

36. Prick the bubble of pride

THE tongue that does not utter the name of God, the hand that knows no charity, the years of life that know no calm, talents that receive no reward, a life that has not garnered wisdom, a temple where there is no atmosphere of reverence, talk that does not communicate knowledge--all these are of no worth.

Dr. Raamakrishna Rao spoke of the teachings of Raamaanujaachaarya and of the basic principles of *prapathi*, which is another word for *sharanaagathi*--surrender of the individual will to the Supreme Will. He also spoke of the need for an attitude of gratitude to the Lord for this human existence He has vouchsafed; and for the many chances given for acquiring enlightenment. Gratitude is a quality that is fast disappearing in human relations; it is a heinous sin to neglect this obligation.

The Shaasthry elaborated on the assurance given in the Geetha, *Yogakshemam Vahaamyaham*. This does not mean that the Lord will ensure for you *sukham and santhosha* (happiness and joy)--but, it means that the Lord will endow you with steady unshakable peace, inner equanimity.

Yoga means the acquisition of that which you do not have and *kshema* means the preservation of that which you have acquired. So the assurance means that the Lord will ensure that you acquire the *shaanthy* that you do not have and create conditions under which you can preserve that *shaanthy*. For the greatest happiness is *shaanthy*, inner peace. How do you get it? By knowing that you are the *Aathma*, which has no birth or death, no joy or grief, no up and no down.

Just as underground water is the sustenance of all trees, the *Aathma* is the underlying source of all the *aanandha* that the *jeevi* experiences. You bring that subterranean water up by the process of boring; steady hitting, digging, thumping through a pipe, which contains and directs the drill. The borers have to take care that they do not allow air to go into the pipe; for, then the drilling cannot succeed. So too in the *japam* that you do, the drilling the Raam, Raam, Raam, you must be very careful not to allow *vishayavaasana* (attachment to worldly objects) to enter and interfere with the smooth working of the drill. If you do, the *Aathma cannot* be experienced.

Paths of devotion and knowledge

Underground water is perennial; it will not dry up. The pleasure one gets through physical, mental and intellectual pursuits is transitory. Good deeds may grant heaven; but, that too is a temporary habitation, from where man has to journey down to earth, to live his life again. It is like the short term an M.L.A. gets to bask in public fame, earned by the votes cast in his favour; when the term is over, he becomes a beggar once again, begging for votes, to win again the lost status. He starts shouting the same slogans for getting popular applause.

Many people say that *Bhakthi Maarga* (path of devotion) is much easier than *Jnaana Maarga* (path of spiritual knowledge); but *jnaana* is easier. For, it comes in a flash to those who can just sit quiet for a few minutes and analyse themselves. A car moves on its four wheels, but the person who drives it is inside it, not outside. So, also, drive the intellect, the mind, the senses from inside; do not try to guide them from outside. Board the train of *saalokya*; that is to say, of constant thought of Godhead; it will take you to the station, *saameepya*, that is to say, nearness to God; then the next halt is *saaruupya*, where you earn divine attributes; finally, you reach the

terminus, *saayujya*, when the individual *Aathma* is experienced as but a wave of the ocean of *Paramaathma*.

How to destroy the mind?

You must reach the terminus where ignorance dies and *jnaana* is born; then, there is no more journey. Along the route, there are many pseudo-terminii which tantalise you; but, you would not give up the journey until you reach the real one. Calumny, scandal, loss, dishonour, poverty, distress, fame, pomp, triumph---all these call on you to alight; but you should stick fast to the seat and never give up.

Do not seek more and more sukham; seek more and more *jnaanam*. The mind is a fertile field for ignorance. Wipe out all traces of the mind (*Mano Naasanam*)---that is the task of the *jnaani* (man of realisation). How to destroy the mind? It is easy once you know what it is. The mind is stuffed with desire. It is a ball filled with air, like a football. Puncture it and it will not move from place to place. *Nirvaana* means, without air. In a square filled with water from an irrigation canal, it appears square; if the field is circular or oblong or rectangular or triangular, the sheet of water that fills it will have same geometrical shape. The mind takes on the form of the desire that fills it. To take another example, it is like a piece of cloth, the warp and the woof being the yam of desire. The texture, the colour, the durability, the feel, the shine of the cloth will depend upon the desire that constitutes the warp and the woof. Remove the yarn, the warp and the woof, one by one---the cloth disappears. That is the technique of *mano naasanam* (destroying the mind):

Terrible nature of "desire"

Korike (wish) is the elder brother of the mirage. You pursue it and suffer. It enters the consciousness softly, silently; it holds out prospects of pleasure and joy; it draws fine pictures in attractive colours; it gains a foothold, strikes root; then, it strangles, swamps and destroys relentlessly, unintermittently. That is the terrible nature. Raamakrishna Rao gave the instance of Yamunaachaarya conquering the nefarious hold of desire. Be a hero like him. If you entertain desire, you will lose contentment and peace.

