

Sai Pearls of Wisdom, Part 40-B

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Om Sri Sai Ram Prasanthi Sandesh

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Prasanthi Sandesh, Sai Pearls of Wisdom welcomes you.

Bhagavan Sri Krishna has declared, "I have installed Myself in the heart of every living being!" So God Himself has chosen the heart as His Abode.

Swami says, "The spiritual heart is quite different from the physical heart, which of course is a vital organ of the body. In spiritual terms, the heart is eternal and unchanging. The one who realizes this principle attains all types of knowledge. The real freedom is contained in this realization."

Here is a story from the Shirdi incarnation which tells us how God is the Indweller in the devotee's heart. Sri Dadasaheb Khaparde was an ardent devotee of Sainath. He used to visit Shirdi quite frequently. Once, Sainath kept Dadasaheb with Him for a long time, to protect him from being arrested by the police during the British Raj.

Sri Madhavrao Deshpande was another ardent devotee of Sainath. He used to call Sainath, '*Deva*' and Sainath used to call him '*Shyama*.' On 8th December 1911, Sri Dadasaheb Khaparde had a very unusual experience. He went to Madhavrao's house and found Madhavrao fast asleep. But every time he inhaled and exhaled, with each breath, the sound '*Sainath Maharaj*' could be heard from his mouth. This sound was quite clear and could be heard from quite a distance. This shows that Madhavrao had crossed the 4 steps of devotion: *Sameepya* – closeness to God, *Saroopya* – to see God in all, *Salokya* – to concentrate on Him, *Sayujya* – to merge in God.

Swami says, "*Bhakti* – devotion leads to *Shakti* – power, and *Shakti* leads to *Yukti* - skill. The *Yukti* helps you fix your *Rakti* – attachment on the proper objects; and your *Bhakti* thus promoted finally results in *Mukti* – liberation."

One day Swami told a devotee, "I will come to your house!"

The devotee got very excited and gave his address to Swami. Swami asked for the address once more. The devotee repeated it.

Swami said, "That is not your house! It is a rented place. Your body is your house. I am ever present there, but due to illusion you are unaware of it. Remove the *Maya* and experience My presence!"

Every pure heart is Prasanthi Nilayam and Bhagavan Baba dwells there in all His glory.

Bhagavan Sri Krishna says, "The love towards those who are worthy of worship is devotion!"

Bhagavan Baba says, "The two types of *Bhakti* – one is *Sahaja Bhakti* and the other is *Vishesha Bhakti*. *Sahaja Bhakti* is satisfied with Worship, *Bhajan*, *Namasmaran*, *Vrata*, Pilgrimage etc. *Vishesha Bhakti* craves for purity of character, suppression of impulses, practise of compassion, love, peace, non-violence and enquiry."

While treading the path of devotion, the *Navavidha Bhakti* or the nine forms of adoration are *Sravanam* – to listen to God's glory, *Keerthanam* – to sing God's glory, *Vishnu Smaranam* – to chant God's name, *Pada Sevanam* – to worship God's Lotus Feet, *Vandanam* – to bow down to God, *Archanam* – to offer worship to God, *Dasyam* – to serve God, *Sneham* – to love God as a friend, *Atma Nivedanam* – total surrender to God. *Atma Nivedanam* is the ultimate form because God gets bound by the devotion of a devotee who has completely surrendered to Him.

We find innumerable examples of *Bhakta Paradeenadha*. Yes, He submits to *Bhakta* - that's what it meant! To name a few, Sri Krishna ate the parched rice offered to Him by His poor friend Sudama. He ate granules of rice at Vidura's place and weaved cloth for Kabir. Lord Vittala washed clothes for Janabai and served Sant Eknath as a servant named Shrikhandya.

When Swami was residing at the old *Mandir*, there was an aged lady devotee named Sakkamma. She could not bear separation from Him. She was very concerned that Swami should have His meals on time. She would fear that His health could get affected if He went out in the bright afternoon sun. Consequently, she would follow Him wherever He went. But it was impossible for her to bind this mischievous God to one place. Whenever Swami was missing, she would go all over the village in search of Him, walking with the support of a stick. Finally after getting tired, she would return only to find Swami resting in His room. On seeing Him taking rest, she used to feel at ease. Baba used to pretend that He was resting only to please Sakkamma. The moment she turned her back, He would vanish to some place.

During the same time, there was another lady devotee named Yedalam Subbamma who used to come for Swami's *darshan*. In those days, the journey was not easy. She used to come there by taking any means of transport that was available and would bring

Moong dhal dosas and chutney for Swami. The dosas were prepared in the morning. The moment he saw her, Swami would ask for the bag and would happily partake the cold *dosas* and *chutney*, and Yedalam Subbamma used to ride on the waves of bliss. Many others who used to bring several sweet delicacies but Swami used to ignore them and prefer to have the cold dosa and chutney brought by His dear devotee. Isn't this the best example of how God is bound by the love of His devotee?

Bhagavan Baba has shown us that 3 paths that led to liberation – work, worship, wisdom and inter-related. Bhagavan says, "Let all your work be based on wisdom. Let your *Bhakti* be permeated with humility, love, compassion and non-violence.

