

7. Bhajans and bliss

The goddess of prosperity walks in the wake of Truth;

Fame follows sacrifice;

Knowledge follows diligence;

The intellect is governed by actions.

(Sanskrit Shloka)

SATHYA-ANUSAARINI Lakshmi (As long as people adhere to Truth, prosperity will attend on them). Truth is that which is valid for all the three categories of Time--past, present, and the future. Truth is Divine. The one who ad-hems to Truth will lack nothing in the world.

"Thyaaga-anusaarini Keerthi" (Fame will follow the man who has the spirit of sacrifice). In the world today both truth and sacrifice are rare. These two are the proper goals for human existence.

"Abhyaasa-amusaarini Vidhya" (Knowledge is gained by the extent to which it is diligently pursued). Diligent study is essential for the acquisition of knowledge. The Geetha has declared that earnest practice leads to success in meditation. Meditation helps to promote the spirit of sacrifice. Peace is secured from sacrifice. Hence, diligence is essential for achieving anything. All actions in one's life are performed well *through Abhyaasa* (constant practice).

Bad actions pollute the intellect

"Buddhih Karmaanusaarini" (Actions determine the course of the intellect). In the actions performed by the person, there are two types: the proper and the improper. Man's intellectual tendencies depend on the nature of his actions, good or bad. Bad actions pollute the intellect. Good deeds purify the intellect. Hence the condition of the intellect is determined by one's actions.

To ensure that one's actions are good, one has to cultivate good company. Association with the good influences the intellect in the right direction. Your company shows what you are. It is, therefore, necessary to cultivate the company of good people and foster good qualities.

In this world, who is a true preceptor? One's heart is the true preceptor. Time is a true teacher. The world is the best guide-book. God is the ideal friend. Hence, there is no need to search for a preceptor. The heart is your conscience. When you consult your heart or conscience, it tells you what is right. It is the right preceptor. It will nor let you go astray.

Then you have Time. It is going in the right direction. In any circumstance you cannot go against Time. Teachers are of two kinds: the painful and the illuminating. Time belongs to the type of teacher who illumines. Time is the devourer of all things in due course. But the Lord, Eshvara, is master over Time itself. Therefore, one should act according to the needs of the Time, with full faith in the Lord. This is the proper way to act.

The cosmos is the best text

People read all kinds of sacred books- the Geetha, the Bible, the Quran, the Granth Saheb and others. All these books confine their reachings to specific subjects. They do not cover other subjects related to the physical, the social etc. Bur the cosmos itself constitutes the most comprehensive text-book, covering all subjects, the physical, the mundane, the ethical and the

spiritual. The cosmos is therefore the best text. There is nothing you cannot learn from the universe.

However intelligent a man may be, he learns all that he knows from the world around him. Without the world knowledge cannot exist.

In the distant past, the world was enveloped in darkness. For millions of years the world was covered by a heavy mass of clouds. Then started a downpour which lasted for thousands of years. This was followed by the formation of oceans, mountains, rivers and forests on the earth. The dissolution of the clouds gradually dispelled the darkness enveloping the world. Then, the sun and the stars became visible from the earth. Man has to learn many things from the phenomena taking place in the universe.

Next, there is the question: "Who is one's best friend in the world?" There are any number of fair-weather friends. Who is a lasting friend, who will stand by you in weal and woe, who is pure and unselfish? God alone is such a friend. When you make God your friend, you will be free from all troubles. Your worldly friends may desert you any moment. But God will always be with you, above you, around you. Your dearest and unflinching friend is God alone.

All of you were engaged in the *bhajans* whole of last night. They appeared to be largely *Vyaavahaarika* (kind of ritual). What is the origin of this worldly ritual? It has come from *Paaramaarthika* (the spiritual). This shows that there is an element of spirituality even in worldly actions--whether it be the practice of a profession, or a business or the pursuit of knowledge. Worldly activities get sanctified by association with spirituality.

