

6

The message of Sakkubai's devotion

God created the Cosmos out of Truth;
The Cosmos is sustained by Truth;
Without the glory of Truth what can flourish?
This is the cardinal truth, behold all ye!

Truth is valid for all times — past, present and future. This truth protects life and sustains it.

The inner significance of Truth (*Sathyam*) has to be properly understood. *Sath+e+yam = Sathyam*. *Sath* means life. *E* means food (*annam*). *Yam* means *Surya* (the Sun). Food is derived from the Sun. Food sustains life. For the preservation of life, food is essential. "*Bhikshaannam deharakshanaartham* The Lord offers the gift of food to protect the body)." When this basic truth is forgotten, food becomes scarce for the people. When food is scarce, life begins to decay. Hence, the entire survival of the world depends on the Sun.

The significance of the term *Sathya* can be sought from another angle. *sa, tha, ya* are three syllables in it. When the word is read in the reverse order we have *ya, tha, sa*. This would mean that through the disciplines of *yama, niyama* and others, when *thapas* is performed, one can experience the manifestation of *sathya* (the embodiment of truth). This means that by the control of the senses (*yama, niyama* etc.) *thapas* (penance) has to be performed to realize Truth.

Thapas means the unity of the three *gunas* (qualities) *satwa, rajas, and tamas*. The absence of harmony among the three qualities results in *tamas* (the dullness of ignorance).

The integral unity of feelings in the heart, the words spoken by the mouth and the actions done by the hands represents the unity of the three active principles in man.

Pure feelings are the outcome of pure thoughts

Feelings are related to thoughts. Only when the thoughts are good can the feelings be pure and sacred. Pure results are the outcome of pure thoughts. Here is a story to illustrate this:

Once Sakkubai complained to the Saint Namadeva that somebody was stealing the cow-dung cakes she was making everyday. Namadeva asked Sakkubai, "How do you identify the cow-dung cakes made by you?" She replied: "I always recite the name of the Lord whatever action I may be doing. The cow-dung cakes I prepare bear the trait of the name I chant". She ran up to her home and brought a dung-cake made by her. She placed it close to the ear of Namadeva. The dung-cake was chanting the name of God: "*Ranga! Ranga! Panduranga!*" Namadeva heard these words coming out continuously from the cake.

Namadeva wondered whether this was real. Even the great men of those days could develop doubts of this kind. Sakkubai was asked to prepare another dung-cake. She brought some

dung and made it into a cake, while chanting the words, "*Ranga! Ranga! Panduranga!*" Namadeva tested that cake by keeping it close to his ear. Once again he heard the words, "*Ranga! Ranga! Panduranga!*" issuing from the dung-cake. He realized that the power of the Lord's name was beyond all reckoning. Man's thoughts remain forever, outlasting his human existence.

Prior to this episode, Namadeva used to be known as Vamadeva. From that day, he started chanting the name of the Lord. Namadeva was the younger brother of Jnanadeva. Namadeva was ever blissful chanting the Lord's name.

By reciting the Lord's name any difficult task can be accomplished. One becomes what one thinks (*Yad bhavam thad bhavathi*). Hence people should see that their thoughts are pure and good. Human life is the expression of one's thoughts. When an inquiry is made into what is most important for man, the general answer is: life is most important. Some others may declare wealth is most important. But Sakkubai was not of this view. She declared that the most important thing for anyone is the name of the Lord. It is God's name that promotes the fame of a person.

The importance of thought waves

In this context, the importance of thoughts should be properly understood. Thoughts arising in the mind fill the atmosphere with waves of energy. Like radio waves, they are present everywhere. We are able to listen in Puttaparthi to a broadcast from Delhi. How did the radio waves reach here from Delhi? By entering the ether in space.

Likewise, thought waves are equally powerful and sacred. Hence our thoughts should be sublime and sacred. No evil ideas should affect our thoughts. Evil thoughts inevitably lead to evil actions. When cruel thoughts enter the mind, men be-

have like cruel animals. When, instead, there are good and loving thoughts in a man, they divinise the man and make him do good and sacred acts. Hence, every man's heart should be filled with love, compassion and kindness.

When bad thoughts fill the mind, even ostensibly good acts result in bad consequences. Hence, the primary requisite is to make one's thoughts good and holy. Unfortunately, today, because of the influence of the *Kali* Age, men's thoughts go astray and men lead bad lives. People should realize that there is no greater blessing than leading a pure life. By chanting the Lord's name men can cross an ocean of troubles. God's name is the boat for crossing the ocean of mundane existence.

In the term, *sathyam*, the *yam* refers to *Surya*. *Surya*, the sun, is the sustainer of life on earth. The sun is also the deity presiding over the vision. If your vision is sacred, your life will be sacred.

Among other meanings of *Sathyam*, one is *Brahmam*. Truth is God. There is nothing in the world where Truth is not present. Today people are oblivious to the greatness of Truth. People lead a life based on falsehood. The result is that there is widespread starvation.

Chant the Lord's name

In ancient times, people led their lives based on the constant repetition of the Lord's name. The power of the Lord's name could be seen in the fact that even the cow-dung cakes made by Sakkubai, while reciting the Lord's name, chanted the name of *Ranga*.

