31. The *Avathaar* and the devotees

More effulgent than the Sun,

Purer and Whither than snow,

Subtler than space,

The Supreme Self pervades everything,

From the minutest particle.

Holding everything within Him,

Illumining everything By His Consciousness.

The Divine (Brahman) is in you

And you are in the Brahman.

There is no difference

Between you and Brahman.

What greater truth can I convey

To all of you assembled here?

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Aathma, When the Lord (Naaraayana) incarnates in human form, He cannot avoid abiding by the regulations set by Him. You should not forget that even if the Lord is the Director of the" Cosmic drama, in His human form he is playing a specific role. If He does not act according to the role assumed by Him, either overdoes or underplays the role, departing from what is appropriate, He will be falling in His purpose. When the Divine assumes human form, He has to serve as an example by ideal actions.

Hiranyaaksha and Hiranyakashipu, impelled by their hatred, embarked on many enquiries in search of Naaraayana. They felt after their prober that Naaraayana was not in any of the five elements. But the tide of time and circumstances led to situations in which they faced the Lord in His most dreadful forms and met with their end.

When Krishna made His advent on earth, He also had to play His part according to His role. While Sishupala was railing at Krishna, He allowed him a long rope and destroyed him, when the appropriate time came. The Bhaagavatham relates the story of how Krishna retreated repeatedly in His encounters with Jaraasandha. How can the All-knowing, All-powerful, Omni-present Lord flee from anywhere? Where can He hide Himself? This is utterly fanciful.

When one has faith in the ways of the Lord and abides by the will of the Lord, the Lord can be understood and experienced.

For instance, there is the example of Dhraupadhi in the Mahaabhaaratha. In the court of Dhuryodhana, although she was humiliated and dishonoured by Dhuryodhana and Dhusshaasana, Krishna, in accordance with the role He had to play, did not intervene, as both of them were destined to meet with their death at the hands of Bheema.

During Krishna's life-time, He was the target of attacks and accusations by many wicked persons. But the Divine has no likes or dislikes. The wicked persons suffer from the consequences of their own actions according to their deserts.

What one gets in life is dependent partly on what he has earned by his actions. This is called *Praarabdham* (fate). This is by its nature temporary. What is got as the fruit of a past action will not last long. Forgetting this fact and forgetting also his *Svabhaavam* (true nature) man is carried away by the transient and acts according to his whims.

When an actor in a play is assigned a certain role, he studies the entire play, but while acting his role, he has to play his part alone in each scene as required in the play and not all the roles that he knows. He has to suit his actions to the demands of his role in each scene in the play Likewise, the Lord, when He has assumed a role in the Cosmic play, has to act in each situation according to what is appropriate to it and according to the rules of the game.

Mankind's fall from righteous conduct

From ancient times, in accordance with the spirit of Bhaaratheeya Culture, Bhaaratheeyas have been according the Highest place to *Thyaaga* (renunciation or sacrifice). They adored *Dharma* (Righteous Conduct). They were pledged to upholding justice. They adhered to Truth. People today have ignored these values of Bhaarath's ancient culture. They have fallen a prey to worldly and sensuous pleasures, believing that only earthly existence is real.

People in the world today are taking to evil ways and cherishing evil thoughts the like of which have never before prevailed. Men are consumed by a limitless passion for wealth and power. No doubt money is necessary for meeting one's daily needs. But even here there should be a limit. The vast ocean, when it swells beyond its bounds, causes disaster. The food that is required for sustaining the body is conducive to health only when it is consumed within limits. Over-eating poisons the physical system. Food may give satisfaction or cause illness. By his food habits man is becoming a prey to disease. Food is essential, but it must be taken within limit for it to be wholesome. Likewise wealth is essential but within limits. When there is excessive wealth, many dangers ensue. With excessive wealth man turns arrogant and loses the sense of discrimination between right and wrong. He becomes a Dhuryodhana who exemplified greed rather than a Karna (who was noted for his generosity).

Wealth and sacrifice should grow together

Together with the growth of one's wealth, one's spirit of sacrifice should grow commensurately. Increase in wealth should bring about an increase in generosity. These days wealth increases but not magnanimity.

Of what use is wealth if one cannot be happy?

Even if a river is overflowing,

A dog can only lap a little of it.

