

### 3. Hopping on one leg

Sankraanthi Day is extolled by poets as conferring on mankind a subdued Sun, a cool breeze, with a nip in it; the birds welcome the day with joyous song; Goddess earth wears a saree of green, dotted with red and yellow flowers. Man and beast are happy that their exertions have been rewarded with harvest; they can look forward to a few weeks of sport and pastime, recouping and ruminating. It is a day of *aanandha* (bliss) for man and animal, *aanandha*, both inner and outer. It is green, both in the outer world and in the inner. In the inner, because, this day marks a new phase in the march of the Sun, who is the inspirer and invigorator of the intelligence. Bheeshma waited for this so that he may travel beyond death, with an illumined intellect, aware of his identity with the Supreme. This is called *Uttharaayana*, because the Sun swings towards the North from today. For the next six months the Sun moves northward by degrees. So it is called, *Utthara* (Northward) *ayana* (journey).

The northern direction is associated in Indian scriptures with the Gods, and so, these six months are considered specially suitable for *saadhana* (spiritual discipline) and for ceremonial rituals. But, I must tell you that you must be concerned more with the Sun in your inner firmament than in the depths of outer space. You are concerned with the inner illumination, more than external light and energy. What is the *saadhana* that will send the inner Sun Godward? God is hidden and obstructed by the clouds of egoism. Getting rid of egoism is the *saadhana* to be practised.

#### Service is the best cure for egoism

Learn a lesson from the tree. When it is heavy with fruits it does not raise its head aloft in pride; it bends low, stoops, as if it does not take any credit for its accomplishment and as if it helps you to pluck the fruit. Learn a lesson from the birds. They feed those who cannot fly far; the bird relieves the itch of the buffalo by scratching it with its beak; they help and serve each other, with no thought of reward. How much more alert must man be, then, with his superior skills and faculties? Service is the best cure for egoism; so, engage in it to relieve pain and grief to the extent that you can.

In the Raamaayana, apes brought huge rocks and threw them into the sea to build a passage across for Raama and His army; the tiny squirrel too helped, as far as it could: it rolled on the sands on the seashore, ran towards the heap piled as part of the passage, whisked the sand from its fur by a vigorous shake, adding only a pinch of material to the quantity heaped by the giant apes. Raama saw the squirrel; He appreciated its devotion; He took it fondly in His palm; He stroked its back tenderly, and with a blessing. That was ample reward. The squirrel race has since acquired three lines on its back; to indicate that sign of gratification and Grace. Try to assuage, as far as you can, the distress of others; it is the best *saadhana* for the aspirant.

Man walks with two legs: *iha* and *para* (this world and the other), *dharma* and *Brahman*, righteousness and God! If he is totally engrossed in this world, he is choosing to travel all his life with a handicap; hopping on one leg. That is fraught with trouble; he may fall any moment and break his shin. And he does! Goodness in this world, Godliness for the life after death--equal attention to both, vigilance while taking a step, with either foot, these are essential for a happy journey through life.

### **Master the tendency to yield to the senses**

You have to put the right foot, the *Brahman* step, when you enter the region of realisation. The senses have to be conquered by then. 'Go' means 'senses' and 'Go-pee' means a person who has subdued the senses, as a result of surrender to *Go-paala*, the master of the *Go* (senses). Krishna once told Arjuna that he can enter *Vrajamandala* (the region where the *Gopas* and *Gopees* lived), only after mastering his emotions and impulses and his tendency to yield to the senses.

One day Naaradha happened to land on the sands of the Yamuna river-bed in the *Vrajamandala*. He was surprised at the deep silence that pervaded the place. The water flowed without a murmur; not a wave splashed; not a single twig, leaf or petal moved, lest it should disturb the calm. Even the insect seemed to be aware of the need to respect the silence and remained still: its wings were at rest. There was no hum, hiss or hoot, caw, coo or call, flop, flick or flutter. The groves on the banks were as pictures on canvas.

Naaradha saw a woman, shining as a star, lost in meditation; he was amazed at the halo of splendour around her crown. Naaradha wondered whether he could reach that depth of experience any time in his career. His presence awakened her and when accosted, she revealed her identity. She was *Brahma-Vidhya-dhevatha* (the Goddess of the Science of the awareness of Reality), the truth that *jnaana* reveals! Naaradha's amazement was doubled by this revelation. "What need have you to meditate? Why this intense *dhyaana* (meditation), that has silenced all Nature around you? What are you meditating on?" he asked. She declared, "I crave the supreme joy of contemplating on the Lotus Feet of Krishna; I meditate on them, making myself a *gopee*, who has surrendered to Him." Such is the sweetness derivable through that contemplation, that *bhakthi* (devotion).

### **Man can grasp Divinity only in human form**

The *bhaktha* (devotee) is content with the vision of a part; he tastes the sugar, grain by grain. He finds no joy in becoming sugar, or merging in the mountain of sugar himself. No one can see that entire region of the sky. For, there is no sky at all, when you examine it. His sky is limited by his horizon. From each point of observation there is a different horizon, but no one can see beyond it. Limit the sky and enjoy its vastness and beauty. That is what the *bhaktha* (devotee) does. So long as you are embodied, you can picture only an embodied Divine.

Uma's father, the Monarch of the Himalayas, is said to have prayed to Shiva, "Vouchsafe to me the vision of a fraction of your Universal Self! How can I cognise through my senses and limited intelligence, the limitless?" Man can picture God only as having Human Form. Krishna says in the Geetha, "I am the eagle among the birds, the lion among the beasts, the banyan among the trees." That is to say, the birds picture as God a bird that can fly highest, whose eyes are sharpest, whose wings can hold out longest. "*Dhaivam maamusha ruupena*"---"God in human form"---that is the only way in which divinity can be grasped by man. Here and now, it is only as He, that God can be felt and experienced. God is not to be spoken of as Coming down or going up, since He is everywhere, available for your becoming aware of Him, through beauty, truth, goodness, strength, love or any one of the divine attributes.

### **Pray to Sun God for bright intelligence**

On this holy day, resolve to spend each hour in the contemplation of the Glory of God; do so, at least as a duty; for, the exaltation which that contemplation brings will unconsciously encourage you to continue it with greater zest. The Sun is turning Godward, as the mythological story says.

He is the postman, who will carry your letters, if correctly addressed and stamped (with the stamp of sincerity) to God and bring back His Grace. Put your yearning in the envelope of resolution. And, hand it over every day to the Sun. Do not write asking for a house or a son or gold. Ask for bright intelligence, in order to realise the majesty of God. Ask for steadfastness in His service, in His adoration.

*Prashaanthi Nilayam, 13-1-1968*