

23. Rope round the neck

This land is the *Karmakshetra*, the land where all activities are sublimated into *saadhana* (spiritual practice) and the goal of merging in the Absolute is ever held before the particular, individualised man. But, this land has started pursuing the mirage of sensory pleasure and worldly happiness, forgetting that only spiritual success can give peace. Though people discover soon that no one can be happy fully, by getting rich or becoming an expert in any science or master of any art, or building up a healthy physique, still, they seek happiness through these means alone. What has to be done is to develop detachment step by step, dwelling on God and fixing attention on His grace, power and wisdom.

The Vedhas have three sections *karma*, *upaasana* and *jnaana*. *Karma* or activity engaged in with a dedicatory attitude, regardless of the benefit it may result in, builds up purity of mind. *Upaasana* or systematic worship of God contemplating on the glory and splendour and His manifold expressions equips you with concentration. These two lead to a clear grasp of the Reality, that is to say, you *acquire jnaana* (spiritual wisdom); the veil of delusion drops and glory stands revealed. Now, these three are neglected and even scoffed at. Know that no object is *per se* pleasing or joygiving. It is you that find it so, the joy is in you. You pour it on the object and ascribe it to the object, by the trick of projection. If an object itself is capable of producing joy, it must be welcomed by all at all times and places. This is not the case so far as any object is concerned; the joy is only projected on it by the mind of the individual.

The innermost core of man is pure

Delusion has to die; then only does the cycle of change end. Then only is man liberated from the bonds of birth, life and death. Call it *saayujyam* (reaching the goal, or merging in the Absolute or Universal), or *Brahmasaakshaathkaaram* or *Aikyaaanusandhaanam* (becoming one with Infinite)--the names may differ, but the finish is the same! Every mortal must attain immortality; for he *is Amrithasya puthrah*, a child of Immortality. That is why I dislike people condemning themselves as sinners, 'born in sin, living in sin, fundamentally sin itself'.

I always remind such people that it is treason to their inner reality to heap such stark falsehoods upon their own heads. This becomes clear when you address any one of these people as, "Hey! Sinner!" they will turn round in anger and threaten you with hard pounding. Why? Because that word 'sinner' wounds their innermost core, which is *Nirmala*, *Nischala*, *Nithya* and *Nisswaartha* (Pure, Fixed, Eternal, and selfless). If you hit a tamarind fruit when it is green, the seed too will get the impact; but, hit it with a stone or hammer when it is ripe, the seed will not get hurt. Be like the seed in the ripe fruit; feel that you are unaffected by the blows of fate; when you get *the jnaana* that you are not the body (*deha*) but the Self (*dehi*), then, no blow can hurt you.

The Shaastri versed in *Vedha* spoke of Yama, the God of Death, having *kaama* and *krodha*, as the leader of the army with which he attacks mankind. But Yama is not an identifiable person riding on a buffalo, with a noose in his hand for roping in the souls of those whom he wants to drag to his realm. No. The God of Death is called *Kaala*, Time. Time is the God of Death; time knows no mercy; when the time is over, you have to leave; each day, your span is shortened by 24 hours. He is as omnipresent and omnipotent as Time. He does not run a rope factory to drag into his home all the millions who die. The dying person has the rope already spun and twisted round his neck. He has only to come and pull! He spins the rope by every act of his, during all

the years of his life, now or in the past. All acts done with egoism, self-interest, an eye on the beneficial consequences, the fruits, give a little more length, a stronger twist, to that rope.

Know the true values of yaaga and yajna

Good deeds done in a dedicatory spirit do not add to the length or strength of the rope. They give *shaanthy* and *santhosha* (peace and happiness) in plenty. Why, you had a very good illustration of this just today. The final offering of sacred objects in the sacrificial fire of the *Rudrayaaga* was done here at 10 a.m. and, there was a welcome downpour of unexpected rain at 10-05 a.m.! Those who do not know the true values of *yajna* (*Vedhic* ritual of sacrifice) and *yaaga* (ritual of worship) ridicule these rites and shout that they involve the loss of precious ghee and fuel, which could be put to better use. They do not realise that the food they themselves consume is a colossal waste, for, they do no good to the world or for themselves. Their cigarettes are a waste, indeed, a dangerous waste; their bush coats, the films they, saw, the hours they listened to the radio are all waste.

You see a sculptor working away at a rock with his chisel and you condemn his work of chipping pieces as waste of precious time and valuable stone. You do not know that one day a form of Divine beauty will emerge. You see the ryot scatters valuable seeds on the mushy field; you blame him for wasting eatable stuff! You do not realise that he will harvest it a hundredfold in a few months. Your criticism is born of ignorance and shortsight. The rain that fell this morning and surprised everyone did not surprise Me, for it is the inevitable consequence of the *yaaga*. It is a special science, which these Pandits know; honour them for it.

There are many who talk cynically of even *Sathya* (truth), *Dharma* (virtue), *Shaanthy* (peace) and *Prema* (love). They say that if you stick to truth nothing can be got done, that a little lie helps much; that *Dharma* is what suits the need of the moment; that if you practise *Shaanthy*, you will only receive all the blows on your own back; that if you become famous as a man of *prema*, the entire village will squat on you and share your hard-earned wealth. Therefore, they conclude, you will be a fool if you decide to practise these four virtues.

