

52. Grief and God

MANY things have happened here since 3-30 p.m. when you all gathered. The programme began with the *Burra Katha* (folk-tale) on Paarvathi *kalyaanam* (marriage) by the girl students of the Saadhuvamma High School and it ended with the *kalyaanam* of Krishna, described by Veerabhadra Shaasthry. In the middle, Ganapathi Shaasthry told you of the origin and meaning of the *Sanaathana* (ancient) social order, as laid down in the *Vedhas* and the *Shaasthras*. Out of the many plausible interpretations of the *Shaasthras*, you are prone to attach yourselves to the one that pleases your own prejudices; so it is essential to hear such *Pandiths* who know the authentic meaning and who will not deviate from it in order to make the exposition popular. Listening to such talks should not end with *shravanam* (listening) only; follow it up with *mananam* (rumination, digestion).

So also, with the talk on the Bhaagavatha, cogitate over it within the four walls of your *puuja* room, sitting before the shrine and offering ritual worship. 'Do not treat the Bhaagavatha as a chapter of ancient "history"; you can experience the thrill now, today, for ever. The Bhaagavatha is for all time, for the elevation of human emotions in all climes and places. The *Vedhas* with their meaningful rites and their deeply significant philosophy are valuable for all time. Once, someone decided to worship the greatest. He fixed upon 'the earth, but the sea erodes the earth; the sea too is not so great since Sage Agasthya drank it up; Agasthya is now a tiny star in the broad sky; but the sky was just enough for one foot of the *Thrivikrama* form of the Lord; 'and the Lord is enshrined in the heart of *Bhaktha* (devotee). So he concluded that the *Bhaktha* was the greatest of them all!

Castes have no superiority or inferiority

Bhakthi (devotion) knows no caste; it saves all, ennobles all. Castes have no superiority or inferiority according to the *Vedhas*. A sugar doll is all sugar. The hymn. of *Purusha Suuktha* speaks of the four castes having come from four parts of His Body. The meaning is that all are equally high born and equally important. The mouth cannot walk nor can the feet talk. It is the voice that is obeyed and the arm that protects. Well, all those who felt (and follow the feeling) that fighting is their righteous duty are *Kshatriyas*; all those who feel it their duty to study the *Vedhas* and the *Shaasthras* are *Braahmins*---not those who feel it as their right!

Yesterday, I spoke a few words specially to the men. Today I shall speak to the women. Many of you become so desperate and dejected that you bemoan your birth and welcome death. This is very wrong. You cannot flee from your responsibility in the middle of your allotted task. It is a sign of weakness and cowardice. After all, just think for a moment whether the rich are happy, the strong are happy, the highly educated are happy or the clever are happy. No one is happy you will find. If you must be happy, one of two things must happen. All your desires must be fulfilled, or you should not have any desire. Of these, the reduction of desire is the easier path.

Become more steady in spiritual discipline

Take the troubles that come to you as tests and opportunities to learn non-attachment. It is the hot summer that sends you to air-conditioning. Grief sends you to God. When a child dies, ask yourself the question, "Is it for my sake that he was born?" He had his own destiny to fulfil, his own history to work out. Gauthama Buddha's father was so overcome with grief when he saw his son with a begging bowl in the street that he told him thus: "Every one of my ancestors was a King: what misfortune is this that a beggar was born in this line?" Buddha replied, "Every one of

my ancestors had a beggar's bowl; I know of no king in my line." The father and the son walked different paths, travelled along divergent routes. The blood of the son when transfused may prove fatal to the father.

Another point: you should all become more steady and regular in your *saadhana* (spiritual effort). You must curb the propensity to indulge in inane jabber and idle curiosity. Follow the discipline laid down for the Prashanthi Nilayam and become examples for the new-comers! This applies to the men also. You will have noticed that I do not address you as "*Bhakthulaara*" (dear devotees) at any time. For, to get that name, *bhaktha*, you must have dedication, unwavering faith and steady discipline.

When the *Nirguna Niraakaara* (Attributeless and Formless) is available here and now as *Saguna Saakaara* (with Attributes and Form), you must use every moment to earn His Grace.

You do not realise your unique good fortune. In the years to come, people will revere you, for you had a chance that millions could not get; they will worship your pictures in their shrines! Live and love in such a way that you may deserve that honour.

Prashanthi Nilayam, 26-11-1962

For Naamasmarana, no expense is involved; no materials are needed; there is no special place or time to be provided. No qualification of scholarship or caste or sex has to be proved.

When a bit of iron is rubbed to and fro on a slab of stone, heat is generated; only, the rubbing has to be vigorous and continuous. When you do so at intervals and with poor pressure, the iron will not get hot. So, too, in order to get sufficient heat to melt the soft heart of the Lord, in order to get sufficient heat to melt the soft heart of the Lord, rub the name Raam Raam Raam Raam vigorously and uninterruptedly. Then, the Lord will shower His Grace.

If you devote but two minutes and a half in the morning and another two minutes and a half in the evening the little heart will cool off twice a day and His heart will not melt.

Sathya Sai Baba