

7. Serve the Divine: chant the Name

*What can Kali or the forces of evil do
To one whose heart is filled with compassion,
Who wears the jewel of truthful speech,
Whose limbs are devoted to the well-being of others?*

IF MAN is to be free from the sway of evil forces, He has to achieve the triple purity of thought, word and deed. It is only when the heart, the tongue and the body are pure that man can fully comprehend *Para thathva* (Supreme Principle.)

This world that is inhabited by man is called *Prapancha*. *Pra* implies that which is shining or blooming. It is a prefix. It is only when this *Pra* is prefixed to every sense organ that *Prapancha* (the world) emerges.

Prapancha and Paramaathma

There are the five basic elements (space, air, fire, water and earth), the five sense organs (relating to hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell), the five sheaths (*Annamaya, Praanamaya, Manomaya, Vijnaanamaya and Aanandhamaya*), and the five life-breaths (*Praana, Apaana, Vyaana, Udaana and Samaana*). When the prefix *Pra* is added to each of these *Pancha* (five) categories, *the Prapancha* emerges. This means that the world is made up of the five elements, the five senses, the five sheaths and the five vital airs. Consequently, wherever you turn, you see in the world differences: differences among material objects, a variety among individuals, differences in experiences, etc. Wherever such differences exist, there are bound to be likes and dislikes, *Raaga and dhvesha* (attachments and aversions). If man has to transcend these differences, he has to recognise the all-pervading Divine principle. Only then both attachment and hatred can be totally eliminated.

The five elements are manifestations of the *Paramaathma* (Over-self). So are the five sheaths and the five vital airs. Hence, man cannot exist without these manifestations. That is why the scriptures declared: "His feet and hands are everywhere; His head, face, eyes and ears are everywhere." The omnipresence of the Divine can be experienced in the Cosmos.

When a man embarks on some undertaking, he imagines that no one is observing him. But no man can do anything unseen or unnoticed by God. Is it possible to deceive the Divine whose face and eyes are every where? "*Sarvam Aavrithya thishthathi*" (Encompassing everything, He remains). The Divine shines in every object. It is a mark of supreme ignorance to imagine that you can conceal anything from God. Nor is that all. God is described, as "*Acharam Chameva Cha*" (He is non-moving and moving). That is, though appearing to be moving, He remains unmoving. God has no hands, but He can grasp anything. He has no feet but He can move everywhere. He has no eyes, but can see everything. This is the significance of the statement "*Acharam Chameva Cha*."

Here is an example. Man in the dream states feels that he is moving about. In the dream he wanders over all places. He experiences many actions done by the body. But despite the movements and activities in the dream, his body is still and motionless on the bed on which he is sleeping. The same body is moving about in the dream. The Divine is in that body. Equally the

Divine is in the body that is motionless. Thus, He is both the unmoving and the moving. It is not easy to recognise this subtle Jnaana (spiritual wisdom).

Perception of One without a second is *Jnaana*

What does *Jnaana* mean? *Jna* means to know. *Na* refers to that which cannot be known. *Jnaana* therefore refers to that which cannot be easily comprehended. "*Advaita Dharshanam Jnaanam*," declares the scripture. *Jnaana* (Super-knowledge) is the perception of the One without a second. Only the One exists. There is no second. In such a situation, there is nothing to be known. There is no knowledge, knowing or knower (in that state). In comprehending the One, the nature of the many has to be properly understood. Every man has to recognise the Divinity that is present in all human beings.

God is one. That One is the Indweller in all beings. Did the Divine fragment Himself in a myriad ways? The answer is: without fragmenting Himself, the Divine is present in all beings. In his ignorance, man notices only the manifoldness around him.

This may be illustrated this way. The sun's image can be seen in an ocean, a river, a lake, a pond or a well. Everywhere the sun appears to be shining. Are there so many different suns? No. The objects reflecting the image of the sun are varied and different from one another. Likewise, names and forms may be different, but in all beings, the same God, without being divided, shines as the Indweller. Thus, although bodies may appear with different names and forms, the Divine in them is one.

