

16. Shiva sankalpa

JONNALAGADDA Sathyanaaraayanamurthy spoke on fine topics in a fine language, but however nicely a person may talk and however great his skill in the use of language, he who can clarify the truth of God has never yet been born; nor will he be ever born. One can only relate what one has felt or experienced through His Grace. He who has touched the very base will not come again to this base world.

Of course, they show the Lord in books, illustrations, films and pictures, as well as on the stage. But who among the writers or painters or actors has seen Him? The epics and *Puraanas* relate only an infinitesimal fraction of His Glory; they set limits to the limitless, for words have a limit. It is only the one endowed with *Jnaanadhrishti* or *Yogadhrishti* or *Bhaktidhrishti* (vision of sacred knowledge, of union with God or of selfless devotion for God) that can have a glimpse of that Effulgence. The rest only mislead by their claims of authenticity. Those who know will not speak; those who speak do not know, cannot know.

You all recite the *sloka* in the Geetha which says that the Lord will create a Form for Himself and come into human affairs whenever *Dharma* is in grave peril. You have repeated it so often that it has become meaningless jargon; it has been quoted so often and by so many that it has lost all significance. Only those that are proficient in the *Shaasthras* can recognise an *Avathaar* and test the credentials; only they can taste the joy showered by the Incarnation. The *Puraanas* and the *Ithihaasas* (ancient legends and history) describe the Lord in manifold ways according to the *vyakthi* (individual) who is devoted and the *Shakthi* (power) that is described; but the *Vedhas* and the *Shaasthras* do not indulge in such changing moods; they deal with fundamentals. Sometimes, in the confusion of interpretation and re-telling, people miss the road. When the blind lead the blind, both are likely to fall into the well. Then the wise intervene and demarcate the Road along safe lines.

God is beyond understanding

Sathyanaaraayanamurthy referred to Dr. Bhagavantham and the soaring claims of science. But religion begins where science ends. In science, when one door is opened, and a passage is revealed, ten doors are discovered in that very passage, and each one of them has to be opened in turn. Science transforms things, re-arranges them, studies their composition, re-groups their parts and releases the energy that lies latent in them. But I create the things themselves! And they are as lasting as any that is found in Nature! That is this, but this is not that. Nature is *Brahman*, mistaken to be Nature, on account of the delusion of Name and Form. But *Brahman* is not Nature; it is only the rope which was mistaken to be the snake. When Wisdom dawns, when Light illumines, the snake disappears and the rope alone remains. The Lord is sweetness, you are sugar; He is fire, you are fuel; He has no heart; every heart where He is installed is His.

Naaradha who moves always by and with the Lord feels that God is beyond his understanding; Balarama who came as His own brother could not fathom His personality. How then can you grasp My Mystery? How can those who strut about in well-ironed bush coats fathom Truth? Yet, I know some here who sold away their faith to hollow men and started talking about My dress and My hair! If you dare seek My Truth, come, surrender unto Me. Do not teach treason to your friends and to other seekers. Dress and manners have become polished now but the inner man has deteriorated in virtue and faith!

Yearning of the heart only pleases the Lord

Raavana and Hiranyaaksha were experts in *japayajna* (*Vedhic* ritual of sacrifice with pious repetition of sacred *manthras*) but they never surrendered their ego to God. They did not pluck the weeds of sensory impulses from the fields of their hearts and so they harvested a crop of thorns. It is not the grandeur of the *yaaga* (ceremonial sacrifice) or the pomp of *puuja* (ritual worship) that pleases the Lord; it is the yearning of the heart; not the sum of all the miles covered by you in pilgrimage or the cost of all the articles you have given in charity. You need not even pray aloud, unless of course you picture Him as living far away in Dhwaraka or Kailaasa. If you have installed Him in your heart, He will Himself emerge when you yearn for Him. Prahlada felt so and since no fire could burn Him or no fall could break His bones, Prahlada too suffered no harm!

Ambaresha performed a *yaaga*, but at the crucial moment the animal intended for the sacrifice escaped! Now the priests ordained that to make amends for this sinful neglect, a human being had to be offered as substitute to the Gods! The King promised 1000 cows in exchange for a son, but which father will send a son to death, even when 1000 cows are given in exchange? There were also other conditions: the King's messengers should not ask any one for the son; they should not commit the sin of equating 1000 cows as equal to human being; the father too should not break the sad offer to the son; the offer to immolate himself must come unasked from the son, without any prompting or persuasion; it is only such a son that will be accepted by the Gods.

