

21. The Insentient And The Supreme Consciousness

You have all tasted the sweetness of the Name of the Lord for twenty-four hours, as continuous devotional singing (*akhanda bhajans*). *Akhanda* means uninterrupted, without any gap. I am glad you sang without any gap and also that you selected the names of the manifold Forms of God, instead of singing one particular name throughout, as if God had only one facet of personality. The same man is father of his children, uncle to his nephews, brother to some, cousin to many others, and son to his parents. God also has many aspects, and when you conduct *bhajans*, try to satisfy all who take part by reminding them of the manifold manifestations of the Lord, not simply Rama or Krishna or Sairam.

Again, *akhanda bhajans* means that it should not be just a twenty-four hour affair or even a seven-day affair; it must go on, from birth to death, this contemplation of the Source and Goal of things. The procession to the cremation ground starts immediately on birth, and the beating of the heart is the drum-beat for the march toward that place. Some take a longer route, some reach quickly, but all are on the way. Therefore, *bhajans* has to start in childhood and has to continue. It must be the constant companion of a person, their solace and strength. Do not postpone it to old age, for it is the essential food for the mind.

There is no consistency in behaviour

You have all been thrilled by these *bhajans* here, and you are glad that you got the chance to join. But this is just a temporary feeling. You who shared in this glorification of the Lord will tomorrow as enthusiastically join in some other gathering where falsehood and injustice are honoured! There is no consistency in your behaviour. What you feel as correct and what you do are poles apart. That is not the mark of a devotee. If there is no faith, how can you have peace and happiness?

People seek frantically for peace and happiness in a thousand ways along a thousand roads. Dr. Bhagavan-tam was telling Me just prior to My coming here, at the Tata Institute of Science, that there is something beyond all this objective world, some mystery that becomes deeper and more mysterious with every advance of science. When one door is opened, ten doors that were closed reveal themselves to the surprised scientist. So real peace (*santhi*) is to be got only in the depths of the spirit, in the discipline of the mind, in faith in the One Base of all this seeming multiplicity. When that is secured, it is like having gold, you can have any variety of jewels made from it.

It is all a matter of one's own experience. And the joy of that experience, the profound exhilaration that accompanies it, cannot be communicated in words. All hearing and singing God's Names is to take you nearer that experience. Listening is the medicine that you take internally, and singing is the balm you apply externally. Both are needed. So also virtue (*dharma*) as well as sanctified activity (*karma*) are necessary. *Karma* is the very foundation of devotion to God. It is the basement on which devotion is built. *Dharma* is the attitude in which action is done, the truth, love (*prema*), and equanimity with which the mind is activated when it seeks to do things.

Do karma regardless of the fruits thereof

Karma has to be done in and through *dharma*. Those dominated by ignorance (*thamas*) do *karma* solely for the sake of the fruits thereof, and they resort to all subterfuges in order to gain from it. For them, the end justifies the means. Those dominated by passion (*rajas*) are proud and pompous and boast that they are the doers, the

benefactors, and the experiencers. Those dominated by the quality of calm serenity (*sathwa guna*) will do *karma* regardless of the fruits thereof, leaving the result to the Lord, not worrying whether it leads to success or failure, conscious of their duties and never of their rights.

As a matter of fact, there is more joy in the actual doing than in the result that accrues. This must be your experience. All the elaborate arrangements that the master of the house makes for a wedding in the family, the reception, the feeding, the illumination, the music — these are thrilling while they are being planned and executed, but they do not give so much pleasure once the thing is done. In the end, when the bills come, they might even cause disgust and grief! So it must be easy to discard the fruits of action, provided you spend some thought upon the process of *karma* and the worth of the fruit.

The individual soul has come to this birth in order to reveal the splendour of the spark of Godhead, which It is. The body is the wick of the lamp, yearning for God is the ghee that feeds the flame. But, like the rat that, attracted by the strong smelling cheap stuff inside the trap, neglects all other articles of food in the granary and falls a prey to its foolishness, people neglect their real sustenance and waste their lives in pursuit of mortal riches.

Various types of devotion

You should see and wonder at the eternal in all this temporariness. This drama has only two actors: the insentient and Supreme Consciousness, who play a million roles. Just as violinist Chowdiah here who played ten musical tunes now and can play 400 tunes on the four strings, the insentient and Supreme Consciousness together play all these roles. Out of a mere 26 letters of the alphabet all the words in the dictionary are formed and millions of books get written, read, and understood. But you should see through this drama and discover the Director, who is none else than God.

This can be done through devotion based on desireless action. Devotion is of various types, according to the purificatory acts of the devotee, the state of the mind, and the stage of development. There is the peaceful devotion of Bhishma, the parental devotion of Yasoda, the sweet loving devotion of Gouranga and Meera, and the deep attachment of the cowherd maids (to Krishna). Of these, the devoted-servant attitude, which grows out of peaceful devotion, is the easiest and the best for the majority of aspirants at this time. It means total surrender.

Devotion has to be developed by several means or indeed by all means. The mind and the intellect have to be trained and controlled; that is the aim. They can take you as far as the qualified dualism. Later, non-dualistic experience depends upon His Grace, and merging in the Absolute is in His Hands. The chief means are hearing, singing, remembering Lord's Name, prostration, salutation, servitude, friendship, and Self-offering. Friendship is placed just before offering of the Self because between friends, there is no fear, no doubt or disbelief or hesitation.

