

## 41. The power that draws devotees

*The unwise man thinks about the external world;*

*The man of wisdom contemplates on Vishnu;*

*The former becomes a worldly man;*

*The other realises the Divine,*

*Hearken! Oh valiant sons of Bhaarath.*

*EMBODIMENTS of Love!* Man, although he is inherently the embodiment of *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* (Being-Awareness and Bliss), unaware of this truth, seeks this bliss in the phenomenal world. This is because he considers the physical world as the ultimate reality and forgets his own true Divine nature. This is a mark of his *Ajnaana* (ignorance). When one's vision is turned Godward, this ignorance disappears.

Many persons yearn for God, worship God or contemplate on God. God cannot be realised by any of these means. All these activities are based on separating themselves from God. What is needed is a sense of oneness. How is this to be obtained? When you cultivate the feeling: "I and you are one." This oneness is beyond the grasp of the mind and the senses. It is only the *Buddhi* (Intellect) that can experience what is beyond the senses.

### **The message of *Vedhaantha***

There is no need for penance or *japa* or other austerities to realise oneness with the Divine. Love alone is enough. This is the message of *Vedhaantha*.

When Aadhi Shankara set out on a tour of the country to propagate *Adhvaitha*, he met Mandana Mishra, a great *Vedhik* scholar. They wanted to have a philosophical debate. They had to choose a judge to declare who had won in the debate. Aadhi Shankara, who was a *thrikaalajnaani* (one who knew the past, present and the future), chose Mandana Mishra's wife, Ubhaya-bhaarathi, as the judge. She was a lady who could rise above personal attachments. The debate was held and Ubhaya-bhaarathi adjudged in favour of Shankara. She declared in unqualified terms that Mandana Mishra had lost in the debate. Immediately the verdict was declared, Mandana Mishra took to *sanyaasa*. Thereafter, Ubhaya-bhaarathi also, as Mandana Mishra's better half, followed suit and became a renunciant.

Ubhaya-bhaarathi established an *aashram* of her own to which only women were admitted as disciples. One day she was going with some of her disciples to the river Ganga for a bath. On the way she saw an ochre-robed *saadhu* resting under a tree with his head on a *Kamandalam* (a vessel used for keeping water). He was a renunciant only in external vesture but not a whole-hearted renunciant. He kept the gourd water container under his head lest some one should take it away when he fell asleep.

### **A lesson for the *saadhu***

To teach the *saadhu* a lesson in genuine renunciation, Ubhaya-bhaarathi spoke loudly to her disciples: "Ladies! Look at the man's renunciation! He has not given up his attachment to his worthless *Kamandalam* and is concerned about its safety." On hearing her words, the *byraagi* (renunciant) got angry. When Ubhaya-bhaarathi was returning from the river, he ostentatiously cast off the gourd-bottle. Ubhayabhaarathi then exclaimed: "What a pity? I thought the *saadhu*

was only a victim of *Abhimaana* (attachment). I find that he is also filled with *Ahamkaara* (egoism). If he was not so egoistic would he have thrown his *Kamandalam* at me?" She stood before the *saadhu*, and told him: "Your egoism is growing along with your attachment. This does not befit the robe you are wearing. You cannot be a real renunciant as long as you are filled with attachment and egoism. Give up attachment to the body and develop attachment to the *Aathma*" She taught this lesson in a quiet and convincing manner.

In the sphere of wisdom, there are no distinctions of sex, or creed. Hearing Ubhaya-bhaarathi's words, the *saadhu* came running, fell at her feet and sought her forgiveness. He said: "Oh Mother! Because I had no one to teach me the truth in this manner, I was leading this double life. From now on, you are my guru.

### **The Lord's grace**

In human life, many pursue different forms of spiritual exercises.

*Whatever ochre robe they may don,  
Whatever sacred garland they may wear,  
However fast they may roll the beads,  
Finally they have to come to Baba.  
His grace is essential  
For anyone of any eminence.  
Only His grace can redeem you. (Telugu poem)*

So many are engaged in formal spiritual practices of various kinds. But of what use are they to win the grace of the Divine? Are you searching for the path that will help you to earn God's love? When you earnestly search within, you will get the answer.

