

20. The novel night

THE *Navaraathri* is the Festival to commemorate the Victory of God over Evil. The Embodiment of Divine Power (*Paraa-shakthi*), in its various manifestations, as *Mahaa-Saraswathi* (*Saathwik*), as *Mahaa-Lakshmi* (*Raajasik*), as *Mahaa-Kaali* (*Thaamasik*) was able to overcome the forces of vice, wickedness and egoism, during the Nine Days' struggle and finally, on *Vijaya Dhashami* (the Tenth Day commemorating Victory), the Valedictory Worship is done.

It is a Festival of Thanksgiving. Gratitude is Divine; Ingratitude is Demonic. But, while offering the homage of Gratitude, you must also try to discover who was killed and who was saved and why. The six enemies of man are eating into his vitals, embedded in his own inner consciousness. They are the demons to be killed. They are lust (*kaama*), anger (*krodha*), greed (*lobha*), attachment (*moha*), pride (*madha*) and malice (*maathsarya*). They reduce man to the level of a demon. They have to be overpowered and transmuted, by the supreme alchemy of the Divine Urge. Then, the nine nights of struggle will become new, a new type of night, devoted to the purification of the mind, and the illumination of the soul---the night described in the *Geetha* as 'the day of the worldly.' What is clear and attractive to the ordinary man is uninteresting and unknown to the yogi; what is clear and attractive to the yogi is uninteresting and unknown to the worldly man. That is the nature of this topsy-turvy world.

Do everything for the Glory of God

To celebrate the *Nava-raathri*, new as well as nine (*nava* means both 'new' and 'nines', at the *Prashaanthi Nilayam* is indeed a rare chance, replete with wonder and joy. For this is the Abode of Peace, the Peace that ensues when the six enemies are destroyed forever. The *Prashaanthi Flag* which will now be hoisted is the symbol of this consummation--the conquest by man of the six enemies and the illumination within him of the Flame of Wisdom, installed in the Lotus of the Heart. It is the Flag of *Swa-raaj* (Dominion over Oneself), the true Independence, when you can genuinely claim to be master of the realm most intimately related to you. It is the Flag that flutters in the breeze of *Aanandha*; the Flag that announces the arrival of Inner Splendour. It is the Flag that heralds the Dawn of the highest wisdom and the deepest peace.

Man is proud that he is flying far into the sky and even landing on the Moon; but, he is incapable of living at peace with himself or his neighbours. His life on earth is full of fear and anxiety; but, he proclaims without shame that he is the summit of creation! He does not know how to put down the fire that burns within himself; but he is able to destroy entire cities by fire, emanating from bombs!

Swa-raaj means full mastery over your senses, mind and intelligence, through the recognition of the *Aathma*. You must not be dependent on another for services that you can well do yourself. What is the use of tiring out a servant in subserving your wishes and yourself sitting lazily in meditation? Engage in activity, devote yourself in worshipful acts, do everything for the glory of God---that is far more fruitful than the 'meditation' which you are relying on.

Just as a thermometer indicates the heat of the body, your talk, conduct, and behaviour indicate your mental equipment and attitudes, and show how high is the fever of worldliness that afflicts you. These have to be *Saathwik* (pure), untinted by passion of emotions like hate or pride. Talk in peace, promoting peace in others. What is the use of *japa and dhyana*, when your talk and conduct are not even human? How can you hope to approach the divine while grovelling in the

slush of the bestial? This is the first day of Dashara Festival and so, resolve this day to cleanse the mind of impurities, so that you can imbibe the inspiration it is intended to convey.

Aspirants for mental peace have also to reduce the luggage they have to care for; the more the luggage, the greater the bother. Objective possessions and subjective desires, both are handicaps in the race for realisation. A house cluttered with lumber will be dark, dusty, and without free movement of fresh air, it will be stuffy and suffocating. The human body too is a house; do not allow it to be cluttered with curios, trinkets, trash, and superfluous furnishings. Let the breeze of holiness blow as it will through it; let not the darkness of blind ignorance desecrate it. Life is a bridge over the sea of change; pass over it, but do not build a house on it.

Hoist the Prashaanthi Flag, on the temple, that is your heart. Follow the prescription it teaches--- subdue the six enemies that undermine the natural bliss in man, ascend the *Yoga* stage when the agitations are stilled and allow the Splendour of the Divinity within (*the Aathma*) to shine forth, embracing all for all time.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 12.10.1969