

52. Grief And God

Many things have happened here since 3:30pm, when you all gathered. The programme began with the folk tale on marriage by the girl students of the Sadhuvamma High School. and it ended with the wedding of Krishna, described by Veerabhadra Shaasthry. In the middle, Ganapathi Shaasthry told you of the origin and meaning of the ancient social order, as laid down in the *Vedas* and the holy scriptures (*sastras*).

Out of the many plausible interpretations of the scriptures, you are prone to attach yourselves to the one that pleases your own prejudices, so it is essential to hear such *pandits* who know the authentic meaning and who will not deviate from it in order to make the exposition popular. Listening to such talks should not end with listening only; follow it up with rumination, digestion.

So also, with the talk on the *Bhagavatha*, cogitate over it within the four walls of your worship room, sitting before the shrine and offering ritual worship. Do not treat the *Bhagavatha* as a chapter of ancient history; you can experience the thrill now, today, for ever. The *Bhagavatha* is for all time, for the elevation of human emotions in all climes and places. The *Vedas*, with their meaningful rites and their deeply significant philosophy, are valuable for all time.

Once, someone decided to worship the greatest. He fixed upon the earth, but the sea erodes the earth. The sea is also not so great because Sage Agastya drank it up. Agastya is now a tiny star in the broad sky, but the sky was just enough for one foot of the Three-Steps form of the Lord (Vamana). And the Lord is enshrined in the heart of the devotee. So he concluded that the devotee was the greatest of them all!

Castes have no superiority or inferiority

Devotion knows no caste; it saves all, ennobles all. Castes have no superiority or inferiority, according to the *Vedas*. A sugar doll is all sugar. The hymn of *Purusha Suktha* speaks of the four castes having come from four parts of His Body. The meaning is that all are equally high born and equally important. The mouth cannot walk, nor can the feet talk. It is the voice that is obeyed and the arm that protects. Well, all those who felt (and follow the feeling) that fighting is their righteous duty are protectors (*kshatriyas*), and all those who feel it their duty to study the *Vedas* and the *Sastras* are *brahmins* — not those who feel it as their right!

Yesterday, I spoke a few words specially to the men. Today I shall speak to the women. Many of you become so desperate and dejected that you bemoan your birth and welcome death. This is very wrong. You cannot flee from your responsibility in the middle of your allotted task. It is a sign of weakness and cowardice. After all, just think for a moment whether the rich are happy, the strong are happy, the highly educated are happy, or the clever are happy. No one is happy, you will find. To be happy, one of two things must happen: All your desires must be fulfilled or you should not have any desire. Of these, the reduction of desire is the easier path.

Become more steady in spiritual discipline

Take the troubles that come to you as tests and opportunities to learn non-attachment. The hot summer sends you to air-conditioning. Grief sends you to God. When a child dies, ask yourself the question, “Is it for my sake that the child was born?” The child had their own destiny to fulfil, their own history to work out.

Gauthama Buddha's father was so overcome with grief when he saw his son with a begging bowl in the street that he told him thus: "Every one of my ancestors was a king: what misfortune is this that a beggar was born in this line?"

Buddha replied, "Every one of my ancestors had a beggar's bowl; I know of no king in my line."

The father and the son walked different paths, traveled along divergent routes. The blood of the son when transfused may prove fatal to the father.

Another point: you should all become more steady and regular in your spiritual effort. You must curb the propensity to indulge in inane jabber and idle curiosity. Follow the discipline laid down for the Prasanthi Nilayam and become examples for the newcomers! This applies to the men also. You will have noticed that I do not address you as "dear devotees" at any time. For, to get that name, devotee, you must have dedication, unwavering faith, and steady discipline.

When the Attributeless and Formless is available here and now as "with Attributes and Form", you must use every moment to earn His grace.

You do not realise your unique good fortune. In the years to come, people will revere you, for you had a chance that millions could not get; they will worship your pictures in their shrines! Live and love in such a way that you may deserve that honour.

Prasanthi Nilayam, 1962-11-26

For remembrance of the Name, no expense is involved, no materials are needed, no special place or time is to be provided. No qualification of scholarship or caste or sex has to be proved.

When a bit of iron is rubbed to and fro on a slab of stone, heat is generated, but the rubbing has to be vigorous and continuous. When you do so at intervals and with poor pressure, the iron will not get hot. So, too, in order to get sufficient heat to melt the soft heart of the Lord, rub the name *Ram Ram Ram Ram* vigorously and uninterruptedly. Then, the Lord will shower His grace.

If you devote but two minutes and a half in the morning and another two minutes and a half in the evening, the little heart will cool off twice a day and His heart will not melt.

Sathya Sai Baba