

1. The triple purity

Devotion alone bestows the supreme good;

Devotion alone is the destroyer of the disease of the cycle of birth and death;

Devotion alone is the means of recognizing Divinity;

Devotion alone is the means of Liberation.

EMBODIMENTS of Love! Only through devotion does man attain the supreme Truth. Through devotion alone does man get release from the disease of birth and death. Through devotion man seeks to realise God. Through devotion alone he achieves Liberation.

Esteeming *Bhakthi* (devotion) as the supreme end and the highest goal of life, Bhaaratheeyas have been pursuing the path of devotion from ancient times.

The term *Bhakthi* (devotion) has been interpreted in many ways. The word *Bhakthi* is derived from the root '*Bhaj.*' "*Bhaja Sevaayaam,*" declared Shankara. "Service is devotion," according to Shankaraachaarya. Whom do you serve? What is the form of service? Service to God is true form of service.

Viveka Chudaamani (of Shankaraachaarya) expounded the meaning of *Bhakthi* in a different way. "*Svasvaruupa dharshanam Bhakthi*" (The recognition of one's own true Self is *Bhakthi*).

Naaradha, who was a great exponent of devotion, declared: "*Bhaja Paramabhakthih.*" Naaradha defined *Bhakthi* as the ceaseless flow of devotion arising from dwelling on the Lord's name.

He also declared that one who is filled with *Paramabhakthi* (supreme devotion) is in a state of intoxication, forgetful of the body, totally immersed in the love of the Divine. This means that true devotion consists in obliviousness of the body and total absorption in the love of God.

Raadha and *Bhakthi*

Raamaanuja who is the exponent of the *Visishtaadhvaitha* philosophy, derived the meaning of *Bhakthi* from the name of Raadha and interpreted it as the continuous flow of love for God. The word 'Raadha' contains four syllables: *Ra*, *aa*, *dh*, and *aa*. If you read the word starting from *Ra*, you have Raadha. Starting from *aa*, you get the word *Aadhaara*. Starting from *Dh* you get the word, *Dhaaraa*. Starting from the second: *aa*, you get the word *Aaraadha*. *Aadhaara* means "basis." *Dhaaraa* means "continuous flow." *Aaraadha* means "worship." Thus Raadha signified for Raamaanuja the continuous stream of worship of the Divine.

Vallabhaaehaarya gave a different interpretation of devotion. He made a distinction between the continuous flow of devotion and devotion falling in drops. When a devotee's heart is completely filled with the love of God, he ceaselessly chants the name of God. This state of mind of the devotee was described thus, "*Sarvadhya Sarvakaaleshu Sarvathra Harichinthanam*" (ceaselessly thinking of God at all times and at all places).

True devotion is to regard God as friend

Maadhvaachaarya described true devotion as regarding God as the only unfailing friend. All others may be friends for some time and turn inimical later. Thus all worldly friends may turn

into enemies some time or other. God is the only true friend. Maadhvaachaarya defined true devotion as the manifestation of the love for God, considering Him as the greatest friend.

The *Vedhas* have proclaimed a truth transcending all these interpretations. The *Vedhas* repeatedly harked upon two words: *Nithyam* and *Svagatha*. *Nithyam* is that which remains unchanged through all times. This has also been described as Truth which remains the same in all the 'three' categories of time past, present and future. *Svaagatha* refers to that illuminating power, which remaining alone spreads its effulgence all around.

This is illustrated by the sun, who is one entity that is unchanging and spreads his light all round. The permanence of the sun indicates the attribute of *Nithya* and the dispersal of his light indicates the quality of *Svaagatha*. Both the qualities are rooted in a single entity. The *smrithi* referred to this characteristic as *Svaruupa-Svabhaava* (the combination of form and quality).

The sun has two qualities: One is shedding light; the other is transmitting heat. Likewise, the *Aathma* has two qualities. One is: *Prabhaava* (effulgence). The other is spreading the light all around. You have the example of a lamp in your home. The lamp is one, but its light illumines the whole house.

Likewise, the *Aathma* (Spirit) is one only in its form. It is eternal and unchanging. The *Smrithi* described it as: *Sathyam, Jnaanam, Anantham Brahma* (The Supreme Self is truth, wisdom and infinite). It is the nature of the Self to spread *Jnaana* (spiritual wisdom) everywhere.

The *Smrithi* declared that the Self has the form of *Anu* (the atom). The implication of this is that there is nothing in the universe without atoms. All material objects are made up of atoms. The scripture declared that God is omnipresent as *Anusvaruupa*. God is present also as the macrocosm.

Dharmee and Dharma

The *Anusvaruupa* (micro-essence) of God is termed *Dharmee*. In this form, *Dharmee* is present in all objects in creation, but none of them is present in *Dharmee*. All objects in the universe appear as different from each other, but the Divine principle in all of them is one and the same. That Divine principle, which manifests the oneness underlying all objects, is called *Dharmee*. This means that *Dharmee* is what unifies all apparently manifold objects. *Dharma* demonstrates the diversity in the forms of objects. The underlying principle which reveals the oneness of all these objects is *Dharmee*. This *Dharmee* is described by the *Vedha* as *Muulaadhaara padhaartham*---the thing that is at the root of all things. This primal basic substance is the basis for everything else. Today the significance of this *Dharmee* is being forgotten. It is also forgotten that this *Dharmee* is all-pervading.

As the all-pervading *Dharmee* (divinity) is present in all objects as the subtle atom, man is regarded as *Dharma-Svaruupa*, the embodiment of *Dharma* (righteousness). What for has man been given a body? What for does he exist? The scriptures say: "*Shareeram aadhyam khalu dharma saadhanam*" (the body verily is primary tool for realising righteousness). The body has been given to man to practise *Dharma*.

