

4. Saline turned sweet

WHAT a tragedy! Truth is treated as a foe; falsehood is the friend of man. Liquor is sold in a tavern, to which people trek miles; but milk is taken to their doorsteps, by vendors who cry hoarse, to draw the attention of the residents, but yet, they turn away with their ware unsold. What a reversal of values has man accomplished!

On this sacred day called *Vaikuntha Ekaadhashi*, one is reminded of this, because, festivals like this have been ordained in order to take stock of one's spiritual progress and to make man resolve to march forward, until the goal is reached.

This is a thrice-blessed day, as the *Thriveni* is the confluence of three holy streams: Thursday, which is especially significant for Sai devotees, being *Guru Vaar* (the day of the *Guru*); the *Akhanda bhajan* (non-stop singing). which you concluded after twelve hours a few minutes ago; and the festival of *Vaikuntha*, for which you have gathered here.

Vaikuntha means, without any trace of grief or pain; the place where perfect peace reigns, and there is no flutter of fear. *Ekaadhashi* means the eleventh day of the lunar fortnight. The phases of the moon are numbered, and the day after the tenth, *Dhashami*, is referred to as the *Ekaadhashi*! But the real meaning of *Ekaadhashi*, the eleventh, is this. When the ten senses---the five senses of action and the five through which knowledge of the objective world is gained---are all coordinated and turned in the direction of God, the eleventh, then it becomes genuine *Ekaadhashi*!

Man has to pay attention to 26 categories

This is also the meaning of the *Namaskaar*, where you fold both palms together and hold them on your chest, near the heart region. The ten senses surrender to the person adored, with real sincerity in the heart! The caricatures of this reverential rites are today current in almost all circles. People are reluctant to follow tradition and so, they hold the palms as if they are trying to shield the rays of the Sun from their eyes (!) or vigorously shaking them defiantly at the face of the person who is sought to be honoured(!).

This is a day on which one has to transcend the lower impulses originating from the *thaamasik* (inertia) and the *raajasik* (passionate activity) natures and, help the upsurge of *Saathwik* (pure) tendencies. Men engage in good Works, good thoughts, good speech---but, they do not pause to inquire the purpose, the goal. Man has to pay attention to 26 categories. The 5 senses of action (*Karma-indhriyas*); the 5 senses of knowledge (*Jnaana-indhriyas*); the 5 vital airs (*Praana*); the 5 attributes of the elemental principle, smell (of *prithvi* or earth); taste (of water); light (of fire); touch (of air); sound (of sky); and the remaining four *manas* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), *chittha* (differentiating memories) and *ahamkaara* (the selfish ego). *The jeevi* (individual soul) the wave is the 25th; it has the 26th, the *Param-aathma* (the Supreme Self or Reality) on one side and the 24 principles on the other. It has to illumine all the 24, and draw them all to the Reality, namely, the 26th category, the *Paramaathma*. When they are illumined, they disappear, for they cannot survive light; they are but creatures that are the progeny of *maaya* (delusion and illusion).

Know thyself, you know the world

When the 24 categories are analysed and known, nothing is gained. For, they belong to the realm of the relatively real, not the absolutely real. They are *jagath* (world), the moving, changing, the transitory, the untrue! The *Vedhas*, *Shaasthras* and *Puraanas* have not mentioned anything about

the origins and dissolutions of these, with any degree of certainty, because they are concerned more with the rescue operations of the I that is entangled in them and with validation that they are of no importance. Know thyself; you know the world, which is but a projection of thy mind; that is the lesson conveyed.

Measure the microcosm, you have measured the macrocosm. Know all about clay; you have known all about pots, pans, plates and cups. Know about the base, you have known about the superstructure. Know about water, you know about rain, cloud, steam, stream, river---all its modifications and manifestations. The same quantity of silver might be shaped into a plate today, a set of spoons tomorrow, a number of cups the day after. The forms get new names; the uses of each are different. When put to use or when silver remains as a silver 'lump' only, in the hands of every one that holds, it or handles it, in the beginning or in the end, it and they are always silver. The core, the truth is ever One. In the murky, dusk of ignorance, it appears diverse, that is all for, then, you are led to distinguish and differentiate on the bases of name and form.

