30. Perpetual bliss

Who can ascribe a form to Him who is beyond all
bounds and shapes?
One-can only laugh at those who babble that
He is thus and thus and thus.
He has no hands or feet or limbs or parts:
How then can humans picture Him ?
His radiance is that of a billion Suns and more:
How can the mind hope to reach Him?
'Tis formless Force--to grasp It whole
Who can venture? Who can claim success?
'Tis Aathma with no fixed Form, since Time began,
Illumining Space and the boundless vast

He, the Ever-existing with no birth, no death,
Sans beginning, middle or end,
Unborn, undecaying, deathless
He is the Aathma, *the Timeless, the Etenal Supreme.*

EMBODIMENTS of Love ! Since dawn this day, from every tongue, the words, "Happy Birthday" "Happy Birthdays" have been resounding. What exactly do these words mean? Are the words used with awareness of their significance, or, are they spoken as a conventional form of social etiquette? Such doubts do arise.

The English word "happy" has as its equivalent in Thelugu *Santhosham.* We shall probe into the implications of the expression *San-thosham. 'Thosham'* signifies *prasannatha* (delight). The prefix *'Sam'* denotes that the delight has been won through righteous and honourable means, that is to say, through 'detachment' and 'sacrifice.'

When discontent disappears delight is established

One has to give up desires that enslave and imprison, that bring sorrow in their train. Desires can be grouped under two heads: desire for an object or experience that no one else has earned, and desire that the object or experience one has earned should not be earned by any one else! Both these desires are indeed ridiculous. What is desired is as illusory as one's shadow. The faster you run towards it, hoping to seize it, the farther it is from your reach. When you pursue desire, it flees; when you scorn its hold, it submits like the shadow that follows you when you turn your back on it. Desires are born of greed. When greed is weakened more and more, discontent declines in equal measure. And, when discontent disappears delight is established.

Prahlaadha, as the Bhaagavatha text declares, was rooted in the faith in God Naaraayana and His Universal, Absolute Reality. His father, Hiranyakashipu, however, was drawn by external forms and the limiting names. Therefore, Prahlaadha was rooted in *Aanandha* (Bliss) wherever he was, in whatever set of circumstances. Hiranyakashipu was ever worried and anxious, caught up in the multiplicity of names and forms.

Those who are in such bliss as Prahlaadha had will have an aura around them and an effulgence on their faces. People can derive joy watching their faces and yearn to have that experience again and again. The faces of the worried and the anxious will infect others too with similar feelings.

In deep sleep man is in his native core

Besides, Delight endows one with great power also whereas anxiety robs one of the strength he has. True delight cannot be acquired by effort or produced artificially or maintained by design. No course of *Saadhana* (spiritual effort) can be prescribed to enable one to gain *Aanandha.* For, one is, in fact, the very embodiment of *Aanandha* !But since he has failed to identify his truth, he is seeking it from outside, from the objects around him. For those who have realised that they are the Eternal, the True and the Pure *Aathma, Aanandha* is ever accessible.

Aanandha is *Brahman;* the Bhagavathgeetha teaches this truth in many ways. The very name Prahlaadha has *Aanandha* soaked in it. *'Hlaadha'* means *Aanandha* and the prefix *'Pra'* indicates that the *Aanandha* is 'full.' Prahlaadha means 'Full Bliss'---"a person who is full of *Aanandha."* How could Prahlaadha attain that state? He gave up attachment to his name and form and sought the *Aathma* as the only reality and identified that reality with Naaraayana.

Every man is privileged to taste this Bliss during *Sushupthi* (deep sleep). In that state, he is not conscious of his name and form, nor do any of his senses function. So, he is then in full Bliss, his native core, his very birthright. This is the reason why he seeks it so restlessly from the moment he awakes until the moment of sleep, unaware of the inner spring which is its unfailing source, engaging himself in the pursuit of knowledge and skills for earning a living.

Knowledge, wealth, power and status are all capable of granting only worldly pleasure or joy or exultation. Of course, whatever the extent or nature of this joy, it must be realised that it is a *amsha* (particle) of the supreme *Aanandha* of the *Aathmic* awareness, the impact of *Brahma Aanandha* (the Limitless Vast). The mansion of a millionaire may have many evidences of his wealth but each is a particle of the Grace of Lakshmi (Goddess of Prosperity). Men may derive joy from their enormous wealth, deep scholarship, or physical prowess, but each of these is really a ray emanating from *Brahmaanandha.* The ray is reflected differently from different media but the source is One and the primal essence is one.

