

8. The dying lament the dead

KAAMA (desire) is the cause of birth; Kaala (Time) is the cause of death; Raama (God) is the guardian of life. On account of desire, birth takes place. By Time, which flows unceasingly on, respecting none, the thread of life is cut. Through the constant chanting of the Name of God, life is made worthwhile. Life is a battle; the battle is fought until victory. The goal of victory is the 'Crown' of *Aathma*, the 'Sovereignty' of the Realm of Liberation. That is attained and won by the process laid down in *Vedhaantha*.

Vedhaantha is the consummation or the finale of the *Vedhas*. Milk when curdled is rendered separable into butter and whey, and butter when melted and clarified becomes ghee; ghee is the finale, the *anta* (the final stage) of milk. So too, man's final, irrevocable transmutation is Liberation, *Moksha*. When you prepare yourself for victory in this battle with your inner foes and the senses, the Lord gives you the reinforcements you need, for you are proceeding to Him and He takes a hundred paces towards you for every ten you take towards Him!

Once Raamadaas wailed, "O Lord! You are Mighty, All-powerful, All-knowing; I am alone, helpless, orphaned and poor." Then the Lord interrupted the self-condemnation and said, "No, how can you name yourself poor, help- less and orphaned? I am with you, in you, in showering My Grace. The only Orphan in the Universe is Myself; for, I have no guardian, no means of support, nobody to fall back upon. I am the *A-naatha* (orphan); all else are *Sa-naatha* (with Lord), for I am their. *Naatha* (Lord)."

Carry the atmosphere of the Nilayam to your own home

So, do not call yourself as a *Dheena* (weak person); how can you be a *dheena* when you are endowed with *dhhee*? (*Dhhee* indicates Intelligence, Discrimination). With this *dhhee* as support, start your *saadhana*, without wasting precious time in wails. That is the highest duty you owe to yourselves. The *saadhana* can be to realise God as Formless (*Nirguna*) or with Form (*Saguna*). When one walks, the right foot and left foot are both necessary, you cannot hop long, on one foot! The *Saguna Saadhana* and the *Nirguna Saadhana* are as the two feet. When the pilgrimage is over and the shrine has to be entered, place 'the right foot forward! The right foot is towards the *Nirguna Saadhana*--the Formless aspect of God.

You have spent the entire night in the recital of the Name; but do not be content; make it your daily sustenance. Do not imagine this to be like some places of pilgrimage you have visited, where you do not learn any lesson to be treasured in the heart. There you are in a picnic mood or in a tourist mood, seeing sights and collecting curios,. But here, you are silently immersed in the ecstasy of the Divine Presence. Carry this atmosphere to your own village and home and cleanse those places with holy thoughts and deeds. Make this *Shivaraathri* an *Akhanda Shiva-raathri*---a continuous festival of Shiva-contemplation---an inspiration for making life itself an unbroken adoration of Shiva. "*Sarvadhya Sarva kaaleshu sarvathra Had chinthanam*," it is said---"Everywhere, at all times, under all circumstances contemplation on *Had* (God)."

Avoid even little misdemeanours

When once Brahma asked the sage Naaradha what was the most amazing thing he noticed on earth, Naaradha replied, "The most amazing thing I saw was this: the dying are weeping over the dead." Those who are themselves nearing death every moment are weeping over those who have died, as if their weeping has any effect, either to revive the dead or prevent their own death!

Brahma asked him to tell another, Naaradha said, "Another amazing thing is: Every one fears the consequence of *paapa* (sin), but goes on sinning nevertheless! Everyone craves for the consequence of *punya* (meritorious acts), but everyone is reluctant to do any meritorious act!"

Polite conversation is sweet conversation, they say. But, mostly, this sweet talk is made up of falsehood and scandal. People often ask, how can we manage to live in society without a dash of falsehood? This is a wrong approach. Truth-speaking comes natural to man; it is falsehood that is an artificial skill. Be natural; be yourself; then you will not descend into falsehood. Avoid even little misdemeanours, for, by repetition, they warp character, and develop into vicious habits. When the wife is given ten rupees by the husband for shopping, she retains one rupee and spends only nine; and she hides the fact from her husband. Though the wife may argue that it is not improper, it is a wrong step. Examine your acts, thoughts and feelings every moment on the touchstone of Truth.

When kaama is in the heart, Raama has no room

With the doors of your hearts closed by the bolt of falsehood, how can you lay the blame on God if He does not illumine it with the rays of Grace? Falsehood is prompted by desire, by *kaama*; when *kaama* is in the heart, *Raama* (God) has no room. Let *kaama* and his evil brood of *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *madha* and *maatsarya* (anger, greed, attachment, conceit and envy) slither out of the heart; then only can Raama instal Himself there. Without this cleansing operation, it is sheer waste of breath to shout Raam, Raam, Raam, swaying and shaking the body! What is the fun in shouting 'Victory', 'Victory' when the enemy is inside the fort, and you are too broken to eject him?

Sow in the field of your heart the seeds of good thoughts, charged with humility; irrigate it with the waters of Love; protect the growing crop with the pesticide called Courage; feed the crop with the fertiliser. Concentration; then, the '*bhakti*' (devotional) plants will yield the harvest of *jnaana*, the eternal wisdom, that You are He, and when that revelation comes, you become He, for, you were always He, though you did not know it so far.

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In spiritual matters, faith is the very essence. Doubt shakes the foundations of saadhana and is therefore, to be avoided. Have faith in the wisdom of the ancients; do not pitch you tiny little brain against the intuitions of the saints and their discoveries.

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