In the *Thretha Yuga* (Silver Age), there was a king called Vijaya ruling over his empire from the city of Chandhragopaalapuram. He was steadfast in the observance of truth, morality and peace. He was known far and wide for his deep sympathy with the poor and distressed. He was overcome with desire to widen his sway and conquer the border regions. His spiritual teacher, Garga, permitted him to essay this adventure, for he knew that he would not overstep the limits laid down by the scriptures. He even initiated him into a *manthra*, which would gain for him superhuman help. When the *manthra* (sacred formula) was mastered, Vijaya repeated it, and Io, Hanumaan, Jaambavaan and Sugreeva appeared before him, with all their attendants, demanding to be told what he wanted them to do! He told them that his desire was to conquer the four quarters and that he could not rest until that wish was fulfilled. Hanumaan and others told him: "That is impossible; go back home. That is possible only in *Dwaapara Yuga* (Bronze Age)!" So, he returned to his palace and died, to be born again as Arjuna.

Arjuna's encounter with Hanumaan

When Arjuna went South on this conquering expedition, on his coming to Raamasethu, where Raama has built the bridge to go over to Lanka, he was filled with pride at his unrivalled skill with the bow-, he felt that he was superior even to Raama, for Raama had piled it up laboriously,

stone upon stone. Arjuna said rather aloud "If I were he, I would have twanged my bow and built an arch of arrows across the sea over which the army could have marched safely along." Hanumaan surprised him by presenting himself before him with a grin, which Arjuna felt made him even uglier. He challenged him to build one, so that at least one monkey could walk across, not to speak of the vast host. Arjuna shot arrows one after the other and they got entangled one with the other in such strong combinations that a huge structure was formed, bridging India and Lanka. Hanumaan declared that it was too fragile; Arjuna agreed to immolate himself if the bridge could not stand his weight. Then, Hanumaan walked a few paces on the bridge, it crumpled into bits!

True to his word, Arjuna lit a fire and was about to expiate for the sin of pride that made him feel superior to Raama, when Krishna appeared and asked the reason, as if He did not know! In fact, that was the very reason why He appeared! When He was told of the wager and the failure of Arjuna, He declared that any agreement can be valid only when it was made before a witness. How could the parties be trusted, since it was in their interest to modify the conditions to their advantage?

So, He wanted the bridge to be built again and Hanumaan to break it again. It was done and Hanumaan walked on it as before; but, try as he might with all his might the bridge was absolutely intact! Hanumaan jumped on it, but not a dent was caused. The secret was, Krishna was supporting the bridge with His back wherever Hanumaan's steps were placed, the same back that held the Mandhara Mountain in position, during the epochmaking churning of the ocean of milk by the gods and the demons. This was revealed to both Arjuna and Hanumaan, by the bleeding that was evident on Krishna's back! The Lord interceded to save the honour of His *bhaktha!*

Hanumaan's offer of help to Arjuna

Arjuna's pride was humbled; he fell at the feet of Hanumaan and prayed that he must help him win the battle. Hanumaan agreed to be present on the flag of Arjuna's chariot, shedding his halo over the warrior within. That was how the *Thretha yuga* wish was fulfilled and the *Thretha yuga manthra* proved effective.

This relationship with the past is beyond the reach of human investigation. You can feel that you are inheritors of a long past, of a long history. You may not remember the incidents of a particular day ten years ago; but that does not mean that you were not alive that day. So too you may not recall what happened in the previous life or the life previous to that; but there is no doubt that you had those lives. If you eructate now, you will get the flavour of the food that you have consumed. This life is the eructation of the last one, which you consumed. The flavour of this is an indication of that.

A mother holds a child that has soiled its shirt and puts on it a new one; death is the removal of the soiled shirt and birth, the putting on of the fresh one. Let the mother do her will; be a child in her hands. Have full faith in her love and wisdom. Be an instrument; submerge your will in the Will of the Lord. That will save you from worry and pain. Do not lose seeing people who have gone astray; it will be like judging rain water to be dirty, seeing a stagnant pool. Rain water is pure; it is the soil that soils it.

God is in you and in all else

I have been teaching people irrespective of age and circumstance. Years ago, there were no eating houses and the hundreds who came to this place had to be fed by Karnam Subbamma, who delighted in feeding them herself. The water in the big vessel on her hearth was always boiling and she had only to pour the washed rice grains into it in order to get a meal ready at short notice. She did this tirelessly for years; many came and learnt. Those who kept themselves at a distance then, are pining now for lost chances. That will be the fate of all who fall in faith, in spite of experiences that confirm and foster it.

Vaasudhevas sarvamidham does not mean that all this is just Krishna, the son of Vaasudheva. It means that all this is God, by whatever name He is known. So, if you decry any one, you are decrying God, that is, His real core. If you become aware of the God in you and the God in all else, there is nothing to equal the peace and joy that you get. I bless you that you may attain that bliss.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 16-10-1964