

5. Not Loka but Lokeshha

YOU know that today is a sacred festival at Prashaanthi Nilayam and thousands have gathered here to share in it. Most of them have come with a load of sorrow which they

hope to unburden here; many are praying for the relief of their physical or mental ills; some are broken by the weight of misery. Most have some pain or other, some loss or other, for which they crave relief. My task is to appease their grief. "*Vaidhyo Naaraayano Harih*"---"*Naaraayana* is the Doctor that destroys illness." That is what the *Vedhas* declare. So, I shall do that work.

The doctor does the main surgical operation, or the main task of diagnosis and prescription. The rest is done by the nurses, isn't it? They attend to the patients kindly and considerately, to their food, their temperature, their movements---and with loving care, they help recovery. It is that type of service that I am allotting to you today. If you fail in your duties to these patients if you do not follow the doctor's instructions strictly and attend to their needs as directed, you will be complicating matters and causing great harm.

"*Na karmanaa na prajayaa dhanena thyaagena eke amruthathvamaanasuh*"---"*Immortality* can be attained, not by ritual deeds, nor by birth, nor by wealth, but only by sacrifice and renunciation". This is the declaration of the *Vedhas*. *The seva* (service) into which you are initiated is the first step in the training for this sacrifice. *Seva* is the highest *Saadhana* for, God Himself takes human form and comes down to serve mankind and lead it to the ideals it has ignored. Therefore consider how delighted God will be when man serves man!

Worldly thirst makes man bestial, thirst for Krishna

Many people come to Prashaanthi Nilayam all alone, though they are old or ill; for, they are too poor to afford a companion or too orphaned to have one. You have to be on the look-out for such, and seek chances to help them. Do not wait until they faint or fall. Seat them in the shade or inside the sheds and relieve their exhaustion or thirst, as best and as quickly as you can. Persuade the younger and healthier persons to vacate their seats inside the sheds for the sake of these aged and sick persons. And, do not yourself occupy the front rows.

The badge does not confer any privilege on you; it only puts responsibilities on you. In your anxiety to see me from close quarters, do not push your way into the front. But, wherever you are, even in the farthest corner, if you are cheerfully discharging the duty entrusted to you, I shall be with you, by your side; do not doubt this. You are wearing my picture on the badge; but I am inside your heart, all the time.

The weather is pretty hot nowadays and so, you have one more item of service, the supply of drinking water to the thirsty. The body suffers from thirst for water; that is called, *Thrishna*; the spirit has a keener thirst, *Krishna*. Worldly thirst is disastrous; it makes man bestial in his efforts to satisfy the craving. If the earth was a little smaller, man might have swallowed it whole! Luckily it is a little too big.

Grace of the Guru will save the devotee

But, you are not concerned with the world; you are now concerned with the Lord of the world---not the Loka but the *Lokeshha*. Obey the command of the Lord, that is enough. You need not worry that you have no time, for *Japa* or *Dhaayana*, or *Puuja* or Prayer. Shankara, the great

Aachaarya, had four chief pupils Thotaka, Hasthaamalaka, Sureshwara and Padhmapaadha. Of

these, Padhmapaadha was intent only on service to the Guru; he could not pay attention to the lessons. The others used to sneer at him for his backwardness in studies. But his deep reverence for the Guru made up for it. One day, he washed the clothes of his Guru and dried them on a rock in the middle of the river; but, even as he was folding them, the river rose fast in a swirling flood; and he had scarce a foothold on the top of the rock. It was getting late; the Guru would need the washed clothes soon; so Padhmapaadha resolved to walk across, over the raging waters. He knew that the blessing of his *Guru* would save him. And it did. Wherever his foot was planted, a sturdy lotus bloomed and bore it on its petals. That is why he came to be called, Lotus-footed, *Padhmapaadha!* The Grace of the *Guru* enabled him to master all knowledge and shine as a brilliant exponent of the ancient wisdom.

Life is short, it is liable to be cut short any moment. The body may fall and release you, without notice. So while you can, you must dedicate the heart to Him who gave it to you. Your heart is your witness; question it whether you have obeyed the directions of the Lord. A thousand persons may swear that you have not, but if your conscience affirms that you have, you need not fear.

Serve God by serving the Godly

There was a clever miser, who argued that God need not be given any offerings, for, with *Amrith* (Nectar) in His stomach He would have no hunger or thirst. He argued that it would be sacrilegious to pour water on His Idol, because the Gangaa emerges from His feet and it will be highly improper to apply on the head what has originated from the feet. So too, he dismissed the idea of offering the lotus flower, since, it bloomed from His Navel. All these are but excuses, by which conscience cannot be deceived. Do not people make a crown for the idol from gold that once formed an anklet for its foot? Reverence can transform and make things pure and holy. Do not manufacture excuses for avoiding service to God. Serve God, by serving the Godly. God appreciates that service most.

The greatest consequence of Seva is the elimination of *egotism---Ahamkaara*. Suurdas prayed that he be made the servant of the servant of the Lord, so that no trace of ego be left in him. This is the reason why the pupil who lived with the *Guru*, had to go with a bowl to beg his food. Suurdas said, "The Lord does not need my service; he has everything. He has many devotees more efficient than I. But these, His devotees, they are in distress; they need care; I shall serve them and uplift myself."

You are now serving the really needy. When a marriage is celebrated in your home, you compel people who are already full, to eat more and more, resulting in waste. While the well-fed are over-fed against their wish, the hungry who clamour at the door for a morsel are driven away with a hail of harsh words. Suurdas told Krishna, "You are eternally content, eternally full, free. Why should I serve you? I shall serve those who are in need of service."