Develop love, nearness and obedience to the Divine

To recognise this, omnipresent Divine, man has to get rid of *Raaga*, *Bhaya*, and *Dhvesha* (attachment, fear and hatred). These three are worldly 'qualities. But, merely by shedding these qualities, man cannot have God-realisation or comprehend the Divine principle. This table before me has no qualities. Can it comprehend the Divine? The mere absence of bad qualities is not enough. There must be love. You must develop love towards God. But love alone will not serve to make one comprehend the *Aathmik* principle. One must move towards the Divine. But, here again, nearness to God is not enough. You have to carry out the injunctions of the Divine. It is only when love, nearness and obedience to the Divine commands are present that one can realise the *Aathmik* principle. Recognition of the Divinity inherent in the human state calls for spiritual *saadhanas* (disciplines) of various kinds.

Today man is enveloped in a certain disease. It is *Ashaanthi* (peacelessness). For curing any disease, there are normally three methods. One is to take the prescribed medicine. After taking the medicine, the prescribed diet regimen has to be followed. Taking the medicine without observing the diet regulations will not help to cure the disease. Adhering to the prescribed diet, without taking the medicine, will also not serve the purpose. Both medicines and diet control are essential to ensure a cure.

If the disease of peacelessness afflicting man is to be cured, he has to take the medicine of love and adhere to the diet of following the injunctions of the Divine. Only then will the mental unrest go.

Three different types of argument

It is true that many have love for God. But they do not live up to the dictates of the Divine. Those who follow the Divine injunctions in a formal manner, do not act with love for God. It is only when there is a union of love and obedience that man can recover peace of mind.

In this context, a *Vedhic* aphorism declares: "*Vaadhah pravadhathaam*" (Let the argument be expounded). There are three different ways of carrying on a *Vaada* (argument). Without attachment or hatred, with the desire to understand *the Aathmik* principle, with a sincere heart, engaging oneself in a spirit of enquiry, is termed a discussion, *Vaadhah* (purposeful argument). This means that one conducts the debate with a heartfelt yearning to know the truth, with a pure mind filled with noble thoughts.

Without such an attitude, if one is keen only to assert his own opinions and defeat the others in the argument by any means, condemning the beliefs of others and defending one's own views in an egoistic spirit--this type of argumentation is termed *Jalpa* (wrangling).

The third type of argumentation is condemning everything and indulging in such condemnation habitually, without any regard for one's own defects, finding faults in others perpetually, magnifying those faults and broadcasting them. Such an attitude is termed *Vithandavaadha* (perverse argumentation).

Of these three types, unfortunately these days we notice only the third type of perverse logic prevalent. *Vaadha and Jalpa* are not very much in evidence. One pretends to be all-knowing in any argument. Such people enter into an argument only for furthering their selfish ends. These persons can never realise the *Aathmik* principle even after any number of lives.

Strive to understand the inherent Divinity'

The first requisite is the urge to comprehend the *Aathmik* principle. Only when this arises in man will his humanness become worth while. In spite of human birth and the inherent Divinity in them, men are failing to recognise their Divine nature. Man is learning all about other things, but is making no effort to understand himself.

What is the real meaning of *Jnaana*? It is to know the truth about one's self by a process of refinement. What is spirituality? What is the refining of one's nature? It is discovering one's true self.

One is searching for something in a room. He sees everything in the room except himself. Likewise in this vast room of the cosmos, man is searching for everything and perceives all things. But he does not know himself and has no perception of what he is. He cries out: "Where is God? Where is God?" This query is like that of a man who asks others where he is. "Where am I? Who am I?" What is the meaning in putting such questions to others? He knows where he is. How can others tell him where he is?

"As is your feeling, so is the outcome"

Likewise, it is sheer ignorance to search for God. There is no need to search for God. He is everywhere, all-pervading, inside and outside. You have to know the Divine which is here, there and everywhere. The Bhaagavatha says: "*Dhuuraath dhuure anthike cha*" (He is farther than the farthest and close by as well). There is none who is nearer to us than He. But there is also none who is farther from us than He. What is the reason for this nearness or remoteness? One's

feelings alone are the primary reason. If you feel He is near, He is near; if you feel He is distant, He is remote. It is on account of this that the scriptures declare: "As is your feeling, so is the outcome."

