

33. The message of the Upanishaths

The Dashara celebrations in October, during which Bhagavaan revived the Vedha Purusha Sapthaaha Jnaana Yajna after a break of three years were made immensely significant for spiritual aspirants as well as Sai devotees in general by the series of discourses on the Upanishaths which He gave for seven days at the Puurnachandhra Auditorium. The discourses from 19-10-1993 to 23-10-1993 are given below in a condensed form.

ONE may study all the scriptures, perform all types of sacrifices, go on extensive pilgrimages, master the eight types of knowledge, but it is not easy to control the senses and the mind, direct one's vision inward and maintain equanimity of temper. In ancient times, the sages and seers maintained purity in thought, truth in words and righteousness in deeds. But in this *Kali* Age today, people have forgotten human values and exhibit animal qualities such as lust, anger, greed and hatred. Purity of heart and selflessness are the hall-marks of the human life which one gets after passing through several births. Foolishness, pride, covetousness and other such qualities are a hang-over from their previous lives as sheep, buffalo or cat. One who is in the habit of attacking and harming others out of hatred reveals the tendencies in his previous birth as a dog. One who lacks steadiness of mind and constantly jumps from one thing to another, reflects the quality of the monkey from which he has evolved. It is to get rid of such bad qualities that *Yajnas* (Sacrifices) are undertaken.

Mind is the altar of the Yajna

In Thretha Yuga, Vishvaamithra took the help of Raama to ensure the conduct of the *Yajna* without hindrance from the demonic forces. His *Aashram* was called *Siddhaashrama*. Actually the heart of every human being is a *Siddhaashrama*. The moment evil thoughts or bad feelings arise in man, that is the beginning of all sins. When the heart is polluted with such sinful thoughts, one should seek the help of *Aathma Raama*, just as Vishvaamithra sought the help of Raama to put an end to the ogress *Thaataki*. If you think of God and pray to Him with sincere devotion, every deed done by you will be a *Yajna*. The mind is the altar of this *Yajna*. You must offer all the evil qualities at the altar of the mind. That is the ideal internal *Yajna* to be performed by every person as distinct from the external *Yajna* done ritualistically.

The Raamaayana as allegory

The allegorical meaning of the Raamayana story should be properly understood. Raama stands for *Yajur Vedha*, as he was the embodiment of *Dharma*. Lakshmana esteemed Raama's words as law and followed him. He was always chanting the name of Raama. He represents *Rig Vedha*. Bharatha represents *Saama Vedha*, as he was always singing the glory of Raama. Shathrughna represents *Atharva Vedha*. Thus the four sons of Emperor Dhasharatha of Ayodhya represent the four *Vedhas*. Dhasharatha's capital, Ayodhya, symbolises a place where no enemy can enter. Dhasharatha symbolises *rite karmendhriyas* (five organs of action) and the *Jnaanendhriyas* (five organs of cognition). The three queens of Dhasharatha--Kaushalya; Sumithra and Kaikeyi--represent the *Saathvik, Raajasik and Thaamasik* Gunas (qualities of Goodness, Passion and Inertia). If the inner significance of the Raamayana is properly understood, it will serve as a manual of ideal living for all mankind.

If the principle underlying the *Yajna* is understood, it will be realised that the Divinity pervading everywhere is within you too. "*Antharbahischa thath sarvam vyaapya Naaraayanasthithah.*"

Through the conduct of a *Yajna* one can understand the immutable permanent Reality in a fast-changing world.

Fire has an important role in the *Yajna*. Fire for the *Yajna* is created by churning two wooden sticks placed together. The top stick is the mother and the bottom piece is the father of *Agni* (Fire). Immediately after birth, *Agni* devours both father and mother. Fire is the presiding priest or *Brahma* (for the *Yajna*). He takes the offerings and acts as a courier to convey them to the Gods. *Yajna* has, moreover, many significant inner meanings. Those who do not know them make fun of it or deride it.

Since people have forgotten the real significance of such holy rituals performed for promoting the welfare of mankind, humanity is suffering from all sorts of tribulations and miseries. In the ethical, physical, scientific and all other fields today man has given up his *Svabhaava* (true nature) and is keen only to earn *Prabhaava* (fame). Fame is like passing cloud. Today one may be a Prime Minister, full of fame and power. But when he steps down from that post no one will care for him.

