

### 33. The creeper and the tree

MINISTER Savant and Mukundha Prabhu described to you the functions of a volunteer. But, while ruminating over them each one of you must find the answer to four questions. Why have I been selected as a volunteer? What have I to do? For what immediate purpose? What is the ultimate goal? These have to be well thought over.

The word for volunteer used here is "*Swayam Sevak*" (Servant of Myself) meaning that you have chosen yourself to be the servant. Servant for whom? *Swayam...that* is to say, of yourself, you serve your own best interests by serving others. You do not serve others; you serve yourself. Harm another; you but harm yourself For, there is no another. He and you are but two waves of the same Ocean. The same God that is in you is in him too.

You have an avidity to know who this or that person is. And, you satisfy your curiosity by noting down their names and addresses, their status, their condition. But, you have not come to discover this; you have no need to know all that. You need know the answers to two questions only; Who is Baaba? Who am I? And the answer is, I am the reflected image of Baaba; Baaba is the original of which I am the reflection. That is the relationship; that is the bond, whether you know it or not, whether the image is distorted or correct.

You do *dhyaana*, morning and evening; you do *japam*; you engage yourself in *shravanam*, *keerthanam*, *smaranam*, *paadhasevanam*, *vandhanam*, *dhaasyam*, *archanam*, *sakhyam* and *aathma nivedhanam* (hearing, singing, remembering, touching the feet, paying obeisance, serving, worshipping, being friendly and offering the Self)---all for realising that you are but an image, to become a clean, clear image of the Lord, so clean and clear that you merge in Him.

#### **A devotee need have only one vow of total surrender**

*Seva* is the adoration of the Lord, as *Vishwa-Viraat swaruupa*---as having the multifaced Form and Immanence in the entire Universe. The *Vedhas* describe Him as 'thousand-headed, thousand-eyed, thousand-footed.' The thousands of hands and eyes and feet that have come here for the Festival are all His, the Lord's. Worship Him; that is the purpose of your *seva*. And He is none else than your own self. Do not count an individual as just an individual; he has God in him, as his Reality. Be aware of that.

I have been offering you advice and directions about *Seva* for some years but I am not satisfied with the extent to which you have been putting them into practice. Your aim should be to please Me, to satisfy Me, to follow My directions. I have come with certain tasks as My Mission.

I too have certain vows to fulfill. They have been mentioned in the Bhagavath Geetha also. I have to establish the supremacy of *Dharma*, I have to bear the *yoga-kshema* (burden of welfare) of those who are immersed in thoughts of Me alone. So, the best way to please Me is to see Me in all beings and serve them just as you would like to serve Me. That is the best form of worship, which will reach Me.

The Lord may have two or two hundred vows; that is his will. But, the Bhaktha need have only one vow, to save himself---the vow of total surrender---of *Sharanaagathi*. If you have full faith in the Divinity of every being, the attitude of surrender will automatically be fixed in you. Do not treat them, as *nara* (human); treat them as Naaraayana, the Lord Himself. You are not alleviating the distress of that other person; you are offering worship to the Lord, in that Form, in that body.

### **Command must be instantly and willingly obeyed**

Those who see you here tomorrow may ask; since directions are not strictly followed and since service is not sublimated into worship by these people, why is the badge given to them, year after year? Well, when you continue repeating the lines and trying to sing them, some day, you may succeed in singing them well. Expecting that you will get to know things better and become more and more perfect as the days pass, I am encouraging you to learn, by practice. I do not give you up. This is a sign of My Grace.

*Aajna* (command) is all-important; when I ask you to do a thing, it must be instantly and willingly obeyed. You can give the go-bye to *dhyaanam* or *japam* (meditation or reciting God's names or sacred formulae); it does not matter. The fruit of obedience is more valuable than those disciplines. Take this instance' you are in *dhyaanam*; some one near you is groaning in pain, you hear it and automatically anger rises in your mind, since he is disturbing your concentration. Do not develop anger or disgust---rise and rescue him, take him to a place where he can get medical attention. Then, you secure by that act all the benefit you could earn by the *dhyaanam* and *japam* you missed, and even more.

### **"Come to Me only if you seek to earn Grace"**

*Padmapaadha*, the favourite disciple of Shankaraachaarya, Confessed that *Guruseva* (service of the preceptor) is enough scholarship for him. *Prahlaadha* declared that the name Naaraayana is enough for progress and liberation from grief. University degrees without mental equanimity and the control of the senses are but handicaps, extra burdens that one has to jettison, before becoming free and happy. If you seek to fulfil low desires, why come here? Come here only if you seek to earn Grace. Go to a hospital only when you are resolved to take the drug the physician prescribes and go through the regimen he lays down. So, obey the directions that I give, whatever others may say or however difficult they may appear to be. You have not come to Prashaanthi Nilayam to please those others; you have come to please Me.

