

## 6. Secure God's grace by *Shraddha* and *Vishvaasa*

*Why does sun rise and set in the sky regularly every day?*

*Why do the stars that shine so peacefully in the sky at night hide themselves during the day?*

*Why does the wind that blows tirelessly protect living beings?*

*Why do the murmuring brooks flow ceaselessly?*

*Why are there among the myriad human beings In the world differences of race, religion, caste and wealth?*

*Who is the Lord of all this?*

*Who is their Controller?*

*Come forward, all ye, to learn to carry out His commands!*

*Isaanah sarva vidhyaanaam*

*Iswaras- sarvabhoothaanaam*

*Brahmaadhipathih Sadaa Shivoham.*

THE entire creation is the cosmic dance of the Lord. It is a marvellous and incomparable dance. It is an enchanting scene to behold.

In this world, birth and death, happiness and sorrow follow each other in ceaseless succession. However, Sumathi, an exemplar of chastity, could stay the sun from rising to prevent the death of her husband. In order to restore her husband to life, Saavithri confronted successfully the lord of Death. Such extraordinary power is given only to human beings.

### ***Dharma* and *adharm*a are prevalent in creation**

In this creation, both *Dharma* (Righteousness) and *Adharma* (unrighteousness) are prevalent. At one time righteousness is predominant. At another time unrighteousness reigns. Only a man filled with devotion can attain the triune embodiment of the Divine----*Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram* (Truth, Auspiciousness and Beauty).

When confronted with his final destiny man becomes a prey to many fears and doubts. The moment Kamsa heard that the child that would be born to his cousin Devaki would prove his slayer, he wanted immediately to kill her. Vasudeva saved his wife's life by promising to hand over to Kamsa every child born to Devaki. To kill or to save a life, the power vests in man alone.

Every human being is a fragment of the Divine. Only when a man discharges his duties will his life find fulfilment. Duty is man's primary obligation. If a man is endowed with wealth and possessions, he has a duty to enjoy them. But to covet or seize other people's wealth is a crime. Wealth is not confined to money or gold or other possessions. All the knowledge and skills acquired by a person also constitute his wealth. Even health is wealth. The power to think is also wealth. Physical strength and mental abilities are also wealth. The time at one's command is also his wealth.

Hence, it is man's primary duty to utilise his time and every other form of wealth in the right manner. Unfortunately, today man wastes the time, wealth and talents of others. This is *Adharma--opposed* to righteousness.

### ***Dharma implies right use of one's time***

Oftentimes, I advise the students not to indulge in excessive talking for the reason that it is a gross abuse of the time available to them. Moreover, by excessive talk with another person, he is robbing the latter of his time. This is also wrong.

*Dharma* implies the right use of one's time and resource. *Adharma* is the abuse of one's time and wealth and depriving others of their wealth.

Every person has a mind of his own in which thoughts arise based on his *Ichcha-Shakthi* (will power). One person favours adoration of Raama. Another prefers Shiva. A third one enjoys worshipping Krishna. A fourth is inspired by contemplation of Jesus. Another is musing over the thought of Allah. All these are based on individual preferences.

But, in the minds of all persons, in whatever country or region, whatever form one wishes to adore, whatever deity one wants to worship, whatever name one likes to chant, two things are essential. *Vishvaasam* (faith) and *Shraddha* (earnestness). Without earnestness, even the most trivial act cannot be performed well. Without *Shraddha* nothing can be accomplished.

"*Shraddhaavaan labhaathe Jnaanam*," says the Geetha. Only the earnest seeker can acquire knowledge of the Divine. However intelligent one may be, without earnestness he will achieve nothing. A man with earnestness can convert a small burning cinder into a huge bonfire.

### ***Shraddha and Vishvaasa represent Shakthi and Shiva***

*Shraddha* (earnestness) is the means to the realisation of the Divine. What does *Shraddha* signify? It signifies *Dhaiva-Shakthi* (Divine power). *Shraddha* is called *Bhavaani*. It refers to a goddess, to *Shakthi* (Divine energy) or *Prakrithi* (Nature).

