

## 11. Nearness to God

*Vedhaaham etham Purusham Mahaantham*

*Aadithyavarnam thamsah parasthaath*

(Purusha Shuktham).

IN ANCIENT days the sages, who were doing *Thapas* and finally had a vision of the Reality, declared that they had realised-the Divine, whose effulgence was that of the sun, beyond the darkness of ignorance. They also taught that God is the embodiment of Truth and had to be experienced as such. They declared that one who does not see this truth is akin to an animal. That is why there is the saying that one who is revelling in untruth is only .an animal.

Truth issues from *Prema*. In this world there is nothing greater than *prema*. The more you love, the more blissful you become. Divinity is the embodiment of love. Love shines as the eternal truth in every one's heart. However, it will be dormant in the heart of the selfish. *Prema* shines only in the heart of the person who is selfless. Love cannot co-exist with ego and pomp. Love is the royal path that can take you to the highest state of the Divine.

This love has to be experienced and shared with all. When love is directed towards the ephemeral world it is *Anuraaga* (attachment). When it is directed towards God it is true love. Worldly experiences confer only temporary happiness. Love towards the *Paramaathma* (the Supreme Self), who is eternal and changeless, will confer eternal bliss. Every individual should know the difference between *Prema and Anuraaga*. Many people profess that they love God. But, in reality; not even one in a million loves God in the true sense of the term. They may love God for securing some selfish material benefits. This is not true devotion at all.

### **True devotion is unpolluted by selfish motives**

What is devotion? It is not merely offering several types of worship or going on pilgrimage. Unalloyed and true love for love's sake alone constitutes devotion. True devotion is the love flowing from a pure heart unpolluted by selfish motives. Love is the intimate bond of relationship between the devotee and the Lord. There are nine types of devotion. But they are not equal to *Prema* (Pure Love).

All the 18 *yogas* mentioned in the Bhagavath Geetha, such as *Jnaana Yoga, Karma Yoga, Vibhuuthi Yoga* etc., are contained in *Bhakthi yoga*. There is nothing beyond this. Do you want to realise God? Do you want to tread the spiritual path and redeem your life? Then, it is enough if you pursue the *Prema Marga* (path of pure love).

There is no power greater than *Prema* (love) in this world because it is selfless and pure. Though several *yogas* are available for practice, each and every *yoga* contains an element of selfishness. But *prema*, is free from selfishness. It is only because of the absence of such selfless love that chaos, conflicts and confusion are prevalent in the world. One who is interested in the welfare of humanity should practise this principle of true love. The life of an individual bereft of love is a sheer waste.

Sages spent their time in the forests amidst wild animals. They lived amicably side by side with them. The animals did not harm these sages. What is the reason? The sages had no weapons at all. They had the sole weapon of love. With this weapon they were able to tame the wild animals. But, in these days, while calling themselves human beings, men are behaving worse than

animals. The reason is rank selfishness. Whatever they think, say or do, selfishness is the basic motive. The result is they are not able to enjoy peace.

### **From truth to peace**

How is peace to be got? When you plant the seed of Truth in the heart and make faith take deep root, with the rain of chanting God's name, peace blossoms, yielding the fruit of Liberation. Therefore, every human being should sow the seed of Truth in his heart. The deeper the root of faith goes down, the stronger will be the tree of life. You must provide water for the flourishing growth of the tree by means of *Bhajana and Dhaiva Chinthana* (singing the glory of God). Only then the flower of *Shaanthi* (peace) will bloom and from this the fruit of liberation will be attained.

Human life has four stages. It can be described as a four-storeyed mansion. Any structure can be safe and sound only when the foundation is strong. *Brahmacharya* (Celibacy) is the foundation for the structure of life. The first floor is the stage of *Grihastha* (householder leading a married life). The second floor is *Vaanaprastha* (preparatory to renunciation) and the third floor is *Sanyaasa* (Renunciation).

This year is called *Yuva* (Youth). Youth should develop strongly the foundation of celibacy so that when they reach the other stages they can be ideal persons. They should develop *Prema* towards God. This is the only way to build their strength.

People think that the world is separate from them. The entire universe is in the heart of each individual. "*Vishvam Vishnusvaruupam.*" The universe is but a manifestation of the Divine, which is within the heart of every individual. Vishnu is the cause and the universe is the effect.

