

40. Inspiration, not imitation

I HAVE come for the re-establishment of *Dharma* (virtue) and so, I always insist on people observing Dharma in all walks of life. *Dharma* is the inner voice of God. It is the conscience that has shaped itself as a result of centuries of and generations of asceticism and austerity; it is experience the voice of history, warning you against the breach of its command. I have called you all together to tell you something that concerns the Andhra area especially with regard to the organisation of *Samithis* there. For, before you set about the task of establishing and running them, you must be aware of the why and wherefore, more than the how and the when! There are thousands of institutions scattered over the land, designed to uplift, educate and train members in various fields of life. They are born, they live well or ill, for some time; and they decline and disappear. Infant mortality is highest among such institutions, for, there is enthusiasm only to start them and not to sustain them.

The sole object of Sathya Sai Seva Samithis, the very breath on which they thrive, is the consciousness of unity, of all as One. But the politics of proliferation attacks the Samithis too and ten men develop into eleven institutions. As in politics, here too, faction, competition, clamour for power and authority, greed for office raise their heads. People are not able to resist the infection of the atmosphere of elections and parties. Such tactics and tendencies will not fit in With associations of aspirants towards the goal of spiritual unity.

Pray for guidance and you will be instructed

Sathya Sai Seva Samithis are built on love. They thrive on love; they spread love. No other emotion or attitude has any place therein. Divinity is the magnet; humanity is the iron. Love is the force that brings them together. *Nara* is the iron, *Naaraayana* is the magnet. *Bhakthi* or Love is the force that draws the two together. The *a-shaanthi* (peacelessness) from which man suffers should disappear; man should attain *pra-shaanth'* (inner, deep- rooted peace); that is the aim of the institutions initiated by Me. Serve Me, serve yourself by being true, loving and active and being examples of truth, love and service to others. Some people complain that units of this Organisation are coming up too slowly. For a child to grow into manhood it takes many years; for a flower to evolve into a fruit full of sweet juice, it takes much time. Have patience and steady faith.

Do not start with show and shouting and fall off, fouled by factions and feebleness. Do not also imitate other institutions or men and try to achieve what they have done in their places. The inspiration and the channels through which that inspiration can be used, have to arise from your own hearts. Trying to become a Meera by imitation is an impossible task. In Madras they inaugurated the *Nagarasankeerthan* (moving devotional choir) by taking out a mile-long procession of omnibuses packed with devotees singing in chorus, which went through the streets for thirty-five miles! How can such a thing be done in your place? I may inspire you to inaugurate it in some other way in your place; pray for guidance and you will be instructed. I may advise you to start it silently and sweetly!

***Nagarasankeerthana* purifies the atmosphere**

I seek the quality of the spiritual effort, not the quantity. I penetrate into the heart and examine the motive which prompted, the emotion which urged, the feeling that shaped the effort. A family may sing the glory of God and go round a few houses in the same street; that is laudable indeed. I appreciate sincerity and steadfastness, more than paraphernalia and pomp. I have not

given you the task of *Nagarasankeerthan* as an inescapable obligation. Judge the conditions of your place and carry it on if you possibly can. The programme will give health and joy; you can purify yourselves as well as others and the atmosphere which all breathe. It can move hearts and make them forget themselves in the thrill of inner exhilaration. First, serve the self; then, help others. This is the highest form of selfhelp, for it leads you to God and you will be a good example to others.

If your circumstances do not allow you to partake in this *Sankeerthana*, stay at home and sing the songs alone, in the silent cave of your heart. Do not do so, according to fixed measure, so many times or so many songs at a sitting. The heart does not calculate in numbers; it confers content, which is immeasurable. That content can arise only through faith. When the mind wavers, loyalty sits light; love disappears; faction begins. This disease affects units, not only in Andhra Pradesh, but in all states.

People worshipping the same God, the same Name and the same Form must be happy in each other's company, cooperate in each other's programme. There should be no idea of superior or inferior. People break away and start rival units and compete for custom and clientele and ignore the appeals for love and devotion. They forget that all their efforts are for acquiring Grace and achieving the replacement of the ego with God. The distinction that I do not see between one devotee and another, why do you see and quarrel over? It is a confession of your petty perversity. I find that such un-spiritual activities have affected the units only in places where 'big' persons, have entered the *Samithis*. The 'small' men are carrying on, quietly and in humility.

Elaborate and complicated ritual is not needed

In some places, *puuja* (ritual worship) is done by persons who are paid for the job. This is done in some houses also. Now, how can a person have devotion merely because you pay him a few chips? I do not ask for elaborate *manthras* (complicated ritual). It is enough if you worship God in your heart, or call upon Him once, with all your heart. It is the ritual, the elaborateness, that needs money and drags your *Samithis* into the realm of greed, malice and hate. The pig is condemned because of its greed, the dog is decried for its anger. So, do not slide into those evils.

Manu has said that sharing your food with the hungry guest is a great *yajna* (*vedhic* sacrifice). You may be engaged in worshipping Me with flower-offerings for the picture, a hundred thousand flower offerings announced as *Lakshaarchana*; but if, when you are partaking of the food-offerings that day, you drive away a hungry man, your worship is barren! The lotus petals with which you worshipped turn into brickbats if your hearts are immune to the agony of the hungry.

God will appear in the Form you pine for

There was a *saadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) once who called Krishna by various names, each describing some facet of His magnificence. He prayed, "Come away from the herd of cows that you are tending; come to me for just a moment and quench my thirst." He was pining under a tree, shedding tears of anguish, when an old fakir came to him; the *saadhaka* poured out his heart to him and prayed for his blessings to realise his fondest desire. But the fakir told him, "God is beyond all forms; He cannot be limited by form. He is all this and more. How can He appear before you in the form you pine for?" This heightened the anguish of the seeker, and he craved even more earnestly for the vision he had fixed in his mind. Who can speak of God as only this and not that? No one can limit His freedom. Is He bound by what the fakir thinks of Him? He

assumed the form wanted and gave him the ecstasy he deserved. Bear this in mind when you get the urge to decry others for their faith in other forms and names.

There was a *Pandith* who offered to teach a student the four great principles of *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shaanthi* and *Prema* (Truth, Virtue, Peace and Love). On the first day, he expounded *sathya* (truth) and said, "I shall teach you what *dharma* is, tomorrow!" The next day, the pupil did not put in his appearance! The teacher went in search of him and catching him, reprimanded him. He replied, "I am practising *sathyam* (truth); I shall learn the second lesson only after I have mastered the first." He is indeed the genuine devotee. Dive into the depths; you secure the pearls. The person who does not dive secures the foam; the person who dives, gets the truth. Dive, know and experience; then, you have the authority to lead and guide, not otherwise.

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