***Upanishaths* proclaim the real nature of man**

What is the true nature of man? A term for man in Sanskrit is *Nara*. *Nara* means *Aathma* (the Self). The five elements have come from *Aathma*. They are called *Naaramu*. The term *Naaraayana* has come from this. *Nara* does not refer to the physical form of a human being. He is the *Aathma* and should behave in keeping with his reality. A man without human qualities is like a flower without smell, a fruit without juice and a cow that cannot give milk.

The Upanishaths explain this truth. They stress the importance of man knowing his own Reality, transcending the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect. They proclaim that the real nature of man is love, compassion and selflessness. But people have forgotten their original nature and are nourishing unnatural qualities. How can *Dharma* be sustained in such circumstances? People are mainly engaged in selfish pursuits. They use their sense organs in wrong directions, instead of seeing good, hearing good, speaking good and doing good, which is the godward path. When there is no trace of any good quality in human beings, how can one expect purity of heart?

Power of the Divine

Yajnas with sacrifice as the basis provide the royal road to Self-Realisation as opposed to the perilous path of self-destruction, in which people are engaging themselves now. *Yajnas* are designed to invoke the power of the Divine for the welfare of mankind. Divine power is limitless and beyond the comprehension of the limited intellect of man, who is labouring under the delusion that he is all-powerful and can achieve anything. Even the great saint musician and composer *Thyaagaraaja* once doubted the power of God when he was subject to great misery and suffering, but recovered his faith immediately after he recollected how, without the power of the Divine, a monkey (*Hanumaan*) could cross the ocean or *Lakshmana* do service at *Raama's* feet or *Bharatha* worship His sandals or *Lakshmi*, the Goddess of wealth, serve at His Lotus Feet. He blamed himself for doubting the power of the Lord and regretted the lapse in his devotion.

The significance of the offerings made in the holy fire of a *Yajna* is that whatever is offered is converted into *Amruth* (Divine Ambrosia) and conveyed to the gods. When man sacrifices his bad qualities, he is transformed into the Divine. With this in view, the *Upanishaths* declare: "Lead me from untruth to Truth, from ignorance to Knowledge, from death to Immortality." Thus the *Yajna* helps man to progress to the summit of eternal bliss.

The Yajna is not for passing time. The cosmic energy issuing from the *Manthras* will go up in the fire from *the Yajna* hearth and spread all over the world and purify the atmosphere. Some agnostics may criticise this as wasting food, ghee and other valuable articles by throwing them into the fire. This is as foolish as the criticism of an ignorant person that a farmer wastes good quality seeds by casting them on his farm. He does not realise that one small measure of the seed will yield several bags of grain as harvest. The *Yajna* is done not for selfish purposes but for the welfare of the entire world. It reflects the noble ideal of service and sacrifice before self.

Excerpts from Discourse on 19-10-1993.

The quest for happiness

There is no penance other than *Shaanthi* (stillness of the mind). It is the ornament adorned by saints and it is what every one yearns for in his heart. Saint Thyaagaraaja sang that there is no comfort or happiness without peace "*Saaanthamu leka soukhyamu ledhu.*"

Sukham (the state of enjoyment of happiness) is like heaven. The pleasures derived by the senses from worldly objects are transient, while real happiness lies in experiencing the bliss from the Inner Self. People are unhappy because of *Thrishna*, or the insatiable thirst for worldly pleasures. Desires are always multiplying endlessly. The only way to overcome misery or grief is to put a curb on desires.

Dhaya (compassion) is inherent in every human being. But few are prepared to share this with their fellow-beings. Man is deluded by the trivial pleasures from mundane things and is filled with greed and lust. This is the main obstacle in the spiritual path.

Basis of *adhvaithik* principle is *Ekaathma bhaava*

The Vedhas deal with rituals and worship, which imply a dualism between the worshipper and the object worshipped. *Vedhaantha* spells out the principle of *Adhvaitha* (non-duality). It is interpreted in different ways, but the real basis of the *Adhvaithik* principle is *Ekaathma bhaava*, that is the feeling that there is only *one Aathma* pervading everywhere and none else. "*Adhvaitha Dharshanam Jnaanam*" (Wisdom lies in the perception of oneness). The *Upanishaths* preach this oneness, based on the concept of unity in diversity. *Upa* means "near," *ni* represents "*nishtha*" and *shath* means "sit". *Upanishath* means that one should sit near the preceptor to acquire the Supreme Spiritual Wisdom.

The Upanishaths originated during different periods of time. That is why we find that the teachings of the different *Upanishaths* are not based on the circumstances obtaining at one particular time, but they are applicable universally at all times as they teach only what is vital for the welfare of humanity.

