

## 51. Diamonds in the dust

COMPASSION towards all creatures is the greatest virtue, wilful injury to any creature is the worst vice. Have full faith in this; spread love and joy, through compassion, and be full of joy and peace, yourself. You do not have joy and peace now, mainly because, your vision is warped and wobbling. The vision is now directed towards the faults, and failings of others, never towards one's own faults and failings. The ears too delight when stories of failures and foibles of others are related. No attempt is made to examine the failures and foibles of oneself. Really speaking, inquiry and the investigation have to begin with oneself. For, what we see in others is the reflection of our own selves, our own prejudices and preferences.

Besides, when your attention is focussed on faults and failures, vices and wrongs, the mind too becomes infected with the pollution and it starts relishing only experiences of such tastes. Hence, the lives of such people lose the peace and joy that are the heritage of the wise and the wary.

Let us take the example of the snake. It has two characteristics: (1) It never moves straight. Its path is always crooked. (2) It strikes at all that comes in its way. Man too is snaky, for, he exhibits these two characteristics in a marked manner. So, he shares another characteristic too of the snake, namely, poison.

Slavery to sensory objects is like snake's poison

Poison is called in Samskrith, *visha*. A kindred word is *vishaya*, which means, the sensory objects, which poison the mind of man with lust, anger, greed, craving, pride and hate. The snake's poison is the cause why it is destroyed wherever seen. Man's slavery to *vishaya* is the cause of his downfall. But, the situation is not without some hope. The serpent can be tamed and its poison-fangs removed, when music from the *naagaswaram* pipe is played and when it is fascinated by that sweet melody. The poison that *vishaya* exerts on the human mind can also be eliminated and countermanded, when man is fascinated by the sweet melodies of *Naamasmarana* and *sankeerthan* --- that is to say, by the repetitive chanting and congregational singing of the meaningful Names of the Lord. The poison in both can thus be transmuted into pure nectar.

What happens to man when *Naamasmarana* withdraws his mind from the sensory tangles is --- the acquisition of *Samachiththa* --- a new balance of mind, of blissful equanimity. Nature is in constant flux; nothing remains the same even for a few seconds. The sweet dish that is cooked now becomes stale and stinking a few hours hence and is ruined so much that it acts as a danger to health, when consumed. Other types of changes happen in other fields, other things and beings.

And, man not only expects these changes, he prepares himself to face them; in fact, in many cases, he is unhappy if the change does not happen! If things remain the same, it is certain to cause deep disappointment. A new-born babe must grow in weight, in movement of limbs, in the intake of food, and the output of energy through activity. Or else, parents become anxious and run from doctor to doctor. The same thing happens when the child does not walk or talk, weep or laugh.

### **Aim at constant consciousness of the Reality**

In a normal babe, there exists real *Samachiththa*, for, there is no desire (except the instinctive desire for food, drink and maternal protection), to agitate it. The babe is the inheritor of Immortality; so it is unaffected by anxiety, that haunts the adult. The word *Samachiththa* is, in common parlance, taken to mean, sheer equanimity---an unshaken balance, when confronted by success or failure, loss or gain, pleasure or pain. But, '*Sama*' has another and more significant meaning, namely *Brahman*, the Universal Eternal Absolute principle. *Samachiththa*, therefore, in its philosophical sense, means, a consciousness established in the Absolute *Brahman*, and as a consequence, above and beyond the storms and stillness of the world of duality. This constant consciousness of the Reality is the fruit of *yajna* (selfless sacrifice), the *Vedhic* symbol of *thyaaga* (renunciation), as mentioned in the statement *na medhayaa, na prajayaa, dhanena, thyaagenaike amruthathwam aanasuh---*"not by the intellect, nor by progeny, nor by wealth, but, only by renunciation can immortality be attained." *Yajna* (sacrifice) means *thyaaga* (renunciation).

It is to emphasise this great axiom that during Dhashara every year, the *Vedhic Yajna* is performed; the thousands who attend the Festival can share the knowledge and the inspiration that the *Yajna* provides.

### **Master the assertive ego by the Real Self**

This day is the *Samaapthi* of the *Yajna*. *Sama* means, as I just now said, *Brahman*. So, *Samaapthi* means, the attainment of *Sama* or *Brahman*, which is the *summum bonum* of the ritual. The realisation of this *Brahmic* Reality is the birthright of all men. But, though born with the fight and the responsibility, as the *Amritha-puthra* (Child of the nectar of immortality), man denies himself the victory, courts defeat and prides himself as an *Anirtha-puthra* (child of the Illusory, the delusion). The realisation which is his due is not an attainable achievement; it is a simple conquest, so simple that people never attempt it!