God has been given three names: *Om Thath Sath*. Man has a fascination for names. When the name of his native place or his own name is mentioned, he feels happy. But with regard to the Divine, the name is not important. If the inner significance of all the different names of the Divine is understood, it will be found that they mean one thing alone. *Om is Parabrahma* (the Supreme Absolute). *Tath* is 'That.' *Sath* is the Real. "*Om Thath Sath*" means "The Supreme Absolute is that Reality." By describing *Om as Pranava*, made up of the three letters A, U, M and elaborately commenting in this manner, the pedantic expositors confuse the aspirants. By such expositions, devotion is weakened. Each one expounds these statements in his own way. When the question is asked whether these exponents practise any of the teaching they preach, the answer is in the negative. When such is the case, how can spirituality grow?

Hence, practice is more essential than preaching. When you practise the teachings, others will follow your example. When you preach to a lakh of people what you don't practise yourself, all of them lose their faith in the teachings and are indifferent to them.

Three stages to attain the Divine

Moreover, the *Aathmik* bliss to be derived from practising spiritual truth cannot be derived by any other means. No preceptor's teaching will be of any use. Nor will the reading of scriptures be of any avail. The gain from study or listening is precious little. It is only when you practise what you have seen and heard that you can experience *Aathmik* bliss. In the Geetha, Krishna declares. "*Jnaathum, Dhrashtum, Praveshtum*" (the three stages of knowing, seeing and experiencing in Self-Realisation). You have heard about something: that is *Jnaathum*. You wish to see what you have heard about: *that is Dhrashtum*. And then you wish to have the experience of what you have seen: that is *Praveshtum*. Only when these three take place can the human being attain the Divine. At present, you are merely studying the scriptures or listening to the expositions of scholars. You must embark on an undertaking to ascertain whether what you have heard can be found and put into practice. You have to begin the quest. But where is the quest to be made? Not outside you. Everything is within you. All that is outside is a reflection of the Inner Being.

Experience of the sages in realising the Divine

In ancient times, the great sages performed rigorous penances to experience the Divine. Some of them gave up the attempt after a time, considering the Divine as unattainable. Some others persisted in their attempts with the determination to achieve the goal. Thereby they realised the Divine. What did they proclaim to the world after their Realisation? "*Vedhaaham etham Purusham Mahaantham Aadithyavarnam Thamasah d*" (We were able to see the Lord, the Effulgent One, bright as the Sun). Where did they see God? "*Thamasah parasthaath*" (Beyond the *Thamo-guna*), came the answer.

Today man is enveloped in a thick cloud of *Thamoguna*. The effulgent Lord can be seen beyond the *Thamoguna* (the quality which is the cause of all man's ignorance and wrong doings). This *Thamo-guna*, which holds every man in its grip, should be got rid of. For this purpose, men should perform good deeds and render service.

In the Raamaayana, during an encounter between Hanumaan and Vibheeshana, Raavana's youngest brother, in Lanka, Vibheeshana asked Hanumaan why he (Vibheeshana) had not secured a vision of Raama in spite of his chanting Raama's name. Hanumaan replied that mere chanting of Raama's name was not enough. Vibheeshana had failed to engage himself in any act of service to Raama. He had done nothing to render help to Seetha, who was held captive in Lanka by Raavana.

It is not enough to recite the Lord's name. One has to render service to the Lord. Only then, there is a unification of the Name and the Form and the Divine is experienced.

People are chanting the name of the Lord today. They are dwelling in the *aashram*. Why have they come here? To secure Bhagavaan's grace and experience *Aathmaanandham* (spiritual bliss). Those who have come may be reciting the name of the Lord. But are you engaging yourselves in any of the Lord's work? What part are you playing in Svaami's work? Without participating in Divine service, your stay here for any number of years will be as futile as the presence of a frog on a lotus. While bees coming from long distances taste the nectarine sweetness of the honey in the lotus, the frog derives no benefit from its nearness to the lotus. This truth is not recognised by devotees.

Duty of the aashramites

Hence, it is not enough to come to the *aashram*. You have to take part in the *aashram* activities. You must render service according to your capacity. You are not asked to do more than that. Svaami does not ask for your services. He is saying all this for your own sake.

Hence, from today everyone staying in the *aashram*, whoever he may be, should render service according to one's capacity. There is no use merely in consuming food and taking one's seat in the *Mandhir* Verandah or the *Dharshan* (audience) line. Everyone must render service to the limit of one's ability. Those who cannot render such service should quit the *Mandhir*. Why have you come here? What are you doing? Consult your conscience for the answers. You have come from far away places, giving up all things. But despite this renunciation, what are you doing? You are wasting your time. This is a grievous mistake. Time is a manifestation of God. Time is consuming man. God is the consumer of Time itself. Therefore, you should strive to earn the grace of God. If you waste time, you will forfeit God's grace.

