

## 50. In ants and men

The pitch darkness of the New Moon night has given place, on account of the death of Narakaasura at the hands of God, to the brightness of the white half of the month. *Daivathwam* and *daanavathwam* (Divinity and devilishness) compete for the possession of the mind of man and pursue him as Light and Darkness. *Daanavathwam* piles upon man misery after misery, while *Daivathwam* warns him against yielding to despair on that account. They have to be welcomed as beneficial, for misery is the crucible in which the dross is removed and the pure gold separated from alloys. The *daanava* forces are aflame in every person as lust and greed, as hate and envy, as pride and pompousness.

The traits of Raavana's lust, of Sisupaala's pride, of Kamsa's hate, of Hiranyaaksha's envy are tainting every human heart. Only the discipline of the spirit *through japam* and *dhyaanam* can quench the flames and scotch the conflagration. Today, we celebrate the destruction of those traits, collectively personified as Narakaasura, for, they, by their collective effect, lead man into hell or *Naraka*.

Those traits are the wild weeds that smother the seedlings of love and truth, of sympathy and service, of reverence and renunciation, which man seeks to cultivate in his heart. The *Upanishads* lay down the means and measure of this inner culture; the thorny bushes that have to be uprooted, the ploughing and levelling, the formation of bunds, the filling of the fields with the waters of love, the seeds, the pests, the fence, the manure and all the other items of this strange new agriculture. The spiritual aspirant is but a ryot who has determined not to allow his inner faculties to lie fallow. He has become aware of the precious harvest of happiness that he can earn and he allows no moment to go waste, without being used for this high purpose.

### Three types of spiritual aspirants

Naagayya, who has acted the roles of great devotees like Pothana, Thyaagayya and Raamadas, spoke just now of three types of *saadhakas* and *bhakthas*: (1) Those who desire liberation from birth and merging with the Universal and Eternal Supreme Sovereign; (2) those who dedicate everything they experience and act, to the Lord, without getting attached to their consequences; and (3) those who worship the Lord for the benefits He confers, here and hereafter. He confessed with some hesitation that he still belonged to the third category! But, certainly, no one need feel small because he is asking the Lord for worldly benefits. It is to be appreciated that, instead of cringing before man, a person has the good sense and the confidence to fall at the feet of the Lord and ask Him for favours.

Pothana refused to dedicate his work to Singabhupathi, though that ruler himself asked for that distinction, for, he declared that he knew no master other than the Lord. Thyaagayya spurned the offer of substantial gifts from the Raaja of Tanjore, who was anxious to reward him for his devotion and his musical talents. He said, "The bliss of nearness to Raama is more pleasing to me than all the treasures man can give". Thyaagaraja was really a *raaja* (king) among the detached.

*Bhakthi* or devotion to God is not to be judged or measured by rosaries or candles, daubings on the forehead or matted hair or jingles on the ankles; purity of motives and intentions is essential, so that *prema* which is the one component of *bhakthi* does not leak out of the heart. The genuine outer signs of *bhakthi* are three' faith, humility and apprehension. Faith in the ultimate victory of truth and love; humility before elders and the wise; apprehension in the presence of evil, fear to

mix with bad company, to enter into evil designs, to act counter to the whisperings of conscience.

### **Be an indefatigable enquirer of Truth**

*Bhakti* cannot come into man from outside him; it has to be grown from within by an effort to cleanse the mind, to know the nature and origin of man and the universe, to grasp the relation of man with all the external objects which now fascinate and foil him. Janaka was such an indefatigable enquirer. Though the ruler of a vast kingdom, he held court mostly to be in the midst of scholars and sages and learn from their discussions the many facets of Truth. He confronted every scholar who came to him with the question, (which he put to Yaajnavalkya, for instance), "With what object have you come? Desiring some cattle, or, some questions for subtle decisions?" And, most of them answered like Yaajnavalkya, "Both, indeed O Emperor".