Equanimity is characteristic of the ocean

From the worldly activities arise what are called *Praathibhaasika* activities (reflections of the worldly activities). What is the relationship between these three types of activities? The *Paaramaarthika* (spiritual) is like the ocean. From this arise the waves of *vyaavahaarika* (worldly activities). The main characteristics of the ocean are to be found in the waves also like chilliness, saltiness, etc. *Praathibhaasika* is represented by the foam arising from the waves. The foam has all the qualities of the ocean. The relationship between these three types has to be properly understood. Without the ocean, there can be no waves. Without the waves, there can be no foam. It is clear that without the *Paaramaarthika* (the spiritual) there can be no *Vyaavahaarika* (worldly) phenomenon. Without the *Vyaavahaarika* waves, there can be no *Praathibhaasika* foam. Their interrelationship is comparable to a grandfather (the ocean), father (waves) and son (the foam). The ocean is not diminished by evaporation or swollen by the flow of river waters. This equanimity is characteristic of the ocean. It is free from egoism and possessiveness.

People, however, consider the three states. *Paaramaarthika*, *Vyaavahaarika* and *Praathibhaasika*----as different from each other. This is totally wrong. The *Vyaavahaarika* (worldly activities) should not in any way be divorced from the *Paaramaarthika* (spiritual). Only then can peace be got from worldly activities. What is the cause of sorrow in this world? It is the result of separating the worldly activities from the spiritual and considering them as distinct from the other. The transient nature of worldly activities should be understood. It is associating them with the spiritual that they acquire sanctity. The spiritual basis of all activity should never be forgotten.

Spiritualize the *Bhajans* with heart felt devotion

The *bhajans* this time were done in a ritualistic fashion. Greater attention was paid to *raaga*, *thaala*, *laya* and *shruti* (the melody, the beat, the rhythm and the tone). All these are *vyaavahaarika* (conventional qualities). To elevate the *bhajans* to a spiritual level what are required are true feeling and ecstasy of devotion. The songs should flow not from the lips but from the heart. When the songs come out of the heart they will be blissful for the ears.

That heart is comparable to the ocean. Hence, the Lord is described as *Hridhayavaasi* (the Dweller in the heart). The heart is the seat of compassion in man. Only when men are kind, you can call humanity "mankind".

Do not think that God dwells in some temple, shrine or place of pilgrimage. He is omnipresent and His abode in man is the human heart.

When Naaradha sought to know from Vishnu what was His permanent abode, the Lord replied: "Wherever my devotees chant my glories, I am present there." When God dwells in the heart, why should devotees seek Him elsewhere?

Conduct your *bhajans* with a pure unsullied heart, oblivious to all worldly desires. When you chant the Lord's name with a pure heart, you will experience the Divine. "If a man, devotes one moment of the time devoted to thoughts of family, friends, business and wealth, to thoughts on the Lotus Feet of the Lord, he will have no need to fear the messengers of death." Men's thoughts today are wholly concerned with acquisition of material possessions, power and pelf. How much happier would they be if they devoted a fraction of their time to contemplate the glories of God. Hours, days, years are wasted in the pursuit of things of the world. One moment devoted to the thought of God will make all the difference.

What meaning is there in acquiring millions? A contented man is happier than a millionaire. The poorest man in the world is the one who has insatiable desires.

Be content with what you get and carry on your duties. This is *Thyaaga*, a life of sacrifice.

Adhere to Truth and Sacrifice

Today the world needs Truth and Sacrifice. What does sacrifice mean? Today there are millions of people who consider themselves Sai devotees. There is no need to go outside the Sai fold. If the Sai devotees alone adhered to Truth and Sacrifice, the entire world will be transformed.

If you wish to change the world, these two principles are the recipe. *Sathya* (Truth) purifies the heart. *Thyaaga* (sacrifice) transforms the physical environment. By this double transformation the entire world is divinised.

How long will men continue to wallow in the mundane world, forgetting the Divine? You must yearn for God and redeem your life.

Men desire to become millionaires. But how many of the millionaires have peace of mind? Money can give many things that are conducive to Comfort. But it cannot give peace of mind.

