

19. Acquire friendship of God

Destroying pride man becomes endearing;

Destroying anger man gets rid of sorrow;

Destroying desire man acquires peace;

Destroying greed man achieves happiness.

EMBODIMENTS of Love! As long as man is filled with arrogance, he cannot win any kind of respect from others. Egoism brings about a man's ruin. Only when a man gets rid of pride the people respect and love him. The first requisite for securing the esteem and love of the people is to root out *Ahamkaara* (self-conceit).

The second is *Krodham* (anger). A man consumed by anger can never be free from misery. Anger carries with it a blazing fire Anger is also described as *Krodhaagni*, (the fire of anger). As long as one is consumed by the fire, he cannot have happiness. To get freedom from misery, man has to get rid of anger. Anger is also the cause of depravity in man. It ruins him in various ways. It alienates him from his kith and kin.

For the decline in human qualities today, pride and anger are primarily responsible. The third enemy of man pervades his entire being. It is insatiable desire. Man's entire life is filled with desires which are endless and ever mounting. Man can achieve peace of mind only by the conquest of *Kaama* (desire).

The fourth enemy is greed or miserliness. When man overcomes greed, he can secure happiness. A greedy man cannot enjoy bodily; mental or spiritual happiness. The miser is like the dog in the manger. He neither enjoys his wealth, nor does he allow others to enjoy it. The world despises a miser.

Only when man gets rid of these four undesirable qualities can he experience peace and happiness. These four vices have no place in a true human being.

Human heart should be filled with compassion

Man is the very embodiment of the Divine. This Divine Will is termed *Prakrithi* (the cosmos). In every human being the Divine Will is present. Man has taken birth to give expression to the Will of the Divine. The human heart should be an ocean of milk filled with compassion. The heart, in the core of which there should be this milk of compassion, is today filled with the four evil qualities.

The ancient sages had a vision of the Supreme Lord Vishnu reclining on the *Ksheerasaagara* (Ocean of Milk) and adored Him in that form. And this was how Saint Thyagaraja described the Lord in his famous song beginning with the words: "*Ksheera-saagara shayana!*" (Oh Lord reclining on the Ocean of Milk). (Svaami sang some lines from the song).

What is this Ocean of Milk? Is it anywhere on earth? On this mundane world with its material concerns, you cannot perceive this Ocean of Milk. Nevertheless, it exists. Where? In every human heart. In this heart Lord Sriman Naaraayana is resting. This is the reason why the Lord is described as *Hridayavaasi* (the Dweller in the Heart). Every human heart is a shrine of God, In the Ocean of Milk in such a heart, no room should be given for crocodiles and whales in the form of evil qualities to dwell. Unfortunately, because of the influence of the *Kali* Age, the Ocean of

Milk in the human heart has been turned into a *Kshaarasaagaram* (Ocean of brine)-in which attachment and hatred dwell as crocodiles and whales. The salt in this Ocean is of man's making.

Today cities like Madras and Bombay are close to the sea. But can they make use of its water? No. Because it is saline.

Deities and demons in daily life

The ancient sages used to pray: "Oh gods, we welcome you. Oh *Raakshasas* (demons), depart from us." Who are these gods? These deities are 'good thoughts, good feelings, good behaviour. The sages prayed that such celestial beings should enter their minds. The demons whom they wanted to get rid of are evil thoughts, bad feelings and bad actions. This is an example for every one to follow in daily life.

In daily life, we consume good things and eschew bad things. We consume good food and defecate what is not wholesome. This is a basic principle. You must give up the bad to provide room for the intake of what is good. This is the lesson from everyone's daily experience.

Unfortunately today men give up what is wholesome and take what is harmful. That is, they are taking in the bad and giving up the good. It is this which accounts for the prevalence of disorder and misery in the world today. Hence, the first need is to cultivate good qualities. Bad thoughts and bad habits have to be cast away. Not recognizing this truth, man makes himself a prey to misery and discontent. Can you say that this misery and worry were caused by Providence? Not at all. You own bad thoughts and actions are the cause of your misery. As you sow, so shall you-reap. The seed determines the fruit. When man cherishes bad thoughts, 'bad results haunt him. When he has good thoughts, the results are also good.

