

## 16. The wayside halt

REFLECT on the *Aanandha* (divine bliss) we experienced when the Secretary was reciting passages from the ancient *Vedhas*! Reflection on the meaning of the passages recited will give even more lasting *Aanandha*. But on account of a sad decline in our national sense of values, not only have the *dhoti* (traditional men's wear), the *thilak* (red dot put in the centre of eye brows) and the tuft which were the signs of orthodox culture disappeared, but even reverence towards the vital truths embodied in the *Vedhas* has disappeared. That is the tragedy.

Man is born with a great thirst, a deep hunger, for bliss. He knows he can get it, but he knows not from where. He has faint memories of his being the heir to the kingdom of *Aanandha*. But he does not know how to establish his claim to his heritage. Something in him revolts when he is condemned to die, to suffer, and to hate. It whispers to him that he is the child of immortality, of bliss, of love. But man ignores these promptings and like one who exchanges diamonds for dirt, he runs in search of meaner pleasures and sordid comforts.

However learned a man may be, if he has no sense of value, he is bound to fall. Raavana was the ruler of a vast empire; he had untold wealth; his ukase ran to the farthest ends; he knew the ancient texts very well. In fact, it is said that his ten heads represent his mastery over the four *Vedhas* and the six *Vedhaangas*. Yet, as his intelligence was diverted to wicked ends, he had an ignominious death.

### **Action dedicated to God loses its bad effects**

Intelligence is a double-edged weapon. It can cut the chain and liberate you; it can cause fatal wounds and kill. That is why the great *manthra* which the seekers chant, called *Gaayathri* (since it saves those who recite it), prays to God to preside over the intelligence and render it beneficial to the individual and to society. The sufferings depicted in the Raamaayana are due to two characters that make only short appearances, but represent the evil force of lust and anger--- Surpanakha and Manthara. They poison the minds of Raavana and Kaikeyi respectively and set the stage for the tale of grief.

The education of the emotions and the control of passions are both included in the definition of *Yoga*, the spiritual discipline that purifies the intelligence. To penetrate the thick fog that ignorance spreads over Reality, the intelligence must be built on the basis of virtue. When Karma (action) is done as dedication and *Upaasana* (worship) is done as the essential for very life, the Intelligence is clarified so much that the fog disappears and the truth is revealed. Karma, when engaged in as dedicated to God, loses its deleterious effects for the doer, leaves the consequence to God; moreover, he considers every act as an act of worship and so does it to the best of his ability. Karma thus becomes transmuted into *Upaasana*.

*Upaasana* starts with some concrete image or idol or Name and Form; then, as the significance of the Name and the Form sinks into the consciousness, all names are seen to be God's; all forms are felt to be God's. Gradually, the truth that the worshipper too is the same entity, deluding himself as separate, because of a separate name and a distinct form, labelling the *upaadhi* (the bodily encasement), becomes evident; this is the dawn of *jnaana* (spiritual wisdom).

### **There is no desire to remove the dirt, but only hide it**

The fog is egoism, which hides the Universal and induces the belief in distinctness; it is a cloud of dust, that smothers the truth. People now love the fog and the cloud, they make no effort to

remove them. When you enter a shop and select cloth for pants or bush shins, you ask for black; and the reason why you prefer that colour and dislike white or light shades is that the black will not reveal dirt! The desire is not to remove the dirt, but to hide it from gaze. This has become a universal weakness. People are not ashamed of dirt; they do not seek cleanliness in the heart. That can be won only through *Prema* and *Sathya*, through the repetition of the *manthra* (mystic formula) communicated by the *Guru* and by *saadhana*, practised regularly and steadily, with faith.

The Andhra Association can well take up this work--having *Sathsangs* (holy gatherings) on Saturdays and Sundays and Thursdays, where spiritual discipline for this inner cleanliness can be discovered and practised. Elders must consider how best they can be exemplars in this field for the young men and women under their care, those who look up to them for guidance, those to whom they are heroes. They should engage themselves in some disciplines like *japam* and *dhyaanam*, they must evince enthusiasm and satisfaction in those disciplines; they should be courageous in calamity and take both good and bad as gifts from God. Then only can the children in their care learn to live happily and in peace.

The parents are like the A.D.C.'s for the child, which is the Mahaaraaja. The A.D.C.'s function does not end when he dresses magnificently and struts about; he has to guard the person who is entrusted to his care. If the two A.D.C.'s neglect their duties, to however small a degree, or if they are not alert and vigilant, there is great danger. So the parents must improve themselves for the sake of their children. Example is more profitable than precept. When the parents have no reverence for God, when the pictures of Stalin and Hitler, Churchill and Lenin adorn the walls of the home, when the child has to breathe the atmosphere of scandal, faction and greed at home, how can it grow into a happy, healthy, balanced individual? The films that children are taken to see are full of violence and falsehood, mean tricks and conspiracies, which tarnish the springs of sympathy and love.

### **Some parents are the greatest foes of their children**

There are parents who are proud when their children join them in card games or even drinking and gambling; there are parents who get angry when their children read religious books, attend temple rites and sit quietly for a few minutes meditating on the awe and wonder the Creation evokes in them. How can such parents claim to be the well-wishers of their progeny? They are the greatest foes of their progress. They do not equip their children with the armour which will render them safe in the turmoil of life. They try to make their children unworthy of the name Indian; for they grow up without learning about Raama or Krishna or the Geetha or the Bhaagavatha!