Every person should remember and recite the Lord's name whatever action they may be engaged in. The Divine pervades the cosmos. Hence, whatever you may see or say or do, the Divine is present in it. But the Divine is subtle –not perceivable or graspable. You should not conclude from this that there

is no God. Air is not visible or cannot be held. But can its existence be denied? Without air one cannot live for a moment. Air is only one of the five elements. All five elements are essential for life. They constitute the basic stuff of the universe. Their very existence proclaims the power of the Divine. How can the existence of God be denied by anyone? God does not mean any particular form. All forms are His.

Sath-Chith-Ananda is manifest in man as supreme bliss—the bliss Divine. This bliss is present in man as his spiritual essence. Man has no need to go after trivial pleasures when he has this eternal bliss within himself. He will experience this bliss when he gets rid of the attachment to the body born out of delusion and ignorance.

Krishna's response to Sakkuba's devotion

Sakkubai was one who had realized this truth and was in continuous contemplation of the Lord's name. Recognising the intensity of her devotion, Krishna assumed her form and sent her to Pandaripur. You can see the greatness of Bhagavan's love for the devotee. Assuming the devotee's form, the Lord performed all her domestic chores and enabled her to go to Pandaripur. God sees to it that the devotee is not exposed to calumny. He saw to it that no one pointed the finger of criticism at Sakkubai for her absence from the house. He himself assumed the form of Sakkubai and did all the household work. Sakkubai went to Pandaripuram and merged in the Lord there.

The power of faith is incalculable. With faith any difficult task can be carried out. This truth cannot be understood in worldly affairs.

It must be recognized that chanting the name of the Lord is highly sacred and efficacious. It serves to remove the impurities in a person. It promotes good and sacred thoughts. When

the heart is filled with truth and love, only "positive" thoughts will arise.

There is no meaning in reciting the name of Rama or Krishna once in a year. How often do you take your meals for the sake of the body? Does not the mind require to be fed equally? Contemplation of God is the food for the mind. To feed the belly and starve the mind is like decorating the chariot but starving the horse. To keep the chariot of the body moving, it is necessary to feed the horse of the mind.

The body is taken care of openly in innumerable ways. The mind needs to be fed in private. No one can notice the chanting of the Lord's name. No one can rob one of the benefits it confers. Possessing this valuable capacity, man should not fail to make full use of it. You strive so much to earn wealth. Do you take the same trouble to experience God? Should you not spare sometime for thoughts of God?

Jnana and namasmarana

Walking on the road, a man may see a temple and make formal signs of worship. What are they worth? Worship should stem from the heart. Think of God in your mind and offer your worship in silence. Sakkubai had set an example to the world by her intense devotion to God. Even Namadeva became her disciple after seeing her exemplary devotion. He began chanting the Lord's name continually. He taught the people that reciting the Lord's name is the means to experience God.

Once, Namadeva and Jnanadeva were going through a forest. For Jnanadeva everything was a manifestation of Divine Wisdom (*Jnanamayam*). He believed that through knowledge anything could be achieved. As they were going along they felt thirsty. They saw a derelict well. There was some water deep at the bottom of the well. Jnanadeva took the form of a bird, flew down to the bottom and drank the water to quench his

thirst. Jnanadeva could assume any form because of his spiritual powers. Namadeva said, "I don't need to assume any form. My God is within me. I can secure His nearness without my going to Him." So saying, he sat under a tree and started reciting the Lord's name. The water in the well rose and overflowed so that Namadeva could quench his thirst easily.

The true devotee should be able to bring God near him, without his having to go in search of God. If he is filled with love for God, that love will attract God toward him.

Divine love is the most powerful magnet

The world is full of magnetic power. A flower that attracts you has that magnetic power. The attachment between husband and wife is a sign of magnetic power. Magnetic attraction is the basis of all human relationships. The honey in a flower is the magnet that attracts a bee to the flower.

Everything has some magnetic power that endows it with the power of attraction. Divine love is the most powerful magnet in the universe. The *gopikas* (cowherd maids) were intensely attracted to Krishna by the power of this love. They declared that they would be attracted to Krishna in whatever form He might choose to manifest Himself –as a flower or a tree or a mountain or the ocean. To merge in the Divine, you may assume any form or resort to any means. God assumes many forms according to the needs of the situation. He cannot be confined to any particular place. All forms and names are His. Hence, by whatever name or form the Lord may be worshipped, His reality is one and the same. Some refer to God as Easwara, who smears Himself with *vibhuti* (the sacred ash). But *vibhuti* does not mean ash alone. It applies to every glorious attribute of the Divine. It refers to every potency of God. Easwara means one who is the treasure house of all that is pre-

cious. Therefore, it is impossible to measure or define His attributes.

This infinite Divine can be realized only through love, which is all-powerful. The devotee's love for the Lord is like the love of a child for its mother. This love-bond is inextricable.

The lesson of *Sivarathri* is that devotees should foster good and sacred thoughts. They should be filled with godly thoughts. They should seek to become one with the Divine by reflecting on their inherent divinity. If you constantly chant the name of God, God realization will come in due course.

Whatever other things they may possess, men suffer from lack of peace and bliss. These two can be got only from God. It is for these two that men should pray to God and not for anything else, because God alone can give them. When these are secured, all other things will come of their own accord by the grace of God. People should yearn for God. All other desires are worthless.

26 February 1998, morning
Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam