34. The click of the camera

WHAT Kuppa Bairaagi Shaasthri told you now about *Brahma Jijnaasa* (desire of getting knowledge of the Supreme Soul) and *Aathma* (soul) was very learned and very useful, especially for *Saadhakas* who have reached a certain stage of discipline and study, but I know that most of it was beyond you. My task is to give you the stuff that you need now, in a form that is both sweet and digestible. It is difficult to grasp the idea of the *Aathma,* about which Kuppa Bairaagi Shasthri spoke, in spite of all the quotations he gave from all the commentaries on the *Upanishaths.*

It is just the gold in all the jewels, the base and the substance, however many forms and whatever shapes the jewels may have. To become a particular jewel is to lose the Universal nature or rather to limit it. To lose the name and form of gold and become a jewel is to feel separate, to forget the One. The *Aathma* does not change, no one can transform it. Its nature is hidden by various veils of ignorance, such as those which Thyaagaraaja prayed Lord Venkatesha to pull apart, in the famous *song---"Thera theeyaga raadha."*

The veils are known as mind, intellect, etc. The jewel must know it is not, it was not, it will not be oval or square or fiat or round, or anklet or necklace or ring or bangle. It must yearn to know its real nature and become aware of the basic truth, apart from the unreal appearance. When it becomes gold again or rather when it ceases to think of itself as anything but gold, it can be said to have attained Bliss.

Love has to begin with a great yearning for Light

Because you have taken residence in this body, you cannot call the body, 'T'. When you sit here in this Hall, you do not call the Hall "I"; you know you are separate and that you are here only temporarily. When you move about in a *tonga* (horse-cart), you do not say that the tonga is you, do you? You do not take the tonga inside when you step down from it on reaching home. So also, you have to drop this body when you reach "home".

The 'T' in you is *Paramaathma* (Supreme Being) Himself. 'T' is the tiny wavelet that plays with the wind for a moment, over the deep waters of the sea. The wave gives you the impression that it is separate from the azure and timeless ocean below. But it is just an appearance, a creation of the two ideas---Name and Form. Get rid of the two ideas and the wave disappears in the sea; its reality flashes upon you and you know.

Paramaathma reveals Its Glory as *Prema* (Love) in man; *Prema* appears in various forms: attaching itself to riches or parents or children or one's a life-mate or friends. All these are sparks of the same flame and the Love of the Universal is its highest expression. This *Prema* cannot be cultivated by reading guide-books and made-easies and learning the steps by rote. It has to begin with a great yearning for the Light, an unbearable agony to escape from the Darkness and see Light, as in the prayer, *"Thamaso maa jyothir gamaya."* The yearning itself will draw down the Light. The Love will grow of itself and by its slow and inevitable alchemy turn you into Gold. Prahlaadha was a *Raakshasa* (demon) but *Prema* (Love) liberated him nevertheless; Jataayu was a bird, Dhruva but a toddler, the cowherds of Brindhaavan were unlettered folk; yet, through that alchemy, they all shone in the splendour of *Prema* and knew the Source.

Samskaara **will have its say at the time of death**

Once you take on the Name of the Lord which is sweetness itself, it will awaken all the sweetness latent in you; when you have tasted the joy, you can never for a moment exist without that sustenance. It becomes as essential as air for the lungs. You may say, listening to some *Puraanic* (mythological) tales, that it is quite enough if the name of the Lord is remembered, however casually, at the very last moment of life! But it is a hard task to recall that name, if you have not practised it for years. In the surge of emotions and thoughts that will invade you at the last moment, the Name of God will be submerged unless you learn from now on to bring that Name to the top of the consciousness, whenever you want it.

There was a shop-keeper once who was inspired by that tale of Ajaamila. He decided to remember the Name with his last breath, by a short cut; he named his sons after the various *Avathaars* (divine incarnations), for he knew that he has bound to call them when he was about to die. The moment came at last and as expected, he called on all his sons by name, one by one. There were six of them and so he called the Lord by proxy six times in all. The boys came and stood round his cot and as he surveyed the group, the thought that came to the dying man's mind, just when he was about to die was, "Alas! they have all come away; who will look after the shop now?" You see, his shop was his very breath all through life and he could not switch it on to God at short notice. The *Samskara* (merit of actions) will have its say, whatever you may wish.

Without faith, no progress is possible

It is no mean achievement to get the Name of the Lord on one's tongue at the last moment. It needs the practice of many years, based on a deep-seated Faith. It needs a strong character, without hatred or malice; for the thought of God cannot survive in a climate of pride and greed. And how do you know which moment is the last? Yama, the God of Death, does not give notice of his arrival to take hold of you. He is like the man with the camera taking snapshots; he does not warn, "Ready? I am clicking." If you wish your portrait to hang on the walls of Heaven, it must be attractive; your stance, your pose, your smile must all be nice, is it not? So it is best to be ready for the click, night and day, with the name **ever** tripping on the tongue and the glory always radiant in the mind. Then, whenever shot, your photo will be fine.

What is most needed is the cultivation of virtue, and fear of sin and the fear of wrong. How do you decide that an act or a thought is sinful or wrong? It has to be done on the basis of the *Shaasthras* and of the Voice within. Without faith, no progress is possible, even in the material world. Science considers the *prathyaksha* (the seen), as the final proof; but how far can you trust the *prathyaksha?* You respect a person not on the basis of his dress or hairstyle which are *prathyaksha,* but on the basis of his character and attainments, which are *paroksha* (invisible).