"*Eeshaavaasyam Idham Sarvam*" says the *Eeshopanishath*. There is no place in the universe where God is not present. Just as air is everywhere even though we cannot see it with our eyes, Divinity is all pervasive. But for this Divinity, the Sun and the Moon cannot shine, rivers will not flow, crops will not grow. The Divine governs the whole universe. All things in creation are for the use of the entire world. No one can claim exclusive right over these gifts of Nature.

The Eeshaavaasya Upanishath teaches man how to combine *Bhoga* with *Thyaaga* (enjoy the world with an attitude of sacrifice). One imbued with the feelings of *Thyaaga* (sacrifice) will not

revel in mundane pleasures. Sacrifice and sensual pleasures cannot co-exist just as water and fire cannot co-exist. What, then, is the inner significance of this directive that man should enjoy *Bhoga* (pleasurable experiences) with *Thyaaga* (renunciation)?

It means that though one is not interested in mundane things, he has to do his duty. He cannot escape doing *karma*. He should shed his ego while doing his work and should not consider himself as the doer. He should do his duty without any desire for the fruits thereof. Because man is filled with ego and is not interested in experiencing the real bliss, he suffers from *Roga* (disease). When work is done with a selfless attitude there is no difference between *bhoga* and *thyaaga*. We find today in the world only *rogis* (persons afflicted with disease) and not *bhogis* or *thyaagis*. You should give up attachment to worldly things and direct your attachment to the Divine only. Sage Yaajnavalkya taught his wife Maithreyi this principle of oneness. The same *Parabrahman* (Supreme Self) is present in everyone in the form of Awareness.

Desireless action leads you away from misery

The Eeshaavaasya Upanishath teaches that this *Sathyam* (Truth) is changeless. It is the basis of the *Sanathana Dharma* that has been followed in Bhaarath. Man cannot live without *Karma* (action). But he should do it without the feeling of ego and desire for reward. When the seed is sown, the tree will grow and yield fruit whether you like it or not. The desire for fruit is the cause of misery. The *Upanishaths* teach the way of getting rid of the ego.

Prakrithi is like a mirror which reflects whatever object is placed before it. When you look into the mirror there are three entities--yourself, the mirror and the reflection. But if you remove the mirror, there is only one left and that is 'you.' The reflection is gone. Because of worldly feelings, you look at the reflection. Remove the worldly feelings, you see your Inner Self which is the Reality. When you get rid of the feelings of I and Mine everything becomes one.

The Upanishaths taught the difference between pleasure and pain. If you shed your ego and experience Divinity you will get rid of your pain and enjoy lasting bliss. The *Upanishaths* teach through stories the subtlest truths. You should understand their inner significance and taste the nectarine sweetness. This is possible only when there is *Bhaava-Shuddhi* (inner purity). Purity of heart leads to *Siddhi*--*Self* realisation.

Qualities that are Nature's gift to man

It is unnatural for man to behave like animals with selfishness, anger and jealousy. A compassionate heart is Nature's gift to man. It is a pity that man does not make any effort to realise that the Divine is closer to him than his own parents. One should search within, and not in the external, for God.

Love, Compassion, Self-Confidence and Sacrifice are the real human qualities. You are *Amrithaputhra* (Son of Immortality). Purity in thought, word and deed is a basic requisite for man. Under any circumstances, man should not allow this threefold purity to be affected. Patience is another ideal quality one should develop. Whatever troubles or obstacles one may meet with while doing his proper duty, he should bear with them. One should not get depressed when others blame or abuse him but should stick, to the path of truth. The third quality is perseverance which is indeed a prime need for any one in any field but more so in the spiritual path.

Once you have taken up a vow to do a good thing, you should not go back on it under any circumstance. You should fulfill it even at the cost of your life. This is the hallmark of a true

devotee. In ancient times, people had this determination and became good souls. The Paandavas had to spend their lives in forests feeding on leaves and fruits. Still they never gave up their adherence to the plighted word. In the *Kali Yuga* devotees have to face a lot of trials and challenges, but they should not waver even a wee bit in their devotion to God.

Just as gold has to be heated, hammered and subjected to many processes before it can be made into a jewel, devotees have to pass through ordeals ordained by the Divine.