Mission on which the Lord comes on this Earth

It is to clear the path of spiritual progress of humanity that the *Avatar* (Divine Incarnation) has come. The restlessness in which man is immersed has to be curbed. That is what is meant by the saving of all good individual beings from the tentacles of grief caused by want of knowledge of the relative unimportance of worldly things. All individual souls must get peace and happiness; that is the mission on which the Lord comes again and again on this earth. He selects a place full of holiness and Divinity and takes on the human form, so that you may meet Him and talk, understand and appreciate, listen and follow, experience and benefit.

The tragedy is that when Godhead is invisible, formless, you concretise it as you like and pray to it and get consolation and strength out of it, but when it is before you, concretised in human form, you doubt and discuss and deny! People fall before the stone snake and pour milk on it and wash it lovingly with sacred waters, but when it materialises into an actual cobra, they flee in fear! A true devotee has no fear or disbelief.

Feel no shame in walking on the right path

Prahlada was shivering at the Narasimha (Man-Lion) Form when it appeared from the pillar. When the Lord asked him why, he replied that it was due not to fear at the form of God, for as he said, all forms of His are lovely as they are Divine. It was due to fear that the Form might soon disappear and he might lose the splendid Vision of the Lord.

Prahlada's father was so full of passion that he saw the terrible Narasimha Form, but Prahlada did not see it so. To Him, the Lord appeared beautiful and full of grace, for he was saturated with devotion.

You must dive deep into the sea to get the pearls. What good is it to dabble among the waves near the shore and swear that the sea has no pearls in it and that all tales of its existence are false? So also if you must realise the full fruit of this *Avatar*, dive deep and get immersed in Sai Baba. Halfheartedness, hesitation, doubt, cynicism, listening to tales — all are of no avail. Concentrated complete faith — that alone can bring victory. This is true to any worldly activity, is it not? How much more true must it be, therefore, in the spiritual field? But if you have already attached yourselves to some one Name and Form, do not change it, do not choose another in place of the Embodiment of Love.

A hundred people might come to your house and even treat you with affection, but you do not address them as Papa or Daddy. Have your mind fixed on One; do not now and then allow clouds of doubt, like “Is He Great?” “Is He God?” to dim your faith. Be bold. Acknowledge the glory that you have witnessed; proclaim the joy that you have experienced; confess to the Grace that you have earned. When people ask you whether you too are going to Puttaparthi, for example, and whether you too are doing *bhajans*, say “Yes,” proudly, for there is no shame in walking on the right path!

Peace cannot be won by study of books

Some gurus insist on implicit obedience. They even advise their disciples to beat anyone who cavil at their master! I have contempt for all such, and I have come to give them proper advice. The guru can never usurp the position of Siva; it is better that you have Siva Himself as your guru rather than have these power-mad and egoistic teachers, who revel in hatred and aggrandizement. Leave all those who cavil severely alone, with their *karma* and their ignorant bliss — not merely those who are ignorant of Me but even those who deride all forms of God and the very idea of God.

Develop faith in yourselves, so that you can stand like a rock braving the rushing waters of the flood of negation. That faith will make you forget the changing circumstances of the outer world. Ramadas, when he was put in jail, thanked Rama for the great blessing, for he felt that he could now carry on his repetition of God's Name undisturbed by the world, which was mercifully shut off by the high prison walls!

The first steps are the most hard in the pilgrimage

It all depends on the point of view whether you are happy or unhappy. The point of view colours all attitudes and options. Ramadas sang the exploits of Anjaneya (Hanuman) in Lanka and, while doing so, he mentioned the white lilies of the island. Anjaneya heard him sing it and immediately took exception to the description. He said that he had never seen a single white flower there; the lilies of Lanka were red, he declared. Ramadas, however, insisted that they were white. Anjaneya got annoyed at the impudence of poets who tried to pit their imagination against a first-hand expert witness and appealed to Rama for intercession. Rama agreed with Ramadas! He said that Anjaneya saw them red because his eyes were affected by passionate anger at the entire demonic brood!

So, if you have peace (*santhi*), the world will appear a quite peaceful place; if you have restlessness, the world will be full of restlessness. *Santhi* is to be won by spiritual disciplines, not by study of books. One judge reads huge big volumes and writes one judgement for a suit; another judge reads the same huge big books and writes quite an opposite judgement for the same suit! Books are just guides for some bit of the road. Afterward, you have to find the way yourselves, and it gets easier as you go. One naya paisa and another make two, four more make an anna, and a hundred make a rupee. The first steps are the most hard; the pilgrimage to Kasi (Benaras) is to begin with the first step.

Keep the flame of detachment with tiny sticks until it grows into a big bonfire; welcome all chances to develop discrimination. If you are good for the world, then the Lord of worlds will shower Love on you. Become a blossom, exude the fragrance of selfless service and love (*prema*); then I shall gladly wear the garland composed of all of you.

Take the name of the Lord and repeat it always. I was listening to the *bhajans* you did here yesterday and today. Your voices were low; they could scarce be heard outside this hall. I know that in a certain institution where they decided to do continuous *bhajans* (*akhanda bhajans*), they had to hire a few people at so much per hour so that their plan could succeed. Do *bhajans* with faith and enthusiasm. Let the whole city shake with devotion you put into every Name that you sing. The Name promotes comradeship and establishes concord; it stills all storms and grants peace.

Bangalore, Akhanda bhajans, 1959-07-10

All the joy you crave for is in you, but, like one who has vast riches in the iron chest but who has no idea where the key is, you suffer. With proper directions, dwelling upon them in the silence of meditation, it is possible to secure the key, open the chest, and be rich in joy.

Sathya Sai Baba