For a greedy man, there is no contentment

Even if he has large hoards.

Today, when a man's riches increase, he becomes increasingly miserly. As a result, he forgets his true nature.

When money earned by honest means does not always confer happiness, how can you get happiness through money earned by dishonest means? Hence, it should be realised that excessive wealth can never confer peace or happiness. When you have large wealth, offer it for good causes to help others. Thereby you will derive satisfaction.

In the pursuit of power men sacrifice morality

The second evil is the passion for power. From the villager to the topmost man in a city, everybody is after power. Power carries with it limits and obligations. There are five kinds of power--the power of knowledge, intellectual power, the power of fame, the power of character, and the power of sacrifice. Only the person who has all these five attributes should aspire for a position of authority.

These days men conduct themselves in positions of power without any understanding of how to exercise authority. Every man aspires for positions of power from that of Panchaayath President to the head of the government of the country. In the pursuit of power, men are prepared to use any means, sacrificing morality and justice. All sorts of corrupt practices are being resorted to for securing power. Law and order are being undermined.

In this manner, the true nature of man is being forgotten. This is a highly dangerous situation. Those who seek positions of authority should recognise their obligations. They should exercise power with due regard to the restraints to be observed. "*Nasshreyo Niyamam Vinaa"* (Nothing great can be achieved without restraint). Thus both wealth and power have to be used with restraint. But these restraints have been violated at present.

Divine bides for proper time to play His full role

All the troubles and disorders the country is experiencing today are due to these violations. Men are failing to recognise the nature of the Divine. Even though the Divine has come down as an actor on the world stage, He is biding for the proper time to play His full role. A fruit takes time to ripen. When the fruit is ripe it falls down of its own accord. Likewise when the time is ripe for one to reap the fruits of his actions, he must be ready to gather them according to the nature of the actions. It is one's own actions which lead to bad or good results. That is why the scriptures have declared that man's mind is the cause of his bondage or liberation.

Hence, the mind has to be turned towards the sacred path. It should be concentrated on actions of service to others. It should be devoted to concern for the welfare of the world. Only then the purity of the mind expresses itself.

For all the confusion and conflict prevailing in the world today, it is the feelings and thoughts of people that are responsible. To rake offence when some one criticizes you or to think of retaliation when one does some harm to you, is not the right way of reaching to them. Consider whatever good or bad that happens to you as the consequence of your own actions. Do not attribute them. to acts of the Divine.

God is like a postman. The postman delivers one letter to one address and the people in the house rejoice over the good news contained in it. He delivers another letter at a second house and there is lamentation over the sad news contained in the letter. Is the postman responsible for the joy or the sadness of the recipients, of the letters? No. It is the content of the respective letters that is responsible. What you experience by way of joy or grief is a consequence of your own actions. God is only a witness.

Earn God's grace by getting rid of ego

In human society today, egoism is rampant. Ostentation is ubiquitous. Can peace and security be ensured in such a milieu? Can God's grace flow in such a state? No. Whatever one's scholarship or wealth, as long as there is *Ahamkaara (egoism)* God's grace will not flow. Grace, like water,

flows from a higher to a lower level. God's grace will be showered on those who have humility and discipline. Humility is essential for securing God's grace. Revere elders. Be content with what you have. Develop goodwill towards 'all. Bear no iii will towards anyone. When you desire that all should love you, you should equally love all.

The history of Bhaarath bears testimony to the pacific attitude of Bhaaratheeyas. They defended themselves when the country was invaded by outsiders, but they never embarked on wars of conquest. The ancient Bhaaratheeyas never resorted to wrongful or unrightful policies. Adherence to peace and truth was natural to them. Unfortunately today; in the pursuit of power people are giving the go-by to morality and integrity. In western countries many leaders resorted to violence to capture power. In Bhaarath also, there have been many examples of Muslims who killed or imprisoned their own fathers or kinsmen to seize the reins of power. This greed for power converted men into demons.

But look at what happened in the Raamaayana. To carry out the promises of his father, Raama renounced the kingdom and chose to live in exile for fourteen years in the forest. He did not aspire for power or position. He cherished *Dharma* (the code of right conduct).

