

1. Heroes, not Zeros

PANDITH Sathyanaaraayana Avadhaanulu could have spoken for some more time, but he stopped rather suddenly perhaps to give Me more time. You must not grow listless when others speak; for, whoever speaks here, he is giving you the nectar of the *Vedhas* or *Shaasthras* (scriptures) and that is sweet and liberating ever. Moreover, he said that this evening, we have met here since it is New Year Day, the first of January 1964! Well. This is a delusion within the larger Delusion! This Day is welcomed as marking some big change, as if yesterday was something quite different for it belonged to 1963 and today is something quite distinct, for it is 1964! This day is celebrated by people, in picnics, in gambling, in drinking and feasting; they attend cinema shows, wear new clothes, give presents, to each other and greet all with joy and hilarity. They exhaust their money and their energy in the pursuit of frivolity, thrill and excitement.

All this is due to the custom that views this day as something unique. In fact, the 'year' is just a convention. There are as many New Year Days as there are days in the year; many communities and countries have their own distinct calendars. It is not the first of January or the first of *Chaithra* (first month of Telugu New Year) that is unique. The year is just a name to indicate a number of months, the month a number of days, a day to indicate a number of hours, the hour is a period of time counted in minutes, and the minute is a name for sixty seconds. Each second is new. It is a gift, a chance, an opportunity, a thing to be celebrated, to be used for your uplift. That is to say, each second is a fresh chance given to you for training the mind, refining the intellect, purifying the emotions, strengthening the will, for getting confirmed in the conviction that you are the deathless *Aathma* (Self, the Infinite Consciousness).

Be like the lotus with head high above waters

Be thankful to the Lord that He gave you Time, as well as action to fill it with. He gave you food, as well as hunger to relish it. But, that does not entitle you to engage yourself in action indiscriminately. When you build a house, you install a door in front. What is the purpose of the door? To admit all whom you welcome and to keep out all whom you do not want. It has a double purpose; you do not keep the doors wide open, for all and sundry to come in as and when they like. So too, select the impulses, the motives, the incentives that enter your mind; keep out the demeaning, the debasing, the deleterious. Admit the highest wisdom of the scriptures, the wisdom culled out of the crucible of experience, called *anubhavajnaanam*.

All water is not potable; the stagnant pool is to be avoided, the flowing river is better. Select and drink. Use the mosquito curtain, but, see that the mosquitoes do not get in when you go to bed. Keep them out; do not imprison them inside the net. Sail in the boat that floats on water but, do not allow the water to enter the boat. Be in worldly life, but, do not allow it to get into you. Use the doors intelligently, to let in those whom you want, and keep out those whom you do not need. The lotus, born in slime and mud, rises up through the water and lifts its head high above the waters; it refuses to get wet though water is the element which gives it life! Be like the lotus.

By action, done with all this care, the Vision gets clarified. Man is blinded by the objective world and he believes that world to be real, meaningful and worthy of pursuit. The cataract grows in the eye and robs it of its efficiency. The cataract is the enemy of the eye. Ignorance, the cataract of the inner eye, blinds the intellect and robs it of its efficiency. So, it cannot see the Divinity that

is your real nature. It misleads you into the impression that you are a man (*Maanava*), whereas you are really God (*Maadhava*).

Tread the path of Liberation

The rope is mistaken to be a snake and the perceiver flees in fear. The truth is, it is not the organ-eye that sees; there are many whose eyes are good, so far as doctors can discover, but they cannot see! The eye sees because it is illumined by a microscopic spark of the rays of the Sun. The scripture says: "*Chakshos Suryo ajayatha*": From the eye, Surya was born. The soul is the motive force of all the senses; the eye is but a window through which the soul peeps out at the external world. Of what use is the eye, when the vision is not correct? That is to say, when you have no *Samadhrishti*. *Samam* means *Brahman*, the Absolute Reality; *Samadhrishti* means, seeing only *Brahman*, the One, in all things at all times. This *Ekathwam* (Oneness) is the basic truth. All other experiences are partial, distorted, false. Dwell on that, in your

meditation. Fix it in your inner consciousness. That is the path of Liberation, which you must start treading and, today is as good a day as any, for deciding to do so. You have meditated too long on riches, status, salary, children, relatives, fame and the standard of living. They are all of minor interest, momentary value, dubious profit. Meditate, fix your urge on the *Nithya*, the *Sathya*, the *Nirmala*, the *Nischala*---the Eternal, the Real, the Pure and the Immovable.

