

29. The immortal guide to immortality

These days when anxiety casts its shadow over the land, the recollection of the birth and achievements of Raama acts as armour to the agitated mind. Raama is in truth the *Vedhas* personified. He is *Vedhadharma* in human form. Today, what you celebrate is not the birth of the son of Dasharatha, called Raama, but of the birth of Dharma itself. You must be happier at that thought; it is a double birthday. When *Dharma* declines, and the joy of practising it and living it and saturating thoughts and deeds with it, is no longer sought after, when that joy is forgotten and even denied, the Lord incarnates, according to the assurance He has vouchsafed. That is the way of the Lord.

The arena of life is raised on four pillars' *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kaama* and *Moksha* (Righteousness, Wealth, Desire and Liberation). They sustain and support. When the arena loses two and struggles to stand on the remaining two, viz., *artha* and *kaama*, naturally, anxiety, pretence, grief and greed afflict mankind. Each pillar must co-operate and complement the parts that the other three play. *Dharma* must sublimate *artha*, that is to say, through moral means alone should the means of living be obtained. *Artha* must be won through *dharma* and used in *dharma*. *Kaama* must be primarily for *moksha*; that is to say, desire must be directed to liberation from bondage, not to the forging of new chains or the addition of further links in the chain of birth and death. The first of the four, *Dharma*, must interpenetrate and strengthen the next two, so that the fourth may be attained. Devoid of the first and the last, mankind is reduced to the level of beasts and birds.

Dharma subsumes all stages of life

Artha and *kaama* should not be sought after, in isolation. The fact that today there is fear and anxiety in all sections of the people and in all stages of life, shows that men are pursuing only *artha* and *kaama* and neglecting *dharma* and *moksha*. It was once the pride of India that it was a land of peace and fearlessness, of spiritual effort and adventure, which guaranteed social and individual content. Now, Indians must again dedicate themselves to the revival of that way of living, of *Dharma* which subsumes all the stages of life. In this campaign, it is the duty of every individual, irrespective of caste, creed, sex or extent of possessions or learning, to join enthusiastically. For, it comes quite naturally to an Indian since it has drawn out the best in him for centuries and the yearning for it is in his blood.

How are you to adopt *Dharma* in the process of living? That is laid down by the *Avathararas* like Raama. That is the purpose of His coming. Dasharatha had four sons of whom Raama was the foremost. They represent the four *Purusharthas*, *Dharma* being the foremost; the other three serve and are strengthened by Raama, who is described as *Vigrahavaan Dharmah*: the very image of *Dharma*.

The difference between man and demon (*maanava* and *daanava*), is just this' *Maanava* or man has or ought to have *dharma*, *dhama* and *dhaya*---*morality*, self-control and charity. The *daanava* or demon does not have these nor does he consider them as desirable qualifications. He spurns them and pays no heed to their promptings. These three Dha's are essential components of humanness. There are as many stages of *maanavathwam* proceeding towards *Maadhavathwam* as there are hearts; for, all are pilgrims from *daanavathwam* or *demonhood* to *maanavathwam* or *humanhood* and thence, to *Maadhavathwam* or *Godhood*. The pilgrims move at their own speed and with the Name-Form that inspires them.

Religion is a mode of the mind

There are some who talk of unifying religions; but religion is a mode of the mind and there are as many religions as there are minds. If you can unify minds, you can unify religions; but, it is an impossible task. Unless the altars of all hearts are made uniform, this attempt is bound to fail. And it is not worthwhile. *Jeevo devassanaathanam* (the self and God are eternal), said the Pandit, now. Yes. The *Brahmathathwam* or the Universal Principle is *nirmala* and *nischala* (pure and immovable) but the *Deva* imagines itself to be the *Jeeva*. *Brahman* feels bound to Name-Form and so, it has to regain the lost awareness. This is done through *Dharma*.

Samartha Raamadas appeared before Shivaji, with his usual call for alms: *Bhavathi Bhikshaam Dehi*. Shivaji realised that the *Guru* is God; so, he wrote something on a piece of paper and deposited it reverentially in the alms bag of Raamadas. "For the relief of hunger how can paper suffice?" asked Raamadas. Shivaji prayed that the paper may be read. The paper recorded a gift of the entire kingdom and all that Sivaji owned to the *Guru*. Samartha Raamadas replied: "No, *My dharma is Dharmabodha, the teaching of dharma*, instructing the people in the right way of life; *Kshatriyas* like you must follow the *dharma* of ruling the land, ensuring peace and content to the millions under your care." Sage Yaajnavalkya too once refused a kingdom, because he cared more for the Kingdom of *Moksha*, the realm of eternal freedom. Sage Vasishtha is also said to have renounced a kingdom, offered him by Raama.

