

### 3. Triple transformation : *Sankraanthi's call*

*The sun appeared cool and serene;  
The day started getting shorter;  
The chill wind blew fiercely;  
The fields were filled with golden harvest.  
The farmers rejoiced in singing at night  
With the moon shining bright,  
The buds of flowers blossomed  
Like garlands of pearls  
On the banks of rivers;  
Farmers were bringing home  
The newly harvested grain,  
Hailing the advent of  
The Joyous festival of Sankraanthi.*

*EMBODIMENTS of Love! Bhaaratheeya festivals are full of inner significance, imparting bliss, and not ostentatious shows. Every festival has a unique significance of its own.*

The sun moves into a house of the zodiac every month. In a year he goes round the twelve houses of the zodiac. Of these, the main houses are four. The first is *Makara Sankramana* (the zodiacal sign of Capricorn). The second is *Karkaataka* (Cancer). The third is *Thula* (Libra). The fourth is *Mesha* (Aries). Of these four, the most important is *Makara* (Capricorn). The entry of the sun into *Capricorn* has physical, ethical, social and moral significance.

#### **The northward journey of the sun**

From today the sun starts on his northward journey. What does the north signify? It is considered the direction leading to *Moksha* (Liberation). The sun is said to move towards Himaachala. Himaachala is made up of two words: Hima + Achala. '*Hima*' means that which is white as snow. '*Achala*' is that which is firm and unshakable. What is the place to which this description applies? It is the region of the heart. In a heart that is pure and steady, the sun of *Buddhi* (the intellect) enters. There is no need to undertake a journey in the external world. The *Uttharaayana* (or the Northward Journey) means turning the intellect inward., towards the heart. The bliss that is experienced within alone is true bliss for man. All other external and sensory pleasures are ephemeral. Only the *Aathmik* principle is pure, permanent and infinite. This has been termed the abode of *Moksha* (Liberation). The journey to *Moksha* is called the quest for liberation.

Sankramana is the time when the inward journey towards a pure and unsullied heart is made. Just as the sun embarks on his northward journey, *Sankraanthi* is the day on which the intellect should be turned towards the *Aathma* for Self-realisation.

*The Vedha* has declared the *Uttharaayana* as a sacred period. The great warrior Bheeshma, lying on a bed of arrows, waited for 56 days for the advent of *Uttharaayana* to end his life. The *puranas* have stated that whoever passes away in *Uttharaayana* will attain liberation.

### **Inner meaning of festivals**

In the movement of the sun from house to house in the Zodiac, the entry into Capricorn is most important. Capricorn is a sign of peace and contentment. According to the Gregorian calendar, *Sankraanthi* begins on January 13 or 14. This confers a kind of mental and physical peace.

In this period, farmers and others labouring on the soil enjoy a period of rest. The farmers are at ease enjoying the fruits of their labours. Their granaries are filled with grains of all kinds. Farmers have no other period of rest. During this month, farmers enjoy peace of mind and body.

Few people understand the true significance of festivals like *Sankraanthi*. Man cannot secure enduring bliss through physical pleasures. He has to discover that the source of this bliss is within himself. *Sankraanthi* enables man to make this discovery, like a man who carrying his spectacles on his forehead searches for it everywhere and discovers to his joy that it has been with him all along.

The Divine is not anywhere else. It is enshrined in one's heart. Hence, the man who seeks the Divine within his heart redeems himself. He then attains liberation. All external spiritual exercises are of temporary value. They should be internalized to experience lasting bliss. All mental exercises also leave the heart unaffected. In the nine paths of devotion, beginning with listening to sacred things and ending with *Aathma-nivedhanam* (total surrender of the self), the last is the most important. After *Aathmanivedhanam* there is no need for any other effort.

### **The feelings promoted by *Sankraanthi***

*Sankraanthi* gives the call for this total surrender. Subba Rao (in his speech prior to Svaami's discourse) said that *Sankraanthi* is a kind of family festival. Yes. This is so. But the whole world is one family *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. The festival relates to the entire world. It is not confined to one's kith and kin. *Sankraanthi* is related to the entire mankind. Whether people realise it or not, *Sankraanthi* promotes in one and all a feeling of happiness.

*Sankraanthi* promotes mental transformation. It illumines the minds of people. It induces the unfoldment of inner feelings. It brings about the manifestation of the invisible *Aathma* within everyone. *Sankraanthi* is pregnant with such immense significance. It influences not only the mind but also the powers of nature. Nature is a projection of the mind. "*Manomoolam idham Jagath*" (The world is rooted in the mind). When the mind is turned towards the heart and the heart is filled with the Divine, the mind will cease to be a source of trouble. The mind is the master of the senses. When the senses are controlled the mind is under control. Only the master of the mind can attain Maadhava (the Divine).

Young people should realise that the root cause of all their bad thoughts and bad actions is the food they consume. The nature of the food determines the state of the mind. Food does not mean merely what is eaten, but includes all that is received through the senses and stored in the mind. The mind, as Subba Rao said, has the power of attraction. It attracts impressions of all kinds from the external world. What do we find in every home today?'

### **Harm done by Television**

There is a television set. T.V. sets are installed in every room in the houses of the rich. From the moment television made its appearance, the mind of man has been polluted.

