

35. The ideal poem

Today, Vijayadhasami, is a thrice sacred day for *Prashaan-thi-vaasis* (the dwellers of the abode of peace), that is to say, those who live in the Prashaanthi Nilayam, here or elsewhere. It is as sacred as *Thriveni*, where three rivers commingle their holy waters. Today is the *samaapthi* (conclusion festival) of Dashara; it is also the *Samaapthi* (conclusion) of the *yajna sapthaaha*, the seven-day rite of *puuja* and *paaraayanam* (adoration and recitation); it is also the *samaapthi* Day of the *poorva-avathaaram* (the previous incarnation), the *Samaadhi* Day (the entombment) of the *Shirdi Sareeram* (body of Shridi Sai Baaba) *Sam-aapthi* also means the attainment of *Brahmaanandha* (Brahmic Bliss) and so this day we have a chance to imbibe the Bliss Indescribable.

Karma (action) and *Upaasana* (contemplation), the two stages of *saadhana* devoted to the attainment of God-realisation, can be noted and seen; *but jnaana* the stage of ripeness cannot be seen. The *karma* symbolised by the Yamuna, and *bhakthi* (devotion) symbolised by the Ganga, meet at the point where *the jnaana* or Saraswathi flows unseen. But today, people have lost the enthusiasm for *karma*, the exultation for *bhakthi* and the eagerness for *jnaana*. *The true vidhya* is that which reveals the *aathma* (the true self) to man. When these facts are neglected, the *Avathara* (incarnation) takes place to re-teach the duty of man, the *dharma*. What is the *dharma* (the moral code) that has to be re-established today? It is *Sanaathana Dharma* (the eternal law), nothing less.

The Highest alone must be sought

Not that there are no sages even now on earth. Great *Kavis* and *Mahaapurushaas* and *Mahaapandiths* are with us, even today. But, in the mad pursuit after pomp and pageantry, the feverish struggle to defy and defeat others, there is no time to imbibe their messages and taste the sweetness of the *saadhana* they prescribe. The poets of the modern age are not to be compared to the *Kavis* (Poets) of the past, though the same name is used to indicate them. Those *Kavis* had purified their consciousness so much that God was clearly reflected therein. The poets of today retain all the blemishes and failings which cater to lower urges. They exhibit more bile than *bhakthi*; they have no mastery over the senses or passions; they are slaves to hate and greed; they render unholy the message they spread, for they write of low ideals and cheap victories. Such people have no right to name themselves 'poets'.

The senses should not be allowed to over-ride man. They must be instruments within the control of man. They are mere servants, orderlies, helpers. The knife is best used to cut fruits or vegetables; you should not use it for cutting your throat. The senses have to be trained to be free from *thamas* (inertia) and *rajas* (passion); they must be neither dull nor dragging, neither dormant nor dangerously diverting. The *gunas* must be overcome. A student approached a *guru* and asked for the road for *shaanthy*. He replied that he must develop *sahana* (tolerance) towards all men and all things and all events. Nothing should arouse interested reaction, disgust or desire. The highest alone must be sought; God alone must be desired.

Prema steady, unchanging, undiminishable, can only be *Vishweswaraprema*--Love towards the Lord of all the worlds. *Chala-prema* (changing love) is love towards the changing world. When a *bhaktha* placed two grains of rice on the idol with no motive or desire for reward, but in a pure spirit of devotion, they turned into gold grains. If he had some motive, they might well have turned into stone.

Do not bargain with God

Now, people pray to God to relieve them from pain, grief and loss, to confer on them health, strength and wealth but if you develop an intimate attachment to Him and make Him yours, then He will manage to give you all that you need. Do not demean the relationship into bargaining: give me this, then I shall give you this in exchange. If you insist on wages, you become a coolie. Become His own. He is providing for the idler, the insane, the shirker; can he not provide for you? The father feeds the sons, whether they are idlers or shirkers or steady workers in field or factory. When you offer God a fraction of your wealth, you do it out of conceit that the wealth is yours, that your hand is upper and the recipient's hand is lower.

In one of the poems read today, the question was raised why God should give eyes that look outward and then blame when they wander in the outer world. No, the eyes do not wander; it is as the messenger of the mind that the eye wanders. If the mind orders them to keep aside, the eyes have to obey. The poet also charged God for equipping man with an insane mind; no, the mind is not insane; it can be used for tightening bonds as well as for loosening them. *Bandha* and *moksha* can both be effected through the mind. You have the choice. It is an in--merit for either. Condemn the use, not the tool.

The poet should not attempt to engage in publicity; he should not add lines merely for stuffing or for padding, in order to make it long and copious. There should be no artificial stepping up of emotion or passion. These must be natural, arising naturally out of the context and the character. Otherwise, the poem will be lopsided and it will slide from the sublime to the ridiculous. A Brahmin was reciting the *Vedhas* scrupulously correct, with *Udaattha* and *Anudaattha* in the proper places; hearing it, one Sowcar asked him to sing a song and when the Brahmin protested he had no music in him, the Sowcar threatened him with dire consequences if he did not comply. So, out of fear, to escape punishment, he sang a song slurring over the words, I cannot sing, I will not sing; but this rascal wants me to have a fling. Fear or greed, doubt or denial should not be the urge driving the poet towards expression. To blame society for one's own deficiency is like blaming the pillow for the headache one suffers.

Have Love even for misguided people

When the winnowing is done, the husk falls far, the heavy grain heaps near. The mean tactics of vicious pens that appear in the gutter papers serve to separate the husk from the grain. No one can shake truth, no one can install untruth. I am established in Truth and I have come to secure for Truth its rightful place. Envy and greed make man resort to tricks and barter one's honour and character for a few pieces of copper. When people observe this vast gathering drawn by love and only love, some of them who have no love in their hearts but only hate, cannot keep quiet; they must eject the poison of hate.

Of course, there have been such traducers in all ages, for all who came down to help mankind: Raama, Krishna, Shankara. Do not develop hatred towards them, for, sooner or later, they are bound to repent and make good. Milk poured into water gets paid for as milk. Lies about Me also sell and earn for them some cash! Leeches fall off when they have sucked full to bursting point. Pray for their transformations into *Saathwik* souls, for their blindness to be cured and for their becoming attached to Truth rather than to sheer untruth. *Dweshha* leads to *duushana* (hatred leads

to the casting of mud). Love leads to mutual understanding and sympathy. Have love even for these misguided people; they will join the pilgrims path soon.

Dashara, 23-10-1966

The thirst for worldly goods can never be allayed; trying to satisfy it makes it only more acute. Thirst can never be quenched by drinking salt water, which is the objective world.

Human desire is illimitable, without end. It makes you pursue the mirage in the desert: it makes you build castles in the air; it breeds discontent and despair once you succumb to it.

But, develop the thirst for Krishna, you discover the cool spring of aanandha within you. Krishna naama (name) makes you strong and steady; it is sweet and sustaining.

Sathya Sai Baaba