Do not blame God for your grief

'Those who do not recognise this fact, go about blaming God. They lament: "Oh God! Why are you inflicting these miseries on me? Why are you denying, me peace of mind?" God is the Eternal Witness. He is the dispenser of the fruits of actions. He gives you according to your deserts. He is in no way responsible for your grief' or happiness. (Svaami sang a ballad which pointed out that a man sows a poisonous seed, while desiring sweet fruits. Unable to eat the poisonous fruit he blames God). This is the product of ignorance. It is opposed to the sacredness of human life.

Man's first duty is to practise good conduct. Such good conduct can ensue only from the contemplation of God. People must nourish sacred thoughts about the Divine in their hearts. This is not something which can be got from someone or somewhere outside you. It is within you. The Divine is present within you.

Those who experience this Presence within them can experience a joy that is indescribable, wherever they may be. It is not enough if you are here. You must realise the sweetness of your presence here. A frog that is close to a lotus is totally unaware of its nectarine honey. But a bee comes from afar and drinks the honey.

People should realise that time is fleeting and one's life span is melting away every moment like a block of ice. Man is nearing his end even before he realises his primary duty. What is that duty? It is to discover the purpose of life. Man seeks wealth, comforts, position and happiness. How are these to be got? Moving away from God's grace, man seeks all these kinds of worldly happiness. Of what avail are these transient physical pleasures? *Thyaagaraaja* sought to know

wherein lay real happiness. Is it in wealth or is it in the service of Lord Raama? If one is blessed with God's grace, what more does he need?

Practise sacred impulses to experience the bliss within

Hence, seek God's grace at the outset. Does real happiness lie in enjoying creature comforts? No. True happiness consists in manifesting all the potentialities in man. When you put into practice all the sacred thoughts that emanate from your mind you will realise true happiness. Most people do not practise the sacred impulses that arise in them with the result that they do not experience the bliss within them.

Embodiments of Love! The most important thing you have to recognise is that your heart is a *Ksheerasaagaram* (Ocean of Milk). But because of the invasion of bad thoughts and feelings, your humanness is vitiated. Humanness consists in harmony of thought, word and deed.

Your freedom is subject to the norms of society

Today devotees have come here from all parts of the world. Whatever your dress, your education, your habits, each of you has to realise one supreme fact. You are a member of society and as such you have to respect the social norms. You cannot behave as you please. All your actions have to be in accordance with the obligations to society. Your freedom is subject to the norms of society.

Society does not mean a large group of persons. Relationship with any other person is governed by social obligations which limit your freedom. Your right to wield the stick in your hand in a public place is limited by the right of others to use the public places. Your freedom is subject to your duty towards other fellow-beings.

Moreover, *Svathanthram* (freedom) has to be construed in the correct way. *Svathanthram* consists of the two terms: *Sva and thanthram*. *Sva* means the Spirit. *Svathanthram* means acting according to the dictates of the Spirit. The Spirit will never cause harm to others. It is the Eternal Witness present in everyone and desires the welfare of one and all. Hence *Svathanthra* or real freedom is related to the Divine Will.

Duty is related to one's obligations to society. Freedom is related to expressing the Will of the Divine. The *Prakrithi* (phenomenal world) is a projection of the Divine. Hence, it should be regarded as holy. Duty means recognizing the sacredness of one's obligations to *Prakrithi*. Each one must recognise that he (or she) is an image of the Divine and conduct himself on that basis. He alone is a real man who lives his life in this way.

Deeming the physical body alone as real, man goes after worldly objects and ultimately ends up in misery. Man must take to the spiritual path. This means that one should recognise the entire cosmos as an image, of the Divine. Once one has this conviction, evil can never approach him. He experiences bliss at all times and everywhere. He desires that all should be happy.

Unfortunately, most people today do not cultivate such a broad feeling. They are immersed in concerns about themselves and their family, They should transcend these narrow feelings and have regard for society as a whole. They should deem service to society as service to God.

The illness and the remedy

The overseas devotees who have come here are affluent people. Why have they come here? They are like patients who go to a hospital for their ailments. All of them suffer from some kind of

illness or other, mental or physical. All are victims of some kind of mental illness. They have all come for the medicine of peace, joy, and happiness. Wherefrom is this peace to be got? It cannot be got from outside. It is within oneself. The disease has arisen within because of bad qualities. Every person's physical, mental and spiritual health is mined by bad qualities, bad thoughts and bad feelings. Hence, cultivate good thoughts, good feelings and good attitudes. Expel every bad thought as it arises in the mind.

