

32. Welcome the tests

WHILE Bairaagi Shaasthry and Narasaraaju were speaking, I observed many of you were clearing your throats aloud; your retention should have been devoted to clearing the ears and removing the cobwebs from the heart. What has the throat to do with the imbibing of the lessons their speeches conveyed? Just as this mike should be kept in front of me, near me but not too near the mouth to transmit the voice, so too, the heart should be held right, straight and open to receive the teachings transmitted. If the heart is turned in some other direction, the teaching will not be recorded clear and distinct; it gets warped.

Narasimharaaju reminds Me of Shyaamakavi from Bangalore who died some years ago. He had deep scholarship, vast spiritual experience, poetic talent and steady devotion. Whatever he touched ended in failure, but never for an instant did he throw the blame on the Lord. On the other hand, he became more intimately attached to Him. The blows of fate did not shake his faith; he stood like a rock, amidst the angry waves. The mind was trained by him to pass through joy and grief unscathed.

The real nature of man is equanimity

The discovery of Truth--that is the unique mission of Man. Man is a minute of *Maaya* and *Maadhava*; the *Maaya* (illusion) throws a mist which hides the *Maadhava* (God); but through the action of the healthy impulses inherited from acts performed while in previous bodies or through the cleansing one by austerities in this body or through the Grace of the Lord Himself, *Maaya* melts away; for it is just a mist which flees before the sun. Then *Nara* (human) is transformed into *Naaraayana* (God) and this *Bhuuloka* (world) is elevated into a *Prashanthi Nilayam* (place of tranquillity). The illumination of *viveka* (discrimination) will remove the darkness which hides the Divine essence of Man. Today, man hopes to dispel darkness by the sword, the gun and the bomb, while what is wanted is just a lamp. How can darkness be swept away by darkness, hatred by hatred, ignorance by deeper and vaster ignorance? The very lust for victory promotes darkness. Leave all thoughts of conquest aside; strive to know the Truth and when that is known, false notions fondly held by you will fall off of their own accord.

See clearly the lovely image that is hidden in the rock. Release it from that stony prison, remove all the extra stone that is encrusting the idol---that is the task for you. Do not worry about *Maaya*; concentrate on *Maadhava*; you are certain to succeed. A tree on the Godhaavari Canal Bund will not go dry, it will have a crown of green, for its roots are fed by the underground water. Similarly, be a tree with the roots in perpetual contact with the flowing waters of the Grace of the Lord and you need not worry about drought.

The dull-wired man runs about madly in pursuit of 'peace of mind'; trying this prescription for some time and preferring another afterwards He is on the wrong path; the path of catering to the senses, the path beset by *Ruupa*, *Naama*, and *Guna* (form, name, and quality) the path of the temporary and the apparent. But the *mumukshu* or the seeker after *Moksha* (Liberation) gets that Peace quite easily. In fact, the real nature of man is *Prashanthi* (equanimity)---steadiness, unshakable resolution, peace. Nature is a great store where all things which help you to grasp the truth are found. That truth is first cognised as *Samam Brahma Mayam*---all this is imbued with *Brahman*, directed by *Brahman*, composed of *Brahman*! Then the seeker rises to a greater awareness, the awareness of *Sarvam Brahman*---all this is *Brahmam*; only it appears as

something else for a time to the unopened eyes! The final state is one where there is not even a *Sarvam* to be posited as *Brahman*; there is just *Brahman*: the one and only.

Obey Nature's commands and listen to the warnings

The lesson is learnt by man when he studies nature, analysing it and trying to understand it. It is at the mother's lap that the child learns the art of living; so also it is *Prakriti* (Nature) that teaches man how to succeed in the hard struggle and win *Prashaanthi*. Break the laws of Nature and she boxes you in the ear; obey her commands and listen to Her warnings and She will pass on to you your heritage of immortality.