The assertive ego that urges him to identify himself with the body and the instrument with which it is equipped, the motives with which those "instruments work and the reactions which those motives breed, has to be mastered by the Real Self, a wave of the great Ocean of Cosmic Consciousness, that is all. Now, man declares himself as *aham* and takes pride in his *ahamkaara* (egoistic-consciousness). But, he is not aware of the inner meaning of the word *aham*! *Aham* is just a verbal symbol for what he really is. A is the sound that represents the Omnipresent Godhead, named also as *Vishnu*. In the Geetha it is asserted, *aksharaanaam a-kaarosmi--*"Among the letters I am A," (pronounced as in anatomy, etc). *Ham* means *Shakthi* (energy, power, force). So, when one points to himself as *aham*, he is unconsciously announcing that he is the hardened energy of the Omnipresent Universal Absolute *Brahman* called also Vishnu.

Besides, the Lord says in the Geetha, *mayaa kritham idham sarvam---*"I have made all this out of Myself!" When all is He, you and all *jeevas* (individualised beings) are He. How then can we demarcate some as bad, and relish the stories concerning them and list their faults and failings?

### **Make the mind concentrate on the Brahman**

The question may be raised, "The good and the bad are so obvious, how can we deny them or ignore them?" They are obvious only so long as the individual is not fully established in the truth that *Vaasudhevah sarvamidham* (God is all). Until that moment, the body dominates thought, desires haunt the mind, ego rules the intellect; so dualities lord over man. When like the boy

*Prahlaadha*, one is sunk and saturated in God-consciousness, there can be no feeling of gain or loss, pleasure or pain. He is immersed in the word, and is unconcerned about its meaning which is manifested in all its variety in the objective world. The one Word seems to have many meanings, as a result of ignorance. It is the word, the *Paraa-shakthi* (the Supreme Power) that gives value and validity to every one of the meanings.

Another idea called *ekaagratha* (one-pointedness) too can now be elucidated. *Saadhakas* (spiritual aspirants) often bewail that they do not earn one-pointedness. They mean, by that term, that they are not able to concentrate their attention long on a flame, light, picture, or idol. The eye concentrates on something seen; the nose, on some fragrance; the ear on some melody. But, the mind concentrates on the One, (the *Ekam*), the *Brahman*---which is described as *ekam nithyam vimalam achalam sarvadhee saakshibhootham* (the One, the eternal, the pure, the unmoving, the all knowing witness of all). *Ekaagratha*, therefore, denotes the concentration of the inner vision on *Brahman* (Omni-self). The intellect, the ego, the senses---these should subserve this great purpose and help in attaining the ideal. They should be vigilant that they do not divert the vision or deviate it from the *Brahman*.

#### **Nature is beauty, truth but man sees it ugly, false**

However, it has to be admitted that such *saadhana* is now very rare; very few fix their inner vision on the universal and the eternal; nor do they listen to its majesty and mystery. The tragedy which has fallen upon mankind is just this: the mind of man has strayed away from its moorings, and is being tossed about on the waves of doubt and diversity. *Brahman* is One, unchanging, everlasting. A mind filled with the yearning for *Brahman* will see the One in all, it will remain unaffected by the smiles and sneers of fortune. But, man's mind has been tempted into strange paths that can lead him only to fear and frustration. Man condemns the world and calls it a seat of wickedness and war.

The fault lies not in the world, but, in himself. He has war in him and so, he sees war; he is inherently wicked and so, he observes wickedness all around him. A brilliant lamp cannot remove the darkness which a blind man has always around him. For those who have eyes to see, it is brilliant, the light around them. The darkness the blind man swears by is in him, not outside him. So too, the man who is at peace with himself, will discern peace all around him. Nature is beauty, truth, peace. Man sees it ugly, false and violent---that is all.

It is strange, but true Immortality lies enshrined in the mortal; there are diamonds in dirt and dust; wisdom dwells in this mansion of muscles; the *aathma* illumines this tabernacle of the *jeeva* (individual being). Man does not look into himself; he is poor, though under his feet there lies buried treasures. Heir to inexhaustible bliss, he runs after momentary pseudo-pleasures! He gets as reward only distress, disappointment and defeat. He spends all his allotted years in this wasteful adventure, and even at the last moment of life he is beset with sorrow and fear. He has no peace when he leaves his body, for, he has lost the chance of winning peace through its instrumentality.

