. When you try to free your foot, you will see that the other foot has gone in; and when you lift the other, this one has gone still deeper, so that you do not know where you are. It is an unthinkable misery, unadulterated sorrow.

Where is the salvation, and where is the remedy? The remedy is not in further involvements. Often we try to cure one disease by introducing another disease into the body; this is not a real curative method. You cannot pay your debts by borrowing from some other person, though many a time we do this thing and feel that debts are paid. But we have paid the debt by creating another debt, paying perhaps compound interest and making matters worse. Our search for joy in life is at the same time an accumulation of sorrow from another side. This we forget in our involvements. So, at least from the point of view of man's present way of involvement and thinking we can say that he cannot attain real freedom. But it is not true that the expectation is absolutely impossible. There is a necessity to go to facts *as they are*, and not merely opionate about things and hold

judgments on objects in any manner whatsoever, because every judgment is a characterisation of that which you see with your eyes, and, as I mentioned, this characterisation is always infected with a defect caused by your having sunk into the mire of an involvement which is called birth.

The withdrawal of conscious operation objectively in terms of what we see with our eyes, judging things from the point of view of the senses, would be the beginning of the development of wisdom in our lives. Then, to speak in the language of Buddhist psychology, we move from what they call Kama-loka to Rupa-loka. The world we are living in is called Kama-loka, because it is the world of involvement by desires, positive as well as negative. A positive desire is the clinging to something, and a negative desire is aversion to something. And we have a twofold attitude towards things in the world. Whatever be that attitude, like or dislike, it is Kamaonly, and inasmuch as there is nothing visible in this world except these two types of involvement, they consider this world as Kama-loka. You cannot see a person as he or she is in himself or herself. A person, a thing, or an object, whatever it is, is to us what it means to us in terms of an involvement, and minus the involvement, we cannot know what it is. I cannot know what you are except in relation to me. This relation is the undoing of all things. Whenever we understand things or cogitate on any person or thing, we always do this cogitation work in terms of what sort of relation that thing has with us. Independently, we do not consider a person as a tree in the jungle. We do not bother what the tree is about; let it be there! It is not my son, it is not my brother. Whatever happens to it is not my concern. But it is a great concern of mine in relation to that with which I am related. This concern is the bondage of the soul.

Why should you be concerned? That is the externalisation of your relationship. This is overcome by what you call detachment in its true spirit, not detachment in the ordinary ritualistic manner. Detachment does not mean moving from Kanyakumari to the Himalayas, or from one country to another. It is the disentanglement from the

involvement of consciousness in this act of judging in terms of what it means to 'me' positively or negatively. Then you will reach the next world, called Rupa-loka, where the world may be seen by us, *as it is*. The beauty of the painting will no more be there; you will see only a canvas and ink spread in a particular pattern. To give an example of how you move from Kama-loka to Rupa-loka; from the beauty that is seen in a painting, you move to the substance out of which the painting is made. The arrangement of the ink on the canvas in terms of a spatio-temporal context, again involved in our way of looking at things at a particular distance also – all these factors considered – becomes the cause of our knowing things as beautiful, or otherwise. So, when this Kamais no more there, we begin to see Rupa, or the forms of things *as they are*. Are you not something independently in yourself other than what you are to others? You know very well you are something to yourself. Whatever be the opinion others may hold about you, minus all these opinions, you are something, and that is the pure principle of existence, sometimes called Isvarasrishti, apart from Jivasrishti. The ideas of 'I' and 'mine', and the notions of 'my belonging to somebody' or 'something belonging to me' or 'not belonging to me', etc., are known as Jivasrishti, or the involvements mentioned – the abyss, Samsara, this quagmire. But if I can know you as you know yourself, and I know me as I am to myself, and each one stands by himself or itself as a pure subject unrelated to the objects, relation is abolished, because, really, there is a basic unity of things where the pure subject which is the universe stands supreme in its integrated completeness, which is the universal perception we are waiting for finally, you may say, the vision of God. And when God knows Himself, not as an object of vision by somebody – That is the origin of things, *That which is*, the Almighty God Supreme, call Him Narayana, call Him the Father in Heaven, the Unimpeachable, Ununderstandable, Non-Externalisable, Pure Being, All-Being, the Bhuma, the Infinite, the Vaishvanara of the Upainshads, the Viratsvarupa of the Bhagavadgita. That is our Goal. And we can have an

iota of satisfaction and joy in this world only to the extent of our approximation to this reverse movement of ours in the direction of Truth. But if you try to be happy here by adding more untruths to the already existing ones, purchasing more illnesses to the existing ones already in the body, and piling up sorrows over sorrows, over those which are already there, then the fate of man is booked, for what it is.

May this be a heralding moment to us to find time to brood over these truths of our real state of affairs in this world, what we really are, also what anyone is really in himself or herself, what any thing is in itself, in the eyes of that which alone can see things clearly without the spectacles of likes or dislikes. Such is the mighty Goal before us, into whose facts we are awakened by great masters like Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. Their blessings we seek, and the Grace of the Almighty we invoke upon the whole of humanity at this auspicious hour of mutual communion. May we, then, sing the song of the ancient mystic in a slightly different strain: "In the beginning there was the One, and there was not the many; Then there was the many, but not the consciousness of the many; Then there was the consciousness of the many; but not judgment of 'the other'; Then there was the judgment of 'the other', and, lo, mortal sorrow became the name of all life."