

13. Shivam, not shavam

GHANDIKOTA Subrahmanya Shaasthry read and offered what he called a *Navarathna Haaram*---a Garland of Nine Poetic Gems; but though I do not accept garlands, I certainly accept the devotion that gives fragrance to the garland. He said that the *Vedhas* are for the glorification of the Gods (*Dhevaanaam sthuthyartham*), that in the *Kali Yuga*, one is asked to rely more on *Naamasmarana* (repeated remembrance of God) for liberation. Why is it considered enough for the people of this Age? For, other *Saadhanas* are fraught with difficulties. They need rigorous discipline and much preliminary effort. Again, there is another advantage in *Naamasmarana*: as soon as the Name is uttered, the owner of the Name comes into view. When you think of the Form, the Name may not always accompany; you may not be able to identify. There may be more than one Name and you may be confused. But take the Name, and the Form automatically appears before the mental eye.

In Bhaarith, the discipline, to remove that attachment to the senses and to curb the mind from running after fleeting pleasures, is clearly laid down since ages; and we have the experience of many saints, recorded in the sacred literature of this land. All the activities of thought, word and deed are sublimated to this higher purpose. Man is *Shivam* (auspicious), not *shavam* (corpse); he has three eyes, which are derived from the Sun and the Moon, and from Agni.

Where the Lord's Name is sung, there He sits

The Agni eye is the internal eye, which can be opened by the discipline of the *Yoga*. The three-eyed Shiva can see the past, the present and the future. A boy of ten whom you have seen, you can recall his picture as he was when you saw him; but you can't see him as he is now or as he will be ten years hence. But, if you earn the *Thrinethra* (three eyes), capable of seeing the past, present and future, you can see all three. You become master of time and space.

The Name is enough to give you all the results of every type of *saadhana* (spiritual effort). This is accepted by all the *Shaasthras* and all the *saadhakas* (spiritual aspirants) who have left accounts of their struggle and success. Moreover, the Name is capable of being recited and meditated upon by all, equally. Of course, the Name is a limitation of the Universal; it identifies the un-identifiable, through one of its aspects. Take the *Upaadhi* (disguise) as a means of saving yourself; take it as a boat that will take you across the sea of birth and death.

When you repeat the Name, all the sweetness of the Form and its associated glory must come to memory and just as your mouth waters when you remember some sweet dish you relish, your mind must "water" when you contemplate it. Choose the Name that captivates your heart. Why run after riches when all the pleasure and satisfaction that riches can offer and even a hundred-fold, can be got by dwelling on the Name? The Lord has said that where His Name is sung, "*thathra thish-tthaami*," ("there I sit"). He establishes Himself there! He will not move from the place. So, the tongue is enough to win Him, the tongue that speaks the language of the pure mind.

The Lord is a *Kalpavriksha* (Wish-fulfilling Tree); you have to approach Him and develop attachment to Him. You must win His Grace and be ever near Him keeping back all the forces that draw you away from Him. Even if you commit some technical faults in singing about Him or in worshipping Him, it does not matter. *Bhakthi* (intense devotion) makes every error

excusable. Nectar, though poured into a brass cup, will not lose its savour or taste. Poison, even if is poured into a cup of gold set with gems, will not lose its death-dealing property.

The Name persuades the Form to bend and bless

Bhakthi will force the Lord to give you Himself as the gift. The Coronation Ceremony of Sree Raamachandhra and the celebrations were all over; the presentation of gifts to all important people was over. Then, Seetha remembered that Maaruthi had been forgotten. There was no one in the hall except Raama. Seetha and Maaruthi. Raama wondered what to give him: He suggested to Seetha that the gemset ring that Janaka gave him on the occasion of the marriage would be the best gift, because as He said. "Your father gave this to me. on the day he gave *you* to me; this Maaruthi gave you to me. a second time. So. I shall give him this." Maaruthi did not seem quite happy when the ring was placed in his hand. Evidently he did not appreciate the gift because it was not given in full sight of all; when all were given, he was neglected! But Maaruthi placed it near his ear as if he sought to know what sound emanated from it: he bit it with his teeth; tried to peer into its structure.

Raama asked him why, and Seetha was also anxious to know. Maaruthi said, "I am finding out whether it has the Raamanaama which I want to the exclusion of everything else." Then. Raama embraced him and said, "Maaruthi! what other gift can I give you? I shall give you Myself as the gift. Accept Me!" So, that is why he was neglected, at the time every, one else was awarded gifts! That is why wherever Maaruthi is. there Raama is bound to be-wherever Raama is, there Maaruthi is invariably present. The Name is so valuable for the *Bhaktha* (devotee). It persuades the Form to bend and bless.

The Name that pleases you is best for you

Just consider this- the form changes from age to age, from one appearance to another. Raama and Krishna were different in form; even their deeds were distinct. But still, people agree when you say that both are identical. Well; tell them that Raama held aloft the Govardhanagiri, they will not accept it.

The Name has the association of all the special fragrance of the *Leela* (Divine play) and the *Mahima* (Power) and the *Upadhesha* (spiritual instruction). Each one has a special attachment to one Name out of many, suited to the temperament and the *Samskaara*, the inherited instincts and tendencies shaped in previous births.

Meera loved the Name *Giridhaari* (mountain-holder). To her, that *leela* appealed as the most significant, as the most symbolic of the' Lord's glory. The name that pleases you, that arouses the sweetest and the purest love, is best for you. *Raamayathi* is Raama (the thing that pleases is Raama); *Harathi* is *Hara* (the thing that destroys *Maayaa*, is Hara or Hari).

Keep the Name lit on the tongue

Suurdhaas was overwhelmed with grief, when the lovely little body who held his stick and led him along the road to Brindhaavan suddenly left him with the announcement that his name was Krishna! He ran about with both hands extended to catch Him and keep Him in his embrace, but Krishna had disappeared; then, Suurdhaas shouted, "You may run away from my clasp; but I have you in my heart. You can never run away from there." Prahlada was also like that; he had no other thought; he saw nothing else; elephant, snake, poison, fire---all were for him *Naaraayana-thathwa* (divine principle) itself. How then could they harm him?

The *Naama* is the Narasimha for the Hiranyaakshas of the mind; *the Raajasik (passionate)* and *Thaamasik* (ignorant) forces, besieging your heart are bent on your downfall. Just as they give Calcium and Vitamin tablets to cure anaemia, etc., take *Naamam* tablets to get rid of mental anaemia and other illnesses. There are some throat pastilles, which you have to carry to your mouth and whose taste you have to slowly swallow, in order to relieve cough; have the *Naamam* on your tongue and imbibe its taste slowly to get rid of the troublesome upsurge of passions and emotions. Keep the Name lit on the tongue; it will illumine your interior and also the exterior. It will cleanse your mind, as well as minds of those who hear the Name when you recite it. Keeping it on the tongue is like keeping a lamp lit on the door-step at the entrance to your house.

Naamasmarana is the best *saadhana*; it is the most beneficial *sath-pravarthana*. That is the *highest japam*, the most profitable *thapas*. Kuchela won the Grace of the Lord through the same means. Fill the Name with your Love, whenever you repeat it; saturate it with devotion. That is the easiest path for all of you.

Prashanthi Nilayam, 29-4-1963

A mere Five-minute inquiry will convince you that you are not the body, or the senses, the mind or the intelligence, the name or the form, but that you are the Aathma Itself, the same Aathma that appears as all this variety.

Once you get a glimpse of this truth, hold on to it; do not allow it to slip. Make it your permanent possession.

Sathya Sai Baaba