That is to say, have the Lord as your Guide and Guardian and adhere to the rules of *dharma*. Let the dull-witted man hug his delusion that happiness and peace can be secured through slavery to the senses. Those who know that the world is a mixture of truth and falsehood, and therefore a big conundrum or *mithya* (false), will leave off the outer attractions and concentrate on the inner joy of attachment to God. If you are declared "passed", you have Peace; if you are declared "failed", that too solves the problem for some little time and puts a stop to worry; but if your results are not announced but withheld (for it is not quite certain whether you have passed or failed), you suffer the maximum *Ashaanthi* (restlessness), is it not? So also, this world which is neither *Sathya* (Truth) nor *asathya* (unreal) but *mithya* (false), breeds profuse *ashaanthi* (disturbance) in the mind.

Suffering entitles you more to the Lord's Grace

Non-attachment alone can grant *Prashaanthi*. *Sathsanga* (company of the pious) and the visit to holy places and holy men promote that attitude and habit. Kuchela was prompted to visit Dhwaarakaa by his wife who had deep devotion; so too unless your *samskaara* (merit of action) is good and your inclinations are elevated, and elevating, you will not get the idea of coming to Puttaparthi. I called Narasaraju and his wife for this Shivarathri here and they have come. I know him for thirty years, him and his plans and yearnings and trials and troubles. The Lord responds not merely to the sweet voiced *Kokil* (cuckoo) and its song; He gives ear to the warbles of other birds, too. He gives ear to the wailings of every being. In fact, suffering entitles you more to the Grace of the Lord. When suffering comes in waves, one behind the other, be glad that the shore is near: bear them bravely; do not like cowards throw the blame on some outside Power or develop dislike for the Lord.

The *smarana* (remembering) of the Self (*Aathma*) is the spring of joy; the *smarana* of the Non-self (*An-aathma*) is the source of sorrow. Welcome the test because thereafter you are awarded the certificate. It is to measure your progress that tests are imposed. So do not flinch in the face of grief. The Lord bestows a favour when He decides to test you, for He is impressed by your achievement and wants to put upon it the seal of His approval. Rise up to the demands of the test, that is the way to please the Lord.

The ways of the Lord are inscrutable

There was a great *bhaktha* once who failed in the test and so could not get the certificate. Every day at noon, he used to look out for a needy guest whom he could feed lavishly. Thus he spent years, but one day, a frail old figure toddled into the house and sat for the dinner. He had crossed the century mark in years. The host had the steadiness of the vow, but he did not have the discrimination to derive the fruit of that vow. Like water poured on a dry sandbed, it did not add to its fertility. His heart still remained a dry sand-bed, though the waters of charity were poured

on it every noon. The *viveka-less* heart drank up the charity and he was the same strict ritualist. The decrepit guest was overwhelmed by hunger and so, as soon as the first dish was served, he swallowed a big morsel without reciting the Name of God. Annoyed at this atheism, the host cursed the old man and pushed him out of doors to starve or beg in the hot Sun.

That night, he had a dream where the Lord chastised him for the cruelty of his behaviour. The Lord said, "For more than a hundred years, I nourished that man lovingly as the apple of My Eye, though he never once took a single one of My many Names. My dear man, could you not have suffered him for a few minutes?" Thiruththondar in Tamilnadu showed how to stand up to this kind of test when the Lord comes as a hungry guest to the house of the *bhaktha*. The feeling of surrender is the best for success in all such instances. Let His will be done. He is every One. *Sharanaagathi* (seeing refuge for proration) is like grass on the ground, unaffected by storms; egoism is the palmyra tree that sways in the wind but breaks when it blows suddenly in a gust. The ways of the Lord are inscrutable; your duty is to submit to them faithfully, thankfully and joyfully.

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*The human body has been given to you for a grand purpose---
realising the Lord within.*

*If you have a fully equipped car in good running condition would
you keep it in the garage? The car is primarily for going on a
journey; get into it and go. Then only is it worthwhile to own it.*

*So too, with the body. Proceed go forward to the goal Learn how
We use the faculties of the body, the senses, the intellect, the mind,
for achieving the goal and march on.*

Sathya Sai Baaba