Raama's example for cherishing *Dharma*

Shortly after their entry into the forest, one day, when Raama and Lakshmana were sitting under a tree, they heard the neigh of horses and cries of elephants. Raama asked Lakshmana to find out the masons for the unusual presence of horses in the forest. Lakshmana climbed to the top of a tree and surveyed the scene. He noticed the advancing of a huge army, but only the flag fluttering high over the haze could be seen clearly. Lakshmana concluded from the emblem on the flag that it was Bharatha who was coming with the army.

Lakshmana got down and asked Raama to get ready with his bow and arrows. "What for?" asked Raama. Lakshmana said that at the instance of his mother, Bharatha was coming with his army to seize them. Amused at Lakshmana's naivety, Raama told him smilingly: "Bharatha is not such a person. He will do no such thing. He is coming to see us because he did not find us in Ayodhya when he came back to the city." Lakshmana retorted: "If he is coming to see us, why should he bring the army with him?"

Raama said: "To allay the feelings of the people, Bharatha is coming with all the citizens. Lakshmana! You have failed to realise that no one born in the Ikshvaaku line will ever shed blood to ascend to the throne. Those who seize the throne by the sword cannot be righteous rulers. No such Kings will ever be born in the Ikshvaaku dynast. The rule of conduct for the Ikshvaaku Kings is to inherit the throne by righteous means and rule with the consent of the people. The spirit of service should inspire who seek positions of authority. Without knowing how to serve, one cannot become a true leaden" Raama allayed Lakshmana's apprehensions in this manner.

Meanwhile, Bharatha came running towards Raama, crying "Oh Brother!" and fell at his feet. Watching this scene, Lakshmana regretted his misjudgment and sought Raama's forgiveness.

Thus, from ancient times, the rulers in Bhaarath never resorted to violence or unrighteous means to ascend the throne. They were dedicated to the practice of *Dharma. "Sathyam Vadhha: Dharmam Chara"* (Speak the truth, follow Righteousness). These were the two basic tenets of the ancient Bhaaratheeyas. They esteemed them as their two eyes. Today the rule has been *reversed---Sathyam Vadhha (Kill truth) Dharmam Chara* (Imprison Righteousness). Today it is

the reign of falsehood. Unrighteousness is the prevailing moral code. It is because of these tendencies. Bhaarath today is a prey to disorder.

Every individual should try to practise and protect truth and righteousness. This is the bounden duty of every citizen of Bhaarath. This is the service they have to do to the nation. The nation will not be protected by an army or by the most modern weapons. If the people safeguard truth and righteousness, the latter will protect the nation and the world.

Svaami's encounter with intellectuals

Once, more than two decades ago, Sri K.M. Munshi convened a conference of intellectuals in Bombay to be addressed by Svaami. The so-called intellectuals today seldom have any intelligence. They are filled with conceit. The intellectuals in the gathering were proud and arrogant, gloating over their scholarship and book knowledge.

Bhagavan was the Chief Guest at the meeting and Munshi was seated next to Svaami. Munshi requested Svaami to clarify the doubts of intellectuals regarding spirituality and right conduct. Many questions were put to Svaami and Svaami answered all of them clearly and convincingly.

One member of the audience asked Svaami whether it was not necessary for India to equip itself with atom bombs in view of the fact that both affluent America and Communist Russia had huge piles of atom bombs. Svaami replied- "What folly is this! When there are millions in the country who lack food, clothing and shelter, the provision of these necessities is the most urgent task and not the manufacturing of atom bombs. Of what use are bombs when you cannot feed the people? Crores are being wasted on armaments. I cannot agree to such wastage."

Then another member asked- "How are we to meet an attack from outside?" Svaami replied: “Our country's name is Bhaarath. For this country the Mahaabhaaratha is the authentic guidebook. The heroes in this epic are the five Paandava brothers. Among them, Arjuna and Bheema are incomparable warriors. Nevertheless, they submitted themselves to Dharmaja, the eldest of the brothers. If India upholds *Dharma,* America and Russia will have to respect Bhaarath. Confronted by *Dharma,* anyone however powerful, will be cut to size. Therefore, the most vital thing for Bhaarath is *Dharma."*

When Svaami gave this reply, the entire gathering cheered Svaami for fifteen minutes. Thereafter Svaami told them. "It is not enough to clap your hands; open the taps of your minds. Take to the path of *Dharma.* There is no use merely applauding my words."

