

21. Welcome God's tests

What can kalipurusha do

To one whose heart is filled with compassion,

Whose speech is adorned by truth,

Whose body is dedicated to the welfare of others?

EMBODIMENTS of Love! Only that person can be said to lead a full human existence whose heart is filled with compassion, whose speech is adorned by Truth and whose body is dedicated to the service of others. Fullness in life is marked by the harmony of thought, word and *deed*.

The heart should be filled with compassion. Every speech of a human being should be adorned by Truth. Everyone should note the purpose of human life. The ancient adage declares: "The body is given for service to others." The body should be used not only for one's own purposes but also for the benefit of others. In every human being Divinity is present in a subtle form. But man is deluded by this unmanifested presence of the Divine into believing that God does not exist. The innumerable waves on the vast ocean contain the same water as the ocean regardless of their forms. Likewise, although human beings have myriads of names and forms, each is a wave on the ocean of *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* (Being-Aware-ness-Bliss).

Every human being is invested with immortality. He is the embodiment of love. Unfortunately he fails to share this love with others in society. The root cause of this condition is the fact that man is consumed by selfishness and self-interest. All his words, thoughts and actions are inspired by self-interest. He has become a puppet in the hands of self-interest.

Only when this self-interest is eradicated man will be able to manifest his inner divinity. Every individual is an incarnation of the Divine. But few attempt to understand this. Developing attachment to the body and forgetting his Divine essence, man leads a meaningless existence.

To get rid of selfishness, man has to engage himself in selfless service and chanting the name of God.

Show gratitude to God

Man leads his life on earth, depending on the mutually inter-related five elements: ether, air, fire, water and earth. Every object in the world, whether it is a bird or a sheep or anything else, has a value of its own. Man alone has lost his value because of his involvement in mundane pursuits. Man has no gratitude to the five elements which confer on him gratis innumerable precious benefits like light, heat, air and water. Man has to pay a price for so many small amenities like electricity and running water. But what price does he pay for the light of the sun who illumines the world? This light is a gift of the Divine. What price do you pay for a soft breeze or a heavy downpour of rain? God is providing freely such precious benefits to man. What gratitude does man show to God for all these? The only way to show one's gratitude to the five elements is *Smarana* (to chant the Lord's name incessantly). For so many trivial services in life we express thanks, but what thanks do we offer to God who is the provider of the most precious benefits in life?

Chant the Name from the depth of your heart

In expressing your gratitude to God by chanting His name, you should do the chanting from the depth of your heart and not as a musical performance. Raavana, for instance, used to repeat the five syllable *Shiva Manthras* "*Namah Shivaaya*" constantly, but did not give up any of his demonic qualities because the recitation was done mechanically.

On the other hand, Prahlada, though he was the son of a *Raakshasa*, repeated the *Naaraayana Manthra*--"*Om namo Naaraayana*" continually with all his heart and soul. This served to save him from all the terrible ordeals to which his father, Hiranyakashipu, subjected him. His father cast him from a precipice, had him trodden over by elephants, got him bitten by venomous reptiles, pushed him into the sea, but he came out unscathed from all these ordeals by churning the Lord's name from his heart. Every instrument of torture turned into the Lord's form.

It must be noted that reciting the Lord's name with one's whole heart is true *Smarana*. The chanting of the name should not be done to earn the approbation of others or for show. It is enough if one is able to please the Lord. In the process one becomes united with the Divine.

Man, who should manifest his inherent loving nature, has become stony-hearted. To accomplish his desires man should cultivate forbearance, love and compassion and not resort to sinful means. Your desires will not be fulfilled by causing harm to others. You cannot please God if you are full of envy, pride and ostentation. God will respond only to unsullied love and not to wealth or position.

Chaitanya appealed to Krishna to show him the path to realise God, as he was not acquainted with spiritual practices of any kind. He said that the only means at his command was his pure love for God.

Many people speak about getting a vision of God. This is a naive desire. They do not realise that the Divine is present in everything they see. The *Vedhas* declared that man fails to see the Divine though the Divine is manifest in everything that he sees. The *Vedhas* declared such a person as a complete fool. Everything in the universe is permeated by the Divine. Everyone should seek to realise his/her divinity and recognise the divinity in all beings.

Bali's supreme offering

This profound truth is expounded in all the scriptures of Bhaarath. Men are used to making all kinds of gifts--land, wealth, property, etc. But the greatest gift of them all is to offer one's self, as Emperor Bali did. Even his preceptor Shukraachaarya, warned him against making such a gift and tried to prevent it.

Emperor Bali had a heart filled with compassion, was a firm adherent of Truth and was dedicated to the welfare of his people because of these three qualities, the Lord showered His grace on Bali. Bali firmly told his preceptor that there could be no greater sin than going back on one's pledged word. "Whatever troubles may happen to me I will not go back on my promise," declared Bali. Emperor Bali was always concerned to promote the people's well-being and happiness.

Everyone should act according to the role allotted to him in life. This can be illustrated by a story from the life of King Bhoja in which an actor, first appearing as a renunciant in the King's court, declined his offer of a plate of gold coins, and on the second, appearing as a dancer, declared that

the gold coins offered to him as a dancer were inadequate. Today persons don the *Kaashaayam* (ochre robe), but their hearts are polluted. People do not live up to the roles they assume.

When you are given the human form, you should play your part as a human being. As a student, or as a householder, or as a renunciant, you should play your specific role well.

