

## 21. Sing the sweet name

THE mariner uses his compass to guide him aright amidst the dark storm clouds and raging waves. When Man is overwhelmed by the dark clouds of despair and the raging confusion of irrepressible desires, he, too, has a compass which will point to him the direction he has to take. That compass is a society that is dedicated to the propagation of spiritual discipline. So long as man is attracted by outer Nature, he cannot escape the blows of joy and grief, of profit and loss, of happiness and misery. But, if he is attracted by the glory of God within him as well as within Nature, he can be above and beyond these dualities and in perfect peace. The body is the car, where God is installed for the festival of adoration. Its four wheels are *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (wealth), *kaama* (desire) and *moksha* (liberation)---the four goals of man, *Dharma* modifying *artha* and *moksha* controlling *kaama*.

The car can move only when the fuel of *vijnaana* (higher knowledge) is poured; the tyres are to be inflated with faith. The goal is liberation, immortality merger with the Divine, getting immersed in the inner and outer glory.

Knowing this is the real aim of man; he who is unaware of this is ignorant. However profound his scholarship may be, he does not know the answer to the only question that is worth asking: "Who am I"? He may travel to the Moon, but, he has failed to explore his own inner Moon, the Mind. When he knows the mind, its composition and behaviour, he can know all about the Universe too, for the Universe is only a creation of the mind.

### **Science cannot confer calmness, peace and bliss**

Men of science must be humble that their discoveries are not so important as the discoveries of sages about the inner reality. Be thankful to the scientist for the inventions, the manipulations of material forces and objects. But, do not give him more reverence than he deserves. Science can confer ease and comfort, alleviate disease, analyse objects. It cannot confer calmness, equanimity, peace and bliss. It can improve the cart, make it firmer, more mobile; but, it cannot improve or inspire the horse. These three days, you were engaged in various discussions on spiritual matters and out of them has emerged certain conclusions, which I shall sum up for your benefit.

*Measures for the elimination of egoism:* The chief among these is the *bhajan*. Have *bhajans* (group singing of devotional songs) on as many days as you can, in your village or area. Have them in places where all can come and join, and not in the homes of some people, for in homes not all may be welcome. Have them as simple as you can, without competitive pomp or show; reduce expenses to a minimum, for God cares for the inner yearning and not the outer trappings.

Even this small unavoidable expenditure must be silently shared spontaneously by a few members of the Committee, and not collected by means of a plate or *hundi* pot, or a subscription or donation list. The participants must be bound by love, affection and loyalty to one Name and Form. *Bhajans* are best held on Thursday evenings and Sunday evenings---but, that is no unbreakable rule, for it is not the day of the week that counts. It is the heart that must be ready and eager to imbibe the joy and share it. As a matter of fact, *bhajan* is a constant exercise, it has to be as essential as breathing.

### **Sai Organisation members should not be fanatics**

Group *bhajans* must be arranged to suit the convenience of the locality and the people. Some people affirm that the *bhajans* used at the Prashaanthi Nilayam alone should be sung; but God is omnipresent, He is the indweller in every heart; all Names are His. So, you can call on Him by any name that gives joy. Members of Sathya Sai Organisations must not cavil at other Names and Forms of God; they should not become fanatics, blind to the Glory of other Names and Forms. They should join the Groups that honour those other manifestations and demonstrate that all Names and Forms are Mine. They should contribute to the joy and happiness of all without giving up their faith.

*Then there arise the issue of meditation.* Apart from the *dhyaana* that you do individually, it is good for you to sit for ten or fifteen minutes, at the place where you did *bhajan*, and after *Omkar*, collect your thoughts and meditate on the God whom you adored so long. Or you can meditate on the flame of the lamp in front of you and cause it to illuminate your inner consciousness and overflow into entire creation.

*Dhyaana* sanctifies all activities and controls the mind. You can picture the God whom you adored in *bhajan*, in the splendour of that overflowing light. This group *dhyaana* after *bhajan* will prepare the ground for individual *dhyaana* in your own homes; the taste will grow, the duration will become longer, the peace that fills you will become deeper. I insist on *dhyaana* as an indispensable item of *saadhana* (spiritual discipline) for every member of this Organisation.

### **Reading is not completion of the journey**

*Then about the study circles.* I am not for indiscriminate reading of books, however valuable they may be. Much reading confuses the mind; it fosters argumentation and intellectual pride. What I insist upon is putting the things read into practice---at least, a thing or two. Moreover, you must always remember that the book is only a pointer, a guide, a signpost. Reading is not completion of the journey. It is only the first step. Read for the sake of practising; not for reading's sake. Too many books in the room indicate a person suffering from intellectual illness, just as too many tins, capsules and bottles in the cupboard indicate a person with physical illness. The reading of books or passages from books is best done at some other time, and not as a continuation of *bhajan* or as preliminary to it.

*Then, we have this programme of Nagarasankeerthan* (moving choirs). It is nothing new, for Jayadhev, Gouranga, Thukaaraam and Kabir used this type of *Naamasmarana* (remembering of God's Name) as a means of self-improvement and mass spiritual awakening. Gather in the early hours before dawn, say, about 4-30 a.m. or 5 a.m., and proceed slowly along the streets, singing; *bhajan* songs glorifying God. Carry the name of

God to every door; wake the sleeping with it, purify the atmosphere of the streets, rendered unclean by angry shouts of hate or greed, faction or fight.

Let the day dawn for you and others with the thought of the Almighty, the Compassionate, the omnipresent, All-knowing God. What greater service can you do to yourself and others? This will give you health and happiness. Your egoism will be shattered when you sing in the streets in full view of your neighbours. You will forget in your enthusiasm all pride and self-esteem. Thus, this *Nagarasankeerthan* is a great *saadhana* a great piece of social service.

### **The most precious *prasaadh* is *vibhuuthi***

Another point too was raised yesterday---a small one--about *prasaadham* (the edible that is usually offered to the Lord after *bhajan* and distributed as consecrated food to the participants). Well. The edible offering is to be avoided; the Name itself is the best consecrated offering to be shared. You can give *vibhuuthi* (holy ash) as *prasaadh*; that is enough. That is the most precious and effective *prasaadh*.

It is now your duty to carry on the activities of your unit of the Sathya Sai Organisations in the most effective manner, becoming yourselves fine models of behaviour and attitude. These three days you have spent here, with fellow-pilgrims from other parts of the country and other nations throughout the world, must have given you both information and inspiration.

The Sathya Sai Seva Samithi of Bombay as well as the Prashaanthi Vidhwanmahaasabha (Mahaaraashtra Branch) have made fine arrangements for your boarding and lodging and for the Conference. They have planned and executed the programmes of the Conference on a grand scale, in order to highlight the spiritual purpose of the Conference and to give you all the chance of My *dharshana*, *sparshana* and *sambhaashana* (observing, touching and conversing). You must be grateful to them for this. They have set an example which will serve other *Samithis* in other cities. I bless you that you may, by your efforts in your places, promote the spiritual progress of yourselves and the people of the world.

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*Some people have their minds and senses like cotton balls and a spark of jnaana will set them ablaze and they achieve victory!*

*Some others have them like dried faggots; they take longer time, but, victory is certain.*

*Most have minds and senses like green fuel and even the raging fire of jnaana may be put out by the onslaught of the moisture contained in them.*

*Make your mind and senses like clean finely ginned cotton.*

*Shri Sathya Sai*