

### 31. Glory of the Lord's lotus feet

*Observance of right conducts has declined;*

*Dharma has been endangered;*

*Morality has nowhere to abide;*

*What can I say about human existence?*

*Morality and ethics are confined to books;*

*The heart has become a foul dust-bin.*

*EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Aathma!* Wetness is the natural trait of water. Hardness is the attribute of stone. Sweetness is natural to sugar. Heat is the quality of fire.

These are the *Dharma* (natural behaviour) of substances. For the individual, *Vaancha* (desire) is natural. Because man is sustained by desire, it is considered a *Dharma* (natural trait) of man. "*Dhaarayathi ithi Dharmah*" (*Dharma* is that which sustains). Man is sustained by desire. Man's primary duty is to offer all his desires to God.

This means that the practice of *Dharma* calls for the offering of all worldly desires to God and developing the inward vision. "*Sarvadharmaan pariththyajya maamekam sharanam Vraja*"--*Renouncing all Dharmas, take refuge in Me alone--*says Krishna in the Geetha. This implies that man must make it his primary aim to offer to God all external sensory, physical desires and cultivate spiritual thoughts centred on the eternal.

#### **Purity of heart is essential for spiritual wisdom**

To develop such a spiritual outlook and to inspire it in others, one has to possess *Chittha suddhi* (purity of heart). Spiritual wisdom can dawn only when there is purity of heart. Just as removal of weeds, tilling the land, sowing the seeds and watering them, are required before the crop can be harvested on a plot of land, the field of the human heart has to be cleared of bad thoughts and bad feelings, watered with love, tilled by spiritual practices and the seeds of the divine Name sown. Only then one is entitled to reap the harvest of *Jnaana* (Divine Wisdom).

Today the spiritual exercises are confined to listening to talks and not to practising the teachings. Listening has become a kind of disease. Merely after listening, men go about bragging that they know everything. This crazy boastfulness is deepening men's ignorance.

One should ruminate over what has been heard. After rumination, one should do *Nidhidhyaasa* (put into practice the lessons). Only then there is the triple purity of thought, word and deed. Today people are content with mere listening to discourses. This will not lead to Realisation.

Srinivasaraghavan referred to the practice of "*Naama Likhitha japam*" (repeated writing of the Lord's Name as a spiritual exercise). This practice promotes harmony in thought, word and deed (first thinking about-the Name of the Lord, then uttering it and then writing it). All these three processes should be carried out with a pure heart.

#### **"Sathyam" indicates the true form of man**

Total purity is essential for all *Saadhanas* (spiritual disciplines). To achieve this purity one has to understand the difference between *Shreyas* (spiritual well-being) and *Preyas* (mundane happiness). True humanness consists in knowing the nature, of the *Aathma* (the Indwelling

Spirit). *Vaak* (speech), *Manas* (the mind) and *Praana* (the life-force) together constitute the *Aathma*. The three syllables contained in the Sanskrit word *Sathyam* indicate the true form of man. *Sath* represents food, *ee* represents water and *Yam* represents *Surya* (the Sun). The implied meaning of the term is that the Sun provides the water which helps man to grow food. When *Sathya* is interpreted in the reverse order, it means that the Reality is realised by the penance and control of the senses (*Sath* for Reality, *Tha* for Tapas--penance, and *Ya* for *Yama* and other forms of control over the senses).

Control of the senses and the desires arising from them is almost impossible. What can be done, however, is to turn all the desires towards the Divine. This will be rendered possible when one realises that all the sense organs---the eyes, the ears, the nose and the tongue---derive their functional capacities from the *Aathma* (Indwelling Spirit). It is the *Chaithanya* (the *aathmik* consciousness) that animates the sense organs and enables the eyes to see, the ears to hear and the tongue to taste. The role of consciousness is like that of the 'current, which enables a bulb to shed light. It is because this *Aathmik* consciousness is present in all beings, it has been described as *Brahman*.

### **Human body is an instrument to realise the Divine**

Caught up in worldly desires, man does not realise his Divine nature. He identifies himself with the body, not realising that it is temporary and perishable. The human body is nothing but an instrument for realising one's inherent Divinity. Man tries to know all about the universe but makes no attempt to know who he is. Man is leading an artificial life because of his ignorance of his reality. Man's foremost endeavour must be to realise his divine nature. He is not a mere human being. He is truly Divine and has to realise this basic truth.

Man has to realise that all the limbs in his body function because of the divine power animating them. Too much importance should not be attached to these limbs intrinsically. Are not blind persons able to live without eyes? Are not deaf and dumb persons able to get on without the powers of hearing or speech? What matters is how these organs are used.

