

6. Green across the door

SAGES who have designed the Hindhu Calendar have arranged the holy festivals for fostering mental stamina and emotional purity. The *Makara Sankraanthi* (the Summer Equinox), when the Sun enters Capricorn, is laid down as the day when man dedicates his activities for the higher purpose of attaining Divinity, by following the *Uttharaayana* (the Northward Path), the Nobler Path which the Sun Himself is seen to take from this day. The month of *Dhanus* is over, and that of Makara begins today. *Dhanus* means not only the bow but also the sugar cane, which is the bow of the God of love.

The harvest has come in now and every family has cooked this day the gift of God that has been stored in the granary. The children have chewed the sweet cane and are running about in glee. The cattle which toiled in the fields as companion, helpmate and slave of man are ruminating in the shade, enjoying their holiday from the yoke. The earth too is wearing a sari of yellow flowers, bedecked with spots of red, wherever ripe chilies cluster under green leaves. Nature is happy that man and all living beings can now turn Godward in thankfulness, and intensive contemplation of His handiwork. For six months now, it is dheva-yaana--the season of pilgrimage. It is Utthama-yaana (the superior path).

The message of the holy day of *Sankraanthi*

The Geetha proclaims that he who dies in this half of the year dies in peace and plenty and so, rises to purer levels of spiritual attainments. Bheeshma, who was stricken by mortal arrows on the field of Kurukshetra, waited for this day which ushers in the holier half of the year, so that he may give his breath up, and merge in the Supersoul!

This is a day of dedication! Not a day of diversion and dissipation. It is wrong to waste it in gambling, and feasting and catering to the lower instincts, it is not a holiday; it is in the strictest sense of the word, a holy day! Become whole, by wholesome deeds and thoughts; that is the message of the holy day. Mere spinning like a top, until you can spin no longer, and then falling helpless and inert, is dreary devastating existence. The top has no faith in itself; it has to be handled and twirled by another. Be self-confident, that is to say, have confidence in your self; for, that self is Divine; it has in it all the strength, all the sweetness of the *Aathman* (True Self), which is but a wave of the ocean of *Param-aathman* (Supreme Reality).

In order to ensure happiness and peace, administrators contrive five-year plans, and build bridges, dams, factories and schools. But, without the cleansing of the spirit, the strengthening of detachment, the promotion of compassion and kinship, economic progress promotes only hatred, faction and envy. Self-confidence, self-control and self-knowledge---these alone can lead man to peace and joy. *Na shreyo niyamam vinaa---*"No prosperity without control!" No progress without discipline, that is what the sages teach. On these holy days, he has to look back and forward, and orientate his route along the correct markings.

Mind is a bundle of desires and doubts

Belief in the Creator, the Designer, the Supporter and the Disintegrator is a necessary equipment for the pilgrim on earth. Fear of sin, love of God---these two endow man with peace and joy, save him from sorrow and grant him *aanandha* (bliss). During deep sleep, one is not aware of time, space or causation. Only the I persists; the I that is *sath-chith-aanandha*. But, during deep sleep the I is not aware of its *aanandha*, not aware of itself. It is only after one awakens that one

declares, I had a very pleasant sleep! During the dream stage, the mind is active, though the intelligence, the senses, are all dormant. The dream builds a bungalow in a few seconds, and you occupy it and live happily in it, until, in the dream, an earthquake brings it down on your heads, and you flee for sheer life! The entire story of construction, occupation and destruction was the reflection of mental aberration, its *sankalpa* (resolve). It is the seat of the ego and the ego plays all sorts of pranks with the mental stuff, during sleep, when the senses and reason are temporarily out of action. The mind is a bundle of resolutions and hesitations, of desires and doubts.

When the basis of the ego is removed by spiritual effort heroically, directed towards this end, then all the drama of name and form drifts away into nothingness.

The Sun draws the water up as steam, and endows it with the name and form of 'cloud,' 'rain' and then as 'stream,' 'river,' 'flood' until it merges in the sea back again, losing all the manifoldness of name form caused by time, space and causation. Each one of you is the basis of truth, which a cloud of unreality fogs. This is to be discovered, each for himself, by himself.

Maaya is like your shadow in the well

The seed struck in the soil sprouts and grows. It puts forth branches and leaves, and adorns itself with blossoms which attract' bees; it develops fruits which are really offerings of sweetness and strength, to those who serve the tree, carrying the seeds ensconced within them, to far distances and scatter them again on the soil, so that they may get stuck and sprout, in another cycle of life and death! The seed is not inert; it is conscious, alive, active. The whole Universe is suffused with Divinity, Divinity that is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss (*sath-chith-aanandha*)! Existence as "seed-plant-tree," Consciousness which strives for expression and manifestation and unfoldment; and, Bliss, in that fulfilment. You are also *sath-chith-aanandha*. Do not condemn your majesty bewailing, "I am unfortunate, I am despicable, I am downhearted." No. You are elated, you are enthroned, you are exalted. You are all this; but you are not aware of this, on account of *maayaa* (illusion). *Maayaa* is like your shadow in the well; if you do not peep into the well, it is not there! It is there, only whenever you peep into it !

The primal ignorance and the primal wisdom, are inherent, one in the other; the light of day darkens the stars, so that we cannot see them, though they are up above our heads! The darkness of night reveals the specks of light, which are the stars! Vibration, motion, light, darkness---all are inferring.

God knows what is good for individual souls

To adore Name and Form is against the basic teaching of *Vedhaantha*; for, one has to educate oneself into ignoring the evanescent, the temporary, the superficial. Unless one has discovered his identity with all, the identity of all with him, one cannot have the waveless calm, the steady flame. *Thyaagainaike amrithathwam aanashuh*; give up, give up the fancy for the fantastic objective world, give up, until you reach the stage, when there is no "giver-gift-giving," when there is no "beginning-continuing-ending." Naaradha learnt from the sage Sanathkumaara that he can acquire *Shaanthi* only when he knows that he is *Shaanthi* and nothing else! *A-shaanthi* (restlessness) is something that has possessed him, like a phobia which has no footing. Shake it off; exorcise it. He is free. It is the role that is tragic; not the actor. He has only to remind himself that it is a play and that he is playing the role of a tragic hero! This Naaradha learnt and his equanimity was never again disturbed.

This day, every home is swept clean, the floors are polished, the walls whitewashed and painted, and before every house, women draw auspicious designs in flour. They place in the middle of that design a lump of cow dung, and stick on that lump a big yellow flower of golden hue, of the sweet cucumber. Why the cow dung lump? It symbolises the cow, the *Go* which *Gopaala* feeds and fends. *Go* (cow) also means, beings, souls, individuals. So that, *Gopaala* is He who tends the souls, keeps them away from harm, encourages them to graze in peace, and drives them back into the sheds when evening falls on earth. Individual beings too are under the loving care of God, who knows what is good for them and saves from ruin. Thus, each trivial detail of the festival rites has a meaning, which can vibrate the participant, in its proper time.

***Sathsang* will keep you young and fresh, full and free**

Again, this day, you are requested to eat sweet rice cooked in milk. That is the food called *Saathwik* (pure), which promotes elevated thoughts, mildness and humility. But, food does not end with what you take in through the mouth. What you take in through the eye, the ear, the nose, the skin, through your greed your hunger for excitement, your thirst for variegated experience of the objective world---all is food. And, every particle of it has to be *Saathwik*, so that your progress towards self-realisation may be quick and fruitful.

You are really fortunate that you are able to drink through the ear the discourses on the glory of the Divine; *Vedhaantha* is the best and highest food which man can consume; it keeps your propensities pure, your body in perfect trim, your passions well controlled, your emotions clear and lucid, your thoughts simple and sincere. *Sathsang* (noble company), is more nutritious than fruits and nuts, milk or honey. It will keep you young and fresh, full and free, beyond the disintegrating influence of time and space.

These holy days are reminders of the discipline, which you have strayed away from. It is a grim world, from out of which you have to squeeze yourself out, into freedom and fulfilment. A train whistling past in full speed over the rails drawn by a giant locomotive cannot be stopped by a million hands; but by merely pressing a button, the driver can bring it to a halt! Installing that button, that mechanism in your mind that rolls along behind the senses is the purpose of *saadhana*; installing and operating it.

The knowledge that you are the architect of your fortune and that you can, by steady effort, rebuild it or foster it, that you are ever laying on or pulling down the structure of your career, will be a great inspiration, provided you welcome it.

Nothing ever happens without proper reason

It was the first night of Raama, Lakshmana and Seetha in the thick jungle into which they were exiled. Guha (the chieftain of the fisherman), who had rowed them across the Ganges was engaged in subdued conversation with Lakshmana, while Raama and Seetha were sleeping, on the river bed! Guha, was sunk in sorrow, that the inheritor of the empire should be cast on the sands under the sky; he cursed the Queen Kaikeyi (step mother of Raama) and her wicked accomplices for contriving this heart breaking tragedy. But Lakshmana prayed that he halt his tirade. I too emitted fiery fury at the perpetrators of this tragedy. For, I did not then know the inner purpose of this chapter of Raama's history. He has come in this human form to destroy the evil brood of demons, and so, He has himself contrived this exile, to be free from imperial responsibilities until that aim is accomplished. What do we know, dear Guha, of the mysteries of God or even of man, who is but God in human attire? Or of any living being or non-living

matter, for they are all the inscrutable Divine, appearing to our limited senses in the way they do, What their real nature is, how can we ever know, with these inefficient instruments of knowledge?

Nothing ever happens without proper reason, however accidental or mysterious, it might appear. The roots go deep and are out of sight. I was telling Hislop, in Bombay at Dharmakshethra, the same thing. The bridge towards Lanka was being built over the straits, so that Raama and His army could, march across to the realm of the demon King Raavana, where. Seetha was interned. The valiant monkeys were plucking mountains and leaping vast distances in space with those peaks hoisted on their shoulders, so that they could be thrown into the sea to create a passage for Raama! The monkeys had formed a queue all the way from the Himaalayas down to the southernmost point, where the bridge was fast coming up. When the causeway was completed, word went fast along the queue that no more hills are needed and each monkey placed on the ground, wherever it stood, the hill it had on its shoulder at the time.

Inanimate things too have emotions

One hill, however, did not sit quietly. It started bewailing its fate.! "Why was I removed from where I was and why am I now refused? Alas! I was elated that I was destined to serve a Divine purpose; I was overjoyed that the armies of Raama and Raama Himself will walk over me. Now, I am neither there, nor where I was!" It shed profuse tears. News reached Raama, and His compassion was great. He sent word that in His next; *Avathaar*, when He will come again upon His mission in human form, He will certainly bless the sorrowing hill. This was the Govardhana Peak which Raama (as the boy Krishna) lifted on His finger and held aloft for full seven days, in order to save the cowherds of Gokul from the deluge of rain that Indhra dared inflict on them!

I related this story to Hislop, when he asked Me whether inanimate things too had emotions and feelings of disappointment and despair. The occasion at Dharmakshethra was : I asked that about a hunted saris be brought, so that I could select some, for distribution to the women workers at Ananthapur who are helping build the Sathya Sai College there! I selected 96 and asked them to return 4 to the shop. I kept the 4 aside and the 96 were placed in my room. Later, when I passed the table on which the four discarded saris were kept (Hislop was standing by the side of that table), it was noticed that the card board box which contained the four was dripping tears! The saris were weeping (!) that they could not get appreciation from Me and were declared unfit. Yes! They had shed tears. You may ask whether this is ever possible. I answer, there is nothing in this world which has no heart, which is incapable of feeling joy or grief! Only, you must have the eye to see, the ear to listen, the heart to respond!

Accept bravely whatever happens, fame or shame

This morning, when the Sun rose in the East, the Moon was just setting in the West, so that both the orbs could be seen at the time. The moon represents the mind and the sun, the intellect. Both must be balanced in a disciplined way; it should not be one or the other, emotion or intelligence, but, emotion held back by intelligence. Then, you will not be carried off your feet by gusts of fear or fury, fancy or frivolity. You will accept bravely whatever happens---fame or shame! Welcome every happening with a Yes. I always say Yes, Yes, Yes (S S S), whether it is praise or blame, ill or well.

You are in the see-saw, in two moods, anger, exultation, pride, self-condemnation, alternating joy and grief. Bheeshma, whom one should remember on this *Uttharaayana* day, felt the bed of arrows on which he lay to be as cosy as a bed of roses! He had accepted it of his own choice and so, he felt no pain. I accepted the inflamed appendix of a devotee, as a consequence of the Love I bore him; and, so, though every one, including the doctors said, I must have excruciating pain, I did 'not feel it! Bheeshma said, Yes, to all that happened. It was the Will of the Go within, the God without, the God without whom nothing can ever happen.

Adore God offering Him your deeds, words, thoughts

The Sun takes the Northern Path from today; the higher path. So, the children too have to follow the footsteps of the Parent. In the North, the Himaalayas welcome you into 'Un-affectedness' (*a-chala*), Purity (*Hima*, Snow) and Immaculate-ness (pure white, untarnished clarity), and coolness (perfect joy). Whenever the mind yearns for and pursues these four gains, it is on the Northern path leading to the Himaalayas, the Abode of the Gods; it is following the Sun, the Splendour of the intelligence.

Resolve to take the first step towards the Indwelling Cod, now, this day. That is the reason why people have hung mango leaves across their doors today, to welcome Cod into the home! But, your home is your heart, not the brick and mortar pile, where your body dwells. Hang the streamer of green across the door-sill of your heart. Enthroned the Divine there, and adore Him with all sincerity, offering Him your deeds, your words, your thoughts.

You celebrate the Sankraanthi with a feast, where you prepare a dish, out of green gram, rice and jaggery. The gram-is Lord Vishnu, the rice is His consort (*Sri* or plenty and prosperity), and, the jaggery is the principle of Divine love. So, it is not that dish that marks the festival, it is the contemplation of the Divine that has to be established in the wayward mind.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 14-1-1971

Be like the lotus, unattached to the slush where it is born and the water in which it is bred; the merits and demerits earned in past births is the slush, where the jeevi (individual soul) is born.

Maaya or the enticing illusion called world is the water which sustains; but do not allow that enticement to affect you. Be above and beyond the earthly attachments like the lotus.

Know that though you may be in it, you should not allow the world to get into you and affect your sense of values.

Sri Sathya Sai