

### 35. "From me," not "for me"

THE Valedictory Session of this Third All India Conference is on us, so soon. Time swoops past like a whirlwind, sweeping everything before it. So one has to concentrate on the duty of the moment, leaving the consequence to the God who prompted it and made the task possible, giving one the chance to carry it out. Time ticks on relentlessly and man is born, lives, dies, rotating on the wheel of *Karma* and consequence, unaware of the means of escaping from the oncoming destiny. Agony and anxiety have not softened his heart; adventure and achievement have not made him humble. He is proud of his advance in the path of hatred and haughtiness. He revels in cruelty and sin. He displays an unholy satisfaction in immorality and untruth. He has reduced himself to a level lower than that of beasts.

Man evokes pity because of this plight. For, he has taken the wrong turn on the road to happiness and landed himself in this hell. No one seeks grief; all seek only joy. But, those who know that grief is the interlude between two joys and joy the interval between two griefs, will seek to attain the stage when they will not be agitated either by the fierce or the friendly storm! That stage of equanimity is the most desirable. It is what is called *Nirvaana*, when the mind is in perfect equilibrium, unaffected by the blows of fortune, good or bad. For, he knows that he has no right to judge, whether what happens is good or bad, beneficial or other.

#### **Saadhana has to enlarge the experience**

To reach this stage of Bliss, man must; live a life of saadhana. If you take one step after another, however short the step, you can walk even a hundred miles! An eagle, however intrepid in flight, has to spread its wings and venture into the wind so that: it can reach a few feet away. If the will to step forward or to unfurl the wing is not there, progress is but a fond dream. The *ichchha-shakthi* (Will Power), has to be sharpened and shaped as an instrument for progress. This individual can fulfil himself only through the service of others, expansion into the universal. Saadhana has to enlarge the vision, enhance the experience, and enthuse the *Jeevaathma* (individualised soul) to merge in the *Param-aathma* (Supreme soul). It starts with the question. "What am I contributing to the welfare of my neighbour? Not, what am I collecting from my neighbour?" You can draw cheques on a bank, only when you have deposited their in; or, you can mortgage your property and take a loan; or the bank may grant you an overdraft.

The property on which you can take a loan is the "accumulated merit consequent on the good deeds of previous lives"; the overdraft: on which you can draw in times of emergency is Grace, which God showers, when you are sincere and steady enough to deserve it. You must give some surety or something as security, to get a loan; the surety is Divine Grace; the security is the fixing of your faith, the fullness of your surrender. The security and the surety can also be the *Guru*, who knows the disciple and his attainments and possibilities.

But, about the extent of ancestral property, (accumulated merit), you have no information; you cannot count on that. Also, you do not know where to get a *Guru* who will be a reliable surety or an acceptable security. Such are rare indeed. So, win Grace and earn overdrafts, against a lean day. That is the best source. The more systematic and successful your saadhana, the more useful you will be for yourself and society.

### **Mother is the earliest teacher of the child**

Since this is a Conference of Workers engaged in the practice and promotion of Sathya Sai Ideals, let me dwell upon a few items of work I feel important at the present juncture. First, the Sathya Sai Seva Dhal (Service corps): All States must have a common badge, a common curriculum of spiritual discipline and study, a common course of practical training in first aid, social service, etc. Now, we have Seva Dhals in Bombay, Madras, Kerala, Andhra and some other States, but each *Dhal* is being trained without reference to what is being done in other States.

Second, *Mahila Sathsang* (Women's Club): The Mother is held as the object of affectionate reverence in Indian Culture. She is the mistress of the house, the earliest teacher of the child, the person who lovingly transmits the culture of this ancient land to its heirs in their most formative years. The mother and the father are the first examples in social behaviour that the child sees before it and learns to imitate. They teach *Bhakthi* and *Prapaththi* (adoration of God and surrender to the Highest); they represent *Shaanthi and Prema* (equanimity and love) before the watchful and receptive eyes of the child. So, they have to be inspired to take their share in the spiritual awakening that this Organisation is embarking upon.

Tolerance and humility have to be promoted in the rising generation through the promotion of *saadhana* among the mothers. They are Mother Earth, which germinates the seeds and fosters them into stalwart saplings and trees. Saline soil stunts the saplings and damages the crops. Every one has a mother as the source of his life and body. So the mother has to be strong in mind and body, ripe in culture and character, sanctified by holy thoughts and steeped in love and dedication. Good mothers make a good nation. Mothers have to be repositories of *Thyaaga, Yoga* and *Bhakthi---sacrifice*, discipline and devotion. Their *Karma* (activity) must be based on these three urges.

### **Ease and elevation cannot go together**

It is now six years since the *Sai Samithis* (branches) have been established in this country, in place after place; they started with very elementary items of work like *Bhajan* and study of sacred scriptures, but, as each *Samithi* gained experience through contact with others, the activities have today become more varied and intensive. After this Conference, when you go to your places, I want that you should explore the possibility of expanding the work among mothers, children and youth. The *Mahila Vibhaag* has to be strengthened. In places where there are *no Mahila Sathsangs*, try to start one, and have Bala Vihaars under their guidance.

