

## 17. Sweetness in the fruit

Most men spend the lifetime allotted to them or earned by them in the partaking of rich but harmful food and drink and indulge in glamorous but more harmful pastimes. What a pathetic waste of precious stuff!. Though belonging to the animal genus, man has much more than his fellow-beings in physical, mental and moral equipment. He has memory, language, conscience, reverence, awe, wonder and an inexplicable sense of discontent, the precursor of detachment. He has the glorious chance of visualising his identity with the Mystery that is manifested as this Universe; but he is so sunk in ignorance that he behaves as though he is an animal like the rest and wallows in grief and vice.

It is as if fire has forgotten its capacity to burn or water its nature to wet; man has forgotten his nature to reach out into Godhood, his capacity to seek and secure the Truth of the Universe of which he is a part, his capacity, to train himself by virtue, justice, love and sympathy to escape from the particular to the Universal. He can attain the consummation and climax of merging with the unchanging that is behind all this change. It was *Vyaasa*, whose memory is enshrined in this Festival of *Vyaasa Poornima*, who held before erring man this destiny and this discipline, in the various texts that bear his name.

*Vyaasa* collated the *Vedhic* texts and composed the *Brahmasuuthras* stringing together in epigrammatic form the essential teachings of *Vedha* and *Vedhaantha*. He also placed humanity under a deep debt of gratitude by elaborating the moral and spiritual lessons of *Vedha* and *Vedhaantha* in the magnificent poetic philosophical epic, *Mahaabaaratha*, and in the sweet *bhakthi*- saturated collections of divine stories called *Bhaagavatha*. Each of these can by itself effect the liberation of man, provided he imbibes the lessons and practises them. While the *Brahma suuthras* may be helpful only to a limited number of intellectual seekers, the *Mahaabhaaratha* and the *Bhaagavatha* are for the common man, the unlearned seeker. They serve equally well and as quickly as the other texts, if not quicker. The *Vedha Vedhaantha* may be taken as a Rupee Note while the epics and *Puraanas* like the *Mahaabhaaratha* and the *Bhaagavatha* are 100 paise which mean the same thing, for the rupee is equal to 100 paise.

### **Do every deed in a spirit of dedication**

*The Puraanas* and the epics teach the path of devotion and surrender. They ask that man should do every deed in a spirit of dedication. Allow the wind of doubt or the sun of despair to affect the pot of *aanandha* you have filled, and it will evaporate quickly. But keep the pot in the cool waters of good company and good deeds; it can be preserved undiminished for ever. *Aanandha* too grows when you dwell on it in silence and recapitulate the circumstances which yielded it. That is why *manana* is held so important a part of spiritual effort. Like the child which throws off its toys and starts crying, you too must realise the paltriness of the toys of fame and fortune and call out for the Mother. The child feels that all else is trash before the love of the Mother and the blessedness of Her Presence. One should not aspire for anything less.

*Kaalidaasa* in the court of *Bhojaraaja* was insulted by the senior poets and scholars who were jealous of his attainments. He was poor and that was enough reason for them to look down upon him. When the tank is full, the frogs sit round its bank and croak; when it is dry, no frog leaps by its side. The seniors spread scandals about *Kaalidaasa* and attempted to cast him out of court.

### **Cleverness is out of place in spiritual affairs**

Kaalidaasa knew of only one Person who was free from jealousy and pride and that was *Kaali*, the Mother. So he went to the *Kaali* temple and prayed before the Mother to assure him of high status among poem. After a long time spent in intense prayer, Kaalidaasa heard a Voice emanating from the shrine and it extolled *Dhandi* and *Bhaava-bhuthi* as great geniuses and scholars. There was not even a whisper about his attainments! So, he got hurt and even enraged; he gave vent to his ire in harsh words and insisted that She should declare the truth, however unpleasant.

Then the Voice announced, *Thwamevaaham, thwamevaaham, thwamevaaham, na samshayah*"--- "You are Myself, you are Myself, you are Myself, without doubt!" What greater status did Kaalidaasa need than this? That is the reply that every seeker will get, for that is his truth, his reality, his prize and consummation.

There are many stories which describe Kaalidaasa as a very resourceful poet who defeated the stratagems of his opponents by *yukthi* (cleverness); but his *bhakti* was much greater than his *yukthi*. I am reminded of the cleverness of a householder when he heard at midnight the noise of his house being broken into by thieves. He guessed that they were within earshot and so he asked his wife loud enough to be heard by the thieves. "Why are you torturing me thus, asking me to bring back all your jewels that I have pledged with the Maarwaari? I know that all your gold has gone to him and you know that I have not even a rupee with me; let good times come; I shall certainly recover them and give you. But now?" You need not be told that the thieves left, to enter some other house that night; they left the house that had "no gold, not even a rupee."

Such cleverness is out of place in spiritual affairs where all artifice and artificiality are impediments rather than helps. It is when cleverness increases and chokes sincerity and straightforwardness in spiritual matters and in the relationship between God and Man that the *Avathaar* comes. As the Health Minister of Mysore said just now, cleverness degenerates into conceit, and that makes man forget God who is the inner motivator.

### **Learn the art of operating the human machine**

You may have a costly transistor or watch or phonograph with you, but if you do not know how to use it efficiently they are mere lumber. Now, imagine what a wonderful machine you yourself are! Should you not know how to operate it and get the best results out of it? What is the benefit, if you use a sharp silver hilted sword to cut vegetables? Indian seers discovered the art of operating this human machine, but their descendants have allowed that art to decline.

The teachers have no desire to learn it, have no qualification to practice it, or enthusiasm to discover it. The leaders of the people, who are in charge of Government are unaware of it. Provided there is the thirst to know it, even one sage who is adept in that art is enough; many can light their lamps at the flame of that sage. Vyaasa is one such sage, the foremost and the first. That is why he is described as Naaraayana Himself.

By imbibing the teachings of the *Bhaagavatha*, your *thamo guna* (quality of inertia) will be raised into *rajo guna* (quality of restless activity) and purified into *sathwa guna* (quality of poise and serenity). It is like the fruit growing by the combined influence of the earth and sun first into full sourness, then to partial sweetness and finally complete sweetness, in three stages. Man too by the twin forces of the Grace from without and the yearning from within, grows into the complete sweetness of *aanandha* and prema.