

## ***1. Climb the right tree***

I KNOW that your hunger has not been fully appeased, even after listening to two excellent discourses, radiating *Aanandha* (bliss), given by these *Pandiths* (scholars). Both of them said that they had no claims to scholarship and that all that they were able to see and speak about was due to My Grace. Well, that is but a way they have cultivated, to curb conceit. Hanumaan was not aware of his vast strength; he had cultivated that much of self-effacement. Some one had to remind him of his skill and prowess and then, Hanumaan would rise to the occasion, with his powers fully awake.

It was also pleaded on your behalf that I should speak to you today, for it is a long time since I spoke to you at this place. I feel I must satisfy, that desire of yours. You eat yourselves *bhakthas* (devotees); so, I shall talk to you about the *dharma* of persons who seek to acquire *bhakthi*. No one can become a *bhaktha* by naming himself so, nor, by others calling him so.

*Bhakthi* involves dedication, with nothing held back; not even a wisp of ego should remain. His command alone counts; His Will prevails. Like a drunkard, the *bhaktha* has no sense of honour or decency, pride or conceit. He is a *mattha*, an *unmattha* (a mad person), unconcerned with all that is unrelated to his ideal. He is deaf to the call of hunger and thirst; he misses steps in logic and he calculates wrongly while dealing in the market place. Naaradha says that those full of the liquor of ignorance stumble after the shadows of the world, while those drunk with nectar of wisdom never move away from the Highest, which they have discovered as themselves.

### ***Bhakthi must soften the mind***

You saw this in the case of this Shaasthry a few days ago when he came and sat in this Hall for the first time, after 30 years of intense study of the Srimath Bhaagavatha. He felt that he had won the fruit of years of study and worshipful exposition. He lost all awareness and some of you thought he had an attack of epilepsy or something akin to it. I knew that he was in the realm of *Aanandha*. That is why I did not encourage you to take him to the hospital. Even today, you noticed how when he started to describe the depth of Divine Grace he was overcome with joy.

The Lord broke His own plighted word in order to give the *Bhaktha* the credit for making Him do so, Bheeshma had said that he would force Krishna to wield a weapon on the battlefield, contrary to His declared intention. Bheeshma would accept defeat only from the Lord! And, so Krishna strode towards Bheeshma, brandishing the *Chakra* (discus) in order to win. The Shaasthry was describing this, when he broke down. *Bhakthi* must soften the mind and keep it receptive to the higher emotions, the purifying impulses.

### ***Every being is a pilgrim to reach God***

Bheeshma was a *bhaktha* and by winning the Lord's grace, he was clothed with more majesty and splendour than any earthly emperor. What majesty have these petty sceptre-holders? They cannot claim to have inner peace, inner joy; they know not the joy of sharing love with all. Bheeshma surrendered to the Lord, when He challenged him with the *Su-dharshana*; that is to say, when He offers *Su* (good) *dharshana* (vision), one must be wise enough to surrender, give up all; that is what Bheeshma did.

Like the kitten calling the mother to where it sits, by mere mewing, the *bhaktha* has only to yearn, to mew with the pain of separation. The growing crop in the fields thirsts for rain; it sees the heavy rain-clouds sail across the sky; it cannot rise up to that altitude and drink the life-

giving rain; nor can it bring the clouds down to the ground. Humanity too sizzles in the hot Sun, the unbearable heat of ego and greed. It needs the rain of Grace; it knows it can flourish only then in peace and joy.

As the clouds form droplets and fall upon the fields which they choose to foster, the Formless Absolute individualises Itself, assumes Form and comes down in the midst of humanity to save and sustain, That is the secret of God Maadhava coming down as *maanava* (man), the cloud taking pity on the crop, parching in the Sun. Once the rains come, the Sun has its uses! So too, when the grace of the Lord is gained, then ego and greed can be put to profit by being made to flow; into useful channels.