### **All the three worlds are within everyone**

There are three states of consciousness in man--the waking state, the dream state and the deep sleep state. All the three states are in every individual. The three governing powers in these states are *Vishva*, *Thaijasa* and *Prajna* respectively. The Gaayathri manthra "*Om Bhur Bhuvah Suvah*" is related to these three. We think that *Bhuuloka* is the world that we live in, *Bhuvarkala* is *svarga* and *Suvarloka* is beyond that. This is not correct. All the three worlds are in our heart only. The outside world we see is the material world formed of inert matter. You may ask how this can be called inert when there is a lot of movement. The world that you see is *Bhu* and the power that causes the movement is: *Bhuvah* or *Praana shakthi* (Life-force) which can be termed as Vibration. It is the force of vibration that activates all the limbs of the body. When air is pumped into a tyre we see this force in play which causes the tyre to bloat. *Praana* (Life-force) is *Bhuvah*. Because of the *Prajnaana*, which is inside, the Life-force is able to cause vibration and activate the limbs. The source of *prajna* is *Suvaha* (Radiation). When you analyse in this manner, it will be seen that *Bhur-Bhuvah-Suvah* represents the forces of Radiation, Vibration and Materialisation.

It is the existence of these potencies in man that makes human birth very precious. But its value is now being mined by people getting immersed in fleeting sensual pleasures. Humanness is entirely forgotten. It cannot be acquired by learning from a teacher or studying text books. It is born with the human being. It is there in everyone. People are not able to understand this truth today.

### **Reason for codification of *Vedhas* by Vyaasa**

The *Vedhas* are infinite and human life is limited. How to master the infinite within the short span of one's life? Keeping this problem in view, Sage Vyaasa codified the *Vedhas* into four major divisions and named them *Rig, Yajur, Saama and Atharva Vedhas*. *Rig Vedha* is *Manthra-Svaruupa* (consisting of *Mantras*). The *Yajur Vedha* is a compilation of rituals and the *Sama Vedha* is a compilation of *riks* set to music. In order to maintain the health of the individual and ensure the protection of the country, the *Atharva Vedha* was compiled. Sage Vyaasa, who codified these four *Vedhas* and wrote 18 *puraanas*, finally gave one stanza as the essence of all the *puraanas*, namely, "It is meritorious to render help to others. It is sinful to cause harm to them," "*Paropakaarah punyaaya, paapaaya parapeedanam.*" The inner meaning of the declaration by Vyaasa should be understood by everyone. *Para* means Brahma, *Upa* means nearness and *Kara* means go. So this term *Paropakaara* means travel towards the *Aathma* and go nearer the *Paramaathma*. Chanting the name of God or doing other forms of worship will not help you to go near God, though they are good deeds. It is only by selfless service you can get nearer to God. This is real *Punya*.

"*Paapaaya Parapeedanam.*" According to worldly interpretation, this means that it is a sin to hurt others. But there is an inner meaning for this. *Para* means *Aathma*. *Peedanam* means 'hurting.' The same principle of *Aathma* is in everyone. You should not hurt the *Aathma*. What is meant by this is that you should realise the oneness of the *Aathma* in all. If you do not realise this and act contrary to the principle, it is 'hurting.'

### **When there is *Prema* there is no grief**

You are considering the bodies which are different in form as different from you. To do so is sin. You must only see the *Aathma* in all. There are many bulbs of different shapes and sizes here in this hall. But the electric current that makes them shine is only one. The *Aathmathathva*, the principle of *Aathma*, is the one current that activates all the bodies which are like bulbs of different hues and shapes. "To see diversity is sin" says Vyaasa. He taught the world to see the One in the many. You should follow this principle and develop *Prema*, the principle of love., towards all. When there is *Prema* there is no grief.

You need not waste time in trying to study all the sacred texts, as they are innumerable and your life-span is very short. All that is needed is to cultivate the *Premathathva* (Love principle). There is no greater power than this in the world. It is the supreme among all virtues.

Real love is beyond the three categories of time past, present and future. Love towards God, the permanent changeless entity, alone is fit to be called *Prema*.

### **The meaning of *Gaayathri Manthra***

In the *Gaayathri Manthra*, the unity of body, mind and soul is depicted in the first line as "*Bhur-Bhuvah-Suvaha.*" The next line "*Bhargo Dhevasya Dheemahi*" means "Throw away the darkness." "*Dheeyo yonah Pracho-dhayaath*" means: "Let the effulgence of the Divine dispel the darkness of ignorance." *Gaayathri* is pervading everywhere. It consists of three deities, *Gaayathri, Saavithri* and *Sarasvathi*. Of these, the first one is master of the senses. The second is the teacher of truth and the third is the master of speech. Hence it is Trinity of the senses, the mind and speech. *Gaayathri* is hailed as *Chandhasaam maathah* (the Mother of all *Vedhas*). *Gaayathri* has five faces and is the embodiment of all *deities--Sarva dhevathaa Svaruupam*.

