

9. A Drama Within A Drama

The two pandits who spoke have given you substantial food, but one feels full only after drinking a glassful of water in the end. I shall provide the water now. Of course, the water drawn from the spiritual texts (*sastras*) is not just water, it is nectar.

The pandit referred to some episodes in the *Ramayana* that cause confusion and doubt. He asked why Dasaratha chose an occasion when Bharatha was absent to raise the question of Rama's coronation, why the Ahalya incident (Rama touched the stone in which Ahalya was imprisoned and she was freed) was allowed to reveal the divinity of Rama when all along Rama is depicted as only human, why Vali had to be killed by such a virtuous hero as Rama from behind a tree, why Kaikeyi, who loved Rama even more than she loved Bharatha, suddenly got so concerned about Bharatha. The fact is, doubt grows wild in the absence of faith. Faith can be established only when one grasps the inner significance of each incident and remark.

All must reach the goal some day or other

Dasaratha did not invite the king of the Kekayas for consultation along with the other leaders and princes who were called to give their opinion on the choice of Rama as the heir apparent, for in that case, subsequent events in furtherance of the Master Plan would have been rendered difficult. In fact, Dasaratha did not command Rama to go into exile in so many words; he only acknowledged to Kaikeyi that he had granted her two boons and that he was now helpless to back out of that grant. It was Kaikeyi who communicated the news to Rama. Silence was as good as approval, and Rama had to accept silence as the command from His father. Kaikeyi had to intervene so that the *Avatar's* purpose might be fulfilled. The sense of righteousness in Rama was so strong that when he heard of the dilemma in which Dasaratha was caught, He helped him to come out of it unharmed; he insisted he would go into exile, as his father had promised by implication.

The Divinity (*Atmarama*) in everyone prompts one to stick to truth and to the moral code; you have only to listen and obey and get saved. Some hear even its whisperings; some listen only when it protests loudly; some are deaf; some are determined not to hear. But all have to be guided by it sooner or later. Some may ascend a plane, others may travel by car or board a bus, some may prefer a train journey, others may like to trudge along—but all must reach the goal some day or other.

Sugriva forgot his plighted word and indulged himself in the newly won revels of the court; he ignored the fact that the mundane world is based not on wealth (*dhana*) but on virtue (*dharma*). So Rama prodded the snake Ananta to raise its angry hood and hiss furiously. That is to say, he reminded Lakshmana of the ingratitude of Sugriva and made him furious. An ungrateful king is as worthless as an ungrateful subject.

Grace must be won by spiritual practices alone

The pandit spoke of the death of Vali, which gave Sugriva the throne. But remember, it was not Vali alone that died. His primal ignorance (*ajnana*) also died with him. He saw Rama, with all His divine glory, as filling the entire universe, which is but a fraction of His personality. Rama's anger at Sugriva's dilatoriness is a drama within a drama, for Rama knew that Sugriva would set about the task of searching for Sita as soon as He gave the prompting.

The *Avatars* all play a drama within the drama of this universe. You say that Rama ‘wept’ for Sita, but how can an ant judge the depth of the sea? Rama was the greatest hero in history. He killed the 14,000 demons (*rakshasas*) led by Khara, Dussasana, and Trisiras all by Himself! Every demon beheld a Rama in every neighbouring demon and, full of fury, slew the Rama and was killed in turn by his neighbour.

The *Avatar* behaves in a human way so that mankind can feel kinship, but He rises to super-human heights so that mankind can aspire to those heights. The real nature of humanity (*nara thathwa*) can be transformed into the real nature of God (*Narayana thathwa*), for both are basically the same. Only, you have to switch on to the particular wave-length. Know it, adjust correctly, and the all-pervading will be grasped clearly with no distortion.

You may read the *Gita* many times, but the *Gita* (‘line’ in Telugu) of grace must be won by spiritual discipline. The line of fortune that the palmists say will bring success is the result of grace alone. You may say that you are the master of the *Gita-sastra*, that you have read and digested it, but when you belch, the taste and the flavour must be manifest! They are not evident at all.

Trifles are sought after, temporary benefits pursued, joy and grief alternately tease and agitate. The sea of worldly life (*samsara*) has to be crossed and all its waves transcended, with the help of remembrance of the name (*Ramanama*). If you seek to know the highest and secure the award of the Lord, there can be no place for doubt. The heart should be set on achieving the task of realising the Lord within you, as the motivator. The Lord comes in human form to show this.

Prasanthi Nilayam, 1963-02-10

Falsehood looks easy and profitable, but it binds you and pushes you into perdition.
Sathya Sai Baba