

2. Names do not matter

TODAY is a holy day because people honour it as such. Every day is holy for those who utilise it for holy purposes; but there are some days set apart as specially significant and *Makara Sankraanthi* is one such. Sankraanthi is so called because the day takes you from darkness to increasing light; the path of light is open from today. The Sun enters upon the *Uttharaayanam* (journey towards North) this day; he moves from the *Makararekha* in the *Madhyarekha*. Bheeshma waited for this day, spending 56 days on the bed of arrows in pain, because he felt that death, when the Sun starts the journey towards north, is auspicious. He wanted to offer his life at the Feet of the Lord at an auspicious moment.

Man must proceed ever towards *bhavam* (strength); he should not take to untruth, wickedness, crookedness--all of which denote a fundamental fatal trait of cowardice, weakness (*balahenam*). Weakness is born of accepting as true a lower image of yourself than what the facts warrant. You believe you are the husk, but, really you are the kernel. That is the main mistake. All spiritual practice must be directed to the removal of the husk and the revelation of the kernel. So long as you say, 'I am,' there is bound to be fear, but, once you say and feel, '*Aham Brahmaasmi*' (*I am Brahman*), you get unconquerable strength.

The body is the field (*kshethra*) of the Master who knows all *kshethras*. One day, when Vivekaanandha was in his room, at night, sleepless because he was tossed about by conflicting thoughts, Raamakrishna who was 'asleep,' was talking as if in a dream but his talk was clearly heard by Vivekaanandha. He said, "O *Manas!* (O Mind)! O *Maanasa raajahamsa* (Royal swan of the mind)! O *Nithya-aanandha rasaika nilaya* (Repository of Eternal Bliss only)! You are Divine in *nature---Daivaswaruupa*. Sport in the pure lake of meditation of the Divine; instead, why do you crave for the dirty pond of sensual pleasure!" That was the advice of the *Guru* to Naren. Naren immediately resolved to take that advice to heart.

Characteristic of Incarnations

The influence of the Divine is such that while you are contemplating it, all traces of envy and greed will disappear from the mind. The boy Krishna had entered a *Gopee's* house and was just standing beneath the pot of curds when she discovered Him. Krishna ran out into the street and the *Gopee* pursued Him, and wanted to catch Him soon, for she was so pained that the boy was running in the hot Sun. She never worried about the loss of curds or milk or butter, but the very thought of Krishna's tender feet walking over the hard stones in the Sun was something she could not bear. The divine love that Krishna showered, made every one forget everything else. He too gave such disarming replies to the queries of the mother and the *Gopees* (cow-herd girls) that no one could have anything but divine love towards Him. That is the characteristic of Divine Incarnations, at all times.

"She was carrying the milk to the temple to be offered to God; perhaps God Himself took the vessel away from her," He would say, announcing indirectly His own Reality. "I was sleeping by your side, Mother. How then could I have gone away to their houses, to steal their butter?" He would plead--suggesting that He could be in more than one place at a point of time. When caught in the act of searching for butter, He would say that He had put His hand in the pot, just to find out if a calf that had run away was inside it! With such lovely retorts, He won a place in every heart and the *Gopees* vied with each other in fondling Him and serving Him.

Tread the path of Gods

Krishna was the same *Premaswaruupa* (Divine love personified) even for the Grandfather Bheeshma. The illiterate simple *Gopees* and the old revered warrior Bheeshma, persons of all types, grades and professions found in Him their chief source of Wisdom, Grace and Inspiration. That is the sign of the Incarnation. When he waited for the northward movement of the Sun to come, Bheeshma was giving man a valuable message: the Sun is the presiding deity of intellect (*buddhi*) and when in the *hridhayaakaasha* (space in the heart) the Sun takes a northward turn, that is, the *Utthara-ayana* or the *Utthama-ayana* (the Superior Path), the path which leads to God instead of the downward path to the objective world, that period is best for the journey of the soul too. So, what you should also do today is to resolve to tread the path of Gods (*Deva-ayana*). Have the resolve to begin remembrance of the Supreme Lord's Name, Ritual Worship, and Divine Service (*Naamasmarana* of *Paramaathma*, *archana* and *aaraadhana*). The day on which you begin these, and thus inaugurate the Superior Path for your intellect, that day is *Uttharaagana* for you. Do not wait for the almanac to tell you the date.

The most dangerous illusion

The very first lesson I gave when I declared My Identity at Uravakonda was: "*Maanasa bhajare Gurucharanam, Dusthara bhava saagara tharanam.*" That is to say: First know that you are in this cycle of birth and death, the ocean of worldly life (*bhavaasaagaram*); then, resolve on crossing it (*tharanam*); then fix on a *Guru* or the Name and Form of God which appeals to you; lastly, dwell on His Glory, do *bhajan*, but do it with all your mind. He, who is deluded by this relative reality is the worldly person (*samsaari*); he who is aware that it is only relatively real is the spiritual practitioner (*saadhaka*).

Egoism is the most dangerous illusion that has to be exploded and destroyed. Bheema had it, but when he could not lift and lay aside the tail of an old decrepit monkey, who was really Anjaneya Himself, that bubble was exploded. Arjuna had it; one day, after the battle, when Krishna brought the chariot back to camp, he wanted that like all charioteers, Krishna should get down first; the master must get down later, after the charioteer opens the door for him, is it not? Krishna refused, and insisted that Arjuna should alight, before He Himself should. At last Krishna won. Arjuna got down and then, as soon as Krishna left His seat and touched the ground, the chariot went up in flames! If only Krishna had got down first! The fact was that the various fiery arrows that had the power of burning the chariot had hit the target, but due to the Presence of Krishna, their igniferous powers could not manifest themselves. Knowing this Arjuna was humiliated; his egoism had a rude shock. He knew that every action of Krishna was full of significance.

