

1. Pride and the fall

THE District Presidents read their reports of the developments in their districts and of the activities of the various Units in their jurisdiction; but, most of the reports were hurriedly prepared, without first-hand knowledge and many of them were padded in the last minute for purposes of presentation. Real sincere work is going on only in a few places in the State. You must have noticed Me, standing at the back of the *shamiana* (large decorated tent) in the midst of the delegates, and moving from one observation spot to another while the reports were being read. There is a chair on the dais for Me, but I occupied it only for a short while; for My place is among you, with you and wherever work lies. That is why I moved among you and stood at your back. This is just to show you that, even in your own places, when you do *bhajan* or some other type of adoration, like serving children or the sick or the poor, I do not sit on a special seat, apart and distant. Do not believe I am on the pedestal that you offer Me; I am part of you, a partner and partaker in all your efforts, inspiring and instructing, when you ask or need inspiration and instruction. So, I know that most of the activities you reported now are shallow and nominal, not charged with genuine enthusiasm and faith!

***Saadhakas* must have no tremors of doubt**

There is only one royal road for the spiritual journey---Love, love for all being, as manifestation of the same Divinity that is the very core of oneself. This faith alone can ensure the constant presence of God with you, and endow you with all the joy and courage you need to fulfil the pilgrimage to God. More than one report mentioned that *Nagarasankeerthan* (singing of spiritual music in the otrets) has been inaugurated in various places. But, in a big city like Bangalore, this important *saadhana* (spiritual discipline) is practised only on occasions, that are far between! Some people are afraid of cynical criticism by unbelievers, and therefore, are reluctant to move out in groups along the streets in the early morning hours, singing the glory of God! When you have the very Embodiment of Fearlessness installed in your heart, why should the slightest tremor of fear affect you? If others do not join, for fear of derision or ridicule, move out alone, singing the Name.

You came into this world alone, with no companion, isn't it? During the years of life, you collected all this kith and kin, you gathered wife and children, friends, and acquaintances who attached themselves to you. When you return to the realm from which you came, you enter the portals alone, with no one to keep company. So too, let it be with the journey called *Nagarasankeerthan*. Come into the street alone; collect kith and kin, if they come unto you; move with them, unconcerned and unaffected; revel in your own sweet solitariness; finally enter your home, in the satisfaction that your job is well done. Fellows may laugh at you as insane; but, this insanity is infectious and very soon, even the irreverent will be initiated into the fold. No organisation should have as its' office-bearers people who do not join the *Nagarasankeerthan* party. They must have no qualms, no hesitation, no tremors of doubt.

***Saadhakas* should become examples to others**

Some persons suggested that the Presidents of these Organisations may be given a short refresher course of instruction, so that they may carry out their duties (of encouraging units to undertake *saadhana* and service) more efficiently. This is very much like the move to train whole-time *archakas* (priests) for performing worship in the temples! Imagine someone being trained for adoring God! It is not a mechanical process, amenable to the curricula and time-table of the

classroom; it is a spontaneous urge from within, born out of sincere faith and yearning. If *puujaris* (temple priests) are to be trained to pray and adore, the suggestion may crop up tomorrow that God too should be given training so that He may respond and reciprocate in correct proportion!

Presidents and others are now in those positions because they are acknowledged by their people as virtuous, devoted and capable of doing sustained service to their brothers and sisters. What can a course of instruction add to their spiritual height? This and similar suggestions raise their heads, because most of you have not grasped the very *raison d'etre* of this organisational set-up. The goal is not the proliferation of activities and centres, the multiplications of units, dotting the map with *Bhajana Mandalis* (Chanting groups) or *Seva Sanghs* (Service units), but encouraging *saadhaks* (spiritual aspirants) to become examples and inspiration to others.

What is planned is 'inner individual reform and reconstruction' and not 'outer reform and rebuilding.' This is no game of word-building, where out of one big word a number of small three-letter words are derived and paraded! This is world-building where out of a large number of straight and sincere individuals the new human community is ushered in. The selection of office-bearers of these units should not be done for 'political' reasons---on the basis of the financial, business, social or official position which persons hold; that method will breed squabbles, jealousies and factions, such as those from which many units are suffering today.

Love must be unselfish and universal

Choose men and women who have unshaken faith in this present *Avathaar*, with this Name and this Form. That will save the units from many complications later on, arising from loyalties which may dissipate or divert the energies of the office-bearers. The leaders of these units lead because they have the vision and the yearning, not because they have the votes or the purse. The *aanandha* they derive is the only reward they are after. When men who have no understanding and no vision encroach into positions of authority, unrest and confusion usurp the saddle. Detachment, simple living, steady *saadhana*---these are the qualities that entitle a person to membership of these units. Give up; do not gather---that is the road to Grace. Abu Ben Adam found that the Angel had recorded his name in the list of those whom God loved, though his name was nowhere to be found in the register of those who loved God; for, he loved, not God, but men. That is enough to win Grace.

Love all as so many Forms of God

Fill the reservoir with water; then, when you turn the taps, the buckets will be full. Cultivate love and devotion; then your activities will be saturated with compassion. and charity; they will yield the golden harvest of joy and peace. The water must be pure; the Love must be unselfish and universal. You can yourself judge whether your Love is narrow or broad, whether your Devotion is shallow or deep. Are you content with your achievement? Examine it yourself---pronounce the verdict on yourself, by your own discrimination. Purity of motive is the best guarantee that you will have peace. An uneasy conscience is a tormenting companion. Righteous action will leave no bad effects, to disturb your sleep or health.

If there is righteousness in the heart

There will be beauty in character;

If there is beauty in character

There will be harmony in the home.

When there is harmony in the home

There will be order in the nation.

When there is order in the nation,

There will be peace in the world.

So, be righteous; avoid all prejudices against others on the basis of caste, creed, colour, mode of worship, status, or degree of affluence. Do not look down on any one; look upon all as Divine as you really are.

The great evil that undermines the units of this organisation is pride and the jealousy that it engenders. When one person exudes the pride that he alone can sing *Bhajans* well among the group, naturally others develop anger, jealousy, hate, malice and such other deleterious traits. Love alone can root out the weed of pride from the heart. Love all, as so many forms of God, appearing in these various roles. A heart without Love is as dreary as a town without a temple. Spiritual pride is the most poisonous of all varieties of pride; it blinds and leads the person suffering from it into ruin. Beware of pride; be always aware that you are but instruments in My Divine Mission of *Dharmasthaapana*---*Revival* of Righteousness. Try to be more and more efficient as such instruments. The Hand that wields the Instrument knows how and when it has to be applied.

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Men are born with a helpless lamenting cry; they should die with the smile of happy joy. That is the purpose of the years between. But those years are wasted now. God, who is the anchor that will save man from stress and storm, is neglected and ignored. Man is tossed about from one want to another, one grief to another, until he is blinded by despair and exhausted by foiled pursuits. Most illnesses are due to this despair and this exhaustion.

Sathya Sai Baaba