Recognise your Divinity

The mere form of a human being is not significant. What is essential is the observance of human values. Men exhibit external enragements, but there is no mental transformation. Many people come repeatedly to Puttaparthi. Physically they have changed, but there is no change in their mental outlook. Without such transformation man ceases to be human. *Gunās* (qualities) should change, not the *Guddalu* (raiment).

The Divinity in each human being will become manifest the day each one recognises the Divinity in every being. You must all realise the supreme sacredness of human birth. The qualities of forbearance, love and broad-mindedness should germinate in every human being.

In ancient days everyone developed self-reliance and did not depend on the services of others. During the reign of King Bhoja, the Queen used to take care of all the needs of the king, including cooking and other domestic chores. Today people are lazy and depend on others for many things which they can do themselves. The ancient rulers used to teach these lessons in self-reliance to their subjects.

When the Queen was attending on King Bhoja, she discovered signs of the greying of his hair owing to old age. She felt sad about the onset of old age, but the King told her that these were the first signs which showed that he should prepare for his final end. There were four signs from providence about what was in store for man. The first warning comes from grey hair. If this is ignored, then cataract appears dimming the sight. The third message from providence is the appearance of wrinkles. The fourth warning comes when the hands and feet begin to tremble. If all these are ignored the final end comes at the appointed time.

"As is the king so are the subjects"

Taking heed of the first warning the king summoned his Chief Minister and told him that he was repairing to the forest for penance, leaving the affairs of the kingdom in the minister's charge. The moment the subjects heard about the king's decision, they declared that they would leave for the forest to do penance for securing long life for the king as there was no use their staying in the kingdom without their loving and lovable king. The people offered penance and the Lord appeared before them and asked what they wanted. They said the Lord should bless their king with long life. "So be it," said the Lord. The people announced with joy the Lord's boon to the king that he would live for a hundred years. The moment she heard this, the Queen sought the king's permission to go to the forest for doing penance.

While the people wondered what had prompted the Queen to go to the forest the Lord appeared before the Queen and asked what she wanted. The Queen said that long life for the king with no such longevity for the people distressed her. She prayed that the people also should be blessed with equal longevity. Pleased with her high-minded prayer, the Lord said that not only the people but the *Queen* also would be blessed with long life.

In those sacred days, the people and the rulers were equally broad minded and noble. The rulers and the people matched each other in their goodness. The adage declares: 'As is the king, so are

the subjects." Today it is rare to find such rulers or such citizens. Each one is wallowing in one's own selfishness.

It is essential that everyone should cultivate a broad outlook. Everyone should recognise that God is the indweller in every heart. Then alone humanness will become meaningful and redemptive.

Goodness is an index of quality

This day is the sacred day when the Lord as *Vaamana Avathaar* conferred liberation on Emperor Bali. Bali was a great person. But he had one weakness. He suffered from a slight sense of ego. Who is a great man? One who sees the human even in Naaraayana (God). But a good man is one who sees God even in man. Hence it is more important for people to be good rather than being great. Most parents these days desire that their children should become great in various ways---in scholarship, wealth and position. This is totally misconceived. They should really desire that their children should be good. Greatness signifies quantity. Goodness is an index of quality.

Because of the undesirable quality of ego in Emperor Bali, Vaamana incarnated to eradicate it. Bali was known for his love of his subjects. Poverty was unknown in his realm. He looked after the welfare of his people with equal eye. He felt proud about his kingdom and his people. Vaamana wanted to remove even this pride and redeem Bali.

Before leaving for the nether-world Bali gave a promise to his people whom he loved. He said he would come back to them every, year on Onam Day and bless them.

Onam is celebrated as the day of advent of Vaamana and Bali. It marks the beginning of a new life. That is why it is celebrated by wearing new clothes and resolving to lead a new life.

Even now, despite the vicissitudes of history and the occasional manifestation of atheistic tendencies, the Kerala people have remained pious and God-loving. You see devotees everywhere. When you watch the people going in and coming out of Padhmanaabha Svaami Temple, you see the depth of their devotion. The existence of opposing qualities is part of the nature of life.

For instance, pleasure and pain go together. Pain is often the means by which God tests human beings. They should welcome such tests, because they serve to promote one's spiritual development. Students should welcome examinations because they are preliminary to promotions to a higher standard devotees at the present day do not relish "tests". They forget that without overcoming tests they will remain where they are. Even students unfortunately are averse to examinations. This is foolish. Only through tests they can progress in life. You should welcome tests and difficulties. By overcoming them your divinity is revealed. The Paandavas realised their Divinity only when they faced many ordeals during their exile.

Recognise the power of love

Embodiments of love! Your foremost aim today should be to recognise the power of love. God dwells in every one's heart as love incarnate. The goal of life is to recognise this truth and share your love with those around you.

Every human being should deem self-realisation as the main purpose of life and dedicate all his activities to the service of his fellow-beings, with constant remembrance of God as the indweller in all. This is the way to redeem one's life.

Renunciation is a very much misunderstood term. It is not mere giving up of family and possessions. It is the total giving up of possessive feelings of any kind, whether they relate to family or other parochial attachments. (Svaami illustrated this truth by references to incidents from the life of Svaami Raamatheertha, a renunciant who could not forget his regional *Vaasanas* even after settling down in Rishikhesh). Real renunciation means giving up all ideas of attachment to anything. Love can emerge only when there is such total detachment. Consider everything as a manifestation of God.

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Man can realise his mission on the earth only when he reveres all others as Divine. And man has to worship God in the form of Man. God appears before him as a blind beggar, an idiot, a leper, a child, a decrepit old man, a criminal or a mad man. You must see even behind those veils the Divine Embodiment of Love, Power and Wisdom--the Sai--and worship Him through Seva.

Baba