

36. The philosopher's stone

MAN is endowed with many skills; he is offered many lives; he is shown many paths. The purpose of all these gifts is to develop in him the spirit of devotion and dedication and release him from the dual dribble of joy and grief. When man visualises the Universe as God, its capacity to colder the dual experience disappears; he knows the truth and is calm. God is One and Only: '*Ekam eva adhwaihiyam Brahma*' (One only; without a *second--Brahman*), which is the transcendent and immanent principle. So one must endeavour to know God, who is Truth. A soldier is honoured and welcomed home only when he has won the battle; not when he has fled in fear, or has had no contact with the enemy, or when he has meekly surrendered, or gladly gone over! It is not the uniform or the medals that are honoured; it is the brave heart pounding within. It is the glint in the eye that bespeaks the hero bathed in victory.

Every human being is engaged in battle, with insidious internal foes. How can anyone move about, with raised head and proud mien, when his enemies are celebrating their victory inside him? It is a matter of stark humiliation, isn't it? The forces of lust, greed, anger, hate, pride, malice, envy and avarice are celebrating triumphant victory-dances in the heart while the humbled victim, the prisoner in their hands, expects to be honoured and lionised.

Consequence of irreverence shown to the *Vedhas*

The internal foes can be destroyed by the light of *jnaana* (the illumination that accompanies the realisation of the Reality). To acquire that illumination, one has to cultivate the spirit of impartial, steady, un-fluctuating inquiry, based on the revelations made in the *Vedhas* about the nature of man and God, and the relation between the two. The *Vedhas* have to be studied reverentially, for, they give us the key to this *jnaana*. The *Vedha* is the philosopher's stone that turns all metals into gold, all students into *saadhakas* and all *saadhakas* into sages. Unaware of their worth, *Pandiths* who have learned the *Vedhas* by rote use it as a means of livelihood, as a fertile field for futile argumentation and dialectics. Their disputations and competitive commentaries have only spread disbelief among the masses, for, they are not impressed by the scholasticism, and sophistry.

When Shri Raama decided to end His *Avathaar* career and walked into the flooded Sarayu river, a dog too followed the concourse. When asked why it had attached itself to the entourage, it said, "I desire to enter Heaven with you all. I was, in my previous life, a full-fledged *yogi*; but I slipped and fell from the straight path of self-control, I became the slave of conceit; I expounded the *Vedhas* as my fancy dictated, in strange but attractive ways; so, I have now become this animal that takes delight in barking, biting and baying. The persons who encouraged me then by praise, are now the fleas and flies that crowd on my skin and pester me. Help me, Lord, the escape from this disgrace; I have worked out my *karma*; I have lived out my sentence." That is the consequence of irreverence shown to the *Vedhas*; study them reverentially and with a view to practice what they teach. Desisting from practice, is itself irreverence.

Benefit from the curative properties of the *Vedhas*

Whoever speaks, whatever is spoken about the *vedhas* and *Vedhaantha* (the concluding metaphysical part of *Vedhas*), if spoken with reverence and sincere yearning, is worth listening intently. I notice one great defect in you. When I am discoursing, you listen to every word, with marked avidity and enthusiasm. But, when *Pandiths* and others are speaking to you, on subjects

that are valuable to you, out of their own deep study and *saadhana*, though you sit silently and dutifully, I do not find the same avidity and enthusiasm. This is wrong.

Rain water is rain water whether it falls from a spout, or the caves, or through a canal or sluice. What they speak is also authentic and beneficial. What you should care for and treasure in your memory is the "curative property of the drug," not the label on the bottle or the name and status of the manufacturer or dealer.

Benefit from the drug; cure yourself; become illumined; realise your Reality.

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