Practising what you preach is Dharma

But, just think a little and you will find out the absurdity of the criticism. It is the lie that requires intelligent bolstering, clever avoidance and deeper memory! It is much easier to speak the truth and be done with it. What you have seen or heard or done, speak about these just as you saw or heard or did! And, what is *Dharma*? Practising what you preach, doing as you say it has to be done, keeping precept and practice in line. Earn virtuously, yearn piously; live in the fear of God, live for reaching God---that is *Dharma*.

Minister Narasinga Rao quoted in his speech some officer-friend who spoke to him about the dangers that lurk in a community that suddenly gets a lift in the standard of living, due to some dam or industry being established in their home land. He said planners must first pay attention to the control of the recklessness and the spirit of bravado and crime that accompany sudden access to riches. Of course, this is a universal experience, this association of vice with wealth, of *madha* with *dhana*. The poor are rich in devotion to God; Kunthi prayed that her difficulties may continue, for they keep the Lord ever in her mind. Riches are a great handicap in the path of spiritual progress. So, though you may be rich, do not cultivate attachment to the bank account or to the mansions, cars and comforts you command. Have them as if they are given to you on trust by the Lord.

Listen to the epics and correct yourself

The Vedhas are called *Sruthi*, because they have to be heard with attention. *Sravanam* (listening) implants ideas: it inspires you to take stock of your condition, to note your deficiencies and failings and even your excellences and merits. The ear has great potentiality to correct, reform and guide. Listen to the Raamayana and the Mahaabhaaratha; it is a chance that many are losing now. Then discover for yourselves the greatness of Raama, Krishna, Meera and Raadha. Dwell on their lives, the example they place before you; correct your habits, your outlook, your attitude to the world, to society, to yourself. That way lies salvation. The ear fills the head; the head directs the arm; the arm acts. So, hear good things; do good things; share good things. That gives joy and contentment.

Speak softly, kindly; that is *dharma*. Give generously, wisely; wipe the tear and assuage the sigh and the groan; that is *dharma*. Do not simply throw money at the needy; give with respect and reverence', give with grace. Give also with humility. Try to live with others harmoniously. This is called *Kaliyuga* (the Iron Age), but it has become worse. It has become *Kalahayuga*, the Age of Factions! Factions in the family, the village, the community, the country, the nation, the world. The root cause of all this is the emphasis on the ego and the desire for cheap and temporary pleasure.

Earn the riches of *jnaana*, as Janaka did, through association with the great sages of the day, as Dasharatha did from Vasishtha. These *Brahmins*, scholars in the *Vedhas*, have in them the *jnaana* you need; they have preserved them in spite of poverty and neglect. They have been scorned by the rulers and the ruled, the people and the politicians. Their knowledge heaped in their 'godowns!' is fast getting useless through not seeing the light. You might be wondering why I am taking them with Me from place to place and even sympathising with Me for the task that I have taken upon My back, for, in your opinion, it is a lost cause. No; it is not lost; the *Avathaar* has come to see that it is retrieved and restored. I derive *Aanandam* through them and with them.

To condemn all is unjust

Do not judge them by their dress or their exterior. There may be among them a few who do not live up to the high standard they profess; that percentage is like the few small stones found in a bag of rice, small in quantity and easily recognisable. Do not condemn the clouds which shower sheets of pure water, because after it falls to the ground some water gets dirty. To condemn all is unjust, untrue and unkind. Take My own instance. I never exult when I am extolled, nor shrink when I am reviled. Few have realised My purpose and significance; but I am not worried. When things that are not in Me are attributed to Me, why should I worry? When things that are in Me are mentioned, why should I exult? "*Sayee ki Sarvamu* yes, yes, yes," (for Sayee it is always s.s.s.). If you say, "Yes; you are the Lord," I am the Lord to you, if you say "No", I am No to you.

I am Anaanda, Shaantham, Dhairyam (Bliss, Equanimity and Courage). Take Me as your *Aathmathathwam* (Reality of *Aathma*); you won't be wrong. Resolve from this day to see only the good in others, to develop the good in yourselves. That is the best *saadhana*. Discard anger, hate, envy and greed; do it by dwelling always on the Name that summarises and signifies the Glory of God. Nurturing anger and hatred in the heart is like carrying a pot with many holes for bringing water.

Foster depositories of ancient wisdom

During these days when I am going about in the East Godavari District, people have witnessed the devotion and sincerity of lakhs of men and women. Spiritual thirst is present in a large measure; the tendency to run towards the Divine is here. It is latent, but strong. Just as when the showers of rain come, the bare plains become green with grass, since the rain feeds the roots underground, My presence has made the spiritual yearning lying dormant in your hearts, sprout in profusion. That yearning has made you ignore the importunities of hunger and thirst, and given you great joy and contentment.

.Foster these repositories of our ancient dharma and wisdom, the Pandits. You run to them only when you need a priest for marriages or other ceremonies. You never care whether they are fed or clothed, whether they have enough opportunities to study the scriptures, to teach their children, to live as teachers and guides of society. Honour them, make full use of them.

Rajahmundry, 30-3-1965

*Life is just a chance
to see for yourself
your beginning and your end..
SRI SATHYA SAI*