Karma is like a passenger train which moves slowly. When you mix *Bhakti* with it, it picks up speed and moves like an express train. *Karma* and *Bhakti* together develop the knowledge of the true Self and this enables us - you to start the real journey towards your inner self.

Well, here is a story from Shirdi Sai incarnation. On 4th March 1912, Lakshmibhai Khaparde, an ardent devotee of Sainath went to Dwarkamai in the afternoon with a food platter to offer *Naivedyam*. Usually at noon, Sainath did not give permission to ladies to enter Dwarkamai. But He did not stop Lakshmibhai and even Baba partook the *Naivedyam* lovingly. After the meal, Sainath took His seat and purposefully stretched His legs. On seeing this, Lakshmibhai was very happy and she started massaging them. Everything seemed fine up to now. But later something unusual happened.

Sainath held Lakshmibhai's hands which were massaging His legs and started pressing them with His own hands. On seeing this, Madhavrao Deshpande remarked, "Deva! What a remarkable sight we are seeing! We are witnessing the actual expression of love between God and His devotee. This is wondrous!"

Sainath was very pleased with Lakshmibhai's attitude of *Seva* and He whispered in her ear, "Keep chanting 'Raja Ram! Raja Ram!' constantly."

Sainath who normally did not give a mantra to anybody, being pleased with Lakshmibhai's devotion lit with a lamp of wisdom in her heart, in order to guide her on the path to liberation.

Well, here is a story from the life of the present Sri Sathya Sai Avatar. According to Hindu calendar, every 4 years, there is *Adhika Masa* – an additional month. This period is considered very auspicious because it is very dear to God. It's also known as *Purushottama Masa* – month of Purushottama, God. There is a custom that during this month, an *Akhanda Deep* – lamp that burns - is lit and kept burning in front of God's idol and a lamp is also offered to Him in the name of Purushottama.

Once, a devotee of Swami was travelling to Puttaparthi, for Bhagavan's *darshan*, during this month. Yes! His wife gave him a silver lamp and asked him to offer her *Pranams*

and give it to Swami. The devotee went to Baba, offered Him *Pranams*, and took the lamp out to give it to Him.

Swami asked, "What is this?"

The devotee replied, "This is a lamp offered to You by my wife on the occasion of *Purushottama Masa!*"

Swami accepted the lamp but did not seem very pleased about it.

He said, "Tell her there is no need for this external ritual. She has the eternal flame of devotion in her heart! Let her always keep that burning bright!"

The couple remembered this instruction and always and reverentially followed it throughout their lives.

Bhagavan Baba has said, "Vedas declare there are 3 types of *Bhakti* – *Boudhika*, *Ekantha* and *Ananya*."

Boudhika Bhakti is connected with *Jada* – the physical. If one is immersed in meditation and idols, experiences arise out of body, mind and intellect and they are transient. The body has to perish one day and so experiences also perish. However this type of *Bhakti* is necessary for the first stage. Travelling on this path, we should slowly march towards the second stage, *Ekantha Bhakti*.

This *Bhakti* means dedication to one idol or form and experiencing mental vision of that one form exclusively in privacy. *Ekantha Bhakti* is a subtle state achieved by effective control of the mind and experiencing oneself as *Antaratma* – the Indweller. In case of *Ekantha Bhakti*, the mind is dissolved and is in a still state. One develops the feeling that God is everywhere and in every being.

And lastly, *Bhakti* without any other thought or feeling is *Ananya Bhakti*. It is one-pointed devotion to God involving total surrender.

Swami also says, "*Bhakti* is not a temporary state. It is an unbroken contemplation of God, without any interposing thought or feeling. *Sadhana* (is) to be undertaken constantly."

Earlier, during *Guru Poornima* and *Vaikunta Ekadasi*, Bhagavan Baba used to give *Amritha* – nectar to His devotees. All the devotees used to sit in rows in a disciplined manner and Swami used to move among them and give *Amrith*, which manifested from His Divine Lotus Hands. After the devotees, it was given to the *Sevadal* volunteers too.

One year, after distributing *Amrith* to everyone, Swami was leaving for His residence on the first floor. A lady devotee named Sharadamma came up to Him. This Sharadamma was blessed with *darshan* and nearness to both Shirdi and Parthi Sai.

She said, “Swami, I did not get *Amrith*! Shall I sit here?”

He gave her permission to sit. Baba put a drop of nectar in her mouth with the silver spoon from the vessel in His hand.

But she said, “Swami, not even a drop has entered the mouth!”

Baba said, “Second chance!” and He stirred the spoon in the silver vessel thrice and in no time the entire vessel was filled with *Amrith*. Swami put some in her mouth and then gave it to all the students.

The same Sharadamma once asked Baba, “Swami, it is said that one attains immortality on partaking nectar! But I have seen several people who have passed away in spite of taking, partaking *Amrith* given by You! Why is it so?”

Swami replied, “I don’t give *Amrith* to grant physical immortality. I give it to bestow wisdom, health, devotion and good qualities!”

Bhagavan Baba bestows devotion and knowledge upon us. Let us pray at His Lotus Feet that we may have the ability to accept His Grace.

Sai Ram! We will meet again!