Third, *Nag Chilarasankeerthan*: There were some rumblings heard during this Conference that it is rather hard for office-bearers and members to wake up at 4-30 a.m. and after *Omkaaram* and *Suprabhatham*, walk about a mile or so, with others singing Bhajans! All good things have to be done the hard way. Ease and elevation cannot go together. The sages welcome the hard way life;

Kunthi the Queen-Mother of the Paandavas prayed that she may be blessed with a succession of disasters, for they forged her life into a charming chain of prayer. The Lord therefore was ever before her mind's eye. Hardships keep one always alert and in trim. They reveal hidden resources of skill and intelligence; they toughen fortitude and deepen the roots of faith. I am surprised that a request was made to exempt Office-bearers from participation in *Nagarasankeerthan* beyond six *keerthans* a year! And this, from people who attend 600 cinema shows a year. It is a disgrace, that such a proposal was ever brought! Playing cards for hours together perhaps, for such people,

is a more sacred rite. Some one raised another objection, against women moving along the streets in the early morning hours! Rather humiliating, they said! Is it not humiliating for these women to stand for hours in queues before cinema houses for a ticket? Or at a bus-stand waiting for a vehicle to come by? No.

### ***Sankeerthan* is the highest form of social service**

The *keerthan* gives *Aanandha* to the participant and *Aanandha* to the listeners. It is its own reward. It is nothing dishonourable; it is the highest form of social service, and self-help. Do not doubt or hesitate. Even if no one else joins, go alone. You came alone into the world and you go out of it alone. Why then lament when you do not gather companions around you when you do *keerthan* in your village and move from street to street? People may laugh at you, call you insane, question your motives, but persist; they will soon see how happy, how healthy, how holy you are and slowly they will throng around you, on the Godward path. Man and woman, though master and wife, have different spiritual destinies; each has to go at his or her own pace. They may be inter-related and interdependent in secular matters, but, in spiritual matters, each has to carve out his or her own career. Make the home a seat of harmony; then, the village will be a home for concord, the state will be having peace and the nation will be happy, and the world will have prosperity.

When you live the life of saadhana, you will meet with opposition from various sources. But, do not attach any importance to such. First, your kith and kin will try to divert you into worldly pursuits. Krishna had his own maternal uncle as his inveterate foe! Raama had a stepmother who sought to exile him into the jungle! Do not be cowed down by cynics or the critics, who may abound in the family. Then there is public opinion, which might decay the spiritual path and subject you to ridicule or worse. Sisupaala, Jaraasandha and the brood of traducers tried hard to smother the mission of the Lord, when he was here as Krishna. Another obstacle is from the worshippers of Names and Forms different from those which you have adopted as most appealing to you. People who are attached to one particular Name and Form, either through hereditary preference or mere fancy are prone to persecute those who adore other Names and Forms. It is far better to die tracking a tiger than live to boast of shooting a lame jackal!

### **Children have reverence towards knowledge**

Women have a great role to play in the moral regeneration of the people. That is the reason for the new emphasis on *Mahila Sathsanghs*. They can tell the children the epic stories of sacrifice and heroism, of saints who sought God and saw Him in Truth, Beauty and Goodness everywhere, of great men and women, who delved into the secrets of the Universe and the Law of all laws, which governs the microcosm and the macrocosm, in equal measure. Christ said, let children come unto me.

They have the sense of wonder, fresh and free; they have the simple, sincere eagerness to know; they have reverence towards knowledge and power. Tell them of Raama, Krishna, Nachiketas, Dhruva, Urmila, Sootha, Hanumaan, Arjuna and many others whom they can picture with admiration in their minds. Indhra Devi said just now that people love their own children and coddle them, but people do not love the children of their neighbours! In fact, the neighbour's children are treated as nuisances. This sense of mine and thine stands as a barrier between spiritual progress and the individual.

The Divine is the inner core of all beings, near and far, big or small. Expand your consciousness to its uttermost limits. Really speaking, it has no limits at all. This cannot be done on an instalment plan, or on a cash-down basis! No. It is possible only through an inner transformation, through *dhyana*, *japa*, or Naamasmarana, in the constant contemplation of the Supreme majesty that is in you. Once you reveal to yourself that Majesty, you can be an effective instrument for service and uplift, among the depressed and the distressed around you. The Divine sprouts in the heart, grows in the Consciousness and blooms in all the mental and physical activities of man. Now the Divine Principle is beyond your experience, because you are not ready to give your best to others, who also contain the self-same Principle. When you are ready to give, you are entitled to take; not until then.

We find that, even among the highly educated, the I.A.S. men and I.P.S. men, etc., very few help their aged parents, very few try to give them at least a fraction of the comforts they themselves command. Each one is immersed in ensuring his own standard of living. How long is he to stay in that standard? A day will come when he has to bid farewell to all that he has garnered with cunning and cleverness, inflicting pain and sorrow, discontent and distress on many. Service to parents, elders and the suffering gives joy and satisfaction to all concerned. Virtue and righteousness---these will bear witness on your behalf, on the Day of Judgement; neither your bank account nor your income tax returns will speak on your behalf.

Let me end on this note: Do not waver, hesitate or doubt your destiny. Yearn to realise your Reality; that yearning itself will endow you with steady endeavour and the Grace of God which will remove all obstacles. Be an example to others. Do not scatter advice, without the authority born of practical experience. Do not search for the faults of others; seek your own. Love, co-operate, help, serve. That is your prime duty, as leaders of the Sathya Sai Units in your villages.

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*Bhakthi cannot come into man from outside him; it has to be grown from within by an effort to cleanse the mind, to know the nature and origin of man and the universe, to grasp the relation of man with all the external objects which now fascinate and foil him.*

***Sathya Sai Baaba***