In past ages, *Avathaars* (divine incarnations) rid the world of evil, by destroying the few fanatics and ogres who wrought it. But, now fanaticism and felony reign in every heart. The number of *asuras* (evil men) is legion; no one is free from that taint; all are wicked to some extent or other. Therefore, every one needs correction; every one has to be educated and guided into the right path. Every being is a pilgrim destined to reach Maadhava and merge in Him; but most people have forgotten the road; they wander like lost children, wasting precious time in by-paths.

### **You can win Lord's Grace only by *dharma***

*Maanava* (man) has to become *Maadhava* (God); that is his destiny, the plan and purpose of his being armed, as no other animal is, with the sword of *viveka* (discrimination) and the shield of *vairaagya* (renunciation). Man is the only animal that can picture a previous existence and existences in a series, with impressions accumulating from one to the other. What you see and feel in a dream has some basis on what you have seen and felt in the waking state; so too, what you see and feel in the present life has, as its basis, what you have seen and felt in other lives, previous lives.

You can win the Grace of the Lord only by *dharma*. *Dharma* induces the spirit of self-surrender and develops it. Without the training that the practice of *dharma* gives to your senses, your feelings and emotions, you cannot have steady faith and steady detachment. The Lord is *Dharma* conceived as a personality. Raama is known as *Vigrahavaan Dharmah* (Righteousness personified). If you step across the bounds of *Dharma* and play foul, you cannot win the game of life.

### **Pursue your task with one-pointed effort**

When Hanumaan was speeding along the sky like an arrow from Raama's bow, many temptations attempted to halt him. He did not delay or turn back. He sped on, intent only on the task his Lord has set for him. When the Mynaaka mountain rose up to offer him a little rest, he trampled it down into the depths of the sea. The mountain rose again and pleaded for the chance of serving him for a while. It had decked itself with green orchards and fragrant flower gardens for his recreation and recoupment, for when Indhra slashed off the wings of all the mountains in past ages, Mynaaka had fled with the help of Vaayu, the father of Hanumaan, and he wanted to express his gratitude by granting hospitality to the son; but, Hanumaan pleaded that his master's task brooked no delay. A few moments later, Hanumaan was confronted by a terrible monstress, Surasa by name. Hanumaan overcame her by skilful tactics and avoided further delay. You should pursue your path to liberation with one-pointed effort.

The Shaasthy said that the Lord wishes that His *bhaktha* should shine over non-believers; that he should be happier, more contented, more courageous than the rest: *Bhakthi* ought to make a

man so, But the *bhaktha* does not cultivate these traits deep enough. He lets the chance go to waste. If Shaasthry gives his sons a hundred acres each, one son may tend it well and reap golden harvests from it: another may allow it to lie fallow and himself sink into misery. The equipment each has brought from previous lives may be different: you cannot blame the father for this state of affairs. Even the blood of one son may be fatal when transfused into another son. Spiritual strength will be less in one, more in another, in proportion to the efforts of each, now and in the past.

### **Let the light within shine**

The pity is that man is not eating the most relishing, the most nourishing fruit, from this Garden of Nature. He is climbing the wrong tree and seeking to pluck the wrong fruits: so, his appetite is ruined, his taste is vulgarised, his health is destroyed. Only the Glory of the Lord can satisfy the hunger of man, for he is part of that Glory.

Only experience can reveal the sweetness, the sublimity, the purpose of that Glory. Parashuraama came across Raama and challenged him when he was returning to Ayodhya after his marriage. He had won Seetha by bending and breaking the bow of Shiva: and thereby humbled the pride of all the crowned heads that had come seeking Seetha's hand. But, Parashuraama was intoxicated with his own achievement, in defeating the *Kshathriya* rulers in twenty-one campaigns. That pride lowered the Divine status of Parashuraama and so, he could be felled in a moment by Raama who was to all appearance just a stripling!

