

22. Recover the spirit of sacrifice

Bhakthi alone confers the supreme good;

Bhakthi alone destroys the disease of worldly existence;

Bhakthi alone fosters yearning the Supreme;

Bhakthi alone leads to final liberation.

EMBODIMENTS of Love! For the realisation of the Supreme, *Bhakthi* (devotion) is the royal road. The Lord's name has been offered to man to escape from the cycle of birth and death and the diseases incidental to human life.

From ancient times Bhaarith has been propagating divine teachings to all mankind. The true aim of spirituality is to foster among the people devotion as the essence of Bhaaritheya Culture.

It is not arms or political institutions that protect a nation. It is love of the country, the spirit of sacrifice and faith in the Divine which serve to protect the nation. Every man and woman should be filled with the spirit of sacrifice, devotion and the spiritual urge to protect the nation. From age to age Bhaarith has been the spiritual leader for all nations. It has welcomed people, of different cultures with open arms despite the vicissitudes of history. This is the unique stamp of Bhaaritheya culture.

Culture determines the daily conduct of the people. It is their way of life. Bhaaritheya culture helped to promote mutual good-will and harmony among the people. But unfortunately people have gone astray and are subject to unrest and disorder today.

The nation can recover true freedom and peace only when it turns to spirituality. Love of the Divine should take root in the heart. The world has lost peace because people have no fear of sin and no love of God and are no longer human in their behaviour. The spirit of sacrifice has vanished.

Heroism of Karna

Mankind needs rulers inspired by the spirit of sacrifice and people filled with love of God. The history of Bhaarith is full of stories of sacred lives. One such is the story of Karna, a hero of the Mahaabhaaritha war. When Karna lay wounded on the battlefield, Krishna was grief-stricken, although the Paandavas had reason to rejoice over his fall. Krishna told Arjuna that the passing of Karna would be a great loss for Bhaarith. No one could excel him in giving gifts. Bhaarith has always given the first place to the quality of sacrifice. Krishna assumed the role of a *Brahmana* to prove to Arjuna the readiness of Karna to make the highest sacrifice even while he was bleeding on the battlefield. Karna knocked out one of his gold-filled teeth to offer to the *Brahmana* the gold he wanted for making the *mangala suthra* (marriage pendant) at his son's wedding. When the *Brahmana* refused to accept it as it was taken from his mouth, Karna cleansed it by producing pure water from the earth by aiming an arrow at the ground. Arjuna felt humbled by Karna's demonstration of Karna's unrivalled magnanimity and prowess. Krishna extolled Karna's devotion and large-hearted generosity and revealed His Divine form to Karna. He told Krishna that having seen the Divine form he had no other boon to ask before he passed away.

Every Bhaaritheya should develop the spirit of sacrifice which has been the hall-mark of Bhaaritheya civilization. God can only be realised through sacrifice. All the scriptures and

epics have extolled the supremacy of sacrifice. All religious practices without sacrifice are artificial rituals alone. God examines your feelings and not your external observances. Divinity can be experienced only when worship of God is done with pure heart and all one's activities are

Whatever form of worship one may adopt, it has to be done wholeheartedly. There must be complete harmony between thought, word and deed. True humanness consists in the combination of three H's---Heart, head and Hand.

Misuse of discrimination

Embodiments of Love! Think for a moment how people in Bhaarath are misusing their power of discrimination. When people build big mansions they allot a small corner for the worship of God. God says: "Oh fool! What sort of room is it for me? Your heart is my abode." Meeraabai also declared: "Krishna! My heart is your temple." Treat the heart as the temple and consider the entire mansion as His. You may use it as you like, but realise that God is everywhere. Have the faith that God is omnipresent.

This morning we had the *Rathotsavam* (festival of Golden Chariot) organised by the *Sai Paadhuka Trust*, Madurai, under the dedicated guidance of Shri Subramania Chettiar, who has been a steadfast devotee of Bhagavaan for over fifty years.

Over many years Subramania Chettiar has been engaged in promoting *Paadhuka Seva* (service of the Holy Sandals of the Lord). It is not easy for one at his advanced age to carry a burden of this magnitude. I am aware of the good service he has done so far. Hereafter he should take rest and devote himself to his personal *saadhana*. It is true that service is a form of service to God. But he is no longer in a position to do this.

Moreover you have to be told about today's car festival. Whether you believe or not I have no liking for such functions. What should be offered to Bhagavaan is unsullied love. That love is God. Live in love. Offer that love to the Divine.

Why should I be bothered with this immense burden of a Golden Chariot? I do not at any time desire such things. Instead of this, you may spend any amount of money on social service activities.

Offer only pure love to Bhagavaan

Here or anywhere else, what you have to offer to Bhagavaan is pure love. Do not make such offerings as Golden Chariot anywhere. Anyone who desires such offerings cannot be Divine. When the Divine is immanent in everything, what is it that you can offer to the Divine? How are you eligible to make any offering at all? Everything belongs to God. Henceforth devotees should not bring here any gold ornaments or ornamental chariots or golden chariots. It is better to sell such objects and use the money for providing drinking water to the people.

From the outset I had resolved on three things in the Bhaaratheeya tradition. From the ancient times Bhaarath has been providing three things to the people. One is *Vidhya* (education). Next comes *Vaidhya* (free medical aid). *Vidhya* relates to the head. *Vaidhya* is related to the heart. For this reason I have been providing free education. Nowhere in the world is such free education offered. Today, heavy donations have to be given for admission even to the first standard. As I feel that every child belongs to me, I see nothing special in offering free education to my children. All are mine and hence I offer these things to them. What I give and what I accept is love. It is a relationship of love to love, heart to heart.

Promote purity of heart

Therefore, whatever Subramania Chettiar may feel, if somebody is ready to bid for this Chariot, I shall be glad to give it away and use the money for providing drinking water to more villages.

He brought the chariot here out of his immense love. He had one overwhelming desire in his life. He was keen to celebrate this *Rathotsavam* (festival of Golden Chariot) in his life time. He did not worry about what happens to him thereafter. It was to please him that I mounted this Chariot. Otherwise I would not have gone near it at all.

I have no desires of this nature. Nor should you entertain such intentions. The relationship between God and devotee is heart to heart and has nothing to do with external paraphernalia. You must cultivate this internal quality. Promote purity of the heart. Engage yourselves in selfless service.

You have to cherish three cardinal principles---Fear of sin, Love of God and Moral life in society. That you will foster your devotion in this manner, I bless you all.

Discourse in Sai Kulvanth Hall on 22-9-1997.