You cannot relish food that is not tasty. Should you not impart sweet taste to your life which spans several decades? How to impart that taste? By constant contemplation on God. Life is made tasty by good thoughts and good actions. All those who wish to pursue the spiritual path must begin with getting rid of bad thoughts and bad practices and start transforming their lives.

People ask: "How are we to cultivate a broad attitude?" The answer is: "Get rid of the artificial barriers you have raised between yourself and others." These barriers create narrow and limited loyalties and prevent you from enjoying an all-embracing bliss. Enlarge your horizon. Expand your vision. This is the true, spiritual exercise for you.

Devotion of overseas artists

During the past three days, devotees from many countries have presented a blissful programme of the kind which cannot be seen anywhere else in the world. They would not have come on the invitation of any government. Even if they had come, you would not have experienced the kind of bliss you have enjoyed here. This is an example of the relationship between an object and its image. It is because of the bliss within the artists, they could generate that bliss in the audience. They have come from their respective countries filled with devotion and in their singing and dance they completely forgot themselves. This kind of performance would not be possible by artists who expect rewards. The devotees did not come merely with art, but they came with their hearts. Their "art" is filled with "heart."

Some of them were oblivious to their bodies in the performances. They were forgetful of their native countries--whether Russia, or America, or Germany, or Africa. This is real *Samaadhi* (the state of spiritual ecstasy). *Samaadhi* is not falling into a trance or some state of unconsciousness. These may be caused by hysteria or antic of the imagination.

Samaadhi means equal-mindedness, forgetting the body consciousness and being immersed in *Aanandha* (bliss). These devotees demonstrated this *Samaadhi* and shared their bliss with thousands of others. Not only did they experience this bliss themselves, but they shared it with all. Can there be a greater *thapas* (penance) than this? What greater *Saadhana* do you need? "*Udahareth Aathmanaa-Aathmaanam*," says the Upanishath--Raise yourself and share that experience with others.

Adherence to tradition by overseas artists

Those artists have been strictly adhering to the artistic traditions of their respective countries. In the Japanese dance yesterday, the priest (an old man) appeared to be shivering. He has all the strength, but when approaching the shrine and nearing the Emperor he displays extreme humility and reverence. They practise such supreme humility. Economically and technologically Japan is a highly advanced country. But see what humility and discipline they display!

Look at the Russians. Among Russians, there is a tendency to "rush." But what complete self-forgetfulness was displayed by the lady while she sang and danced? What ecstasy in her heart made her experience such joy? She was completely lost in her song and dance.

No one can tell what kind of experience one can have in a certain place at a certain time and in a certain situation. Altogether, what transformation has taken place in all those who came for the Global Festival! They came for the first time. But the transformation that has taken place in them cannot be seen in many who have been coming here for years and years. Many of you have listened to countless discourses and have read a lot of books. But, what is the change in you? None at all. You have remained where you are. If we examine further, many seem to have gone back rather than going forward. Hence, devotees should strive to put into practice at least a fraction of what they have seen and heard.

The lives of these overseas devotees appear exemplary. Though they have learnt little, the joy they derive from it is great. This is what is great about them. There are many here who know a great deal, but who practise very little of it.

Every devotee must aspire for friendship towards God

Of what use is all the reading of scriptures and epics? Very little of it is put into practice. The overseas devotees know only a few things. An American artist declared' "Baba is my great friend." This means that he had developed this friendly attitude even before coming here. How did he accomplish? Friendship towards the Lord is one of the nine forms of devotion. Starting with listening to the glory of the Lord, friendship forms the penultimate stage before *Aathma-nivedhanam* (utter self-surrender to the Lord). Every devotee must aspire to reach the stage of *sneham* (friendship). What kind of friendship is it? It is not something new. It is an old friendship. Only such friendship can bring about familiarity and intimacy with the Lord. You maintain formal relations with a friend, But, because God is an ancient friend, the devotee can experience an unrestrained intimacy. When you recognise this truth, you can behave with natural ease and freedom towards God. You are free to confess your lapses to such a friend. You have to receive His counsel. You can then get your heart purified. Offering your sullied heart to the Lord is like presenting a soiled currency note to the Reserve Bank for getting a new one. A note which is not acceptable to others will be accepted by the Reserve Bank. Only God can accept it and replace it with a new one. Therefore, offer all your bad qualities to God and receive from Him all good qualities. Don't pass on your bad qualities to others.