There are many in the country who worship the Raamaayana as a sacred text. How many of them honour the words of the father? Of what use is it to recite the Raamaayana without following its precepts? You have discourses on the Geetha in every street. But is anyone acting up to even one of its reachings? If you go on learning for years, when are you going to start practising the lessons? The endless study of books is sheer folly; to put into practice a single word is better than such studies. Today Bhaarath is full of such foolish persons.

Love is Sai's most potent weapon

Many of you have been coming here for over twenty or thirty years. You have listened to Svaami's discourses many times. Svaami has been repeatedly declaring that immortality can be achieved only by sacrifice and not by deeds, wealth or progeny How many are making any sacrifice? How many are purring Svaami's teachings into practice? Why are you gathered here? It is all useless unless you practise at least one of the reachings. What is My directive? What is it

that will please Me? What is it that I desire? Only one thing: Love, Love, Love. That is Sai's most potent weapon. Was any invitation sent to any of you to come here? So many of you have gathered here attracted solely by the power of Svaami's love. Them is nothing that cannot be achieved in the world through love. Some things may be achieved by other means, but through love even the Divine can be held in the palm of one's hand.

Saavithri, Chandhramathi, Seetha and Dhamayanthi stood our as exemplars of Indian womanhood. People read books about them, but do not follow their example. The reason is that people are swayed by evil thoughts. These bad qualifies are due to bad habits relating to food and recreation.

Eschew meat, liquor and smoking

Today, let it be anyone, whether one deems himself a devotee or not, he should give up meat caring. Why? Meat eating promotes only animal qualities. It has been well said that the food one consumes determines one's thoughts. By caring the flesh of various animals, the qualities of these animals are imbibed. How sinful is it to feed on animals, which are sustained by the same five elements as human beings! This leads to demonic tendencies, besides committing the sin of inflicting cruelty on animals. Hence, those who genuinely seek to become devotees of God have to give up non-vegetarian food. Calling themselves Sai devotees or devotees of Raama and Krishna, they fatten on chicken. How can they be deemed Sai devotees? How can God accept such a person as a devotee? Therefore, whether they are devotees in India or outside, they should give up from this instant meat eating.

Next, there is the question of drink. The water that one drinks is life-giving. It issues from the head of Shiva. It is sacred. Instead of such wholesome drink, it is wrong to drink intoxicants. It makes a man forget his true nature. Alcoholic drink is utterly obnoxious. It degrades the addict. It makes him forget God. The drink addict is not conscious of what he says or does. The very sight of such a person is revolting. The drink evil has ruined innumerable families. Alcoholics have caused misery to their wives and children by wasting all their money on liquor. Of what use to the world are such derelicts?

In addition to liquor, many are addicted to smoking tobacco. Today cigarette smoking is the cause of many diseases like asthma, lung cancer, cosonaphilia and heart ailments. The evil effects of smoking can be easily demonstrated. If a whiff of cigarette smoke is blown at a handkerchief, the cloth turns red at the spot. If smoke can cause such damage to a piece of cloth, how much damage will it not do when it gets into the blood stream? It ruins one's health and shortens one's life-span. Therefore, those who aspire to become true devotees of God have to give up meat, liquor and smoking.

Each one has to reform himself

Drink addiction is the cause of many evils. But no Government can stop this. The change must rake place at the individual level. This can take place only through a mental transformation and not as a result of preaching by others. Each one has to recognise the truth and reform himself.

Embodiments of Love! You are deeming this day as the sixty ninth birthday of Svaami. I have no desire to celebrate such birthdays. As I was coming I was greeted by many wishing Me "Happy Birthday" I am always happy Why should anyone wish "Happy Birthday" for Me? Be happy yourselves. Your happiness is My happiness.

Today, as an offering to Svaami, give up meat eating, consuming liquor and smoking. By renouncing these three, you will benefit yourselves as well as society and the nation. Svaami's sole aim is to promote the welfare of the family, the society and the nation. If you wish to carry out Svaami's aim, renounce from this moment itself these three bad practices. Do not put if off to tomorrow. Take the resolve from this moment. Expecting that you will carry out Svaami's wish and thereby promote the well being of your family and the nation, I bless all of you.

Discourse in the Puurnachandhra Auditorium on 23-11-1994, Bhagavaan's Birthday.