Embark on active work

Many persons are wasting their time in this manner. Whatever you tell them, they say: "Sai Raam! Sai Raam!" Even a tape-recorder can repeat this. What is the use of uttering the name? Embark on active work. Even for eating a *masala dosa*, you have to engage your hands and mouth in action. Likewise, you have to use your hands for service. Chant the name with your tongue. And experience bliss in your heart. Only when all these three are done will you qualify for God's grace.

Therefore, everyone who had joined the *aashram* should take part in service activities according to one's capacity. Some are doing this. There is one devotee who is 86 years old. He is engaged in some work or other right upto 10 p.m. in the night. For doing work earnestly, is age a bar? He has difficulty in climbing stairs or coming down. But he carries on his work by using a vehicle. There is another devotee who is also an aged person. According to his strength, he renders

service in the Canteen by serving water. There is a third devotee. His energies have declined. Despite this, he is carrying on the editorial duties assigned to him.

Do service according to your capacity

Therefore, each one may do what lies within his power. But there are quite a few younger people. who don't do any work. They take food several times. They sit in the verandah and do nothing. There is no room for such persons in the verandah. You have to work. Those who do not work, should leave. This is the import of the Geetha declaration: "*Karmanyeva Adhikaarasthe maa phaleshu kadaachana*" (You are entitled only to do your duty, not to the fruits thereof). Practise. and propagate this *Karma Maarga* (the Path of Action).

When one is told to take up some work, he says: "I won't be able to do this." Now, what is it such a person can do? He must at least say what it is that he can do. He is not being asked to build walls or dig wells. No one is asked to do such arduous work in the *aashram*. All tasks are easy ones. We want persons who will take up such work. It is not for the development of the *aashram*. It is for fulfilment of your life. The work can always be got done by wage earners without your service. But if you do that work, get involved in *Karma Yoga*, aim at *Dharma Yoga* and merge in *Brahma Yoga* (union with the Divine), you will have Self-Realisation. This. is the teaching of Svaami.

Grief follows happiness like a shadow

Dear devotees! All actions should be done with a view to achieving *Thrikarana shuddhi* (purity in thought, word and deed). Everything is in the heart of man. Divinity is installed in the heart. A foolish person is carried away by the wealth and pomp of the outside world. The conceit that accompanies the fascination for these possessions is not recognised. Grief follows happiness like a shadow. Under the shadow of *Adhikaara* (Authority) flourishes the demon of *Ahamkara* (egotism). Do not be carried away by the lure of power. Self-conceit, which comes in its wake, will overwhelm you. Beware of its presence. Only then you will be well. Do not gloat over wealth and possessions. There is an ogress that will submerge them. That is *dhurabhimaanam* (self-conceit). You must take note of such dangers.

When there is a lightning, you see a sudden burst of effulgence. This is followed in the next moment by intense darkness. Darkness lurks all the time behind light. Hence, man is advised to treat pleasure and pain, profit and loss, victory and defeat with an equal eye. There is nothing in the world without these opposites. This is termed *Dhvaitha* (duality). Darkness and light, heat and cold, good and bad, sin and merit, truth and falsehood--these pairs are always there. Man has two eyes, two ears, and two nostrils in one nose.

Thus the world presents a picture of dualism. And because of this, we have the phenomenon of constant change in the *Jagath* (world). *Jagath* means that which "comes and goes" (*Ja + gath*). Nothing is permanent. There is only one thing that is unchanging and eternal and that is Divinity. To experience that Divinity man must first of all get rid of his bad qualities. He must suppress his ego and render service to the Divine along with chanting the Lord's name. That is the way to redeem one's human life. Moreover, both the chanting of God's name and rendering of service should be done with a love-filled heart.

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I am ever engaged in some activity or other for your benefit. Things I could get done, I do not entrust to others; I do them Myself, so that they may learn self-reliance and get experience thereby. I have always your progress, your comfort, your happiness in mind. You can note it in the slightest act of Mine. I do all work pertaining to Me. I open all letters addressed to Me and they are legion.

BABA