You have to offer yourself to God

What is that you have to offer to God? Not a leaf, a flower, a fruit or holy water. You have to offer yourself to God. Then you become one with the Divine. That is what God desires from you. Instead of realising this sublime truth people seek to offer their hair to Sri Venkateshvara to secure petty favours. What is it that Lord Venkateshvara lacks? Does the Lord need your overgrown hair? What is it the Lord needs? On the top of the head you have dark hair. That represents the *Thamo-guna--the* quality of lethargy and ignorance. Those who go to Thirupathi should offer to God their *Thamoguna* and acquire the *Sathva-guna*. Realise that there is nothing of ours that you can offer to God. All you enjoy is from Him. Develop this conviction. Treat whatever good or bad that happens to you as coming from God. What you deem as bad may be like a bitter medicine prescribed by a doctor for your good. Consider all that happens, good or ill, pleasure or pain, is for our good. Only then you will be able to nourish your good qualities.

Embodiments of love! Wherever you may be, in whatever condition, consider your hearts as an Ocean of Milk, the abode of God. God is omnipresent. When you lead your life with this faith, there is nothing greater than this. The overseas devotees who were here during the past three

days have converted their hearts into the Ocean of Milk and invited the Lord to recline on it. The other devotees should learn from them.

The world will come to Sai

Do not consider Sai Baba as a mere figure five feet three inches tall. His Presence will be felt all over the world. Wait and see. In a few days the entire world will come here. Therefore, at least from now on make the best use of the opportunity that has come to you and strive to redeem your lives. Because of proximity, you have tended to take me for granted. Yashodha was similarly misled about the true nature of Krishna and could not understand why He preferred the butter kept by the Gopikas to the butter offered by her. Krishna could be bound only by the rope of devotion. Yashodha had material affection but not the intense devotion of the Gopikas. The sense of dualism should go and there should be total identification with the Divine.

On this holy occasion devotees from many countries have delighted every one here by their presentation of the artistic culture of their respective countries. Wherever you may go do not give up your traditional culture. Devotees from outside who come here adhere to their culture. But Bhaaratheeyas going abroad forget their ancient culture. What is worse, they even forget their mother tongue. After years spent in Bhaarith, within a short spell of stay in the United States they get addicted to the American language. When I ask in Telugu young people who return after a short-stay in the U.S. what they are doing there, they say: "I don't know Telugu," What is it that you have learnt? If you have forgotten your mother tongue, are you likely to remember your mother?

Nations are many but the earth is one

Raama declared: "The mother and the Motherland are greater than Heaven itself." Therefore, wherever you may go, do not forget your ancient traditions. This is relevant to people of all countries. At the same time, unity should be cultivated. "Nations are many, the earth is one. Beings are many, but breath is one." This truth has to be recognized. All the resources of Nature like air are available to all irrespective of nationality or creed or race. This is the unity in diversity that has to be realised, Out of unity comes purity. All should seek to live as brothers and sisters. No one should criticise any nation, faith or culture. When you cultivate this broad outlook, your culture will be respected by others. It is this spirit of unity that the world needs today.

If Bhaaratheeyas forget their culture they will be guilty of spiritual betrayal. See how the Chinese (from Malaysia) performed their unique dances. The young lads had such intense dedication to their culture. Indians going abroad tend to decry their traditional culture as superstition. Once Prof. Max Mueller, attempting to get the meaning of *Vedhik* passage from an Indian I.C.S. trainee who gave his name as Chathurvedhi, found that he was totally ignorant of the *Vedhas* and had no respect for them. Prof. Max Mueller was sad that one born in India, with the name Chathurvedhi, should have so little regard for the *Vedhas*.

Bhaaratheeyas should realise what great respect is being shown by foreigners to our culture and spiritual heritage. The nation is going down morally and spiritually. The first need is to cultivate self-respect. Everyone should uphold the name and fame of Bhaarith. For this, they should have respect for the *Vedhas* and try to acquire the same knowledge of the *Vedhas*. To say the least, they should at least regard God as the indweller of the heart.

Embodiments of love! Cherish the heart as the temple of God and try to keep it pure and unsullied. Chant the name of the Lord to drive away all evil thoughts and impulses.

Discourse in Sai Kulwant Bhavan, Prashaanthi Nilayam on 11-7-1995.

The greatest instrument by which success can be ensured for all your efforts is Bhakthi. That will give health, wealth and prosperity too, for it will eliminate hatred and faction and give more power to your elbow when you plough the land.

BABA