An end which even saints would envy

Now, Sunashepha heard the news by himself and approaching his father, he said he would go, and gladly too. For, what greater good fortune can a mortal expect than ascending to heaven through the sacrificial flame? (I am reminded of a strange answer that a little girl, aged nine, gave Me when I asked her, "Well, what do you want from Me?" She said, "Baaba, let me merge in You" and in a few weeks, she passed away and her wish was fulfilled. The child breathed her last asking that her face be turned to the wall so that she might look on Baaba's picture when she died. She had a wonderful end, an end which could be envied by saints).

God likes such pure souls who come gladly to merge in Him. Some people say, "Oh, it is the Dashara Festival and lakhs and lakhs of people throng there. And they pour lakhs and lakhs of rupees there." Well, what they give is *alakshyam* (disregard), not *Laksham* (lakhs)! My hand stretches out for receiving, only when a pure heart full of *Prema* (Love) is offered; on all other occasions, it gives, never takes. People with poison in their hearts, barren of love and service, let them feel shame and resolve to cleanse themselves from now on.

The Lord will never disown a devotee

Sunashepha persuaded his father that his wish to proceed to the *yajna* and offer himself was legitimate and approvable, and he left for the capital. On the way, he went to his maternal uncle, Vishwaamithra, who tried to keep away the boy from the sacrifice. "This is all just foolish superstition; can anyone substitute a man for a cow?" Vishwaamithra asked. Sunashepha replied that all men are cattle, for until *viveka* and *vairaagya* (discrimination and detachment) dawn, they are but animals. So, in spite of his uncle's arguments, arguments like the ones used by some to dissuade persons from coming to Puttaparthi, Sunashepha managed to reach the *Yaagashaala* (the place of sacrifice). In the same way as the lights before us are lit when a switch is moved up at Penukonda, when the Lord decides on something, it has to happen so. Well, the Lord is not a

rock or a stone; His Heart melted at the plight of the boy. Indhra appeared in the sacrificial fire and departed showering blessings on his head. It was Indhra who had carried away the original cow and elaborated all this plot, to bring Sunashepha and his greatness to light and to bless him.

The Lord is *Premaswaruupam* (Divine Love personified), believe Me. The earthly father or mother will show love only so long as you obey them; start going against their wishes and they will go to the extent of even disowning you! The Lord will never disown, for He is your very core, your very basic Reality. You derive from Him the fruit of your labour, of *your dhyaanam, japam and puuja*; faith will grow into *thyaaga* (sacrifice); you will feel that you are instruments with no individuality save as prompted by Him.

The one *Namaskaaram* (respectful obeisance) you do, do it with devotion. That is enough. You do not do even that; you do it so callously, so indifferently, so automatically. When you fold both your hands and bring them together, feel that you are offering at the Feet all the actions of the five *Karmendhriyas* (organs of action) and the five *Jnaanendhriyas* (organs of perception) as indicated by the ten fingers. Again, the purpose of *Namaskaaram* is to touch the Feet (*sparshan*) of the Lord. The negative pole, *Maayaashakthi* (power of illusion), and the positive pole *Mahaashakthi* (Supreme divine power) have to meet in order to produce a spiritual current that will flow through you.

Do not allow your faith to falter

Come, I am the repairer of broken hearts of damaged *Anthahkaranas*. I am like the smith, who welds, mends and sets right. Ten years ago, a devotee prayed to Me in song, "My heart has gone dry, my lamp has gone out, my path is dark, my brain is confused. Lord, make me fit again for life's arduous journey." The Lord will be waiting outside the door of the *puuja* room of the *bhaktha*, anxious to fulfil his wish! Verily, he who has the Lord as His Servant, he is the real *Prabhu* (Lord)!

Only, do not allow your faith to falter. Do not become a slave to others; no, not even to God. Test. Test, examine, experience and then, when you find God, demand as of right. But before you get that right, you should appear for the examination and pass, is it not? I set tests not as a punishment or because I enjoy putting you into trouble, but just to give you the joy of passing! Bhadrham here was asked by his guru, Deekshithadaas, to go along the streets for some years and beg for food. He had enough to eat but he had to do it as the customary, and the legitimate, duty of *dhaasas*; and Bhadrham did it quite gladly. It is a training in the control and conquest of the ego; you have to take it as such and not give up the fruit, afraid of the exertion that the cultivation of the plant requires.

