

5. Love the source of love

Yesterday and the day before, you all had the chance to drink the nectar of *aanandha* (bliss) here; I am happy you have a chance today to imbibe the sweet nectar of Spiritual discourses. I see you all like the waves of the ocean, when the Moon rises in the sky. Of course, the *prema* (love) you have for the sources of all *prema* is the real reason of this *aanandha* I see shining in your faces. My arrival and My resolve to re-establish *Dharma* (virtue) are both the consequence of this *prema*, as you can well understand.

But, this *aanandha* must be directed along useful channels of activity. The value of the eye will be known only when we happen to go blind. The value of water can be known only when there is scarcity, not when all the taps are pouring plenty of it into the buckets. When tanks and wells go dry, men cry out for a cup of water. So too, this *aanandha*. Gather it, garner it, develop it and irrigate parched heart with it, while you can.

In the past, Shankara strove to re-establish in the heart of man the faith that he is the Limitless Almighty; he tried to remove vicious traits that had taken residence there, so that man can move towards his Reality.

When he has even a glimpse of that reality, man becomes free from ego, free from pride and despondency, so that praise does not please him or abuse sadden him. He is rendered stable and secure, like a mountain peak, which no storm can shake. Like the screen in the cinema hall, he is not affected by the fire of calumny or the rain of extolment. The Buddha once said at Buddhagaya that good and bad, fame and ill-fame, praise and calumny, are as the two feet; one cannot move without either of them. They are inevitable in the process of living. Food and offal are both inside man; he has veins for the red blood as well as for the blue. A city has pipes under it for bringing drinking water and for taking away the drainage.

Do good to others to make them happy

A naasthika (atheist) came near Buddha and challenged him in violent language, abusing him, casting aspersions on him and his associates, exhibiting foul manners of the most reprehensible kind. Buddha listened to him but did not react at all. The poor fellow's tongue got exhausted and he became mad with anger. He went out of the presence, in great huff.

When asked the reasons why he did not speak a word in reply, the Buddha said, "When some one comes to your door with intention to be your guest, the slightest indication that you have become aware of his coming, a word like 'Hello' or 'when did you come?' is enough to make him settle down in the house. But, if you do not notice him or react to his talk, he will return without much ado."

Many of you are pained by the calumny that some papers are indulging in regarding Me. Many are urging that something should be done about it. But, I am holding every one back, for, that is the best way to deal with both praise and blame. The ocean knows no overflowing or drying up. It is ever full, ever majestic, ever unconcerned.

I have been advising you to do good to others, to make others happy, to help others live comfortably. This is called *sath karma* (beneficial acts). Now, these papers that live on falsehood are able to scrape together a little money from people with low tastes. That is a beneficial act; again, the people who spread such fantastic absurdities, knowing them to be false and knowing that they are manufactured by their own brains, get joy out of this exercise. Do not stop them

from it, for, without spending a single naya paisa, you are now able to give them joy. Let them revel in their own mud. Joy is what one derives from one's own mind; when the mind is vicious, it derives joy from vicious things. When it is pure, only purity can give it joy.

God appears as many and varied

Hiranyakashipu declared that God is nowhere; his son Prahlada said that God is now here. The father suffered humiliation and destruction. The son rose to the heights of blessedness. The son knew that all this is God appearing as many and varied. A young daughter-in-law, newly come into the family, was serving dinner to the members of the household. Diners called for ghee, butter, buttermilk (yogurt) and, she simplified the process of serving, by giving them 'milk' instead, for she felt that milk included all they wanted.

When you are immersed in the *aanandha* of the Lord, you are master of all the lesser *aanandhas* also. When you dive in the sea, you must seek pearls; when you go to the *Kalpavriksha* (the wish fulfilling tree) ask for the Highest

Bliss. Do not crave for the smaller when the vastest is available, for just a little more effort. There is a natural craving in man to become one with the vast, the supreme, the limitless, for, in the cave of his heart, there resides the self-same Supreme. It is like the young calf pining for the cow. Each calf knows its mother. You may have a thousand calves and a thousand cows. Let loose the calves and each will find its own mother. So, too, you must know where you get your native sustenance and support. They are available only with God, from whom you came.