Next comes *Vishvaasam* (faith). What is faith? It symbolises *Eeshvarathvam* (the Divine Principle). Through *Shraddha* (earnestness) *Ichcha shakthi*, *Kriyaa-shakthi* and *Jnaana-shakthi* (will power, the power of action, and the power of wisdom) are manifested. The essence of these three potencies is *Eeshvarathva* (Divinity). They constitute the power of *Vishvaasam* (faith).

Thus, *Shraddha* and *Vishvaasam* represent Paarvathi and Parameshvara. Humanness represents the combination of Shakthi (or Nature) and Shiva. These two are not disparate. Just as fire and the power to burn go together, these two go together. Sugar and sweetness are similarly interrelated. There is no sugar without sweetness. Where there is sweetness there is sugar. Likewise *Shraddha* and *Vishvaasam* are symbiotically related to each other. Hence these should be regarded as present in man in the form of Shiva and Shakthi.

The whole of *Prakrithi* (nature) is *Ardhnaari-svaruupam* (the feminine half of the Divine couple). Any man who has no *Shraddha* and *Vishvaasa* is verily a corpse.

Although both *Shraddha* (as God,) and *Vishvaasa* (as Nature) are present in man, by ignoring God (lacking earnestness) man wastes his life. Earnestness and faith together constitute spirituality. Without these, all spiritual exercises have no value.

### **Dedicate all actions to God**

How is man to realise the presence of Shiva and Shakthi in Him? It is by doing all actions as a dedication to the Divine. "*Mathkarmakrith, Math-paramah, Madh-bhakthah,*" declares the Geetha (Whatever actions you do, dedicate them to me. Consider me as your Supreme Lord. Be devoted to Me). This is the message of the Lord in the Geetha. This is the right way to worship the *Saakaara* (attributeful Lord). This kind of worship promotes devotion.

Only a land that is properly ploughed, weeded, manured and sown with good seeds will yield a rich harvest. Likewise, after the field of the heart has been cleared of the weeds of bad thoughts and qualities, fertilised by good feelings and virtues, and the pure seed of *Prema* (Love) is sown, the sacred crop of *Jnaana* (wisdom) can be enjoyed.

Based on this, two paths have been laid down in the spiritual field: *Vidhvamsaka* and *Vidhaayaka* (the destructive and the constructive paths). *Vidhvamsaka* path refers to the clearing of a field of bushes, thorns and the like before it is got ready for cultivation. *Vidhaayaka* path refers to the planting of good seeds in the form of good qualities which will yield a harvest of joy. Hence everyone's heart has to be filled in the right way by *Shraddha and Vishvaasa*.

It is not enough for a devotee to claim that he loves the Lord. He must find out whether the Lord loves him. You must see whether God showers His grace on you. Only then, your devotion becomes meaningful.

In all his actions, man should not be concerned only with self-interest. He must find out whether his actions are approved by his conscience. Just as the Divine is always blissful, the devotee should be a *Santhushtah* (ever-blissful). But in the present times, men have no contentment or sense of joy. They are racked by doubts and apprehensions. How can such persons ever experience divine bliss? It has been said that one who is vacillating is merely a living creature, but one who is firm and unwavering is divine.

### **Treat God as a friend**

God has the appellation *Suhrith* (a good hearted friend). In every human relationship, there is an element of selfishness in the display of affection. God alone showers His love with no trace of selfishness. Man fails to understand this sacred, Divine Love principle. I would like to illustrate what it means to have God as friend from the example of the Pandavas whom Krishna was all in all. When Arjuna returned to Hasthinaapura from Dhvaaraka after the passing of Krishna, he could not bear to answer his mother Kunthi's question as to what had happened to Krishna. With tears in his eyes, he said. that Krishna, who had been their charioteer, their councillor, their preceptor, friend, lord and everything else, had left the world. There can be no greater thing than to have God as one's *Suhrith* (friend).

### **Our aim should be to dwell in the Lord**

Another appellation of God is *Nivaasah* (the Supreme Abode). Our aim should be to dwell in the Lord. This cosmos is the abode of the Lord. We are living in this cosmos. We are not separate from it. But the sacred feeling that we are living in the abode of the Lord should be cherishable by everyone. Such sacred feelings do not arise in man because of the barriers created by *raaga, bhaya and dhvesha* (attachment, fear and hatred). Attachment is the feeling that one develops when he considers that something other than himself can give him. satisfaction and joy. This sense of separateness should go. The consciousness that the same constituents are present in one

and all should be realised. Then, there will be no room for differentiation and alienation. The sense of oneness will be experienced.