That was the ideal in the past; it is only now that men pursue paths that lead them away from *Dharma*. You have allowed the treasure that the sages gave you to drop from your grasp. Though the medicinal root that you so badly need is lying across your path and has actually tripped your step, you have no eyes to recognise it and realise the value. What a pity, this!

Look at the way Raama refused to accept the kingdom out of which he had willingly come, to carry out the wish of his mother, and the plighted word of his father, when Bharatha entreated him piteously to take it from him. Raama taught that *artha* and *kaama* should not be allowed to over-rule *dharma* and the discipline of *moksha*. For, fundamentally, the objects of the world are incapable of conferring joy.

Good deeds will wipe out the tracing of bad

Once when Naarada was proceeding to *Vaikuntha*, the abode of the Lord, he espied a *yogi* who was engaged in severe ascetic practices. The *yogi* prayed to Naarada to bring back from *Vaikuntha* information about the date of his becoming entitled to entry there-into. Naarada promised to do so. When he stood in the presence of God, he pleaded on behalf of the *yogi* and asked that he may be informed of the date. The Lord replied, "Tell him that he will be coming here after as many more births as there are leaves on the tree under which he is doing penance." Naarada felt sad and dispirited when he thought of the grief into which the *yogi* would be

thrown on hearing this disheartening news. But he mustered courage to announce it nevertheless, for, the *yogi* insisted on hearing the news that he had promised to bring.

When at last Naarada broke the news, the *yogi* was transported with joy; he was not dispirited at all. He jumped and danced in glee. He was lost in the thrill of his hope being so near fulfilment. All consciousness of the world disappeared from his joy-filled mind. So, the Lord himself appeared before Him and offered him *Vaikuntha* immediately. But, the *Yogi* said, he would bide his time, for, he did not like the Lord's word, which Naarada had brought, to be falsified! The Lord had to convince him that good deeds and thoughts and feelings will wipe out the tracings of

bad; so, he had by his enthusiastic acceptance of the Lord's will got over the consequences of past actions.

The law of karma is not an iron law; by dedication, by purification, which invites benediction, its effects can be modified, and its rigour mitigated. Do not despair; do not lose heart. When vices hold sway over your heart it becomes foul and sooty. The flames of *kaama*, *krodha* and *lobha* (desire, anger and greed) char the heart. Grace is proved by the quenching of these flames. Grace confers *aanandam*, which *kaama*, *krodha* and *lobha* can never confer.

Practise the discipline laid down by Raama

The word Raama itself indicates *Aanandam*. Raama is *Aanandaswaruupa*. In every being, He is the *Aananda* in the innermost core, *the Aathmaaraama*. How then are you being affected by grief? Because you ignore the core, you identify yourselves with the shell, the body. Today, the holy day of *Raamanavami*, you should immerse yourself in the *Aathma* as *Dharmaswaruupa*, as the motivator of the moral life. There is no place where Raama is not; no being to whom He denies Grace. He does not arrive or depart; He is immanent, eternal. So, to celebrate a Day as the day on which He was born, is itself a sacrilege.

Raama for you should mean the Path He trod, the Ideal He held aloft, the Ordinance He laid down. The path, the ideal and the ordinance are eternal, timeless. Follow the Path, stick to the Ideal, obey the Ordinance---that is the true celebration. Then alone does your life become fruitful. Now, you worship His Form, you repeat His Name; but, you ignore His Orders. This is no real *Prema* at all. Without actual practice of the discipline laid down by the Lord to purify the mind so that He may be reflected therein, all else is mere show, empty ritual.

Godhood can be reached and realised

Running after momentary joy, people exile themselves from the Kingdom of God. The value of human birth consists in this; it is only from humanhood that Godhood can be reached and realised. Contemplate on this unique good luck today, use it not for feasting but plan your future so that the goal is quickly attained. Such days must be fully dedicated to thoughts of God, thoughts that elevate and inspire. People spend holy days as holidays, when they revel in picnics and hikes, watch films, play games, gamble and quarrel over a game of cards. This is entirely wrong. Days like Gokulaashtami, Shivarathri, etc., must be welcomed as opportunities to broaden the heart, deepen faith and enlarge sympathy with fellow beings. To tarnish them by indulging in sensory pleasures is to insult the hoary tradition.