It should be realised that the body and all the appurtenances of the mind have been given to man to enable him to achieve *Aathma-shaanthi* (spiritual peace). If spiritual bliss is not attained, all other physical attachments are worthless.

Man has been endowed with a body to practise righteousness. Man has to rise above the level of birds and beasts. Dedicate your lives to the service of your fellowmen. Do not lead an idle life. Bhaarath has any amount of land and water. Why should people suffer from want? Because they are not engaged in the right type of activities. Many are wasting their time. Time is God. Time wasted, is life wasted.

Pray to God and transform work into worship

In the worship of the Divine, there are two schools of thoughts---those who worship the formless and those who worship the Divine in different forms. The differences over this issue are fruitless. Water that is formless acquires a form when it becomes ice. The formless water molecule and the ice block with the form are one and the same. *Vedhaantha* has clearly pointed out the futility of this controversy.

People get confused by the way some scholars deal with spiritual subjects on the radio and TV. The teachings are often based only on bookish knowledge without any practical experience. Knowledge should be based on experience. For instance, the saltish water from the ocean that is turned into vapour by the rays of the sun becomes pure and sweet. It has no trace of salt in it. It has *been* transformed.

The same process takes place when the grace of the Lord's rays falls on the polluted mind of man and transforms his thoughts into pure and sweet feelings.

The importance of the mind in the process of transformation should be properly understood because the mind is the cause of bondage or liberation. Your actions are the cause of your happiness or sorrow. Do not blame others for your condition. Every thought, every word and every action has its reflection, resound and reaction. It is a sign of weakness to blame others for your troubles. You have to bear with the consequences of your actions. If they are unbearable, pray to God for relief. God alone can give relief in such cases. He is all-powerful and therefore take refuge in Him.

Pray to God and draw from Him the magnet of His grace and offer to the world the power of His electrical energy.

This is the energy which man can mobilise for the good of all. It is all-powerful, because it is Divine. It is within you. What a pity that people should be unaware of this and feel themselves powerless! All energy and all bliss are within us. Because of ignorance people are resorting to all kinds of useless exercises. They are unnecessary. Have full faith in your *Aathma-shakthi* (spiritual power). Adhere to the truth of your faith, without criticising others.

Whatever you do, have the name of the Lord on your lips and faith in God in your heart. Thereby work will be transformed into worship.

Enjoy bliss in silence

Today, you have to open your hearts and close your mouths. But people are doing exactly the opposite. This is treason to God. Practise silence as far as possible. The ancient sages practised *mounam* (absolute silence) as a spiritual discipline. Today people indulge in excessive talk over the trivial and the unimportant. When silence is practised, bliss will manifest itself. The one who talks much will do little. One who acts will talk little.

I have been observing how the *bhajans* are sung. When the girls sing, the boys do not follow in chorus. When the boys sing, the girls do not respond. When both are singing the *Divine* name,

why should not they sing in unison? What is the reason for this narrow separatism? This should be given up.

Once Emperor Akbar asked his court musician how would he account for the fact that a wayside beggar's music moved him more profoundly than the music of the state musician. The latter replied that while the beggar sang from his heart to please God, his music was constrained by the desire to please the Emperor.

You should sing whole-heartedly with the desire to please God. God makes no distinction between a proficient musician and a beggar in the street. It is the devotion and sincerity that matter. Merge your soul in the *bhajans* you sing. Spiritualise your *bhajan-singing*. Then you will experience real bliss.

Don't distort Svaami's teachings for convenience

In following Svaami's teachings people tend to follow them according to their convenience. For instance, when Svaami said that there is only one caste, the caste of humanity, this statement is used as authority for uninhibited marriages between any two persons. This is a travesty of Svaami's teaching. Caste differences are to be eliminated. But cultural differences should be respected. Svaami has emphasised that every cultural group should adhere to its culture. Svaami's teachings should be adhered to in their entirety and not selectively according to one's convenience.

I fervently appeal to all devotees to participate in the *bhajans* with their heart and soul and make community singing a blissful spiritual experience for one and all.

Discourse on the morning of 8-3-1997.