You should not also yield to despair or become dejected. It is My *sankalpa* (resolve) that you progress in spiritual development. I have collected all of you and I shall lay the concrete foundation and build the walls and erect the roof and complete the mansion. My *sankalpa* never proves ineffective.

The story of a Divine Plan

I shall tell you the story of *Ishwara Sankalpa* (Will of the Supreme Lord) and how nothing could stop its realisation. Shiva was every day discoursing on *Kailaasa* to sages and saints and *Dhevas* in the evening hours. One day, Paarvathi suggested that a Hall be constructed for accommodating them all, so that they could all listen without being affected by the constant fog and mist and cold winds. Shiva did not have the *Sankalpa* to put it up; still, Paarvathi insisted that her idea must be

implemented. The astrologer who was consulted before the foundations were dug said that "The stars forecast that the Hall will be consumed by fire, since *Shani* (Saturn) is not propitious from the very beginning." The Hall was completed, nevertheless.

Now, that set a problem for the Couple. Shiva proposed to ask *Shani* for the favour of saving the Hall from his anger, though He doubted whether the Planet, reputed for his inevitable ire, would ever agree. Paarvathi felt deeply hurt and she resolved not to give the tiny tyrant, *Shani*, the credit for destroying the Hall that She had got built. She swore that instead of giving him the chance to declare arrogantly that he had set fire to the Hall, she would herself set fire to it. But Shiva asked her to first await the outcome of His appeal to *Shani*, for He was Himself proceeding to his headquarters! He told Her, "If *Shani* agrees to exempt the Hall from his anger, I shall come back and report the good news to you; but if he is adamant, I shall raise My Hand and twirl this *Dhakka* (double drum). On hearing that signal, you may set fire to the Hall and rob *Shani* of the credit for doing so."

The role of a tool in the Divine Plan

Paarvathi was ready with a burning torch in anticipation of the signal, so that there may not be a moment's chance for the wicked Planet to execute his nefarious plan of revenge. *Shani*, however, agreed to the request made by Shiva; he said that he would not bum down the Hall in Kailaasa and Shiva was happy at his reply. So, when *Shani* prayed that he may be granted one small boon, Shiva agreed and asked him what it was. It seems *Shani* had never before seen the famous Dance of Shiva which all the stellar divinities were extolling and *Shani* craved that Shiva may show him a step-or two. Shiva readily assented and started the *Thaandava* (frantic dance of Shiva), raising His hand and sounding the *Dhakka*! Listening to the signal, Paarvathi applied the torch and the Hall was, as per the *Sankalpa* of Shiva, burnt to ashes! Divine *Sankalpa* must be fulfilled! *Shani* was just a tool in the Divine Plan.

About the *Ashtagrahakoota* (conjunction of eight planets) that is scaring you all now, if you have *Anugraha* (Divine Blessings), what can the *Grahas* (planets) do? If you have gold, that is enough; you can get made all varieties of jewels Ask for and secure gold--that is all that you need. The astronomical junction of planets between Feb. 2 and 5 next year is being made much of by the astrologers and calendar minded *Brahmins* and they are reaping a rich harvest by creating panic and suggesting various counter measures. Of coupe, it is good to give things in charity, to pray to the Gods and to perform *yaagas*; but do it for its own sake, not with a view to escape the Eight Planets! Do it, as you should, at all times, not because of this temporary fear. Do not give way to panic. Nothing will happen between Feb.2 and 5. You will all be coming happily and full of joy for *Shivaraathri* to Puttaparthi, let Me assure you. All talk of *Pralayam* (annihilation) is just a scare; do not lose courage.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 17-10-1961

"Dharma (Righteousness) is the root of the world" says Shruti (sacred text); so, as Krishna said, when Dharma declines, the Lord incarnates as Man. Well. "The Vedha is the root of Dharma," says Shruti. Dharma is the fruit of Vedha which is the Tree. Now, Vedha itself is getting dried up! So, fostering Vedha is one of the tasks of the Avathaar.

Sathya Sai Baba