The yearning to know is the sign of *Chith*

Aanandha (Supreme Bliss) is immanent in every thing in Creation, for *Aanandha* is *Brahman* (the Universal Absolute). Everything is *Sath* (Being), *Chith* (Awareness or Consciousness) and *Aanandha* (Bliss), that is to say, Divine. Everything IS, the IS-ness is the *Sath* (the being) capable of Becoming. Next about *Chith* (awareness) : the capacity to be known and to know, to gain awareness and to grant awareness is *Chith.* When we take with us a child to a fair or market or an exhibition, it asks for answers to endless questions, What is that?" "Why is it so?", “What is its name ?" This yearning to know is the sign of the *Chith.*

In spite of our seeing so many dying around us and heating about as many more deaths, though we witness the misery and the suffering of so many, we long for a death-less and sorrow-less

life. We spend fortunes to lengthen our lives. That is the urge of the *"Sath"* in us. The other longing to know is the expression of the *"Chith"* in us. The third proof of our innate Divinity is the urge of *Aanandha* in us. Without exception, every one is motivated by this *Aanandha* urge.

Purity of mind is enough to obtain Divine Grace

However, these urges have each two aspects---the impression (internal) and the expression (external). *Sath* has, for example, the *being* and the *becoming.* The process of becoming is what the *Gaayathri* prayer asks for "Awaken my intellect, heighten and expand my awareness *(prachodayaath)."* Becoming is through expanding, manifesting wider and more varied forms. The *Upanishaths* declare, "He is everything that exists both inside and outside." *Antharbahishcha thath sarvam vyaapya Naarayano sthithah* (Naaraayana permeates everything inside and outside all this). He cast His look and it all happened.

The Become is a reflection of the Will that urged the Being; so, the Being IS the Becoming. It changes from Is to Was; it is unstable, while Being is stable. Being is the screen and Becoming, the pictures that flit across the screen. When there are no pictures, who will be drawn to the screen? How can pictures be seen, when there is no screen? The fleeting and the fixed are inextricably dependent on each other.

The objective world is but a series of momentary pictures impinging on the mind. The mind is active in the walking stage of the body. The body is built up by *Anna* (food), maintained by *Anna* and disintegrates through *Anna.* The body has five sheaths, the outermost one, the *Annamaya Kosha* (food sheath). It is known also as the *sthoola* (gross body). The next three sheaths, the *Praanamaya* (vital air), the *Manomaya* (mind), and the *Vijnaana* (intellectual) form the *suukshma* (subtle) body. The subtle body is active in the dream stage also. The fifth and the inner-most sheath is the *Aanandhamaya* (Ecstatic, the Blissful), the *Kaarana* (causal body).

The expression of the urge of *Aanandha* is as Love and Delight. Delight is the product and projection of Love. The expression of *Chith* is awareness. The expression of *Sath* is Becoming. Divinity is the Unity that manifests in Diversity, the One as the Many. The One is the efficient cause as well as the material cause of the Many. The One is inherent in the Many and shines in the Many which It has become. The ONE is the source of the highest and the most lasting *Aanandha.*

***Brahmaanandha* is native to Man, his very source**

The *Aanandha* we get when hunger is appeased by a meal is short-lived. Hunger afflicts us again before long. However sweet and tasty the food may be, it causes nausea when consumed in quantity. The mythological bird Chakora is said to feed on moonlight only but we can be sure a surfeit of that will certainly be unwelcome to it. Even nectar will cloy when one continues to eat it endlessly.

Brahmaanandha, however, is different.. For, it is native to man, his very source and sustenance. The purpose of human striving, through stage after stage of spiritual progress, is to attain that. A fish placed in an artistic golden gem-studded bowl is miserable. It has no *Aanandha,* for it has no water. Water is its home, its real source and sustenance. Man too must reach his original home, however far he may wander. Thyaagaraaja sang: "Birds, big and small, before nightfall seek the tree where they can rest. I hold Your Feet In my grasp; save me, 0 Raama." The Bhaagavatha makes it more explicit, "For every living being, the best course is to attain the source from which it originated."

Be reminding yourself "I am not different from God"

There exist many flooded streams on the globe. Where has the water come from? The ocean, of course. Consider the impediments the streams have to overcome before they attain the source! The flooded stream of human life has originated from *Brahmaanandha* and it has to attain the source from which it has come away. In order to succeed, man must recollect the ecstasy of *Brahmaanandha* every moment, in every activity.