There are two sets of rules which regulate human conduct: the one a-moral and the other moral. The a-moral is illustrated by the rule that you have to be at the airport at a particular hour, in order to board a plane. The moral rule is illustrated when the father's property is divided between the sons,, half for one and half for the other, equal share for both. From the point of view of *dharma* (righteousness), equality is seen as the basic principle. From the *Aathmic* standpoint, all beings are equal.

The primary seed of knowledge

When one proceeds to attain the *Aathmic* vision, one has to negate everything as Not this, until at the end of the journey, the *Aathma* alone is cognised. It admits of no definition, no description, no designation, It is the end of enquiry, the *summum bonum* of all endeavour, the silence that swallows all speech. The primary seed of knowledge is "I am not the body." It contains three entities: I Body and Not. I is the *aathma*, the Only truth. The idea I applies only to the eternal I, over which, the transient Is are superimposed by ignorance, born out of false identification. Then, we have the entity called, *dheha* (body).

Dheha means that which will undergo destruction (*dah*: to burn). It means the five feet bundle of bone and muscle, nerve and brain, the senses, the vital airs, the mind that imagines (constructs images), the intellect that argues pros and cons, the *chittha* that revolves around the past impressions and choices and the *ahamkaara* (ego) that urges outwards, the internal and external equipments of man, *Dheha* means not only these, It is composed of the five we elemental categories also: earth, water, fire, air and sky. It disintegrates finally into these five for, it is built up of those five. It is kith and kin, with these five; so, by *dheha* is meant all the regions of the five elements, *desha* (country), in fact!

Realisation cannot be won by book knowledge

The multifarious efflorescence of *maayaa*, the primal desire which proliferated into the Universe--all that is the permutation and combination of the five elements, to cognise which man has equipped himself with the nose (smell, earth attribute), tongue (taste, water attribute), eye (perceptible form, attribute of fire), skin (touch, attribute of air) and ear (sound, attribute of sky). So, the statement says, I am not the body, that is, it declares that Nature, the Universe, all created thin and beings, are not I, or *Aathma* (the true Self), but, only appearances of I.

Man can realise the goal either by picturing something that is different and distant, and praying to it, adoring it, worshipping it---such ways are useful only up to a limit, to purge the mind of low desires, sensual urges etc.,---or by delving into oneself, to reach the truth.

The realisation of the one cannot be won by means of advice, listening to talks and discourses, study of books or austerities. It worried even Naaradha, who approached the sage, Sanathkumaara, for the vision of the Infinite. With this decomposing body and the deteriorating intellect, man cannot experience and contain the boundless surge of bliss that accompanies the realisation that he is the absolute. The wisdom that comes of actual experience is as the rain drop., when compared with sea water which is saline and undrinkable book-knowledge or derived knowledge. Through the inter-action of the rays of the Sun, the salinity was removed and the water that floated into the sky became sweet and sustaining. Saadhana that turns the physical into the meta-physical is the solar action that confers potability.

***Samaadhi* is a much misunderstood word**

Deep sleep is often compared to *samaadhi*, for, the senses, the mind, the reason, are all absent therein; only the ego is immersed in itself. It is in bliss, but, it is not aware of that bliss, for, waking alone gives that knowledge. So, what can grant Realisation is the awareness of the waking stage and the bliss of the sleeping stage. Concentrate on the point, where one is having these two: that is the moment of victory.

Samaadhi is a much misunderstood word. It is freely misapplied. All kinds of emotional upsurges, attacks of hysteria, nervous breakdowns, neurotic fits are now extolled and exalted as "*Samaadhi*"! Mark the word! It says *sama dhee*, that is to say, balanced, unruffled intellect; that is, a discriminating reaction of equanimity, in the face of heat and cold, grief and joy, pain and pleasure, rejection or rejoicing. One who has attained that stage, or realised that he is the One without a second, will be indifferent to fear or favour, to hate or love, to exalt or execrate. Where there is One, how can even thought arise. That is the *Samaa-dhee*---the being, the awareness and the bliss.

Dharmakshethra, 7-1-19 71