

35. The bond that unbinds

THE scholarship which revels in the number of texts mastered is of no use; one may know the *Shaasthras* and the *Upanishadhs* upside down; he may have all the seven hundred *slokhas* of the Geetha in his head, but, if *aachaara* and *vichaara* are non-existent, it is a burden which is best avoided. *Aachaara* means, application in practice. *Vichaara* means continuous self-examination.

The Shaasthry spoke of the incident of the golden deer, which enticed the heart of Seetha. One would naturally wonder why Seetha should fall in for that creature, or why Raama should believe in the existence of such a strange creature. He could have convinced Seetha that it was a stratagem of the *Raakshasas* to attract their attention and bring about dire mischief. But, like any ordinary husband infatuated with his wife, Raama followed the deer promising to bring it back alive, to be kept as her pet. Of course, if He was an ordinary human being, infatuation like this would be condemned. But, being the Lord Himself He has to be judged differently. All things are according to plan, His plan.

Know that plan; it is laid down in *dharma*, depicted in the *Upanishadhs*. The Shaasthry that spoke next elaborated upon the *dharma* as laid down for *brahmachaaris* (celibates). What is *brahmacharya*? It means *charya* in *Brahman*---moving ever in *Brahman*. Cognise that your existence is in *Brahman*, through *Brahman*, for *Brahman*. It is that awareness that makes acts sacred and successful. Feel pure; that makes your act pure. The *gopees* moved about, not in Gokula but in the Lord's residence; they did not sell butter and milk; but, used: the opportunity to call out the names of the Lord. Pure words, pure speech; holy listening, holy reading, seeing holy things---these make the heart pure. The confusion and travail that now afflict you, are the consequences of impure speech and impure sight.

Everyone must fit in with the Lord's plan

When I was in the previous *sareera* (body), Das Ganu who was a police officer came to *Shirdhi* on account of his good luck. That visit transformed him. Moreover, Baaba accosted him as Das Ganu as soon as he saw him, and this stunned him. He asked Baaba that some parties that were opposed to him might be put down and that he might get promotion in his official career. Baaba invited him to remain in *Shirdhi* itself and escape all bother. He told him: "Do not wonder why I am suggesting this, when you craved for something else."

Later, when promotions came, he ignored Baaba and his promise to come away as soon as his honour was vindicated by official promotion. So, Baaba had to bring about circumstances which compelled him to come at last, as per Baaba's plan. He composed a number of songs and *sthothras* (hymns); he began performing *Harikathas* on Baaba everywhere and he was instrumental in bringing the news of the advent of Baaba to thousands in the land. His life was spent in and through the Lord.

Upaasini Baaba was also a similar personality. He was born in 1869 and known as Kaashinaath. He married thrice; practised as a doctor, earned much money and lost all; after hard penance, chanced into *Shirdhi*, where Baaba accosted him. "Hallo, Kaashinaath!" He directed him to Upaasana (contemplation) and guided his saadhana and so he was called *Upaasini Baaba*. He too was a part of Baaba's plan.

The journey towards the Source

Thus, every one must fit in with the plan; strive to know its main principles and be equipped for the task He allots you. Be ever vigilant in the tasks that the role involves, that is your *swadharma* (one's own nature and duty). Give your heart fully to the task. "*Raama*" means, he who pleases, attracts, and attaches himself through pleasing attributes. Krishna means the same thing; he who attracts. "*Hah*" means he who robs you of your self, your ego and reveals Himself as you. To attain Him you have to climb, and climbing from the animal to man and from man to *Maadhava* is a hard struggle with the forces that pull you downward.

A decrepit old car whines and groans when it has to ascend an incline; for the engine is clogged and worn out. Keep the engine of the mind free from the dust and dirt of sensory yearning and you can ascend easily the heights of spiritual progress. It is like swimming against the fast current, this journey towards the source of Being. The *Sanaathana Dharma* (Eternal Religion) teaches you how to succeed in this journey; and, due to its innate integrity, it has flourished without losing its pristine glory, even after the onslaught of wave after wave of strange cultures. It can never decline, for it is Truth. It is the sum of experience of *bhakthas* like Hanumaan, Raadha and Meera. Remember this when the *yajna* (sacrifice) here is drawing to a close for that type of *bhakthi* alone ensures the *aapthi* or 'attainment' of *Sama* or '*Brahman*.' That is the genuine *samaapthi* or finale.

Many of you are inspired to start in your own places *sanghams* and *samaajams* (associations) for doing *bhajana*, but it is difficult to get *bhakthas* who are devoted to the Lord without any ulterior desire or intention. A *bhaktha* must be full of joy, whatever may happen, for he knows it is the will of the Lord that is being worked out. I do not address gatherings as "*Bhakthulaaraa*" (Dear *bhakthas*), for, complete surrender and complete purity essential for a *bhaktha* are commodities that are absent. Ask yourself the question, whether each of you deserves the name, '*Sai Bhaktha*' and you will know why I do not address you so.