Today men tend to forget the purpose for which they have come to existence. They ignore their duties. They go after meaningless fancies. Hence they are not able to understand their true nature.

Role of festivals

In order to make people understand their real divine nature, festivals were designed. Today is *Vaikuntha Ekaadashi*. What is Vaikuntha? The Lord's abode is described in various ways as Vaikuntha Kailaasa, Svarga etc. All these are fanciful names.

What is the abode of God? The Lord told Naaradha: "I reside wherever my devotees sing my glories." The Lord dwells in the hearts of devotees. This is His main address. All other places are "branch offices." Any message addressed to the Divine Indweller in the heart is bound to reach God. Vaikuntha as the abode of God means a place which is changeless. Many things may change in a man, but his heart is changeless. What is meant by *Ekaadhashi*? This should not be regarded as some special place or time. The form of *Ekaadhasha Rudhra* is made up of the five organs of perception, the five organs of action and the mind. *Rudhra* is a resident of the human body, which is full of numerous potencies. Men today are forgetful of these potencies and the Divinity that dwells in the heart.

New year days come and go. Of what use are they? Samvathsara (the year) is one of the names of the Lord. Every moment is new. Why wait for a whole year to make the change in yourselves? As long as you are caught up in worldly celebrations of New year, *Vaikuntha Ekaadashi* and the like, God will elude you. You can realise God only when you forget the phenomenal world and the body-consciousness.

The three active agencies in man

Turn the love that arises in you towards God. Dedicate your body to the Divine. This is the true mark of devotion. There are three constituents in man: the mind, the power of speech and the body. These three are called *Thrikaranas*---the three active agencies in man. It is when all three are used for sacred purposes, man becomes sanctified.

Every human being needs to cultivate the spirit, irrespective of his beliefs. All need devotion. It is only spirituality that can purify the heart and mind of man. The second requirement is morality. Morality helps to purify *Vaak* (speech). The third is *Dhaarmikam*. All righteous deeds done by the body or hands sanctify a man. It is through spirituality, morality and righteousness that the three instruments get purified.

Only the one who has achieved this triple purity can realise the Divine, If any of these instruments are impure, he cannot realise the Divine.

To comprehend the Divine, man has to understand the subtle atomic principle that pervades the entire cosmos. The difficulty in comprehending the Divine was recognized by the Gopikas who declared: "How can we know you, oh Krishna! You are the subtlest among the subtle and vaster than the vastest among the 84 lakhs of species in the cosmos."

The three ornaments to cherish

With faith in the omnipresence of the Divine, man should engage himself in good deeds, cherish good thoughts and dedicate his life to good practices. His words should be words of truth. The ornaments he should cherish are truthfulness in speech, charity for the hands and listening to sacred lore for the ears.

Develop faith in your divinity. Then you will redeem your life. Follow your conscience. Make your heart pure.

You cannot realise the Divine by immersing yourself in worldly concerns. There are two kinds of knowledge: *Dharmee-bhuutha Jnaana* and *Dharma-bhuutha Jnaana*. *Dharmee-bhuutha Jnaana* is knowledge related to forms. *Dharma-bhuutha Jnaana* is related to names. There is no basic difference between the two kinds of knowledge. Name and form are interrelated. This truth has to be understood. The awareness that shines within all beings is the form and nature of the Divine. This oneness of form and name has to be properly understood. Every such concept has an external and an inner meaning. You have to grasp the inner meaning. For instance, the mike here rests on the table. The table is the base. The table stands on the earth. The earth is the base and the table is supported by the earth. The base is called *Aadhaara* and the object supported by the base is called *Aadheya*. Today people tend to forget the *Aadhaara* and think only of the *Aadheya*.

Anything can be accomplished with Divine support

Embodiments of Love! The New Year comes regularly year after year. But do you have any new thoughts? You do not shed your old, mistaken ideas. They should be given up, yielding place to new, sacred and sublime thoughts. Of what use is it to celebrate new year days if you do not change your old ways of thinking and behaving? Make proper use of time which is both precious and sacred. Do not indulge in useless gossip. Develop good qualities like compassion, love and sympathy. Act as your own monitor and correct yourself by self-punishment. By a simple method you can control your wandering mind or your anger. Moreover, place your reliance on God.

With the power of the Divine to sustain you there is nothing you cannot accomplish. Karna and Raavana are examples of powerful men who were destroyed because they did not have the power of the Divine behind them. The Paandavas were saved because of their faith in the Divine and their unity. Happenings in the world show how some families have prospered because of unity and how others have suffered because of divisions within the family.

Today the nation needs unity above everything else. It is through faith in God that unity can be promoted. Look at the diversity of people in this hall, the different creeds they profess, the different nationalities to which they belong. All are united in their common allegiance to Svaami. By this single feeling of faith in the Divine, unity can be achieved. It is the absence of this faith that is the cause of division.

All of you are embodiments of the Divine. All of you are embodiments of love and peace. You are the Divine in human form. Develop that conviction. Immerse yourselves in Divine love. Offer that love to the Divine. Thereby you will have love for all. It is only when you develop this love principle you will be realising the meaning of festivals like these. Stand up for your belief in God, even as you stand up for your father or mother.

Render service to society, without which you cannot exist. Your welfare is bound with that of society. Develop the feeling of oneness with all, loving all as members of one Divine family.

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If you take one step towards Me, I take hundred steps towards you.

Baba