#### **The Will to live in man is very strong**

There was a woodcutter once, going daily into the forest and collecting a bundle of fuel which he sold in the village nearby for pittance; which just sufficed to keep his wife and children alive. One morning, while he was stepping out of his hut, the wife reminded him that it was *Yugaadhi* (the Thelugu New Year festival), the next day; she pleaded with him to collect a heavier bundle

of fuel that day, so that they could get a few more paise to give the children a morsel of sweet rice each. The man nodded assent and walked on. He succeeded in gathering an extra huge bundle, but, with that heavy load on his head, he was soon exhausted; he had to deposit it on the ground, before he could approach the village. This set him thinking of his plight.

He had lost all his old zest for living. He called upon the Angel of Death, the *Mruthya dhevatha*, to relieve him. He cried, "O Death! Have you no mercy towards me? Why have you forgotten me, so long? How I wish I could die and escape from this daily grind?" The Angel of Death took pity on him, and appeared before him, to fulfill his wish. But, the woodcutter suddenly receded, he cleverly changed the purpose of his appeal to the Angel. He had no wish to die, though in his despair, he had called for her help. He said, "No. No. I had no one here to lift this bundle on to my head, so I called on you to come to my aid. That was the only reason behind my prayer. Please help me to lift this burden and place it on my head; I have to reach the village soon!" Since man is innately immortal, he recedes from the grasp of death, the Will to live is very strong, much more persistent than the Will to die.

### **The shadow of man is neither true nor false**

It is like the story of the Sun and darkness, this question of meeting death or vanquishing death. The Sun-God was, one day, very much impressed by the 1008 Names with which a devotee offered Him worship. He listened to the Names, as he uttered them in steadfast faith. He was particularly alerted when he called-upon Him as *Andhakaara dhveshi*--"He who is looked upon as the enemy of darkness." He could not tolerate the existence of an enemy alive; so, He called for a war unto death for this demon called Darkness. He went into all the places where Darkness hid himself; but no sooner did He spot him, the demon disappeared so that He could never come into grips with him. Finally, He concluded that darkness was nonexistent and was only a creation of the imagination of His adorers! Before the splendour of Immortality, the darkness of mortality too would flee in haste.

The resident in the body has no birth and therefore, no death. But, man is hugging the falsehood that he is the body and so is subject to death and birth. A silver cup can be reshaped by the smith into a plate, or later, into a paan-box; but though the name, the form and the function might change, the silver is there, in all three, unchanged in substance, in spite of the births into plate and box and the deaths as cup and plate. When a man stands on the bank of a sheet of water, his shadow appears in the water. People say it is he, but *Vedhaantha* (*Vedhic* philosophy) says, he is not it. When the shadow is beaten with a stick, he is not hurt; so, it is not he; but, when some one says it is misshapen, ugly, etc., he gets angry! So, he is it. The shadow is both he and not-he. It is neither true nor false, it is real-unreal, it is *mithya* (only mythical).

The eye is distinct from the objects it sees; the eye is an instrument used by the I, which is a ray of the Splendour of the *Aathma* (soul). The senses are mirrors and when the light of that ray falls on them, things and objects are reflected therein. The *Aathma* shines and all the inner organs of perception awaken to their duty of gathering knowledge and revealing Bliss. It is their duty to function according to their nature; the result is not to be aimed at. It follows when the duty is done efficiently to the best of one's ability and Will. A knife cuts vegetables; but, does not eat them. It cuts a fruit; but, is not tempted to taste their sweetness.

Let us imagine a cup, full of fruit-juice. The cup is not aware of the sweetness of the juice. A straw is used to sip the juice, the juice fills the entire length of the straw-, but yet, the straw is a stranger to the taste; the tongue has the juice on it; but it has no knowledge of its calorific value

or its components; it can only pronounce judgement on its taste; for other purposes, it sends the juice into the stomach. The stomach discriminates and distributes the essentials of the juice to every part of the body, every nerve and cell, and contributes to their efficiency and strength. The cup is the body of man; it has in it the Divinely sweet *Aathma* principle. The sense organs are the straws; intellect is the tongue; the ego principle is the stomach; it converts the sweetness into spirit and confers bliss, peace and light.

*Prashaanthi Nilayam, 25-10-1974*