The Eternal Charioteer

Pandith Avadhaanulu referred to some incidents mentioned in the Mahaabhaaratha and so, I too shall mention just one point which will make you appreciate the Mahaabhaaratha more. The Lord had *Maayaa* (Illusion) as His Consort, so to say, and He had a son, called *Manas* (Mind). This *Manas*, to continue the parable, had two wives: *Pravritthi* and *Nivritthi*---Attachment and Detachment. Of course, Attachment was his favourite wife, and she had a hundred children. Detachment was ill-treated and neglected and she had five children. That is the symbolism of the Kauravas (hundred sons) and the Paandavas (five sons) of Mahaabhaaratha. Though the children all lived in the same kingdom, ate the same food and learnt from the same teacher, their natures differed widely from one another; the Kauravas, children of Attachment were greedy, cruel, self-centred and vain; the Paandavas, the five of them, each one represented a supreme virtue, so that they could be said to symbolise *sathya*, *dharma*, *shaanthi*, *prema* and *ahimsa* (truth, righteousness, peace, love and non-injury). Since they were so pure and born of Detachment, the Lord became their guide. In fact the Lord will be the Guide of whoever installs Him as his *Saarathi* (Charioteer). He will not consider that position inferior. He is the *Sanaathana Saarathi* (Eternal Charioteer) come to be the Charioteer of all. He is the Lord, for all who seek a Master, a support. The soul is the Master in every one and Krishna is the Universal soul, personified.

Let the Lord shape your mind

There are two birds sitting on one tree, the *Upanishadh* says: the *jeevaathma* and the *Paramaathma*---the individual soul and the Supreme Soul--on the tree of this body, this World. One bird eats the fruits of that tree, while the other simply looks on, as a witness. But, the wonder is, the two birds are really one, though they appear as two; they cannot be separated, since they are two aspects of the same entity. Steam in the air cannot be seen; it has no shape or form; but it is the same as ice, which is hard, heavy and cold. *Niraakaara* and *Saakaara* (without Form and with Form), are just two ways in which the One manifests Itself.

The minute hand of the clock is the individual soul the bird that eats the fruits. It goes round and round but, the hour hand moves silently and slowly, with a certain dignity. The hour hand can be said to be the Supreme Soul. Once an hour the two meet, but, the individual soul does not get that consummation fixed for ever. It loses the precious chance and so has to go round and round again and again. Liberation is when the two merge, and only one remains.

When the obstacles in the path of truth are laid low, deliverance is achieved. That is why *moksha* (liberation) is something that can be won, here and now; one need not wait for the dissolution of the physical body for that. Action must not be felt as a burden, for that feeling is a sure sign, indicating that it is against the grain. No action which helps your progress will weigh heavily on you. It is only when you go counter to your innermost nature that you feel it a burden. A time comes when you look back on your achievement and sigh at the futility of it all. Entrust to the Lord, before it is too late, your mind and let Him shape it as He likes.

Assign to your mind the task of serving the Lord and it will grow tame. You do not hand over the goldsmith an ornament that is quite nice; you give him for repairs or reshaping, the ornaments you feel have been broken or dented or gone out of fashion. So too, give the Lord your mind that certainly needs repair, if not complete reconstruction.

Man should have no fear

The blemish that affects the mind is illusion. It is like a fierce dog that will not allow any one to approach the Master. You can manage to by-pass it, only by assuming the *ruupam* or Form of the Master, which is called *Saaruupyam*, or by calling out for the Master so loudly that He comes down and accompanies you into the house, that is to say, by winning His Grace, *Saameepyam* (proximity). Illusion is His pet and so, it will not harm you if He orders it to desist from harming you.

The Master comes to save not one good man from Illusion, but the whole of mankind. Of course, He has to come assuming a Form that man can love, revere, and appreciate. He can give joy and courage, only if He speaks the language of human intercourse. Even as it is, many are afraid to approach Me, for they know I am aware of their innermost thoughts and deepest desires. But, let Me tell you, only helpless animals have fear. Man, who is child of Immortality, should have no fear. People pray before stone images of the snake god, but when the actual snake appears in answer to their prayers, they run away terror-stricken from the shrine! The Lord manifests Himself only to shower Grace, never to strike terror.

On the banks of the river near Lucknow, there was a sage who addressed dogs, crows and men equally as God; he had realised the unity of all in the Divine Essence. That is the result of Divine knowledge, or intense *Bhakthi*, where you do not see anything other than your *Ishtadevatha* (Chosen Deity), wherever you turn. Be ever in that Divine Bliss, the bliss that comes from God-consciousness, always and everywhere. That is the Eternal Bliss (*Nithyaanandha*) which the wise enjoy.

Like the silk-worm that spins from out of itself the cocoon that proves to be its tomb, man spins from out of his own mind the cage in which he gets trapped. But, there is a way of escape, which the spiritual teacher (*Guru*) can teach you or which the God in you will reveal to you. Take to the spiritual practice which will bring relief. Away with the roles of clown and clout, which you have acted all the ages. Take on the role of the Hero, not the Zero! Forget the past, do not worry about possible errors or disappointments. Decide and do.

There are some spiritual teachers who advise you to keep a daily diary, where you note down every item of evil that you did; they ask you to read it as a spiritual exercise and resolve to correct yourself. Well, reading it, and writing it will only tend to impress it more effectively on the mind. It is better to substitute good thoughts for the bad and cleanse the mind of all evil by dwelling on righteous deeds and holy thoughts. Forget the things that you do not want to remember. Bring to memory only those things that are worth remembering. That is the sane way to achieve spiritual progress.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 1-1-1964