The divinity in man

With *Premabhaava* (feeling of pure love) you can realise your oneness with the world. Every object has five attributes, namely *Asthi*, *Bhaathi*, *Priyam*, Name and Form. The first three-- Existence, Cognisability and Utility ---- are permanent and changeless, while Name and Form are subject to change. Human beings with different names and forms are just like waves on the ocean of *Sath-chith-aanandha*. They are also ame *Sath-chith-aanandha*. The essence is the same in all names and forms. The realisation of this truth is spirituality. This is the message of the Upanishaths. It does not matter if you cannot understand every word of the Upanishaths. It is enough if you realise the truth that you are embodiments of the Divine.

When you get some troubles, you cry in a state of despair and even blame God. There is no need for you to feel aggrieved at all. All troubles are passing clouds. The clouds cannot hide for long the effulgence of the Sun which is permanent. Similarly the *Aathma* cannot be affected by anything. If you identify yourself with this Reality you will have no cause for grief at all as you will be embodiments of bliss.

Excerpts from Discourse on 20-10-1993.

Descent of the Divine

The same Supreme Being who saved Prahlaadha by appearing from the pillar and punishing his demonic father, the same Supreme Being who came to the rescue of Kuchela, the same Being who descended from Vaikuntha to save Gajendhra, the Lord of the elephants, has now come to the world as *Sath-chith-aanandhamurthi*, presiding over the hearts of all as *Puttaparthi Chakravarthi*.

You should realise that I have come to remind you of your Reality, that in fact everyone of you is an embodiment of *Sath-chith-aanandha*.

Excerpts from Discourse on 21-10-1993.

Unity in diversity

Though the *Upanishaths* are termed as *Vedhaantha* (the end of the *Vedhas*) they are actually the *Siras* (head) of the *Vedhas*. The *Eeshaavaasya Upanishath* emphasises that man is bound by action and purity of heart is the basis for right action--"*Chitthasya Shud-dhyaye Dharmah.*" Right action has to be done for achieving purity of heart. When you get rid of bad feelings, evil thoughts and evil deeds, you can experience your Inner Self.

As long as one is puffed up with the pride of education, wealth, status and position one cannot comprehend the *Aathma*. You must turn your mind away from all these transient mundane

pursuits and redirect it towards the Inner Self to realise the *Aathmabhaava*, which is eternal and changeless. This is the basis for all the changing phenomena of the mundane world. (At this stage, Bhagavaan materialised a gold chain by a wave of His hand and went on to explain that the basis for all gold jewellery is gold). The gold chain can be melted and turned into solid gold from which other ornaments can be made bearing different names and forms. Similarly, the basis for all the different forms and names of beings in the world is Divine.

The Eeshaavaasya Upanishath stresses the unity in diversity. It teaches that the mind and the body will change but the *Aathma* is the unifying, changeless and permanent entity. Man, in his ignorance, considers all changing objects as true and does not look into the common basis which is changeless.

Excerpts from Discourse on 22-10-1993.

Man and the Divine

The Vedhic invocation says "*Puurnamadhadh Puurnanuidham*," meaning "That is whole and this is whole." This implies that Divinity and humanity are not different. The same constituents are there in both. In fact there is only one Supreme Power which manifests itself in multitudes of forms.

If you take the *Gaayathri Manthra*, it starts with "*Bhur Bhuvah Suvah*," in which *Bhur* is the *Bhuuloka* (this world where we live), *Buhvah* is the other world and *Suvah* is the world of Radiation. All the worlds are within every human being. Man is an embodiment of the three phases of time (past, present and future) and the three powers of creation, preservation and dissolution. He is thus the embodiment of the *Prajna* (principle of the Supreme Consciousness).

The five vital airs, *Praana, Apaana, Udaana, Samaana and Vyaana* are the constituent elements of *Naadha* (the primordial sound). *Bindhu* represents steadiness of our body, mind and intellect. *Kala* represents the *Aathma*. *The Eeshaavaasya Upanishath* deals with the different aspects of *Naadha, Bindhu and Kala*. It says that these Three are like a triangle with the Self as the apex and the body and mind as the two points at the base. The body is gross, while the Self is subtle and the mind is a combination of the two. Just as *Naadha, Bindhu* and *Kala* are everywhere, the mind is also all-pervasive as stated in the *Eeshaavaasya Upanishath*. The mind is the cause of pain and pleasure, happiness and misery, bondage and liberation. It should be properly directed towards *Prajna* (Awareness). The body is inert matter and cannot function without the *Prajna* principle, which is radiation. *Praana* (vibration) animates the whole body. All the three are constituents of *Sath-Chith-Aanandha*. Man experiences *Aanandha* in the deep sleep *state--Swapna-Avastha* and perceives worldly things in the waking *state---Jaagratha-Avastha*.

