

33. God is the sole refuge

*The form of love is Brahman;
Brahman is permeated with love;
Love is bound to love alone;
If one is filled with love
He is eligible for union with God.
Not from the heavens above,
Nor from the netherworld, nor from the earth,
But by the destruction of
The knot of ignorance in the heart:
One gets liberation, declares the Shruthi.*

EMBODIMENTS of love! Liberation will not drop from the sky. Nor can it come from the *paathaala* (nether world). Nor can it be found on the earth. Liberation can be attained only when ignorance is dispelled. In this vast universe every creature lives according to the law of its being. Man alone, who has the gift of this extremely precious human birth, is failing to realise the purpose of his existence and ignores his duties.

Immersed in sensual mundane pleasures, man forgets his spiritual destiny. All scholarship is valueless without Self-realisation. Raavana, Bhasmaasura and Kamsa were not lacking in scholarship or even religious practices. But all these were related to the *Pravritthi-maarga* (externals) and not to the *Nivritthi-maarga* (cultivation of the Spirit inside). Hence their basic demonic qualities did not change.

It is only when impure and unholy thoughts are expelled from the mind that sacred feelings will enter it. To experience lasting bliss the heart has to be sanctified by filling it with love. Through that love has to be secured *Jnaana* (the highest wisdom).

The goal for youth

The foremost goal modern youth should set before themselves is to sow the seeds of love, rear the plant of forbearance and distribute the fruits of peace to society through dedicated service.

The secret of peace is not in the external world but is within each individual. He should realise that the whole universe is permeated by the Divine. Today the world is filled with strife. It is not possible to make a distinction between a human being and a demon. Man, who evolved from the animal, instead of proceeding towards Divinity, is regressing to animality. Man's primary duty is to uphold the human values of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love. Man today is enveloped in attachment and hatred. The moment he casts them off, he will realise his divinity.

Students! You must realise that the spiritual path is easier than the academic studies you pursue. Education should serve to refine the heart, not fill the mind with useless lumber.

(Bhagavaan sang two poems deprecating the preoccupation with jobs for filling the belly, forgetting the Supreme Lord.)

The country today has lost all sense of ethical and spiritual values. The countryside is rampant with evil practices. Uncontrolled selfishness and insatiable desires are the root cause of the present evils. In the pursuit of worldly objects is there enduring happiness? Not at all. (Svaami sang stanzas from Bhaja Govindam to emphasize the point that youth, wealth and progeny are all ephemeral). Late in life, after going through all the experiences of family life, man even in his last years seeks a happiness that deludes him. Where is happiness to be found? The answer was given by Thyaagaraaja when he sang that happiness is not to be got through wealth but only through the worship of Shri Raama.

The glory of sacrifice

Worldly comforts cannot be adjured. But the spiritual goal should always be kept in mind. There should be a limit to the enjoyment of sensual pleasures. The money that is earned should be used for public good. Bhaaratheeya culture has always glorified the quality of renunciation. Immortality can be got only through sacrifice, declare the scriptures.

Students should realise that God's love alone is totally selfless and boundless. Even the love of parents, wife or children is tainted by a tinge of selfishness. Dedicate all your actions to God. Surrender to God all your bad qualities. God will offer you what is good for you.

How good are relations?

In this context I would relate the story of a student who used to go to a preceptor's hermitage in a forest for his studies.

The *guru* used to teach the student that there is no use in depending on one's mother, father, brothers, or relations or on wealth and property. All these are transient. Therefore he should be on his guard. '*Thasmaath Jaagratha! Jaagratha!*' He also used to teach him that life is full of sorrow upto the very end and hence he should be always on the alert. The boy told the *guru* that this teaching might be all right for recluses like the *guru*, but was irrelevant for ordinary persons like himself. He told the *guru*: "My parents are exceptional, my wife is good, without me she will not take her food. All of them love me. How can I disown them?"

The *guru* said, "I shall prove to you the truth of my teaching." He gave a pill to the student and said that after taking it he will become almost lifeless, but he will be conscious of what is happening around him though others will consider him dead. "Then you will know the truth."

The lad returned home, took the pill and dropped dead (as it were). The mother came, called the father and started wailing over the death of the son. The wife came out on hearing her cries and seeing the husband's body started crying. "I am my father's only daughter. If my husband goes, what will happen to me?" Everyone wailing over the body cried: "What is to happen to me?" Other relatives also gathered and lamented on the death of a young man who was virtuous and spiritually oriented.

At this stage, the preceptor came there. Everybody made way for him. The *guru* asked the mother, the father and the wife why they were wailing. They all mentioned the grievous loss of they had suffered in the death of the young man. "What will happen to me?" was the refrain of each of them. He asked the mother to fetch a glass of water. He dosed his eyes as if in prayer and then told them: "If anyone drinks this water, that person will die but the young man will be restored to life." He first offered the water to the wife as the one dearest to the young man. She said: "I am the only child of my parents. If I die they will collapse. Hence I cannot drink the

water." The guru said: "Your husband will live. Why don't you give up your life?" She replied: "The dead man is no more in any case. Why should I die?"

The guru next asked the mother. She said: "My daughter has come for confinement. She is helpless. And I have two more young daughters to be married. How can I leave them?" When the father was asked, he replied: "I am the head of the family. If I go only two ladies will be left in the house, my wife and my daughter-in-law. My wife will become a widow. With no male member in the house, they will be helpless. How can I give up my life?" All the three declined to drink the water. They went inside the house and drew up a master-plan. They came out and said: "Svaami! You are immensely compassionate. You have no other attachments. Please drink the water yourself and restore our son's life. We will build a samaadhi in marble for you."

At that moment, the guru sprinkled the water on the young man's body. He got up. The guru asked him, "What did your wife say? And your mother and father?" He replied: "They all said, let me die."

God's love alone is unselfish

The *guru* observed: "The world is impermanent. Birth is a misery, old age is a misery. There is trouble with the wife. Entire life is miserable. Therefore, be careful!" says a Sanskrit sloka.

As long as one is alive, all seem to love the body. This is also for purely selfish reasons. God alone is utterly selfless. Loving that God, you can lead your lives in the normal way. There is nothing wrong. Whatever you do, treat it as an offering to God. See God in everyone. Don't have ill will towards anyone. Do not have excessive attachment for anyone. Direct all attachments towards God. Love all. But do not rely on anyone except God. Realise the impermanence of the body and place your trust solely in God. Seek refuge in Him.

The faith is what is most needed today in this Kali Age. It is the loss of faith that is responsible for all the strife and chaos in the country.

Dear students! You are the victims of a purely secular education devoid of roots in spirituality. As often as possible, when you get the chance, meditate on God. That will ensure a good future for you. Earn the esteem of society by your service.

Discourse on 16-8-1996.