

## 6. Raama the ideal

Mankind has progressed much in exploiting the material resources of the earth in order to promote the standard of life. But, neither the individual nor the society has learnt the way to inner peace and contentment. Envy and greed have fouled the relations between nations and between persons, suppressing the awareness of the Unity that underlies all Creation. The main cause of this calamitous situation is rank egoism, each one tries to grab for himself whatever adds to power and comfort. The ego is making puppets of them all. The words and deeds of men reflect this tendency of selfish aggrandisement. Every move is decided by the needs of the self only. No step is taken that does not promote one's selfish interests.

In order to restore peace to the individual and in society, the mind, where desires are born and resolutions are framed, has to be purged of its attachment to the self. The mind has desires, as its warp and woof. When desires are ego-oriented, time and effort are wasted; duty is neglected; the body and its skills are misused. And all this when life is being shortened every day. With every second, life drips, as water from a leaky pot. But man is not aware of the tragedy that is imminent every moment.

Embodiments of the *Universal Aathma!* Man has in him the capacity to grow into a pure Divine personality. But, due to ignorance and waywardness, he has become stunted. He has chained himself to low ideals and so, he has fallen into fear and grief. The *Upanishads* exhort man to awaken and become master of himself. "*Utthishta, jaagratha, praapya vaaraan nibodhatha*"---they warn. Man is overcome by the sleep of ignorance. He has to be aroused and taught by elders who know the precious heritage he is losing. The sleep is caused by the *eeshana* or attachments--to the mate, to the children and to riches. Of course, a person must have enough to lead a simple life. But, wealth accumulated beyond reasonable levels intoxicates the self and breeds evil desires and habits. Wealth has to be held in trust for activities that are beneficial, for promoting righteous living and for fulfilling one's duties to Society.

### **Renunciation is the real yoga**

India has been very fortunate. It has had seers and sages throughout the centuries who have held forth the value of high ideals. It has had the example of *Avathaars* of Godhead. The emphasis has all along been on the *Aathma* that is the core of every being---a teaching that can confer courage, contentment, peace and harmony. It is indeed pathetic to see people following the vagaries of the mind and courting disaster, instead of using the intellect to discriminate between the transient and the permanent.

The mind should be checked by the intellect. Or else, evil resolutions will result in sorrow. Resolve on good actions and reap joy. Of course, if one can desist from desires and the tendency to pursue them, one can have unshaken peace. If the mind is let loose and given the mastery, man is driven from one inequity to another- He loses his self-respect. He sets at naught law and justice, rules of conduct and regulations of social behaviour. His life becomes a frantic rush from place to place and object to object.

Detachment alone can give happiness. *Thyaaga* (renunciation) is the real *yoga*. Three evil qualities have to be renounced before man can rise to his real role. Anger which smothers wisdom (*jnaana*), lust which pollutes the deed (*karma*) and greed, which destroys one's love (*prema*) for God and man. The touchstone which pronounces an act as meritorious is 'renunciation'. If an act is self-directed, if it helps to inflate the ego, it is a sin.

### **Story of Raama is cream of the *Vedhas***

What India needs most today is neither a new creed nor a new ism, neither a new society, nor a new ideal but men and women who adore and follow pure feelings and motives, persons who renounce anger, lust and greed.

The story of Raama embodies this vital message. It is the cream of the *Vedhas*, a veritable Ocean of Milk. Vaalmeeeki has named each section of the epic, *Kaanda*, a name which means a length of sugarcane. However crooked the cane may be, every slice is as sweet as every, other. Similarly whatever the situation depicted or motion delineated, whether coronation or exile, victory or defeat, heroism or dispiritedness, love or hate, joy or grief, the epic is equally sweet and charming.

There are two predominant rasas or streams of feeling or mood in the Raama story, the stream of compassion (*karuna*) as Raama and the stream of Love (*prema*) as Lakshmana. It is the merge of the two that evokes *aanandha* (bliss). *Aanandha* is the very nature (*svabhaava*) of Raama. He is *Bhagavaan* Himself, though Vaalmeeeki has not explicitly declared it anywhere. He refers to Rama as equal in valour to Vishnu, but not as Vishnu Himself. It is only through the mouths of Raama's own sons that the mystery is revealed. *Bhagavaan* means: *Bha* (effulgence) *ga* (manifestation) *vaan* (he who is capable)---He who has the power to manifest *Jyothi* (Effulgence)---the Divine *Jyothi*, the *Aathma Jyothi*. He is also *Sambhartha*---He from whom this Created Universe has emerged and He who is intent on fostering it. All who adore Raama as manifesting and protecting the Universe and projecting the Cosmic Effulgence and Intelligence are entitled to be known as *Bhakthas*.

But, most seekers are but part-time devotees to-day. They are not *sathatham yoginah* (always in union with the Lord) They are *yogis* in the morning, *bhogis* (epicures.) at noon and *rogis* (sick patients) at night!

### **Raama has set the standard for everyone**

Raama enlightens every seeker in the spiritual field, since he put into daily practice all that he deemed right. So, He sets the standard for every member of the household, of the society, of the nation and of the human race. He went into exile to maintain the highest ideal of a ruler responsive to the reaction of his subjects. The former holds forth the duty of *Pithruvaakya-paripaalana* (respecting the command of the father) and the latter, the regal duty of *Janavaakya-pan, paalana* (respecting the wishes of the ruled). The root is: the 'word', of the parent, of the people. The fruit is *moksha*, liberation. For liberation is the ultimate goal, the inevitable destiny. The bud has as its inevitable goal, through the emerging fruit and the mature fruit to become the sweet ripe fruit. These three stages do follow each other. That is the reason why the *Vedhas* lay down karma (the bud), which becomes *upaasana* (the flower) and *jnaana* (the fruit) in *kaandas*---*sections*. Raama illustrated in His own life this process of the onward evolution of the soul into its Awareness.

Raama was the embodiment of steady adherence to *sathya* and *dharma*. Only those who are saturated in *Raama-bhakthi* can dive into that glory. He is the grand ideal, upon whom you can contemplate. By doing so, you can imbibe and develop his virtues, slowly and silently. A tree grows silently for years before it yields fruits. It does not produce them on the spot or in an instant. The coconut palm, the mango tree, the jack tree are of this type. Their gifts are plenty and full of nourishment. There are plants that yield few fruits pretty quickly and die soon after.

The fame of divine personalities grows with every word they speak and every deed they condescend to enact. Raama's glory shines brilliantly even after all these centuries. It will shine as resplendently for ages to come. Raama means He who pleases. Nothing pleases man more than *his Aathma*, which is an eternal unfailing source of joy. One must prefer the awareness of the *Aathma* and the bliss that the awareness confers, to all other minor momentary joys. The *Upanishad* says, "*Thyaagenike Amruthathvam Aanasuh*"---"By renunciation alone can the Bliss of Immortality be won".

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*Everyone of you has in possession a ticket for liberation from the cycle of birth and death. But, most do not know the train which they have to board; many get down at intermediate stations, imaging them to be the terminus and wander helplessly in the wilderness or are carried away by sights and scenes.*

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