Keep your devotion within yourself

Bhajana does not become effective through drums, cymbals, violins and other accessories. They cover up the absence of the essential thing---feeling, emotions, yearning, sincerity, faith. When you gather in groups, the evil qualities of envy, competition, pride and factionalism raise their heads. So, offer *bhajana* to the Lord in your own homes, and do not invite these obstacles by organising groups and *mandalis* and *sanghams*.

Again there are some who extol others for the absurd reason that Sai Baaba speaks through them! Baaba has entered into them, they declare from the housetops. "O, Baaba has come upon this child, this person." How silly! Am I a ghost or a devil to possess someone and speak through him? It is all drama which cheats sick minds. Do not fall a prey to these.

That is why I say, keep your devotion within yourself, under control, and not be led away by crooks and self-seekers. These lead you astray by giving you a wrong idea of the Lord's manifestation. They befool the faith that their brothers and sisters repose in God.

Institutions, societies and *sanghams* have another fault. Religious institutions must make people aware of God and of their own evanescence. But, these create a paraphernalia of officers, various grades of members, a secretary, a treasurer, a president and a batch of committee members, who strut about with their badges and revel in their own assumed greatness. A society named after God must help in the removal of jealousy, envy, vanity, egoism and greed; but, these foster them

and allow them to grow wild. Real *bhaktas* will never crave for such positions; they will avoid them as traps which could lay them low.

Your faith must be unshakable

I do not need any publicity, nor does any other manifestation of the Lord. What are you daring to publicise? Me? What do you know about Me, let Me ask. You speak one thing about Me today and another tomorrow. Your faith has not become unshakable! You praise, when things go well, and blame when things go wrong. You flit from one refuge to another.

And even before you *bhakthi* ripens, you strive to lead others, you collect donations and subscriptions and plan *mandhirs* and *sanghams*; all this is mere show, which brings spiritual loss, rather than spiritual gain. When you start publicity you descend to the level of those who compete in collecting clientele, decrying others and extolling themselves.

Where money is calculated and garnered, and exhibited to demonstrate one's achievements, I will not be present. I come only where sincerity, faith and surrender are valued. So spend the silent hours in meditation and *naamasmarana* (remembering the Lord's name) in your own homes and deepen faith. I do not need *bhajans* which, like gramophone records, reproduce songs and *naamaavalis*, without any feeling or yearning while singing. Hours of shouting do not count; a moment of concentrated prayer from the heart is enough, to melt and move God.

Practise detachment little by little

If you deny God, it is as if you deny yourself. There is no God, you declare; but, you assert that "I exist." Well, who is that I that exists, that exists throughout the varying stages of growth, physical and mental, in joy and grief?. That 'I' is God; believe It. For that 'I' sees with eyes, tastes with the tongue, walks with the feet, argues with the intelligence; but, all the while, it is conscious that it is separate from all these. When you affirm "There is no God," you first assert and then declare the absence of that entity. You assert the non-existence of something that "is." That T must be conceived as a wave of the ocean of God, not as the first person singular. That "first" person leads you into the world of fear and greed. My house, my village, my community, my district, my language--it entangles itself thus more and more inextricably.

There was a man from Puttaparthi who lived in a solitary hut on the banks of the Ganga, some miles above Haridhwaar. He was engaged in severe *thapas* and was greatly admired by other monks. One day, while bathing in the river, he overheard a party of pilgrims who had alighted from their bus at that site, talking among themselves in Thelugu. His attachment to the mother-tongue dragged him thither; he asked them where they came from. They said Rayalaseema. He probed further; they were from Ananthapur District; his ears ached for further details. They were from Penukonda Thaluk, Puttaparthi itself, in fact. So, that monk was very happy; he asked them about his lands, his family, his friends and when he was told that a few of them had died, the poor fellow started weeping like a fool. All his years of *saadhana* had come to nought. They broke down before the onslaught of language-attachment. He was so bound to his mother-tongue. What a pity!

Practise detachment from now on; practise it little by little, for a day will come sooner or later when you will have to give up all that you hold dear. Do not go on adding to the things which bind you to them. Bind yourself to the great liberator, God.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 15-10-1964

To describe the infinite aspects in terms of limited words and limited experience, is not possible.

The Maharishis who were well versed in the Vedhas and Manthras realised that it is not possible to explain and describe the aspects of Brahman in terms of words, and they were only indicating by their silence.

Shri Sathya Sai