The sad condition of humanity at present

There must be a sense of urgency in you when you take to the spiritual path. For, death is lying in wait to snatch you off. At a ferry on the Ganga, hundreds were waiting for the boat to come back from the opposite bank. When it came, they hustled into it and while the boatman was rowing it across, they quarrelled with the fellow-passengers and the boatman and were dealing blows among themselves. They were immersed in faction and fighting, higgling over the fare and demanding a few more inches of squatting space. They were unaware of the danger to their very lives. But, one wise man among them warned them and said,

Brothers! In ten minutes, we reach hard ground, please keep quiet, forget these petty desires, pray to God. This is the sad condition of humanity also at present. On the brink of death, people revel and waste precious moments in empty pleasures.

The fault is: identification with the body. The body is but a dwelling place, a vehicle, an encasement. See yourself as a resident in it and most of your grief will disappear. You will become less ego-centric for, you will then feel kinship with others, who are residents in those other bodies.

Vivekaananda was once in a certain town, during his peregrinations. People recognised in him a great monk and a profound scholar and so, for about three days, without intermission, streams of visitors poured into his presence. Some asked about subtle points in *saadhana*, many argued with him on the intricacies of logic, grammar, and ethics that are found in the *Shaasthras*. Students sought to know the problems of national regeneration and the solutions he could suggest. But, there was an old woman, sitting in a corner, watching Vivekaananda with avidity, who did not speak one word. She was there for all the three days, waiting for a chance to come near the monk.

Qualities that win God's Grace

When the lady finally got the chance, she asked him, Son! Shall I bring you something to eat? These people never gave you anything, nor did they give you even a few minutes to go and beg food from the town. Tell me, I shall run and bring you food and drink. Vivekaananda was overjoyed at the tender heart of that mother; he said, "You are indeed blessed. What can mere scholarship or mere earnestness to serve do, to save man? Sympathy, service, putting yourselves in the place of your neighbour and trying to assuage pain and sorrow---that is what wins Grace." Through Love and Service, the mind is cleared of ego and God is reflected therein.

A man borrowed money from another and promised to return it at sunrise the next day. The other fellow asked, Bat, how are you certain that the sun will rise tomorrow? At this, the creditor retorted, Bat, how are you certain that I will live to repay it or that you will live to take it back? Everything about life is uncertain. So, march on, from this very moment, take at least few steps towards the goal, while you can. That very attempt might induce the Lord to extend your stay until you attain the goal.

Love for the Lord should not degenerate into fanaticism and hatred of other names and forms. This type of cancer is affecting even eminent men now-a-days. But, you must avoid it. Believe that all who revere the Lord and walk in fear of sin are your brothers, your nearest kith and kin. Their outer dress or language or skin-colour, or even the methods they adopt to express their reverence and fear are not important at all.

Sugar dolls are valued for the sugar, not the shapes they are given by the manufacturer. Their sweetness makes men purchase them. Elephant, dog, cat, rat, jackal or lion ,it does not matter. That is a matter of individual fancy. Each is sweet, that is the essential thing. The sweetness draws the *maanava* (man) towards *Maadhava* (God): the *pravrriththi* (deed) towards *nivriththi* (dedication), the *aanandha* (joy) towards *Sath-chith-aanandha* (Bliss in the awareness of the Supreme Being). When the appetite for these grows, all low desires and hungers cease

The best form of serving God

Prahlaadha knew the truth, *Sarvam Vishnu mayam jagath*---This world is all filled with the immanent God". He knew it by study and by experience; he knew it as an ever-present fact. So, when he was asked to frame a boon to be granted by the Lord who concretised before him, he asked neither for the revival of his father nor the restoration of his kingdom, long life, wealth or fame; he asked for the chance of assuaging the pain and sorrow of all beings! God, he knew, was manifest as those beings and the best form of serving God was to serve those manifestations and give them relief and joy. The tongue must justify itself by sweet soothing words; the hand, by soft harmless acts. The body must be spent in *upa-vaasa--being* in the constant Presence of the Divine.