*Sthothra* (description of the glory), *Dhyaana* (meditation) and *Praarthana* (prayer) are all contained in the Gaayathri Manthra. When does a prayer become meaningful? It is only when you stabilise your mind and turn it towards God. The basis for this is to meditate, pray and experience. It is essential to achieve harmony in thought, word and deed. Gaayathri is teaching this great lesson.

### **Significance of Upanayanam**

Every small word or phrase in a *manthra* has immense inner meaning. It cannot be dismissed as superstition. Modern education has ruined our ancient Bhaaratheeya culture. You should know the meaning of the *manthras*. People want the fruits of meritorious deeds but they indulge in sinful action. How can you get good results when your action is faulty or sinful? Youth today must pledge themselves to speak the truth, develop love and have unshakable faith in God. They will then be able to establish peace in the world. This is the significance of *Yagnopaveetham* (the sacred thread ceremony). *Upanayanam* is a *Samskaara* (sacrament) that makes a boy fit for pursuing the highest wisdom. There is no difference between one child and another at the time of birth. All are born out of the mother's womb only. This is the first stage of life (*sudra*). The second stage is getting the *upadhesha* of Gaayathri at the time of *Upanayanam*, when the boy becomes a *Dhvija* (twice-born). He is then purified.

The third stage is *Vipra*, when one has mastered the study of the *Vedhas*. The fourth stage is *Braahmana* when he actually realises the *Brahman* through the knowledge of the Self. One becomes a *Braahmana* not by birth but only when one realises the Supreme *Brahman*. One becomes a *Braahmana* by action and not by birth.

Prahlaadha said that a father can be proud of his son not at the time of the son's birth but only when the son attains fame as a good man. It is only then that his birthday can be celebrated. Those of you who have had this sacred teaching of Gaayathri today are very lucky. On this very auspicious day; you have all taken a second birth. You must forget the past. The present is very important. From today onwards you must develop love of God and get a good name. Though God is the Creator of all beings, you must understand that while God created mud and water, it is the potter that is responsible for creating a pot by mixing the mud and water, similarly God has created *chaitanya* (consciousness) and *jada* (matter). Your father and mother have together given you your body and brought you up. It is, therefore, your duty to make your parents happy. If you don't please them, or if you ignore them, you cannot be happy. You must develop love for your parents, study well, imbibe the sacred culture of Bhaarith and lead noble lives as ideal sons of your parents.

Gaayathri will protect your body, make your intellect shine and improve your power of speech. That is why Gaayathri is considered to be very important for this second stage of your life, which you are entering today. How should you live? You should live in accordance with the Upanishathic prayer' "*Sahanaa Vavathu Sahanou Bhunakthu Sahaveeryam Karavaavahai*" (Let us grow together, live together and develop love together). From such living, you get divinity. Unity leads to purity and purity to divinity. Where there is no unity, you get enmity and hatred.

### **All mothers are Goddesses**

Today is Eswaramma day, the day of the *Maathru Dhevatha* (Mother Goddess). All mothers are goddesses. That is why in Bhaarith, people follow the maxim: Esteem the mother, the father, the teacher and the guests as God. Once when Seetha was teaching how to worship God, Raama

intervened and said: "Oh simple-minded one! Who is greater in the world than the mother and the father? They know our difficulties and needs. They are able to understand our feelings. They are able to fulfill all our wants. Having such known entities who take interest in your welfare, why should you go after unknown entities?" At all times, the parents are there looking after you, You have to worship them. The mother can be compared to the earth and the father to the seed. Unless the seed is sown in the earth the plant will not sprout. You cannot ignore the father and mother who are responsible for your birth and growth. Even if you become the Prime Minister you must remember you owe your birth in the world to your mother. You must develop humility and discrimination as a mark of education. You should not discard love of God at any time. If you forget God, you are not human but demonic. Money, beauty and youth will not last long.

Nowadays, people are not getting rid of attachment and arrogance even in old age. I composed a drama when I was young under the title, "*Cheppinatlu Chesthaaraa?*" (Do you do as you say?) Now I have to ask: "*Cheppinatlu Chesinaara?*" (Have you done as I told you?"). If you go on concentrating on your family alone till death, what is it you derive finally? None of these people will come with you on your final journey. It is the love of God that will come with you even after death. Develop love and sanctify your life with that *Prema* principle. Chant the Gaayathri morning, noon and evening. You do so many things. Why don't you chant this Gaayathri? I bless all of you that you may sanctify your life in this way, making it useful and meaningful.

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