The saint Suurhdhas wails in a soul-stirring song, 'Oh Lord! In spite of being endowed with eyes, people are not able to see your beauty. In spite of having ears they don't hear your melodious voice.' Men hear only useless gossip. They do not listen to auspicious and sacred things. Having eyes, they look upon people with hatred and jealousy.

Monkeys, donkeys, dogs and pigs also have the same power of sight as humans. What is the difference between these animals and human beings? Animals eat, sleep and procreate. If men are also doing these things, what is the difference between them and human beings? Animals love their young ones, but that love is temporary but human love can last one's entire life.

### **How can one sanctify the body?**

Man has to understand what it is without which he cannot exist. He can get on without eyes or ears or other organs, but not without *Praana* or *Aathma* (life). This is called *Praana prathishttha* (the installation of the divine Life-Force in man). In the mirror of the human body, the image of the Divine is reflected. Man foolishly considers the mirror as the *Chaithanya* (Reality). It is this consciousness that accounts for all that one is able to do and not the physical body.

How, then, is this body to be sanctified? By involving the body in actions related to the *Aathmik* consciousness. This lesson was taught to Vibheeshana by Hanumaan. Hanumaan told him that by mere repetition of Rama's name, the vision of Raama cannot be experienced. Only by dedicating

himself to the service of Raama, together with chanting His name, can he (Vibheeshana) experience *Saayujyam* (oneness) with Raama.

Of what avail is it to recite all the 700 *shlokas* of the Geetha, if one does not practise even a single teaching of the Geetha? "*Adhveshtaa Sarva bhuuthaanam*" (Do not bear ill-will towards any living being), proclaims the Geetha. This is the primary injunction of the *Geetha* to mankind. This is based on the dictum that one *Aathma* (Divine) dwells in all beings as the *Antharaathma* (Indweller). What use is there in reciting the Geetha if one has hatred towards others? You worship the Divine and hate the Divine in others. Your worship and your hatred cancel each other out and nothing remains to your credit.

### **Follow Lord Raama's injunctions**

The Raamaayana is regularly read and Raama is worshipped by the vast majority of the people in Bhaarath. There is a Raama temple in every village. But how many are living up to Raama's commands? Raama chose to go to the forest to comply with His father's promise. How many today obey their fathers injunctions? Raama sacrificed the Kingdom and all comforts for the sake of upholding Truth. He said his sole aim was to promote the people's welfare. He sought to serve the people in whom he saw the image of God.

*No penance, no pilgrimages to sacred rivers,*

*No study of scriptures nor the recitation*

*Of the Lord's name will be of any use*

*For crossing the ocean of Samsaara*

*Without service to sajjana.*

*Sajjanam* refers to those in whom *Sath*, the *Aathma*, dwells. As the *Aathma* dwells in all beings, *Sajjnana* refers to one and all. When you serve *Sath*, which is the Reality in every being, you get the Awareness of *Chith* (Consciousness). With this Awareness, the heart is filled with *Aanandha* (Bliss).

Annamaachaarya hailed the feet of the Lord as those which had been washed by Brahma himself which are of *Brahman* Itself, which bear the burdens of the entire universe, and the burden of all human bodies. How is this done. The Divine is *Puurna-Svaruupa* (All-encompassing form). Just as the feet of the individual bear the burden of the human body, the subtle body of the Divine bears on its feet the entire universe. Without the feet the body cannot move.

### **Significance of greatness conferred on Lord's feet**

Recognizing that the macrocosm and microcosm are constituted by the same five basic elements, man should realise that the Divine is present in everything. Hence, man should chant the name of the Lord from the core of his heart and take refuge in the feet of the Lord. Annamaachaarya declared: "Oh mind! Take refuge in the lotus feet of the Lord. They will relieve you of all your miseries and lead you to the Divine."

When Bharatha enthroned the *Paadhukas* (sandals) of Raama, Ayodhya was really protected by Raama's sandals. Bhadrachala Raamadhas also sang in the same strain. "Oh Raama! I am holding on to your feet. I will not let you move even one step until you assure me your protection."

Thyaagaraaja, in a similar vein, declared that he would not allow himself to be tempted by the treasures offered by the Raaja of Tanjaavur and he preferred the lotus feet of Shri Raama to all the wealth of the world.

"Feet" do not mean sandals made in silver or 'gold. Feet refers to the Divine that sustains everything. Why is such greatness conferred on the feet? Viewing the matter from the point of view of science, it will be noted that blood flows from the feet upwards to all parts of the body. It is this blood which sustains the entire body. The feet that bear the burden of the entire body are essential for life itself. When you seek refuge in the Lord's feet, you can secure a vision of the Divine form.