Among the nine forms of devotion, the foremost is the cultivation of the *sakhya* (friendship) of God. Friendship is followed by total surrender to the Divine.

A great devotee once lamented that all his limbs and organs were utterly useless unless each of them was used to serve the Divine, to see the Divine or to listen to the glories of the Divine. The same feeling was expressed by saint Suurdhas when he said that the gift of eyesight was of no value if the eye did not see the beautiful form of the Divine. Those with ears who would not listen to the songs in praise of the Lord might as well be as deaf. (Svaami sang a number of songs which deplored the pitiable plight of those who did not use their God-given organs for experiencing the Divine). True humanness consists in using all one's senses and limbs for sacred purposes and not misusing them in various ways.

The man of faith need not worry about who will take care of him if he devotes all his time to thoughts of the Divine. The Lord who is the universal provider will take care of his devotees. This faith in the Lord was emphatically proclaimed by Purandharadhaasa in his songs.

### **Recognise the miraculous powers of the Divine**

How many realise the wonders in God's creation? There is a chick inside the egg. A huge tree comes out of a small seed. A human being is born from a human being. Who is responsible for all this? Only the Divine will. Without recognising these miraculous powers of the Divine, people make much of human achievements.

Look at what is happening here. What is it that makes people from Australia, Argentina and other countries come here? What is the power that draws them here? Without the power of the Divine, will they come here? Thyaagaraaja glorified the power of Raama in a song in which he extolled how Raama's Divine power enables Hanumaan to leap over the ocean and how it induced Lakshmana and Bharatha to worship Him.

It is the same Divine magnetic power which is attracting people from all over the world to come to Bhagavaan.

Once Raama desired to install a linga of Shiva while He was going to the south for the recovery of Seetha. He had asked Hanumaan to bring a linga from the Himaalaayas within a stipulated time for performing the installation. As Hanumaan did not come in time, Raama created a linga and performed the *prathishta* ceremony. Hanumaan, who adored Raama more than any other deity, threw away the linga nonchalantly.

Later, while walking, Raama's foot hit against a stone in the ground. Raama appeared as if he had lost his balance. Lakshmana asked Raama what had happened. Raama said that it was a small stone. Hanumaan came forth and said that he would pull out the stone lest some one else should stumble on it. Raama was inwardly seeking to test Hanumaan and teach him a lesson.

He remarked: "Hanumaan! You are capable of carrying mountains. Why do you bother about this small pebble? I shall walk more carefully. It is no fault of the pebble." Hanumaan, however, was determined to remove the pebble. It was a mark of his simian nature. He tried to remove the pebble with his left hand. He could not remove it. Later he used all his strength, but the pebble could not be removed. He was surprised and asked Raama: "Lord! What is this mystery?" Raama remarked: "Oh! It's nothing." He stepped forth and lifted the pebble with a toe and flung it afar. That pebble was in fact the linga which Hanumaan had cast away.

An effulgence emerged from the linga and merged in Raama. And an effulgence from Raama entered the linga. Raama thereby wanted to demonstrate to Hanumaan that there was no difference between Him and Shiva. He taught that both Vishnu and Shiva should be adored alike.

Today people have their own preferences regarding the deities they adore: Raama, Krishna, Shiva, Sai and so on. Why cherish such differences? God is one. Names and forms differ according to differences in taste. But the Divine is one alone. When you develop the feeling of spiritual oneness of all beings, you become one with the Divine.

*Students!* Do not consider God as distant from you. Do not also entertain the crazy notion that if you worship Him, He will appear before you. Offer yourself to Him and in a moment you will experience Him within you. There is no need for any other severe penance.

Truth is God. Wisdom is God. Everything is God.

*Discourse on 5-9-1996.*

*The Jnaani says, "Sarvam Brahma mayam" (God is All); another, a Yogi, says all is Energy; a third, who is a Bhaktha says all is the play of Bhagavaan. Each according to his taste and according to*

*his progress in spiritual saadhana. Do not blame or ridicule them,  
for they are all pilgrims trudging along the same road.*

*Baba*