

## 23. Foster firm faith in God

*Who destroys conceit becomes endearing*

*By subduing hatred one is freed from grief*

*By overcoming desires one becomes selfless*

*By destroying greed, one achieves happiness*

*EMBODIMENTS of Love!* As long as a man remains arrogant - full of *Ahamkaara* (self-conceit)-no one will love him. However wealthy one may be, whatever position he may hold, .however intelligent he may be, if he is arrogant, even his wife and children will not love him. The day he sheds his egoistic pride, all will begin to love him. If one desires to earn the love of the world, he has to get rid of his egoistic pride, *Ahamkaara*---"*I-am-the-doer*." Only the egoless person deserves the world's love. "*Krodham haithvaa na sochathi*" (Destroying anger, one is free from grief). As long as one is filled with *Krodha* (anger or hatred), one cannot be happy. In this world people undertake all kinds of *saadhanas* to get rid of grief or unhappiness. But whatever *penances, japas* or sacrifices they do, they are unable to get rid of unhappiness. The reason is they have not been able to get rid of their hatred. Raavana was a valorous person, with many talents and accomplishments. But because he was filled with hatred, he could have no happiness. By harbouring hatred, man renders his life miserable. "The angry man fails in everyone of his enterprises." (Telugu saying). Anger brings in its train all kinds of ill-fame. Haunted by infamy, he can have no happiness.

### **Conquer desires and greed**

*"Kaamam haithvaa nissvaarthavaan bhavathi"* (By conquering desire, one becomes unselfish). As long as one is overwhelmed by desires, one cannot be contented. He loses control over his senses. He is intoxicated with insatiable desires. No doubt man cannot avoid desires. But there should be a limit to them. Limitless desires can result only in ruin. Prosperity will elude him. The moment man is able to control his desires, all things will come to him of their own accord.

*"Lobham hithvaa sukhee bhavathi"* (Conquering greed, man realises happiness). Greed is another cause of human misery. Greed makes a man distant from every kind of happiness... material, intellectual or spiritual. Greed accounts for the failure of Dhuryodhana and Dhusshaasana to feel happy despite all their wealth and power. Hence people must banish greed from their hearts. How is this to be done? When they foster the spirit of *thyaaga* (sacrifice), greed will vanish. With greed-filled hearts there is no room for joy. You cannot fill a tumbler full of water with milk. First empty the tumbler and then fill it with milk. Likewise, get rid of greed and fill your heart with *thyaaga*. "A mind full of evil thoughts has no room for good thoughts." (Telugu saying).

*Embodiments of Love!* Take note of the fact that the rapid passage of time is consuming man's life-span at a rapid pace like the melting of an iceberg. The end comes even before man realises his role in life. It would be a shame if human life is wasted in this manner.

### **The One chose to become the many**

Man suffers from numerous ills because he has not understood the purpose of life. The first thing he has to realise is that God is one, by whatever name and in whatever form the Divine is worshipped. The one chose to become the many. "God is one. The wise hail Him by many

names" is the *Vedhic* pronouncement. It is the imagination of the observers which accounts for the apparent multiplicity of the Divine. The sun is only one, but his reflections appear in a myriad vessels. Likewise God is present in the hearts of different beings in varied forms and natures.

For the individual self, the body is like a chariot (or a temple). The different parts of the body have different functions as the different parts of a car. The four aims of life *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kaama* and *Moksha*. (Righteousness, wealth, desire-fulfilment and Liberation)--are like the four wheels. The wheels have to be filled with the air of *Vishvaasam* (faith) without which they cannot run. The wheels can move only when they are properly steered. The steering is done by the mind in the human body. To get the mind working, the switch of *Buddhi* has to be turned on. The stomach is the engine for the human chariot. The food you consume is the petrol. The Divine is the charioteer in the body It is the. *Aathma* (Self in all). When this is understood, one can reach the destination of human existence.