Before the advent of T.V., men's minds were not so much polluted. Acts of violence were not so rampant previously. Today T.V. is installed in every hut. People watch the T.V. even while taking food. The result is that all the foul things seen on the T.V. are being consumed by the viewer. Concentration on the T.V. affects one's view of the world. The scenes, thoughts and actions displayed on the T.V. set fill the minds of the viewers. Unknowingly, agitations and ill-feelings enter their minds. In due course they take root and grow in the minds.

Hence while taking food, you should not discuss dreadful incidents. No room should be given to subjects which excite the mind. Silence should prevail during eating. Even sound waves enter into us and affect our minds. Hence people should avoid T.V. while taking food.

There is now what is called "Star TV." It is doing great harm to human life. The temporary satisfaction given by it is followed by lasting damage. It is like a sword coated with honey. As you lick the honey, the sword will cut your tongue.

Not Bhaarath alone, but the whole world is suffering from the consequences of T.V. The world is racked by disorder, discord and frustration.

### **Fill your life with holy thoughts**

Men today are plagued by a whole battery of troubles from birth to death. How can they hope for happiness amidst this sea of troubles?

They have to change their vision, their thoughts, their words and their conduct. This is the meaning of Sankramana. Unless you purify yourself, what can any.-number of *Sankraanthis* mean to you? You tasted sweet *prasaadham* this morning. After some time, its taste is gone. It is not sweet food that is important. You must fill your life with holy thoughts. That is the purpose of sacred festivals.

Young people ask why they should not enjoy freedom as the fish, birds and animals do. They should understand that each of these creatures are enjoying freedom in accordance with their own sphere of life. Similarly man should enjoy freedom related to his human condition. You cannot call yourself a human being and lead the life of an animal. Enjoy the freedom of a human being. To be free like an animal is to become an animal yourself. What is the freedom a man can enjoy? Man is governed by certain restraints. He has to adhere to truth. He has to follow righteousness. He has to cultivate love. He has to live in peace. He has to observe non-violence. Sticking to these five values, man can exercise his freedom. These five values are associated with the five elements which make up the cosmos. These five elements may be used in different ways, but they are the basic substances constituting the universe. Beyond these five, there is only one sixth element, that is, *the Anthahkarana*, the Inner Motivator, which is identical with the *Aathmik* principle.

To exercise freedom in its true sense, man has to respect the five basic values. It is in that freedom he will find true bliss.

### **Imitation has become a deadly disease**

In exercising freedom you should not merely imitate others. Imitation has become a deadly disease among modern youth, in matters of dress or other behaviour. They should consult their conscience in all matters rather than copy others. Films and TV have totally demoralized the people. People have become completely oblivious to Divinity within them.

People today have lost the quality of forbearance. The sages in the past allowed even anthills to grow over them while they were immersed in penance. Today people cannot tolerate the slightest disturbance by a fly or a mosquito. Young people should cultivate forbearance and tolerance. Without peace of mind there can be no happiness. Peace can be got only through sacred thoughts.

Youth today have lost confidence in themselves. They are affected by criticism levelled against them. They should see that if the criticism is justified, they should correct themselves. If it is not justified, they should ignore it. Taking myself as an example, I may tell you if somebody somewhere says, "Sai Baba has a mop of hair," I accept it, as it is true. If someone were to say to my face, "Sai Baba is bald," I will ignore it, as it is not true. Why should I bother to quarrel with him? If you are criticized for a fault that is not in you, you can ignore it even if the whole world joins in the criticism.

When we pronounce "*Shaanthi, Shaanthy, Shaanthy,*" three times, it is prayer for peace of body, mind and the spirit. Though people have been mouthing this prayer for thirty years, they have not found peace, because they have not enshrined peace in their hearts. They must learn to speak sweetly and softly.

#### **Students must pledge to rid the world of its ills**

*Students!* Apart from educational programmes, do not look at T.V. at all, especially while taking food. Concentrate on the work on hand, whether it be eating or anything else.

You are observing many things in the world today. You must see how you can make use of your knowledge to make the world better. Students-boys and girls---must pledge themselves to rid the world of its ills. Earning incomes is not a great thing. To ensure peace and prosperity in the world is the highest achievement. You have to strive for peace in the nation, starting with peace in the home.

Above all, unity is important. Young people should promote unity and serve the nation. They should be a power for peace wherever they go. Educated young men should be examples of discipline and good behaviour. Revere parents and elders, love the Motherland and uphold its greatness.

*Sankraanthi* should be hailed as the harbinger of unity and peace. This was the immemorial message of the *Vedhas*. "Let us live together in harmony and strive together."

*Discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on 15-1-1996, Sankraanthi Day.*

*God draws the Individual towards Himself; it is the nature of birth to have this affinity, for they are the same. They are like the iron and the magnet. But if the iron is rusty and covered with layers of dirt, the magnet is unable to attract. Remove the impediment; that is all you have to do. Shine forth in your real nature and the Lord will draw you into His Bosom. Trials and tribulations are the means by which this cleansing is done. That is why Kunthi prayed to Krishna, "Give us always grief, so that we may never forget Thee."*

*Baba*