The Lord, it was said, punishes some and favours others. Let Me tell you- the Lord does neither. He is like the current in this electric wire. It rotates the fan and makes one's life cooled; it operates the electric chair and makes one's life shorter. It has no wish to allay the warmth of the atmosphere; it has no eagerness to kill. The Lord's Grace is like the wind that blows. Roll up your sails and the boat lies limp and lame; unfurl them, it moves faster and faster. It is like light; one person does good using the illumination; another executes an evil plan, with its help. Have an "inner day," though an "outer night." Let the light within, shine. When you are unaware of the world, though in it, heedless of its call for participation, you are having an outer night and an inner day. The *Vedhas* teach you this Truth and impart the discipline needed to attain this fortune.

### **The Lord is the Father of all in the world**

The Shaasthry spoke of the value of the *Vedhic* discipline. The *Vedhas* declare that if a *karma* (act) is done in a definite way, a definite result will accrue. They give you a pen filled with ink, they teach you how to write and what to write. They are so kind. *Vedhamaatha* is so full of maternal love (*vaathsalya* as they call it). She repeats an injunction, over and over again, just as I go on reminding you of the disciplinary rules of the Nilayam, on every possible occasion. So, do not set aside the commands of the *Vedhas*: they are the authentic Voice of the Lord Himself as heard and recorded by purified intellects.

A father gives his wealth to the son, who respects his wishes and obeys his orders, not to the rebel son who flouts him. The Lord is *Loka-pitha* (the Father of All). If you are an *Aasthika* (a person who accepts that there is God and shapes his life accordingly), then you will get the *Aasthi* (wealth or property), if a person is an idiot, ignorant of his true interests, unaware of his own downfall, then he is not entrusted with his own *Aasthi*, a guardian has to take care of his affairs until he proves himself able to manage it with care.

### **Dwell always on the Glory of God**

It may take many lives for a man to prove that he knows what is best for him, that he is able to chalk out his own future without harming himself or others, that he is aware of the pitfalls on the way. So, it is best to trust to the experience of sages, who were filled with compassion and who were moved by that compassion to illumine the path of liberation. This experience is enshrined in the *Vedhas*. Faith in the *Vedhas* irrigates the heart and makes it yield the harvest of Universal Love.

The *Shaasthras* warn you of false steps; they console you in times of stress; they strengthen you in distress; they give correct interpretations of moral dilemmas. They prescribe the dress, the food, the manner of speech, the methods of social conduct, the mode of mutual behaviour, the lines of onward march. They are the conscience of society.

In this Prashaanthi Nilayam, too, there are certain limits laid down, certain modes of spending time usefully, recommended by Me. All who come here, whether longtime residents or new arrivals, have to observe them. You have seen Me, and stayed here, and heard these discourses. Let Me ask what is the gain? Are you going back, unchanged, unaffected? Dogs do not chew sugar cane; they seek a bone, instead, m-fated mortals recoil, when the talk is about God, goodness, *saadhana* (spiritual effort) and *Saakshaathkaara* (vision of the divine) But, you must pull yourselves up into the purer air of *aadhyaathmik* (spiritual) life, draw yourselves away from slums and bylanes and travel on the highway to God. Dwell always on the glory of God; then, you will shine in that glory. Adhere to Truth, that is the surest means of removing fear from your heart. *Prema* can grow only in the heart watered by Truth.

### **What is *Bhakthi* and who are *Bhakthas*?**

Naagayya, even while he plays the role of Thyaagayya, is always conscious that he is Naagayya. "Thyaagayya is the role I am playing," he would say. Now, go one step further. When asked who you are, say that you are *Naaraayana-swaruupa*, playing the role of Pullayya or Thimmayya or Mallayya, or whatever your name is. So too, every other person is a role played by Naaraayana. Naaraayana washed clothes as the *dhobi*, shapes wood as the carpenter, forges iron as the blacksmith, prepares pots at the wheel as a potter. He is all this---and more. His glory is inexhaustible. The *Avathaar* (divine incarnate) is another role He takes up for another purpose.

