

23. The two poles

THIS was to be a gathering exclusively for Office Bearers of the Units of the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation in Maharaashtra; but, what have we to confer only among ourselves? The Organisation is designed to promote the welfare and progress of all and so, I am glad devotees and volunteers are also participating.

You must be clear about the objectives of the Organisation of which your unit is a limb; for, without having the goal clear in the mind, how can the journey end in success? Whatever you do--reading, writing, meditating, doing *Bhajan* (group singing), going on pilgrimage---can be valid and worthwhile, only if you have the objective clearly in view. You must know why certain things have to be done, and why certain other things have to be avoided.

Imagine you are on a journey to, say Prashaanthi Nilayam. En route, you have to change trains at Guntakal, from the broad gauge line to the metre gauge line, isn't it? You wish to take a little rest and you go to a Travellers Bungalow. The man in charge asks you. Whence do you come? Where do you wish to go?" Now, if you have forgotten the answers to these universal queries, how awkward will it be! You can neither go forward, nor, return!

You are now an individual, contained in this body or that; you are moving every moment towards your home, the place where you came from, the *Aathma*, the *Param-aathma* (The Supersoul of which your own soul is but a spark). The *Upanishaths* ask the questions, Whence, Whither, Who, Why; and, when you pine for the answers, they teach you the solutions and advise you to practise the disciplines for experiencing the answers and their truth yourselves.

God acknowledges His devotee as His friend

Know whence and whither, both. The letter must have the address of the person from whom it has come, so that it could be returned to the sender, in case of need; it must, of course, have the address of the person to whom it is to be delivered for, else, why write at all? Now, since the letter, that is, 'your life,' is not aware of whence and whither, it rots in the post box only, or perhaps, it might reach the Dead Letter Office! Why waste lives like that? Learn from the *Guru*, and move forward, from the box to bliss. Everyone has the basic urge to imbibe the immortality from which he has fallen off! Some, like flies flit from fair to foul, are swooped for their pains! They are avoided **as** disease carriers; they do not give ease to those that contact them; they only tease and torment. Others are like bees, seeking only honey from fragrant flowers, and fructifying, them in return for the sweetness they derive. Every being has a latent, basic urge to know the Supreme Self, the *Paramaathma*.

Some persons boast that they are devotees of God, that God has blessed them in such and such ways that God's Grace has helped them thus and thus; do not give ear to these ego centred pretenders. You become a devotee when *God* has acknowledged your devotion. The ego is the greatest obstacle in the way of such acceptance. God has said, You *madh bhakthah sa me priyah*: "He who is my devotee is my friend!" Why has God mentioned both 'devotee' and 'friend'?. The devotee reveres God, he fears God, and so, cannot be quite close to Him. A friend is most close to Him. But, if one is only a friend and not a devotee, there is the danger that he might take liberties with Him, which might not be pardoned. Freedom must not turn into licence!

Everyone has to guard land, faith and wife

Bheeshma was a mighty warrior; he was famous for the grandeur and glory that he won, through both detachment and Divine Grace. In the vicinity of his kingdom, Bheeshma once had to encounter a person called *Gadhaa-dhara*. This man had undergone severe austerity and received from God as a reward for pleasing Him, an invincible discus *Chakra* (wheel) so people hailed him as *Chakradhara* (the wielder of the Divine Wheel-weapon)! The fellow had become so insolent and wicked that he wrote a most insulting missive to Bheeshma, on the death of Shanthanu, Bheeshma's Father. Chakradhara wrote, "Either send the widowed queen to my palace zenana or, meet me in battle!" Who could tolerate such insults and keep quiet? It is said that everyone has to guard *Dharani* (land), *Dharma* (faith) and *Dharmapathni* (wife).

Bheeshma said to himself, "What is my life worth, if I cannot avenge this insult, if I cannot save my mother's honour?" But, the Brahmanas of the court advised him that he should engage himself in combat with Chakradhara only after ten days; for, during the ten-day-period after the death of his father, he had ceremonial pollution and during that period, he should not handle the divine missiles he had with him. He could not utter then, the holy *manthras* which can activate them. "Finish the religious rites to appease the departed soul of your father and then, destroy the foe in battle," they advised. Bheeshma realised the propriety of their counsel and sent a message to Chakradhara, inviting him for the fray ten days later!

Skill reinforced by Divine Grace can work wonders

But, Chakradhara could not delay that long; he was itching for victory; he directed his newly won weapon at Bheeshma! But, a wonderful thing happened! That *Chakra* which had come from the hand of God would not harm a son who was doing his scriptural duty, performing the *Vedhic* rites for the manes! It rotated in the sky for ten days, waiting for the funeral-pollution period to end! When one is devoted to his duty, one is surrounded by such powerful protecting influences that no injurious force dare approach. That is the way Grace operates. Personal skill when reinforced by Divine Grace, can work wonders, as happened when the horde of monkeys successfully built a bridge across the sea to Lanka.