Krishna was the *Avathaara* (Incarnation of Vishnu) come to destroy evil; but now, the evil is not identifiable in certain persons alone; it is widespread. The scorpion has poison only in its tail; the cobra only in its fangs; but, man has poison all over! He has in his eye, his tongue, his mind, his intelligence, his gait, his brain---everywhere. You may ask, O when will this poison be counteracted and destroyed? It will disappear, do not doubt it. That is the very purpose for which I have come. Bring your 'flower of the heart' (*hridhayapushpam*) to Me, rid of all the pests that infest it, the Six Enemies of Man---desire, anger, etc.

There is a Destiny that shapes events

No one is prepared to make the effort for spiritual victory. If you demand the job of a Collector to be given to you straightaway, how can it be done? There are certain qualifications---age, scholarship, efficiency, talent, experience. The flower must become the fruit, the fruit must ripen, the ripeness must be expressed in sweetness. It all takes time. Even an atheist must accept a superior or mysterious power which guides things and events. The argument that you have not seen it and therefore you will not accept it as true is not quite intelligent. The eye is at best a poor instrument. Again, you need not yourself see a thing; others who have seen it, if they are unprejudiced and wise, can be believed.

An old man was warned when he proposed to go through a narrow road that there was a cobra on the road side; but, he said that he had not seen it and so, he was not prepared to believe it. He had to believe it when it bit him, but then it was too late to benefit by that knowledge! Nagayya said just now that recently in one of his speeches Nehru had to acknowledge that there is a Destiny that shapes events, irrespective of individual efforts. Well, everyone has to come to that conclusion, sooner or later, for, there is a limit to the capacity of man to control events. Beyond that, an unseen hand takes over the wheel of events. You may call it Destiny, another may call it Providence and a third, Go. Names do not matter. It is the humility that matters, the wonder, the sense of awe that matters.

Result of extreme miserliness

Then there are some who say that having a trait in the mind, revering it as valuable, is enough; practising it is not so necessary. It is like saying, it is enough that food is in the dish, it need not be eaten and assimilated! Two brothers were famous for their miserliness; the elder was the worse culprit. One day, he had to go some distance to another village. So, he rose early and moved out of the house. Half way along the road, about five miles off, a doubt arose in his mind whether his younger brother had put out the oil lamp at home as soon as he left. So, he returned fast and asked the brother inside. He said, "Do you doubt my intelligence? I put it out as soon as your back was turned; but, pray, why did you walk back? Consider how much your chappals have worn out by these extra five miles!" The elder brother replied, "What? Do you doubt my intelligence? I have tucked the chappals under my arm; I walked back barefooted." But, do you know the result of their miserliness! The younger brother was stung by a scorpion in the dark; the elder was bitten on the bare foot by a cobra on the road!

This Nagayya when he acted the part of Thyaagayya in the film, never forgot that he was Nagayya. If he forgets that, the film will fail. So too, never forget that you are the Infinite Consciousness (*Aathman*); with that consciousness, you can play any role on the world stage. This fact will get stabilised in you, if you read the Geetha in the light of Krishna's actions in the Bhaagavatha and the Mahaabhaaratha. Fill your mind with Divine plays of the Lord and His glory. Once, He and His comrades stole into a house and brought down the vessel of curds. When the mistress of the house came in, "Why did you come in?" she asked. "My mother had a stick in her hand; so, I ran in here out of fear," Krishna replied. "Who are these boys?" she asked. "I brought them to bear witness to what I say," replied Krishna. "Why have you placed that vessel between your legs?" she asked in feigned anger. "So that these fellows may not get hold of the butter," was the answer! "Why do you go from house to house and eat the butter from their stores?" asked Yasodha. "I like only things I select and choose; I do not like to be fed," replied the Boy Krishna. Krishna could not be confined to one house or to one routine. He is All-

pervading (*Sarvavyaapi*); He loves the devotees (*Bhaktha Vathsala*). Make your heart the Seat of the Lord; then it will have value. Soil which has veins of mica is valuable; but, that which has veins of gold is even more precious. The soil is valued according to the preciousness of the metal which it has in its fold. So too, hearts are evaluated by the contents. Keep God in your hearts; they will then be most precious possessions.

Youth must realise the depths of their personality

If God is implanted in the heart, you will see only God everywhere, even in the objective world. For, *Sarvam Brahmamayam* (all is *Brahman*), is a fact. Resolve this day to engage only in virtuous deeds, good thoughts, good company. Let your mind dwell on elevating thoughts. Do not waste a single moment of your waking time in idle gossip or vain boasting or demeaning recreations. Death stalks behind you to fell you and carry you off. Consider Kennedy, how death was lurking around, waiting for the chance! Did he not have men to guard him, soldiers, security men, bodyguards? But, it was all in vain. So while life persists, do good things, speak soft and sweet, never injure or insult another, serve those in need and keep the image of God ever before the mind's eye.

The secular state is hesitating to teach the principles of Eternal Religion (*Sanaathana Dharma*) to young children and students in schools, though those principles are of universal application and do not go against any particular religion. The Shri Prakaasha Committee may, it is said, recommend a course of moral instruction! But if it is not emphasising the superconscious basis of the individual, much of the invigorating strength of *Sanaathana Dharma* would have been lost. A regular course in the discipline of meditation must also be given to youth, so that they may realise the depths of their own personality and its infinite possibilities for ensuring peace and happiness (*shaanthy* and *soukhyam*).

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Freedom is independence from externals. Perfect freedom is not given to any man on earth. Lesser the number of wants, the greater is the freedom. Hence perfect freedom is absolute desirelessness.

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