The Lord comes as *Avathaar* when He is anxiously awaited by saints and sages. *Saadhus* (the pious) prayed---and I have come. My tasks are three, or rather two, since *Dharmarakshana* (protection of virtue) and *Vedharakshana* (protection of *vedhic* culture) are both practically the same. The two are, therefore: *Vedharakshana* and *Bhaktharakshana*---fostering of the *Vedhas* and fostering of *Bhakthas* (devotees). Now, what is *Bhakthi* (devotion)? Who are *Bhakthas*? It is faith, steadiness, virtue, fearlessness, surrender, absence of egoism. *Puuja* done however elaborately and pompously, is sheer waste of time and energy. Why pluck flowers and hasten their death? Some of you go round this Nilayam and satisfy yourselves that you have done so many *pradakshinas* (circum-ambulations), but, they can be called so, only when your mind circles this place along with your feet.

### **Talk less, talk low if you must**

I notice that while your feet are taking you round by force of habit, your tongues blabber about the faults of others, or the price of vegetables, or the dishes you propose to cook for lunch. Before you start on your rounds, which you call *pra-dakshina*, give your mind as *dakshina*

(thanksgiving offering) to the Resident of the temple, the Lord. That is the first thing to do, and perhaps, the only thing to do. *Pradakshina* is not to be taken as prescribed, for loosening the limbs or giving them some exercise.

This Nilayam should not be treated with scant reverence. Make the best use of your stay here. Do not treat this chance lightly. You come spending much money, and put yourselves to much trouble to reach here; but, you do not bloom as fragrant offerings at the Lord's feet by learning the *saadhana* path. The senses have to be curbed into obedient servants of the spirit, For example, I insist on silence. Talk less, talk low when you must talk.

Do not thrust your sorrows, your needs, your problems into the ears of those who have come here with their own bundle of such things. They are not interested in adding to their troubles. I am here to listen to you, to console you. Do not by loudness of voice disturb those who are meditating or reading or writing the name of God.

### **All ills are traceable to faulty living**

Meditate if possible, yourselves, alone; read spiritual books if you can; write the name of the Lord in the quiet of your corner; if you cannot do these, at least do not disturb others who are doing these. Encourage one another to march along the path to God.

Become entitled to the honoured title of *Bhaktha*. My glory is spread daily through those who call themselves My *bhakthas*. Your virtue, your self-control, your detachment, your faith, your steadfastness---these are the signs by which people read of My glory. Not that I want any such prop.

But, it just happens so, in this world, where men estimate others indirectly, rather than directly. Let Me tell you, such *bhakthas* are very rare. That is the reason why I do not address your gathering as, "*Bhakthulaaral*" You can lay claim to that name only when you have placed yourself in My hands, fully, completely, with no trace of ego kept back to cater to your vanity.

All ills are traceable to faulty living. And what is that traceable to? To ignorance of one's real Nature, ignorance so deeprooted that it affects thoughts, words and deeds. The drug that can cure it is patented under different names: *jnaana*, *karma*, *upaasana* (contemplation), *bhakthi*. They are all the same in potency, and curative power. The difference lies only in the method of administration either as mixture or as tablet or injection.

Be confident that you will be liberated; Know that you are saved. Go and tell all that you had gone to Puttaparthi and that you got there the secret of liberation.

*Prashanthi Nilayam, 25-1-1963*

*The mind must become the servant of the intellect, not the slave of the senses. It must discriminate and detach itself from the body. Like the ripe tamarind fruit, which becomes loose inside the shell, it must be unattached to this shell, this casement called body.*

*Strike a green tamarind fruit with a stone and you cause harm to the pulp inside; but, strike the ripe fruit and see what happens. It is the dry rind that falls off; nothing affects the pulp or the seed.*

*The ripe aspirant does not feel the blows of fate or fortune, it is the unripe man who is wounded by every blow.*

*Sathya Sai Baaba*