See the Universal in all. See all as similar waves, sustained by the same sea. Develop that kinship, that love, that sympathy. Serve others, not with the feeling that they are others, but with the attitude of worship that you reserve for God. One single act of service offered to the God whom you visualise in another is worth all the years of yearning for God.

Your duty is to serve, not search for faults

You may ask, "Swaami! When you find a person behaving wrongly, viciously, how can we love him? How can we revere him, as you want us to?" In such a situation consider one thing: Who is

it who committed that wrong? What is it that prompted the act? Who did the deed? The body did it. What prompted the body? The mind. Why was he forced to do it? Through the influence of his karma, the cumulative effect of his activities and attitudes through many lives in the past. The *Aathma* in him is unattached, to any deed or motive. That *Aathma* is Divine; love that, revere that. That is My answer.

To put in simpler terms: you observe a big portrait of Swaami over the entrance of a house, as you walk along the road. You find that it is the house of a person, who is your relentless foe! But, do you revere the portrait any the less, because the owner of the house does not deserve your love? Of course, you love the portrait, you revere it, wherever it is. Is it not? So too, revere the *Aathma* in every one; it is the God residing in each. Why should you pay attention to his wrongs and vices? Your duty is to serve, not search for faults. Serve with all your heart, serve with pure undefiled love. Under My unseen supervision and guidance you have to serve them and relieve their pains and troubles.

Harsh behaviour will not bring any benefit

There is a popular tune in Telugu, "Brindhaavan is everyone's; Govindha belongs to all." Similarly, Prashaanthi Nilayam belongs to everyone, Baaba belongs to all. Just as in a hospital, all patients have the right to be treated and to get the drugs, here too, everyone who comes has to be honoured and served.

Talk sweet and soft, to those in pain and grief. When a person is suffering from fever, go near him and say pleasingly and consolingly, "What is the complaint? Where does it pain? What shall I bring for you? Shall I bring you some medicine, or shall I call the Doctor? Do not worry, we shall look after you." Then, those words so full of love will reduce the suffering. They will be overcome with gratitude. "O, what tenderness, what sympathy! Blessed are the parents who can call these their children," they will say within themselves and they will bless you from the bottom of their hearts. "Even at home, people do not treat us so lovingly," they will confess. That is the fruit you must strive for.

If some one who is thirsty asks for water, do not fly into a rage and tell him, "I am not here to supply water whenever you call for it; wait for sometime. Swaami is about to come into the Auditorium. I will not move now, to stop your clamour." *Darshan* of Swaami secured by such harsh behaviour will not bring you any benefit.

Be vigilant to utilise all chances of *seva* which will give *Aanandha* to Swaami. Observe soft speech, maintain cleanliness and be of use to those in need of service. See that you set an example to others. Do not rush to silence persons talking loudly; go near them, and politely explain to them why silence is insisted upon here; tell them it is the first step in *saadhana*, that they have to learn how to maintain *Prashaanthi*, not only here, but wherever they are; that the tongue has no task here, it is all for the eye and ear; people will certainly follow your directions if they know the why and where for. Tell them that by loud talk, they are undermining their own peace; and disturbing others. Do not cause more noise than is necessary. When you are about to spread your bed, do not throw the roll on the floor with a loud thud.

Be guided by the discipline of the Nilayam

I must tell the men volunteers this, with some emphasis. You tend to wander outside the Nilayam area, and squat in the shops and eating houses, talking to all and sundry on trivial matters. You have spent much money to come here and you have come with much hope of being at peace

here; but, once you go out into the bazaar, all the old urges drag you into the whirlpool of worldly things. If it is comfort you need, you could have stayed at home. If it is Grace, Peace, Knowledge of the Path, *Sathsang* (holy company), that you need, then keep within and be guided by the discipline of the Nilayam.

Realise the great good fortune that you have in being chosen by Me for this service, when thousands outside are eager for just one word from Me. The badge is an indication of the Sai within you, it warns you that you are not a bundle of passions and emotions, you are not this body at all but the *prathi-bimba* (reflection) of God, who is the *bimba* (the object). The badge has also the *OM*, the *Pranava*, on it; honour it, meditate on its meaning, value it as an initiation. Press it on your eyes when you go to bed and when you wake up in the morning, pray, "O Lord, may all my acts be pure and holy."

Only sympathy can win the Grace of the Lord

All who have gathered here are your kinsmen, your brothers and sisters. Do not worry about your daily schedule of *japa* or *dhyaana* or *puuja*, which you may have to forgo; or even your daily routine of food, rest and sleep which will be upset. You will not be missing the chance of heaven, if you miss the *Shivaraathri* vows of vigil and fast. Shiva once demonstrated to Paarvathi that, of the many hundreds who bathed in the Ganga and carried the holy water to the Vishweshwara Temple at Kaashi, no one had an iota of sympathy towards a dying beggar on the street, whose wife was calling out for a cup of water to slake the thirst of her husband. A thief had the sympathy; he gave the water and won the grace of the Lord; not the other pilgrims, who, keen on rituals, bathed the idol of Vishweshwara with the waters of Ganga mumbling *Vedhic* hymns on that *Shivaraathri* day!

Tomorrow morning, we will have the Flag Hoisting Function. In the evening, the *Lingodbhavam* (emergence of *Linga*) takes place. Thousands have come and thousands more will gather. Serve them gladly and efficiently; serve them so that they will have happy memories of Prashaanthi Nilayam and the volunteers.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 8-3-1967

Practising meditation in silence and solitude, one can in due course establish silence and solitude in the heart, even in the busiest thoroughfares.

Sathya Sai Baaba