Parents toil to leave their children a pile of riches; but they do not teach them the proper sense of values by which they can know how little the riches are worth, or how best to utilise the riches for their genuine advancement. Children should be taught to live like lotuses in the lake of *Samsaara* (worldly life), being in water but unaffected by it. Lotuses cannot live when out of water; yet, they will not allow water to enter! Be in *Samsaara* but see that *Samsaara* is not in you. That is the secret of successful living which they do not teach the young.

### **Strive for riches that cannot be stolen or taxed**

The riches that you should strive to amass are not fields or factories, bungalows or bank balances, but wisdom and experience of oneness with grandeur of the Universe and the Force

that runs it without a hitch. Arjuna is called Dhananjaya by Krishna because he had won (jaya) such *dhanam* (riches) that saves man, that cannot be taxed or stolen or transferred. The method of winning these riches is saadhana. People hesitate to enter the field of saadhana, though they crave for the harvest of joy. They are not willing to spend a pie; they want *Moksha* (Liberation) to drop from the heavens in their laps. They would have the vision of God thrust painlessly into their brain!

When Maithreyi was given by *Yaajnavalkya* vast wealth in the shape of gold and cattle, when he left hearth and home on his spiritual quest, she asked him whether they would be of any use for her in her quest. When her husband replied that they were transient and cheap when compared to the wealth of spiritual experience, she cast them off and sought the precious wealth of *thapas and shraddha* (penance and religious faith). She got eternal joy through them.

You must see Nature as filled with God, shaped by God, as God, in those shapes and smells and sounds. We see the image in the mirror because the light rays are reflected back from the surface of the mirror. You are the reflection of the rays of God from the mirror that is Nature. If that mirror were not there, the *Jeevi* (individual soul) does not exist as a separate entity. Remove the mirror, then 'you' merges in 'He,' and there remains We. It is *Prakrithi* (Nature) that induces the belief that you are the body, the deha. You feel you too are Name-Form like *Prakrithi*. This identification has led to an inordinate degree of attention to the body and consequently, worry and misery.

### **Develop the Vision, not the body**

The principle that food is only a drug to cure hunger is ignored and man is enslaved to the tongue. All the twenty-four hours are spent in attending to the care of the body, the prevention of disease, the promotion of health, the development of muscle, etc. No care is spent on the dehi--- the God resident in this physical tabernacle, who has to be recognised and revered. The weighing machine, on which you stand and read your weight with pride, laughs at you for the silly exaltation. It sneers at your conceit over physical victories; it warns you against too much concern over paltry gains. It knows that death is lying in wait to snatch you away, however heavy you may grow. Develop dhrishti (vision), not deha (body). Concentrate on the Maker, not the 'made.'

During the battle at Lanka against the *Raakshasa* (demonic) hordes, a boy sitting on the hip of an ogress was wounded by a chance arrow. The mother dropped the child and fled. Lakshmana pointed her out to Raama and said, "See, how hard-hearted are these ogresses; they have no love in their hearts even for their own children." Raama replied, "Brother, do not condemn them so harshly. She may have other reasons for running away." Raama asked him to find out for himself. She told Lakshmana that not all ogres were hard-hearted. "Do you not know Vibheeshana, who serves Raama so devotedly? Are there no ogres among you, men? Do not damn all indiscriminately. Listen. I know that when it is a question of salvation, each is a distinct unit. Mother and child may go along different paths and reach the goal, soon, or late; each in his or her own time. I must seek my own good. I felt that if I flee and keep alive, Raama may take me captive to Ayodhya and grant me the *dharshan* (audience) that will save me from this recurring fate." She had faith in Raama's Divinity and her own ultimate liberation.

### **Ash is a lesson in detachment and renunciation**

When you enter a shop and select the thing you want, you have to pay the price; when you sit for

an examination, you have to write the answers to questions, to the satisfaction of the examiner; when you seek to learn swimming, you will have to enter the water and struggle with the strokes. When Bhasma (holy ash) is given, doubt haunts some people whether Swaami is wishing that the recipient should be a *Shaivite* (devotee of Shiva)! It is a symbol of the indestructible basic substance which every being is. All things become ash; but ash remains ash, however much you may burn it. It is also a sign of renunciation, of sacrifice, of Jnaana which burns all karma-consequence into ineffective ash. It is a sign of *Ishwara*, and I apply it on your brow, to remind you that you too are Divine. It is a valuable *Upadesha* (instruction) about your identity. It also reminds you that the body is liable any moment to be reduced into a handful of ash. Ash will be a lesson in detachment and renunciation.

Man must live his days without despair and unlimited desire. You should be level-headed, without exulting when fortune smiles or drooping when misfortune frowns. Teach your children this hard lesson. Prahlada, when chastised by his father for disobeying his orders, replied, "He alone is entitled to obedience as a father who orders his son to bow to *Hari*, and to merge in *Hari*---not others." If a father commands the son to revere him as *Hari*, then he is a bitter foe, not a father. The children are the instruments by which Bhaaraatha can be raised; go, I had a talk with the Headmasters of Poona about their moral and spiritual training. An institution will come up in Poona, where parents, teachers and student leaders will be trained to guide them along the right lines; where students too will be trained in spiritual practices that will make them strong and straight.

Study of scriptures and religious texts and such books, without effort to practise, results in ill-health. Being false to one's professions eats away one's self-respect and one starts getting ashamed of oneself. So learn to practise; eat to digest. That is the advice I give you today.

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*Attachment, affection, interest,---these will create prejudice, partiality, illusion; they hide the Truth; they dull the intelligence. Raaga is roga (attachment is a disease), so far as the enquirer is concerned.*

Sathya Sai Baaba