Thyaagaraaja revelled in the *Aanandha* that poetry, music and scholarship can confer but since the *Aanandha* that learning can confer *(Vidhyaanandha)* was liable to weaken, he considered it only as a particle or foretaste of the *Brahmaanandha* he sought most the *Aanandha* derivable from the Universal Eternal Delight, the Nirguna *Aanandha Brahman,* That *Aanandha* is man's reality, for, man is God.

God is neither distant, nor distinct from you. You are God. You are *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* (Being, Awarenessand Bliss Absolute). You are *Asthi* (being), *Bhaathi* (awareness), *Priyam* (bliss). You are all. When do you cognise this Truth? When you shake off the delusions which hide the Truth. If your yearning to experience *Brahmaanandha,* the *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* is sincere and pure, from this day, keep ever in your memory what I am about to tell you:

(1) "I am God; I am not different from God." Be conscious of this always. Keep it ever in mind. "I am God; I am God. I am not different from God." Be reminding yourself of this. Pray that you may not fail in this *saadhana* (spiritual exercise).

(2) "I am the *Akhanda Para Brahman* (Indivisible Supreme Absolute)." This is the second Truth to be established in the consciousness by unremitting repetition and prayer.

(3) I am *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* ("Being, Awareness, Bliss").

Divine Bliss is the goal to be ever kept in view

(4) "Grief and anxiety can never affect me." Develop ' this Faith and convince yourselves of this Truth by repeated assurance and prayer.

(5) "I am ever content; fear can never enter me." Feel thus for ever. Pray that this conviction grows stronger and stronger. Exhort yourself, "O self ! Utter 'Om *Thath Sath', 'Om Thath Sath'* "the threefold symbol of *Brahman.* As the physical body is maintained healthy and strong by the five *praanas* (vital airs), these five prayers will endow you with the "awareness of *Brahman,"* which is the same as "the status of *Brahman* Itself."

Do not demean or condemn yourself as low or small or weak. The body is but a vehicle for the journey through life. Do not mistake it as your self and impose on yourself its ups and downs. You purchase a car and possess it for the sake of its usefulness, not for keeping it under lock and key in the garage. The body-car should be put to the best use, for attaining *Brahmaanandha.* The four goals of human life---Dharma, *Artha, Kaama, Moksha* (fight living, fight earning, fight desiring and release from worldly bondage) are the wheels of the vehicle; the wheel inside that steers these four is the mind. The *Buddhi* (intellect) is the switch. The air which fills the tubes in the tyres is Faith and the destination is *Aanandha.*

Aanandha is the breath that sustains life. That is the goal which has to be ever in view, while navigating the ocean of one's life. Even the least trace of *Aanandha* that one derives is but a

reflection of *Brahmaanandha.* One has to keep this in mind. Anything done or said or seen is but the prompting of the *Brahman* that is one's reality. Have faith in this fact.

In order to develop and deepen this faith, certain spiritual practices can be undertaken. Do not feel separate from God and consider Him as the Giver and yourself as the Recipient. This smacks of commerce. It is wrong to plan for getting some wish granted in return for what you offer. God will not pay any attention to your material greed; He watches the heart and its contents. Believers in God have not understood God if they bargain with Him and clamour for worldly goods. Hence, from ages past, they have suffered misery. The Divine seeks and rewards only Divine qualities, virtues and conduct.

The highest virtue is humility, surrender to God

The body is transient and the joy it seeks and gets is equally transient. The *Aanandha* one gets through meditation on the *Aathma* is as lasting as the *Aathma.* When Godhead assumes a body, It too is unaffected as the *Aathma.* Nothing can confer as much *Aanandha* as virtue, neither wealth, nor material power, nor fame, nor scholarship. The highest virtue is humility, surrender to God. People speak of those who have no one to look after them as 'orphans' but God looks after every one. So, no one can be an orphan. God alone is the *anaatha* (orphan), for who can claim that he is God's guardian?

Dedicate thought, word and deed to God. Do not treat some of your activities as done for God and others as done for yourself. They are both like the two halves of a pulse grain. The plant sprouts from the middle of the grain, drawing sustenance equally from both halves. The alert and the inert, the living and the non-living, the moving and the non-moving are all God. Strengthen this faith, live in this faith. This is the prescription for perpetual *Brahmaanandha.*

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The mother must herself prepare food for the home; for, food that is prepared with love and served with a smile is much more sustaining and strengthening than food cooked by a hired woman and served by a disgruntled refractory kitchen boy!

Sri Sathya Sai