The body houses the immovable *Aathma*

The Upanishaths point out that there are three entities: *the Kshara, Akshara and Kshraakshrara* (Immovable, movable and movable-immovable). The movable body houses the immovable *Aathma*. One who understands this principle of *Akshara* will have nothing to do with the world. The body is given only for knowing the *Aathma* principle, but man is using it for other purposes and thus abusing it.

The human body consists of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, etc. These are but instruments that help one to make the journey of life. There are three elements in all actions' *the Kartha* (doer), *Karma*

(action) and the *Kaarana* (purpose of the action). The *Upanishaths* declare that if all the three are in harmony one will achieve success. All the limbs and sense organs in a man can function only when the life force is there. That is *Chaithanya Shakthi*. It comes from the Self, which is *Prajna*, *Aathma Shakthi* or Radiation. Even scientists are aware that matter cannot move on its own without energy. But they are not able to recognise the *Aathmashakthi* which was recognised by the ancient *Rishis*. The moment one becomes aware of this truth he can be considered to be free from the bondage of the phenomenal world.

Socrates told his disciples that the Universe is governed by truth, goodness and beauty. These are the same as *Sathyam*, *Shivam Sundaram*, the terms used by *the Bhaaratheeyas* to describe Divinity from time immemorial. The truth that transcends the categories of time is the Real Truth. Man is an embodiment of this Truth. But people have forgotten this today. People relish only untruth. Truth is not palatable to them, while untruth seems sweet, though it is poisonous. "Speak the truth, do righteous acts" is the motto of Bhaarith, as declared in the *Vedhas*. But people today kill truth and jettison *Dharma*. How then can they have peace?

The Kenopanishad proclaims that the basis of every action should be Truth which is Divine. The *Rishis* did not compile the *Upanishaths* as a pastime. They gave this valuable treasure for the welfare of mankind.

Devotees' failure to know what Svaami wants

Several persons holding high positions come here to get Svaami's blessings for achieving higher positions or for other personal benefits. Big businessmen and traders come here to take Svaami's blessings and return. Those in the teaching, legal and other professions come here. Theists come here, participate in *Bhajans* etc., and go away. All of them come to Svaami to get their desires fulfilled. No one comes to know what Svaami wants. How many strive for Svaami's sake? Everyone comes only with selfish motives. I want to point out that enjoying benefits and failing to show gratitude is grievously wrong. In ancient days the devotees of the Lord sacrificed their lives by engaging themselves this divine quality of selflessness. It is only by sacrifice you can achieve immortality. You should love all without distinction and serve society.

"Sacrifice and share Divinity with every one" is the message of the *Upanishaths*. You should not bother about your close relations alone, as these relationships are only temporary. You should develop *Vishva Prema* (Universal Love).

You may wonder why I am telling this repeatedly. Though I have been telling you all this for several years no one seems to change for the better. So I have to emphasise the need for your getting rid of too much attachment to your kith and kin. Love your children but do not get excessively attached to them. You must make use of your body for doing your duty, but do not get too much attached to it.

Act according to your role in life

Every person has to play his role in life. How this should be done is illustrated by a story. Once an actor went to the court of Bhoja Raja to exhibit his talents and get a reward. First he went in the role of a renunciant wearing saffron robes. When the king offered him some gold he declined to accept it. When questioned whether what he gave was not enough, the actor replied he would come again the next day.

The next day he came in the guise of a dancing girl and gave a fine performance which pleased everyone. When he was offered some gold coins in a plate by the king, the actor said what was

offered was not enough. When the king questioned him as to why he had refused to take anything on the previous day, but was asking for more that day, the actor replied that he had to behave in a manner befitting the role he took. The previous day he had come as a renunciant and had to decline the gold offered to him. But on that day he was in the role of a dancing girl and so could demand more money. The moral of the story is: Students should behave as students and devotees as devotees only. Every person in any field has to uphold certain values appropriate to the role he has taken up. When I say devotees should do selfless service to humanity as a way of serving God, it is only in your interest and for your spiritual uplift. Discriminate between what is permanent and what is temporary and pursue the path leading to permanent bliss. Do not hanker after trivial transient pleasures. Speaking the truth, do your duty. This is the message of all the Upanishaths.

Excerpts from Discourse on 23-10-1993.

Love is the vital force. Love is the governing principle. It is only when the precious diamond of love is shining in one's heart that sacred and divine thoughts about God will arise in the mind.

BABA