The *Brihadaraanya Upanishad* devotes many sections to these discussions in Janaka's court and to the part played by Yaajnavalkya in clarifying many philosophical issues by his mastery of spiritual science, in theory as well as practice. Once Janaka performed a sacrifice during which he gave away a large number of gifts. He had set apart a thousand cows, with gold jewels on the horns and hooves, as a special prize for the person acclaimed by the assembly of scholars as the most learned, the greatest scholar in the science of *Brahmam*. As soon as he came to know of this, Yaajnavalkya who was singularly conscious of his unbeatable scholarship, asked his pupil, "Drive these cows home, my son". The Brahmins were enraged at this impudence and they challenged him to answer the questions they showered on him, in order to justify his driving away the cows.

### **Faith can grow only on conviction**

The priest in charge of the sacrifice asked him about the effects of *Yajna*. Questions were asked about the sense organs and objects and the relationship between them; some scholars like Bhujyu tried to puzzle him and overpower him by suggesting a superhuman source for knowledge. Others moved on to the subject of the *Aathma*, as *Sarvaantharyaamin*. The most formidable of the interlocutors was a woman, Gaargi who had a plentiful sheaf of arrows to let go at Yaajnavalkya. At last she rose from her seat and declared: "I shall now ask him two questions. If he answers those two satisfactorily, then none of us can ever defeat him in expounding *Brahmam*."

"What is it that pervades like the warp and the woof, that which is above heaven and below the earth, that which is heaven and earth, and between them both, that which was, is and will be?" Gargi asked and Yaajnavalkya answered, "*Aakaasha*". Gaargi appreciated the answer. Then, she asked again, "What pervades the *Aakaasha* as warp and woof?" And Yaajnavalkya replied, "It is the Akshara, neither *sthula* nor *anu*, neither short nor long, neither air nor ether, without eyes or ears, with neither exterior nor interior. It is never seen, but it is the Seer; it is never thought, but it is the Thinker; it is never known, but, it is the Knower." And, Gaargi accepted that he was supreme and undefeatable. Janaka grew wise as a result of such deliberations and discussions in his court. Faith can grow only on conviction and one can be convinced only when doubts are dissolved by discussions.

You are moulded by the company you relish. When you make friends with the blacksmith, you are bound to collect black dust on your clothes and skin. That is why *sangam* (association) is held to be so crucial in spiritual life.

### **Parents must correct their wards on the spot**

You must have a separate room or corner where you do *japa* or *dhyaana* every day, so that the spiritual fragrance might infuse higher thoughts during the process. If the place is changed, it will be like changing the company; the cumulative effect of association will be squandered. Parents and elders must see that their sons and wards are corrected on the spot, whenever they forget or deviate from the path.

Premchand, the Hindi writer, was once proceeding from Lucknow to Allahabad and he had written to his two sons to meet him at the railway station, The younger boy touched the feet of the father on seeing him, but the elder did not. Premchand was enraged at this; his wife tried to quieten him, saying "Poets and writers try to read too much meaning even in slight events." But, Premchand said that the behaviour of the fellow was an indication of ingratitude, a bad strain in his character which will grow into cruelty and hard-heartedness later.

You may boast that you have been visiting Puttaparthi since twenty years or that you have made the place your permanent residence; but, unless you follow the lessons I emphasise, that boast is mere empty vanity. If you develop love for all beings, in the faith that God resides in all, you may be anywhere else, but your prayers would reach me and my grace will reach you. While in my previous body, I told Naanaasaheb that I am in ants, insects and animals, besides all men. When a dog ate off offerings intended for Baba, it was declared to have reached Baba, for he had eaten it in that form: "Naanaa says he is giving me food; but when I go in the form of a dog he drives me off".

Be always saturated with *prema*; do not use poisonous words against any one, for, words wound more fatally than even arrows. Speak soft and sweet; sympathise with suffering and loss and ignorance; try your best to apply the salve of soothing word and timely succour. Do not damage the faith of any one in virtue and divinity. Encourage others to have that faith by demonstrating in your own life that virtue is its own reward, that divinity is all-pervasive and all-powerful.

*Prashaanthi Nilayam: Deepavali, 25-10-1965*

*TO believe that God is manifest  
only in one place or location,  
and to journey thither is a  
superstition much to be deplored.  
He is everywhere, in everyone, at all times.  
He is the energy that filled space and time and he is  
the energy that manifests as causation.*

**SHRI SATHYA SAI**