### **Yashodha catches Krishna through His footprints**

Here is a small example from the early life of Lord Krishna in Gokulam to show what the Lord's feet mean. Krishna was known as one who used to steal butter from all houses and feed his friends and playmates too. As there were a lot of complaints about this naughty child, Krishna's mother Yashodha caught hold of him one day as he was running away and asked him: "Why are you stealing butter from other houses while I offer you so much at home? Your mouth always smells of butter. Give up this habit. Otherwise, I will tie you to a mortar to restrict your movement. How do you do such things, being so small a child?" He smiled and ran away. Yashodha went from house to house in search of Krishna. He played a small trick. Yashodha could not move fast as she had a heavy body. She was in a fix how to trace him.

Krishna dipped his feet in milk in a house and ran from there, leaving behind the trail of his footprints caused by the milk. It was only with the help of Krishna's own footprints that she was able to catch him. In fact, because she was so eager to get at him, Krishna himself helped her to trace him. Yashodha was able to catch the Lord only through footprints of HIS Feet.

The Lord's feet are glorious in many ways. But they will confer blessings only if they are sought with real faith. The Lord's feet contain the Divine insignia, of *Shankha* (Conch) and *Chakra* (Discus). *Shankha* symbolises *Shabdha Brahman* (the CosmicDivine sound). The discus represents the Wheel of Time. The Sound and Time together represent the different cosmic aspects of the Lord. The entire universe originated from sound vibrations. These vibrations are related to Time. Sound and Time are inseparable and interdependent.

It is a common practice among rural folk to advise anyone who has committed a wrong to hold the feet of the person whom he has wronged. Once a man holds the other's feet, it means that he has sought and secured the latter's forgiveness. Nowadays, with all the Courts and legal processes, no one attempts to hold the feet of anyone. In the old days in the villages, if a man fell at the feet of another, the latter had no options but to forgive the supplicant.

### **Seeking the Lord's feet is seeking forgiveness**

The inner meaning of seeking the Lord's feet is that thereby the Lord will forgive the sins of the penitent. But mere holding of the feet is not enough. One must be genuinely repentant and declare that he will not commit similar offences again. Only then he will secure atonement. '

*Embodiments of the Divine Aathma!* Different persons pursue different kinds of *Saadhana*. To realise the benefits of this *Saadhana*, they go to *Aashrams*. They adore elders and offer worship to them. As long as egoism remains in them, all these exercises are of no avail. Your egoism may even lead to your expulsion from the *Aashram*. Hence suppress the ego, bury the sense of possessiveness and develop attachment to the *Aathma* to realise your true humanness. Envy,

hatred and anger are causing havoc among men. Even residents of the *Aashram* are filled with anger. Anger has been described as incense offered to sin. Therefore while you are worshipping the Lotus feet or writing the Lord's name, you have to get rid of these three evil traits.

**Destroy the ego, do your duty and help mutually**

At the outset, the ego has to be destroyed. Then anger will subside. Do your duty. Do not project your ego. Develop mutual helpfulness. Carry on your work with joy. Be friendly towards each other. It is only when you behave in this manner that you will realise the benefits of *Likhitha Japam* and worship of the *Paadhukas* (Lord's Sandals).

In the Sai organizations, the primary requisite is unity and mutual trust. Only with unity can you promote the well-being of the world. If there is discord within the organization, how can you serve others? Make forbearance your ornament. Through love, eliminate your bad traits. Leading members of the Sai organization, who undertake sacred activities such as *Naama Likhitha Japam* and *Paadhuka Seva* should develop sacred qualities.

In Tamil Nadu, in numerous villages devotees are engaged in *Naama Likhitha Japa* and offering worship to *Paadhukas*. Together with these they should also purify their hearts. Today in many parts of the world Nature is causing various disasters such as earthquakes, famines, floods and volcanic eruptions. What is the reason? The spiritual lapses of man account for these calamities. Disturbances in the heart (human heart) are reflected in earthquakes. Fill your minds with good thoughts and engage yourselves in good actions. Chant the Lord's name. When the ether is surcharged with the vibrations of the Divine name, the entire environment gets purified. Those who breathe this sanctified air will have pure thoughts. Purify the atmosphere, which is now polluted.

*Discourse in the Puurnachandhra Auditorium on 7-10-1993, the day of Paadhuka Prathishttha.*

*Man should become the very embodiment of love. When he is filled with love the entire world will be transformed into a love-filled world. As long as he is filled with hate the world will appear as a hate-filled world. It is only when love is developed that the dualism of good and evil can be transcended and the joy of oneness with the Divine experienced.*

**BABA**