

14. Life-long *bhajan*

THROUGHOUT last night, you have sung *bhajans* and kept vigil, as part of the *Shivaraathri* celebrations. This *aarathi* (waving lights before an image) marks the end of that *bhajan* sessions; but, only of the outer, congregational, vocal part, not of the inner solitary silent *bhajan* that must be the very breath of your existence. The *Vedhaantha* persuades you to investigate the function of the senses and of the mind which is activated by its capacity to reflect the *Aathman* within. All the inner instruments of knowledge and the inner witness in man are promoters of the highest wisdom, though they are misused, in ignorance, to confound and ruin man's progress. Those who are aware of their being only the indestructible *Aathman*, encased in temporary sheaths, in a ramshackle dwelling house bearing a name and presenting a form, they are unaffected by anything that happens to the sheath or house. Prahlada was one such. However inhuman the torture they inflicted on him, he was calm and unruffled; for, he was established in the Naaraayana, that was his genuine Truth.

It took Arjuna a long time to realise this. In fact, it was only after the Ascension of Lord Krishna that it was brought home to him, in a dramatic form. Krishna, while rolling up the curtain of the *Avathaar* Drama, had asked him to take the women, children and some old men of the Yaadhava clan orphaned by his departure, to the safety of Hastinaapura, away from Dhwaaraka which had been swallowed by the sea.

The mind hides the Prompter and the Power within

Arjuna led the disconsolate community through lands infested by wild tribes, confident that the bow Which had won him the Kurukshetra battle against the array of gigantic heroes will ensure safely and success. But, when some barbarian hordes fell upon the Yaadhava remnants, Arjuna sought to string his bow and fix an arrow upon it---in vain! He could not recall the formula which could send the arrow on its mortal mission. He had to witness the debacle, the kidnapping of the women whom he had vowed to guard! When Krishna had finished His Mission, he too had ended his mission; there was no more breath in him too. Krishna was his life, his might, his archery, his mastery, his heroism, his all. That truth was made patent to Arjuna by the shame of defeat, not by the paean of victory!

The mind plays many tricks with you, the chief of which is to foster the ego and hide the prompter and the power within. You must have heard of an accountant in the Court of the King of Death, Chithraguptha, by name. He maintains a Register of the good and the bad, done by each living being, and on death, he brings the books to the Court and strikes the balance between debit and credit. Yama, the King then metes out the punishment that can expiate and educate. This Chithraguptha has his office in the mind of man, all the time, awake, alert. The word means 'the secret picture; what he does is to 'picture' all the secret promptings that blossom into activity; he notes the warning signals as well as the occasions when those signals were ignored or wantonly disregarded. You must see that the warning of the Divine against the merely human, or even the bestial inclinations are heeded.

***Bhajan* encourages man to dive into himself**

Bhajan is one of the processes by which you can train the mind to expand into eternal values. Teach the mind to revel in the glory and majesty of God; wean it away from petty horizons of pleasure. That is all that *bhajan* or *puuja* or *vratha* can do. *Bhajan* induces in you a desire for

experiencing the truth, to glimpse the beauty that is God, to taste the bliss that is the Self. It encourages man to dive into himself and be genuinely his real Self. Once that search is desired, the path is easy. One has only to be reminded that-he is divine, for, the malady is, its being thrust out of recognition.

Chaithanya once had very high fever, the temperature rising to 105° to 106° He refused to administer upon himself any drug other than what the *Shaasthras* has prescribed; he asked for the dust of the feet of a Brahmana, water consecrated by washing his feet! They could only get hold of a Brahmana who was not following correctly the disciplines laid down for that high caste, which entrusted with heavy responsibilities like leading the community along the spiritual path to self-realisation. But, *Chaithanya* asked that they need not be very strict in scrutinising his credentials, for, a Brahmana is holy, however fallen he may be. He belongs to a line which has soaked itself through many lives in *Vedhic* lore and *saadhana*.

However rickety a cow has become, milk can be got only from her; she has to be fed, fostered, fondled and revered. Thus, *Chaithanya* reminded the Brahmana of his great; role in society and encouraged them to live up to the high expectations that history has fastened about them. Man too has come for a great destiny, on a sacred mission, endowed with special skills and tendencies to help him on; but, he fritters these precious gifts and crawls on earth from birth to death, worse than any animal. Exercises like *bhajan* elevate the mind and exhort the individual to seek and find the source of eternal joy that lies within him.

Grace is not something that is given or taken

When I directed that groups of people belonging to our *Samithi* should go along the streets in the early hours of the morning singing the glory of God as summarised in the Names with which they are identified, some ask me, "Is this also included in *bhakthi*? Should we sing aloud in company while on the streets?" The question arises from false conceit. *Bhajan* which is part of *Nagarasankeerthan* gladdens the singer and showers joy to those who listen; it cleanses and purifies the atmosphere by its vital vibrations. It inspires and instructs; it calls and comforts.

Hold fast to the God you believe in, despite trials and tests, the ups and downs of life. This day is the New Moon Day, when the moon starts growing into fullness, but, as soon as he has come full circle, he starts waning, until he almost disappears and the earth is plunged-in darkness; yet, all is not lost; the thin curve grows steadily into the full moon again. Fortune too is like the moon. Nothing can be fixed or fragile for ever, in this fickle world, born out of the fancy of the Lord. The Lord is eternal, absolute, unchanging. My Name is Truth, I am the Truth, and since I am in every one of you, you too are everlasting Truth. Do not doubt this and descend into distress. Strive to be endowed with the unwavering eye, the unhesitating mind.

Call out the Lord who is within your heart

Now, you will all be given *Prasaadham* (eatables offered to God) and so, sit silently in rows. Of course, I mean by *Prasaadham* the cooked offerings that are given this day at the conclusion of the *bhajan*. *Prasaadham*, also means Grace, which flows from God when He is propitiated. My Grace is ever with you; it is not something that is given or taken; it is given always and accepted by the Consciousness that is aware of its significance. Win the Grace of your own sub-conscious, so that it may accept the Grace of God which is ever available.

God does not deny any one; it is only you, who deny God. When the gift is proffered, you have to do only one little act, so that you may earn it---you have to extend your hand to receive it. That is the Grace or the subconscious; Win it, by teaching it the value of the Grace of God. My Grace is showered wherever you are through My infinite Love, without even calculating or measuring the readiness of your subconscious to receive it and benefit by it. The Grace itself will confer on you the faith and the strength, the wisdom and the joy. I am in your heart all the time, whether you know it or not. Dhroupadhi called out for the Lord of Dhwaaraka, Shri Krishna, when she was cruelly insulted by the wicked cousins of her husbands, and so, the Lord responded after a little delay. He had to go to Dhwaaraka and come from there to Hasthinaapura where she was! He told her that she could have got Him in the fraction of a second, had she called out, 'O dweller in my heart,' for He dwells there too, as everywhere else!

The *Mahaa Shivarathri* festival is over; but, the message of the day is yet to fructify in your behaviour, conduct, thinking and activity. Do not rest content with a night-long *bhajan*. Make it a life-long *bhajan*, of adoration, of pilgrimage to the Lord within.

Mahaa Shivarathri, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 24-2-1971

The poor are rich in devotion to God; Kunthi prayed that her difficulties may continue, for they keep the Lord ever in her mind. Riches are a great handicap in the path of spiritual progress. So, though you may be rich, do not cultivate attachment to the bank account or to the mansions, cars and comforts you command. Have them as if they are given to you on trust by the Lord.

Sri Sathya Sai