I am not pleased by formal compliance, by external marks of devotion. I insist on real faith, inner compliance, heart-felt devotion. I insist on your observance of all the rules and regulations which you ask others to observe. If you do not talk sweetly, how can you expect others to be sweet towards you? The reaction depends on the action. With the badge on, if you start Smoking, you are disgracing yourself and the badge. It is an act of self-deceit, which lowers you in your own estimation.

Have faith in the discipline you enforce; have the grit to put it into action. '*Shraddhaavaan labhathe jnaanam*'---"*he who has faith can win liberation through jnaana.*" The tender creeper called *bhakthi* (devotion) clings to the tree *shraddhaa* (steady Faith).

### **Your behaviour must be exemplary**

Do not spread out your beds and boxes in such a manner that others who come later have no space to keep theirs. No one comes here seeking comfort. Share whatever space you have with others; all are equally your kith and kin. You have come here to learn and practise detachment. Get wet in the rain, while engaged in serving others; it does not matter. If death comes while serving do not pause; if you are so determined, God will not allow it to approach you! You complain, "Swaami has not softened towards me." Well; melt His heart. Yearn! Show Him the warmth of a repentant heart of a sympathetic heart anxious to alleviate distress. Through deep detachment, the craving for sensual pleasure must disappear; that will cleanse the *chiththa*

(consciousness). God will then be reflected clear and the Reality can be recognised; this results in peace, equanimity, which is the highest bliss.

Prashaanthi Nilayam is the spiritually uplifting centre for the whole world; devotees from all over the world are here, so, the slightest mistake or wrong committed by you will be the talk of the world. Your behaviour must be exemplary; every country must learn lessons from you. The foundation must not give way; you must be strong and steady, sincere and straight. Nor should you suffer from conceit, that you have been chosen to exercise authority over others.

People of all ages, of all states of health and wealth, of various levels of learning and intelligence come to Prashaanthi Nilayam. This Prashaanthi Nilayam is also the refuge for all who have no other place to go to. Do not treat any one as an alien. Remember all have Me as their guardian and support. Have no anger, malice, envy or pride against or before any one. Be full of humility; have faith in human goodness.

### **Be earnest to observe the rules of discipline**

This is a nice good school for you; achieve success here before you leave. This school has only one teacher and that is Myself. I have no Manager, Secretary, President or Chairman. I am the example, the leader, the guide. I have none to compel me, nor do I profit. Still, I work in order to guide and teach. If I remain inactive how can the wheels of the world revolve? I attend even to the minutest detail, of every arrangement here---the stage, the dais, tarpaulins, sheds, water tanks, pumps, everything. I do everything even for Myself. So I do not need your *seva*. If you do *seva* to those who gather here, that gives Me *Aanandha*. I need no other food than that *Aanandha*.

I am *Aanandhaswaruupa* (embodiment of supreme bliss); My nature is *Aanandha*; *Aanandha* is My sign. The *ajjna*, the rules of discipline and *saadhana* laid down in Bhaagavatha, the Raamaayana, the Bhagavath Geetha, the Mahaabhaaratha are not heeled, though they are read and learnt by heart, since centuries. Now that the *Niraakaara* (the Formless, attributeless principle) has come in human form, be earnest to observe the orders given for your own Liberation. Do not cast away the nectar of Grace when it is offered.

Hanumaan was ordered to discover the whereabouts of Seetha and he obeyed implicitly, without question, and succeeded. He did not calculate the dangers of the journey and hesitate; he did not feel proud that he was chosen for the high adventure and enthuse. He listened, he understood, he obeyed, he won. The name *Raamadhuutha* (Messenger, servant of Raama) that he earned thereby has made him immortal. You must earn the name, *Sai Raama Dhuutha*. Have fortitude and self-control, use good and sweet words; examine each act of yours on the touch-stone of My Preference. "Will Swami approve of it?" you should ask yourselves; that is the *thapas* (penance) in which you are being initiated. It is a life-long *thapas*, not for these ten days of Dhasara alone.

When you return home, to your own villages, you must continue the discipline and be bright lamps to light the path for others. I appreciate two things most in you: (1) Silence. It is only in the depth of that silence that the voice of God can be heard. Speak as low as possible; as little as possible, as sweet as possible. Do not whisper to each other, for, that is done only when some one is being traduced behind his back. Do not talk loud, away from My hearing; for there is no such 'away'. (2) *Naamasmarana*. Engage yourselves in repeating the name of the Lord whatever other business you may be doing. Let the Name be the permanent background for all your activities.

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*Don't despair; don't hesitate. Grace can wipe off the past; Sath-prayathna, Sath-sanga and Sadh-aachara (good self-effort, good company, good practices) can ensure happiness in future.*

*Shri Sathya Sai*