I have heard many complain that it is difficult to achieve *ekaagratha* (one-pointedness); even some so-called great men have told me so. But the fault is not with the times, it is in themselves; they have no adequate *shraddha*---*faith* and steadiness. The steadiness they exhibit in the pursuit of worldly goods and worldly comfort they do not transfer to the pursuit of inner calm. They complain of lack of time, as if all their waking hours are now utilised for worthwhile purposes!

I must also condemn the absence of gratitude, which is rampant today. Ingratitude is the hallmark of wild beasts, not of man. Man today is all humility, all obedience until his wish is fulfilled. Once it is satisfied, he tries even to ruin the person who helped him realise it. This does not befit man. He must be conscious of benefits derived and eager to repay the debt, or at least, eager to avoid causing harm to the person who saved him while in distress. *Maanava* means "an individual without a trace of ignorance." But, man by his pomp and pride, his egoism and conceit reveals that he is ignorant of his reality and therefore undeserving of that name.

Ingratitude does not befit man

As far as lies in your power, do good to others. Do not sow fear in others' hearts; do not inflict pain on others; do not promote anxiety or grief. If you take pleasure in the pain of others, you only scotch the divinity in you and bring to light the demonic nature. "*Ishwarassarvabhoothaanaam*"---the Lord resides in all. He is in you as much as in the 'other' whom you try to harm. Know this and give up all efforts to ruin others. You cannot help another; you can only help yourself by that act; you do not harm another, you harm yourself by that wicked act. The attachments are different; but the inner reality is the same in you and "other." You will understand this when you distinguish values, the value of *vishaya indriya aanandam* and *Vtshweshwara Aanandam*, that is to say, the joy derivable from senses and objects and the joy derivable from the contemplation of the glory and the grace of God.

Raama strove to uphold *Sathya* as the main plank of *dharma*. Whatever the trial, however hard the travail, He did not give up Truth. *Sathyam* is *Dharmam*. *Dharmam* is *Sathyam*---the two are irrevocably intertwined. *Sathyam Vadha, Dharmam Chara*, say the *Upanishads*. Raama will be remembered so long as mountains raise their heads and the oceans exist, because of this strict adherence to *Sathyam* and *Dharmam*. If he had argued, "Why should I be bound by the word of my father?" he would not have earned this Immortality. The Immortal had come in the form of Raama to show the way to Immortality.

Seetha too kept up the *Dharma* of women. She declined to return to Raama on the shoulders of Hanumaan for she said, she would not of her own will contact another male; nor would she deny Raama the chance of proving his prowess by destroying the wicked person who stealthily carried away His Consort. That is the *dharma* of a *pathivratha* (chaste woman). These ideals have weakened now; women as well as men are tempted to yield to the convenience of the moment; they do not attach importance to the deeper springs of righteousness. Tree shade or tent, what we want is sleep, they seem to say. The end justifies the means, that is the philosophy. Fair ends through foul means, how can this be right? He who has to instal Raama in his heart is sheltering a beast therein. What a tragedy!

Trait which man should learn from Raama

Kausalya counselled Raama at the start of his exile in the forest, 'The *dharma* which you are so scrupulously observing will guard you.' That was the farewell she gave, not a banquet of tasty dishes. The ten-headed Raavana who held the Gods in chains could not stand up to Raama, who had *dharma* as His sword and shield. Raama was happy when others were happy. He grieved when others were in grief. That is the trait which He wanted man to learn. So, while avoiding pain from others, be vigilant not to cause pain to others, too. Then, you attract the Grace of the Lord, not when you contrive by tricks to harm others, or revel in the misery of others, or concentrate on your own happiness and progress, irrespective of the injury you cause to others.

The grief you cause to others will suffocate you after getting hardened into hatred. It will recoil on your own head, with tenfold force. If you are established in *Aathmatha-thwam* (Reality of Self), you need not fear. Of course you must be afraid of wrong, of injustice, of cruelty, of sin. But why fear when you have the security granted by *Sathyam, Dharmam, Nyaayam* and *Premam*---Truth, Righteousness, Justice and Love?

I had no intention to speak today, but I was pressed to speak for five minutes at least. I have spoken for fifty! I shall now give you a chance to sing a few *Naamaavalis* (divine names).

Venkatagiri, 10,4-1965

*Darkness and light cannot
exist at the same time
and in the same place;
they cannot continue together,
Dhanam (riches) and Daivam (God)
cannot be joint ideals.
When riches are sought
God cannot be achieved.
If both are sought by man
what he will achieve,
will be neither Dhanam nor Daivam
but the Devil.*

SHRI SATHYA SAI