One has to go through the act of expiation

A study of the lives of the great men of past ages in Bhaarith will reveal that they were candid enough and brave enough to confess their sins before everyone. They were also willing and ready to accept punishment for the sin committed. They sought to know what the *Praayachittha* (expiation of sin) was---the means of purifying and cleansing the erring mind. They went through the process with a sense of contrition and contentment.

The Horse that was let loose and allowed to wander through whatever realm it willed, a preliminary to the *Ashwamedha yaaga* "(Horse-sacrifice) resolved upon by the Paandava brothers, was being guarded by Arjuna, who followed it at a certain distance. When the horse passed through Manipur (ruled by Babhravaahana, his own son born, of Chithraangada), the King held it captive in his stables!

Arjuna marched towards the City; when Babhravaahana heard of his arrival and knew that he was his father, he went forward with all his courtiers, kinsmen and priests to give him the welcome due to the father. But, Arjuna invited him for combat; he said, "Having stopped the horse, you must fight and not cringe before its guardian. Earn it on the field of battle; do not be a

blot on the fair name of *Kshathriya!*" His mother too urged him not to shirk his duty, whoever be the guardian of the horse or whatever his kinship with him. When the call of war is heard, no *Kshathriya* should creep back, she asserted.

So Babhruvaahana went back and fought so valiantly with his own father that Arjuna was overwhelmed by the rain of sharp arrows. He fell dead on the ground, between the two armies! Babhruvaahana was plunged in agony. At that moment, a divine nymph, Uluupi by name, came upon the scene, and consoled the son "Do not grieve! This is but the play of Fate. It is written that Arjuna should suffer death at the hands of his son, as an act of expiation for his mis-deeds. Now, touch him and he will rise up alive!" This was done and Arjuna regained consciousness. The two entered the City happily and were welcomed by Chithraangadha.

Arjuna himself had asked for this calamity, in order to cleanse his mind. During the battle of Kurukshethra, he had killed his own *guru* and grandfather, Bheeshma, and repented pathetically for that: sin. He had invoked, a punishment on himself for the wrong---"To redeem me from this sin, may I die at the hands of my own son!" Constant cleansing of the heart is essential, so that the spiritual journey might be smooth and without accidents.

Serve your family as a duty

You are all nuts, bolts and screws. If even the tiniest screw thinks, "I am just a small screw; what does it matter if I am not cent per cent efficient?" a fatal accident can easily happen! Do not neglect your duty wherever it lies. Have self-control, so that: the senses may not run amuck. Serve your family as a duty, not with more attachment than is due.

Frogs croak all round the tank, sitting in hundreds along the shore, when the tank is full; when it goes dry, not a single one is seen! Kinsmen crowd in when you are in affluence; when your riches are drained by misfortune, you are left severely alone!

There is the story of a rich man, who was being led away on death to the world beyond. He pleaded with his angelic escort that he may be allowed to halt a while, and turn back once. They allowed him to do so; he turned and had a good look, then, he said, "Well, now I am ready; lead me on!" The messengers were surprised at his strange willingness to accompany them; they asked him what had happened to make him so resigned and determined. He said, "I amassed vast wealth through sin and crime; I fed and fostered a large brood of friends and kinsmen. I looked back to see whether at least one among them is now following me, eager to help in my sorrowful plight! Not a single one is worried about me. I shall now walk forward to wherever you take me."

God is the truest friend. A sage has described the spiritual family, which will never hurt you with such ingratitude. Truth is the father; Love is the mother. Knowledge is the son; Peace is the daughter. Devotees are brothers; *Yogees* are the friends. Cultivate this type of family; you can be happy in their midst.

Bliss obliterates all worries and anxieties

Sathya Sai Seva Samithis have been formed, to enable you to achieve peace and joy. They are not to be used for advertisement of myself or yourself. Some people ask. "Why rules and regulations in a spiritual organisation?" How can progress be achieved without disciplining the mind? Regulation, strict regulation, is essential up to a certain stage of individual development.

The aeroplane runs on wheels for some length on the ground, before it takes off into the air. You may ask, "Why wheels for air-plane?" So too, when you reach a certain height in spiritual saadhana, rules and regulations can be folded up, as the pilot folds up the wheels when up in the air. While serving others through the *Samithi*, do not forget to do some *Saadhana* for your own advancement. *Paraseva* (service of others) is the negative pole; *Aathma-seva* (service to one-self) is the positive pole; and when they meet, the Flash of *Aanandha* (Bliss) emanates. Bliss obliterates all worries, all fears, and all anxiety. March on to that consummation, through *Saadhana* and *Seva*. That is my Blessing to each of you.

Bombay, 13-5-1971

God does not reside in the head; He is Hridayavaasi, the dweller in the heart. Keep the heart cool, pure and soft--as the moonlight is on the Guru Poornima Day. For this, your mind has to be cleansed by the mind only.

Just as you shape an iron sickle or axe with an iron hammer, the mind is the shaper and shaped, both.

The power behind the mind which helps it to shape it well, is Faith in God. That is why it is declared that one must have faith in God, holy places, the scriptures, the manthra, the soothsayer, the drug and the teacher.

Cultivate that Faith and everything else will be added unto you.

Sri Sathya Sai