Where there is attachment, there is *dhvesha* (hatred), which is a reflection of *raaga*. Fear is born out of attachment--the fear of losing what one has. Attachment and fear breed hatred. These three lead man to stray from his adherence to *Shraddha* and *Vishvaasa*. Hence, these three have to be brought under control.

To realise the 'Divinity within man, everyone' has to turn his vision inward. All that is perceived in the external world is subject to changes. Man cannot derive happiness from an unchanging world. He desires change. But the change He should seek is a divine change, not changes in the mundane world. He should seek to know the truth about himself. Ignorant about his true self, man today is harried by fears. As long as the fear remains, God will elude him. He has to develop faith in the Divinity (Shiva) within him, to get rid of this fear and acquire the *Brahmabalam* (strength of the Divine).

### **Difference between *raathri* and Shivaraathri**

Every night is marked by darkness. But tonight it is Shivaraathri. What is the difference between *raathri* (night) and Shivaraathri? For the man who has recognised his divinity, every night is Shivaraathri. For the man immersed in worldly concerns, all nights are the same. That night is marked by darkness. This night is marked by light. Spirituality is the lighthouse that spreads light for the man who is full of despair, immersed in insatiable desires. The name of God is the lighthouse. By chanting the name, the bearer of the name can be realised.

Man has to proceed from the body to the Divine. Man is a limb of society. Society is a limb of Nature. Nature is a limb of God. The *Aathma* is present in everyone. It knows no territorial barriers. It is omnipresent. To recognize the omnipresence of the Divine is the purpose of observing Shivaraathri. This purpose is not served by fasting and keeping awake all the night. These are mere auxiliaries to what is considered the ultimate goal. But God-realisation should not be put off to some distant future. It has to be taken up here and now. That is the purpose of Shivaraathri.

### **Concentrate Mind on God**

But today, people have forgotten their Divine destiny and are wasting their lives in worldly pursuits. They have no faith in their future. Where there is no faith, there is no Shiva. They lack the power of *Shraddha* (earnestness). So Paarvathi is also not there. Man's pathetic condition today is he has denied himself the grace of both Paarvathi and Shiva. He can obtain it only by cultivating human values. He has to acquire the *Jnaana* (spiritual wisdom) that comes from *Shraddha* (spiritual earnestness). The true values for man are *Ichcha-shakthi*, *Kriya-shakthi*, and *Jnaana-shakthi*. These represent the triple aspects of the Divine: *Sathyam*, *Shivam*, *Sundaram* (Truth, Auspiciousness and Beauty). These are the eternal verities. Though endowed with these divine powers, man goes after petty trinkets. When the Divine is ready to confer liberation, why get involved in the bonds of worldly life?

Man should seek God alone. Once God's grace is secured, all else will be got with ease. For this purpose, man has to get rid of attachment, fear and hatred. He must perform all actions as an offering to God, who is omnipresent.

The vigil and fasting observed on Shivarathri night have become farcical. True vigil and fasting consist in concentrating all one's thoughts on God during the whole night. God's grace is a direct sequel to one's actions. Each one has to examine for himself in what spirit he is performing his worship. The Divine can be realised only through *Shraddha* and *Vishvaasa*. The Divine is within everyone. Once man recognises this fact, he will give no room for bad qualities.

*Embodiments of Divine Love!* Dedicate yourselves to the performance of your duties. Do not waste your time or that of others in idle talk. Starting with the duties of the individual, man should aim at achieving-oneness with the Divine as the ultimate goal. Shivarathri is an auspicious occasion for concentrating the mind on God. Devote at least this one night entirely to the contemplation of God, to the exclusion of **all** other thoughts and worries.

*Discourse in the Puurnachandhra Auditorium on 19-2-1993, Shivarathri Day.*

*I am showing you by My example how you must fill every moment with useful beneficial activity. You talk among yourselves, "O, Swami is having his rest hour; Swami is sleeping. "But I have never craved for a minute's rest or sleep or relief. Shall I tell you at what time I feel restful, relieved, content? When I know that you are all earning supreme bliss through detachment and spiritual discipline, not until then.*

*BABA*