Many of you misunderstand *upavaasa* to mean 'fasting' and I know, you overdo it. You fast on Monday to please Shiva, on Tuesday to please Lakshmi, on Wednesday to propitiate some other God, on Thursday in My Name, on Friday for Gowri and Saturday, for fear of *Shani* and on Sunday, to get the favour of the Sun. Laal Bahadur Shastri wanted that you should fast one day to help solve the food crisis, but you are prepared to help him much further. Now, this fasting will not bring you nearer to the Grace of God.

Do not overdo anything, be moderate

Upavaasa means that all your thoughts and deeds and words on those holy days must be about God, that you should spend the day 'near' Him, 'in' Him, 'for' Him. It means that eating, sleeping and other bodily avocations have to take to secondary role, and the meditation and *japam* have to take the main role. If your body wastes away as a result of these fasts, God will be blamed; so, you are only drawing down the calumny of people on the God you adore. They will come to you and say, What! Before you started this Sai Baba Puuja, you were looking much better; now, you have become so thin and frail; you can scarcely move ! And they continue talking against Me in the same strain.

Do not overdo anything; be moderate and wise. You speak of My being *Sarvabhootha-antharaathma* (the Inner Motivator of all beings) and *Sarvavyaapi* (all-per-vading); but, yet, you get angry and upset when you are prevented from coming here for Navaraathri or Shivarathri. You should not belie the faith you have in the Omnipresence: 'Women especially have to be obedient to their elders and husbands. Do not feel that the husband or the children are hindrances. You should not entertain the slightest trace of disgust at either of these. Worship the husband as the Lord; serve the children as Shri Krishna was served by Yashoda. See in them the Lord you revere.

In the days of Emperor Krishnadevaraaya at vijayanagar, an infectious disease appeared and gained ground quickly. It was reported that the disease spread through rats and so, each house was supplied a cat, together with a 'cat allowance' for feeding the cats. But, the rats showed no signs of decline in numbers. After a few days; the discovery was made that the cat allowance was misused by every one and the cats had become too weak to pounce upon the rats and catch them for eating.

The cats must be fed, so that they may eat the rats. So too, the body must be fed so that wicked tendencies, sensual appetites, evil propensities may be vigorously attacked and put down. Unless this work is done, the Divine in man cannot bloom. The earth around the trunk of certain trees has to be turned now and again so that the roots might get strong; the branches have to be trimmed, so that blossoms might appear and fruits might be got. So too man has to dig around the edges of the mind, trim the traits of character and tend the tree of life.

Take calamities as acts of God's Grace

Practise the attitude of offering every act at the Feet of God as a flower is offered in *puuja*. Make every breath an offering to Him. Do not upset by calamities; take them as acts of Grace. If a man loses his hand in an accident, he must believe that it was the Lord's Grace that saved his life. When you know that nothing happens without His *sankalpa* (resolve), everything that happens has a value added to it. You may be neglecting a creeper in your back-yard, but, if a sage passes by and says it is a rare drug that can cure snake poison, you erect a fence around it and

do not allow children to pluck its leaves even for fun! When you know that the Lord is the cause, the source of all, you deal with everyone in a humble reverent manner. That is the path which will lead you quick to the Goal.

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Service in all its forms, all the world over is primarily spiritual discipline, mental clean up! Without the inspiration given by that

attitude, the urge is bound to ebb and grow dry, or, it may meander into pride and pomp.

Just think for a moment: Are you serving God? Or, is God serving you? When you offer milk to a hungry child, or a blanket to a shivering brother on the pavement, you are but placing a gift of God into the hands of another gift of God! You are reposing the gift of God in a repository of the Divine Principle!

God serves; He allows you to claim that you have served! Without His Will, no single blade of grass can quiver in the breeze. Fill every moment with gratitude to the Giver and the Recipient of all gifts.

Sathya Sai Baaba