You suffer now because all your attachment is towards *Prakrithi* (Nature), and all your *Vairaagya* (non-attachment) is towards *Purusha* or God! This has to be reversed! You must cultivate non-attachment towards Nature and attachment to the Lord.

All joy is derived from the form-full aspect of God

I am reminded now of the story of Shankara Bhatta. He was a great *saadhaka* intent on *japa* and *dhyaana* to such an extent that he was reduced to skin and bone. He worshipped Goddess Saraswathi (Goddess of Learning) which is the key to open the doors of *Mukthi* (Liberation). Goddess Lakshmi (Goddess of Wealth) saw his sad plight and was moved with great pity. She chided Saraswathi for denying Her votary even the common joys of life and Herself hid in his leaky hut to pour on him Her Grace. She offered him plenty and prosperity, fame and fortune. She derided Saraswathi for neglecting to award comfort and joy on Her hapless servant. But Shankara Bhatta turned a deaf ear to Her allurements; he said, politely but firmly, "No, Saraswathi has blessed me with the most precious wealth, the gift of knowledge that liberates me. I do not crave Your Grace. Please remove yourself from my presence."

There is nothing so grand and so sublime as the Lord in whom you find refuge. Call on Him by any Name or speak of Him as the Nameless one. It is both *Sa-aakaara* and *Nir-aakaara* (with Form and Formless). The ocean takes the form of the vessel which contains a part of it. When that is done, the Formless takes Form; the Absolute is reduced to the Particular. You will find out, however, that all the joy is derived from the Form-full aspect of God; the Formless causes no joy or grief; it is beyond all duality.

Jewels give joy, not gold. You can experience the Name, you can imbibe the Form; you can take them to heart and dwell upon them and fill yourself with the joy that they evoke. That is why Jayadheva, Gouranga, Raamakrishna and others wished to remain ants, tasting Sugar rather than becoming Sugar itself. The Name is like the seed, implanted in your heart; when the shower of His Grace falls upon it, it sprouts into a lovely tree. All trees that sprout from the Names of the Lord are equally lovely and shady. If you

have *Krishna-naama,* the vision that you win and the form that you evoke is that of Krishna; if you have *Raama-naama,* it is the Raama-form that sprouts.

Do not allow your mind to waver due to doubts

Leelaashukha had the Name of Krishna embedded in the well-ploughed field of his heart and so, the Lord appeared before him with a peacock feather, a flute and a charming mischievous smile! He fulfills your innermost aspiration in a flash, if it is compelling enough. 0nly you should not allow your mind to waver due to doubt or disappointment. Leave all to Him and be at ease; it is the man with no faith that is tossed about on the sea, like a ship caught in a storm with neither rudder nor anchor. The *Bhaktha* bears the ups and downs of life, keeping the balance of his mind even.

You sometimes talk as if the devotee leads a life beset with hardships and sorrows and that the man who does not bend before a Higher Power is care-free and prosperous; but this is a totally wrong idea. The *Bhaktha* sails on an even keel; he has inner peace, a spring of joy which sustains him and keeps him together.

Bairaagi Shaasthri said that this is an auspicous day for you because this is My Birthday; but let Me tell you, I have many Birthdays like this. The Auspicious Day for you is the day on which your mind is cleansed and not the day on which I took this human form. I am ever new and ever ancient, ever *noothana* (modern) and ever *sanaathana* (ancient). I come always for the sake of reviving *Dharma,* for tending the virtuous and ensuring them conditions congenial for progress. Some doubters might ask, "Can *Paramaathma* assume human form?" Well, man can derive *aanandha* only through the human form; we can receive instruction, inspiration, illumination only through human language and human communication.

God bows to your will and carries your burden

I will never force you to take up a particular Name or Form of the Lord as your *ishtam* (wish). The Lord has a million Names and a million Forms, and He wants that faith and attachment should be

evoked in you by any one of them, as you recite the Names or contemplate the Forms. That is why they have a string of 1008 Names for use to worship; the devotee might be drawn closer to the Lord while any one Name is being repeated, however distracted or inattentive he might be during the rest of the list. Like the coldness of the atmosphere which freezes the water, the compelling agony of the *Bhaktha's* heart solidifies the *Niraakaar* (Formless Absolute) into the shape and the attitude that are yearned for. *"Yadh bhaavare, thath bhavathi"---"as* felt, so fashioned." He bows to your will, He carries your burden, provided you trust Him with it.

Therefore, so act and feel and speak that you get *"iha soukhyam, para soukhyam* and *kaivalya soukhyam"* ("joy here, joy hereafter, joy everlasting" all three). I bless you all that you get more success in the struggle.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, Birthday Festival, 23-11-1960

You must tread the spiritual path with an uncontrollable urge to reach the Goal; you must cultivate the yearning for liberation from all this encumberance.

Remember that you have to dwell in a house built on four stout pillars: dharma, artha, kaama and moksha *(righteousness, wealth, desire and liberation);* Dharma *supporting* artha, *and* moksha *being the only* kaama *or desire.*

However much you may earn either wealth or strength, unless you tap the springs of aanandha *(bliss) you cannot have peace and lasting content.*

Shri Sathya Sai