

26. Unbroken bliss

THIS day you have resolved to imbibe Divine Bliss by reciting the Glow of God in chorus and with music, continuously for twenty-four hours. You call it *akhanda bhajan*, even though it will end after that period. Still, the idea is good and the programme will yield good results. For in this busy age of fear and anxiety, the remembrance of God and the repetition of His name is the one means of liberation that is accessible to all. People toil for years for maintaining their families and bringing up their children, and though they do not succeed as much as they hope or wish, they continue their efforts unabated. But in the effort to gain the Grace of God, they do not evince even half the interest. They get dispirited when they do not see signs of Grace after short spurts of *saadhana* (spiritual effort).

Bhajan (group singing of devotional songs on Lord's Names and Glory) is more important than *bhajan* (meals). Prayer is more desirable than pining for meals. Birds, beasts, insects and worms, all feed and keep fit. Man is the crown of creation, the monarch and master of all beings in creation. And if he, too, seeks only food and shelter as inferior species do, it is deplorable. Indeed. From the moment of waking until the moment when he lays himself down again to sleep, man is engaged in endless errands, unceasing turmoil, never-ending tangles and boundless anxiety. And what does he gain therefrom? More confusion, more mental agitation.

***Bhajan* is a good disciplinary process**

Is this the be-all and end-all of human existence? No. It cannot be. He has the nobler-goal of self-illumination, of lighting the lamp of love inside him, and sharing the light of that lamp with all around him. *Kaama* (desire) and *krodha* (anger) are the two enemies that will not allow him to keep that flame burning bright.

Bhajan such as this, is a good disciplinary process by which these two can be kept away. *Kaama* is the lust for physical pleasure, for power, for fame, for wealth and for scholarship. *Krodha* is anger, which is the result of foiled lust. If you long for peace of mind, you must take up the *saadhana* that will confer peace on you. If, Instead, you still engage in old habits, how can peace be yours? You stand at the square yonder, and wishing to come to Whitefield, board a bus that moves in the opposite direction and takes you to Hoskote. Is that the sign of an Intelligent man? You choose the wrong path and then complain that you are lost. Salt and camphor look alike, but you have to exercise your intelligence to discriminate between them. Brass make more noise than gold, but you should not be deceived by that and choose brass instead of gold.

Through genuine prayer, evil can be destroyed

If men make more noise and mislead people into believing that they are wise, they are like brass. Do not mistake them for gold. Ascribe value to pure hearts and dedicated deeds, never indulging in talk that hurts others. When you intend to harm another, the evil recoils on you. The grief which you suffer is only an echo of the grief you inflict in another's heart. So when you have injured another, pray for pardon; repent and resolve never to do it again. Through genuine prayer, mountains of evil can be pulverised and destroyed. From now on decide that your words shall be soft and sweet, your acts beneficial to others and your thoughts always about how to serve others who are weaker and less prosperous.

In this and in other villages, there are many persons who are either too old or too weak or with some physical defect---the lame, the deaf, the blind, the polio affected, the paralytic---who are

finding it difficult to earn even a subsistence wage. Some of them also have families to look after. What they are able to scrape together is very inadequate in these days when prices are soaring sky-high. I am proposing to help such people in the villages around Brindhaavan with finance and facilities, to start some employment opportunities through tailoring, carpentry, painting, spinning, weaving and other such village industries. They can recite the Names of God, sing *bhajans* and practise *naamasmarana* (Remembering God's Name) even while engaged in these crafts, so that they can earn both peace for the mind and food for the body. As Vemana sang, they will have the "art of earning money to be happy here, and the art of earning Grace to be happy there."

***Bhajan* has been part of our ancient culture**

The others, too, villagers who toil hard in the fields during the day, can gather after their night meals in this Venugopaalaswami Temple hall and fill themselves with the joy and peace that *bhajan* can confer. Those who sing *bhajans* get what can be called 'double promotion,' for they derive Joy and distribute joy! Life today is filled with sorrow, it is beset with fear and despair. The only time you can forget these thoughts and strengthen yourself to meet the hard times is when you contact the Source of all strength, God. You cannot get that peace and joy while you bend under the burden of daily life. You are carrying a huge load of worry all day; keeps that aside for an hour every evening and spend that time with God who can make your shoulders strong and your burden light. You will relish the *bhajan* as you make it a daily function, like eating and sleeping. You eat twice a day for the upkeep of the body; should you not do *bhajan* at least once for the upkeep of the mind?

Bhajan has been part of our culture, part of the *Sanaathana Dharma* (Eternal Universal Religion) tradition. But it has survived, in however attenuated a form, in the villages only. It has disappeared from the towns, where people have more 'exciting' ways of spending time and recuperating their spirits. But this programme of congregational *bhajan* by all must be fostered, developed and transplanted in the towns later. I am glad to note that the young men of this village and of the adjacent villages, especially those who are attending the Sri Sathya Sai College, are evincing keen interest in these *bhajans*. That is indeed a promising sign fraught with great potential for the future of this country and its culture. They are cleansing their own minds and helping to cleanse the atmosphere of these villages. The air even over these villages is polluted by vulgar film songs, by demeaning and disgusting conversation. The 24-hour long *bhajan* will purify it by Divine vibrations, and those who breathe the pure air will be healthier and more upright in behaviour.

The student who made a speech welcoming Me, ended by requesting Me to come once again to this place for some function which he referred to. I am ready to come to your village as often as you wish, for I find the humanness of man thriving only in the villages. In the towns people have lost it. You know Sri Krishna was born in a village where he later tended cattle. His brother always had a yoke on his shoulder, was proud of it. *Dharmasthaapana* (the restoration of righteousness), has to start from the village where it is still found, however feebly or faintly. Therefore you have to live in the path of *Dharma* and treat it as the very goal of all your activities. Be united in that adventure and encourage one another while proceeding along the path. Then success is assured.

Seeghalli, 4-12-1976