All the potencies present in the external world are present in man. The material substances constituting the human body have together very small value. But realise how valuable the human body itself is. To animate the physical body a vibrant power is needed. That vibration power is derived from the *Praana* (Life-Force). All the activities of the body are rendered possible by this Life-Force. The life-force itself derives its vibrancy (or virtuality) from a higher source---the spiritual power of radiation. It is these three potencies that are symbolised by the terms *Bhur*, *Bhuvah* and *Suvah* in the *Gaayathri Manthra*. Ignoring these profound truths men are wasting their energies and live in meaningless pursuits.

People should establish the right relationship with God. This means that spiritual exercises like chanting the names of the Lord or meditation on God should not be verbal or mechanical but should come from the heart. Raavana was a worshipper of Shiva. But it was all formal. His heart was not in it. So, he remained a Raakshasa. Those today who do the chanting of the Lord's name without their heart in it must be said to belong to the Raavana breed.

### **How to pray**

People must pray to God with Love for God and not for petty favours or material benefits. People must seek the Divine internally, not in external objects.

Devotees should strive for transformation in their hearts and minds so that they totally give up their attachment to worldly objects and get immersed in God. God values your feelings and not your physical performances. Make the Lord's name the goad for controlling the mind which tends to behave like an elephant in rut.

Men should seek to lead ideal lives in the service of society Above all, they should act according to the dictates of their conscience. There should be harmony in thought, word and deed at all times.

When the *Paadhukas* are worshipped, the thoughts should be concentrated on the Feet of the Lord. Bharatha is the supreme example of one who worshipped Raama's *Paadhukas* with such devotion. Settling himself in a hermitage outside Ayodhya, he worshipped Raama's *Paadhukas* with such concentration for 14 years that his mind merged in the Lotus Feet of Raama. He identified himself totally with Raama and dedicated every moment to Raama.

### **Develop one-pointed concentration**

Devotees should develop that kind of one-pointed concentration. There is no need to go in search of God who is omnipresent. If devotees develop *Prema nethra* (a loving vision) they can have the vision of the Divine within themselves.

Just as no seed can sprout without rain and without seeds no rain can produce a crop, the devotee must sow the seeds of *Naama-smarana* (chanting the Lord's name) and develop devotion with the help of the shower of grace from the Divine. This was the prayer of the Gopikas to Krishna that he should water their parched hearts by the flow of love from his flute. The Gopikas prayed to Krishna to play on his flute in such a way that the essence of the *Vedhas* flowed out of it as melodious music. (Bhagavaan sang the Gopika-song melodiously). Everyone should try to convert the body into a flute for the Divine to make His music flow through it. The body should be made a fit instrument for such music. Then it becomes a means of service to others. The best way to love God is to love all, serve all. You must learn even to love your enemy A kind word even to an enemy may eliminate his hatred. It is through love that man should refine his nature.

Every prayer, every name used *in japa* or worship should come from the depths of the heart. All names and *manthras* should be recited with a full understanding of the meaning of each word. Some famous musicians mispronounce the Telugu words in a Thyaagaraaja *Keerthana* (musical composition) which completely distorts its meaning. At the *Paadhuka* festival banners have been put up misspelling the *Sanskrit* word *Paadhuka* as *Baadhuga*. This sort of mispronunciation and misspelling of *Sanskrit* words should be avoided.

### **Look upon God as a friend**

Thyaagaraaja used to address Raama in all his *Keerthanas* in the singular. In the famous *Keerthana* "Raara maa intidhaaka," he invites Raama in familiar terms to come to his house (after he had recovered the image of Raama from the Cauvery river). The familiarity is an expression of his devotion to Raama.

You must look upon God as an "Old friend." There is no greater friend in the world than God. God only looks at the purity of your loving devotion. Treat the universe as your text-book and your heart as your teacher. There will be no need to seek God elsewhere. All that devotees need to do is to use all their limbs and organs of perception to experience the Divine. Tulsidas used to lament that as long as he did not use his limbs to experience God he was a useless cripple.

No devotee should allow his faith in God to weaken under any circumstances. You will achieve victory by facing any adverse circumstance with faith in God.

*Embodiments of Love!* Foster intense faith in God. All other beliefs are of no avail.

*Discourse in Sai Kulvanth Hall on 23-9-1997.*