

27. Rama Is An Avatar Of Dharma

When the serpent of time is chasing you relentlessly, you run away in great fear not knowing where to seek shelter. You try to escape from it. It is not possible for you to receive any kind of protection from anywhere even if you run into the different corners of the world. You cannot escape this serpent of time which is after you.

I have been searching, I have been searching then and now, all the time I have been searching so that I may find a true human being. For one single human being with true human qualities, I have been searching and none have I found. In form and outward appearance, there are 5000

crores of people but how many of them are true human beings and how many are monkey like?

Pavitratma Swarupas, students, boys and girls!

The words contained in our *Veda* appear meaningless to ignorant people. On the other hand, for knowledgeable people, the *Veda* is like the *Kamadhenu* (Wish-fulfilling cow) which gives everything. Since the sacred *Veda* contains infinite *rasa* and infinite power, it gives the people according to what they desire and what they need; therefore, it is called the *Kamadhenu*. In as much as even the *Veda* looks after the worldly as well as the spiritual aspects, and even the economic aspects it is called the *Kamadhenu*. In the *Sruthi* this has also been described as *Apushpam*, *Aphalam*, that is one which has neither flowers nor fruits and so is like the *Kalpa Vriksha*. If we look after the tree with great care, there is no objection for us to get the desired flowers or fruit from that tree. If we do not show the necessary care in looking after the tree with the kind of attention which we should show, there is a possibility of the tree perishing. In the same manner *Veda* is like a *Kalpa Vriksha* or a tree which gives whatever we desire;

However, in order to protect it, we have to practise or constantly recite *Veda*. That is a kind of water which we have to give so that the tree may flourish. We also have to provide a proper fence around this tree and the discipline with which you conduct yourself will be the fence. Your *sadhana* is the fertilizer for the tree to grow. It is only when you have this *adhyayana*, discipline and *sadhana* that the *Vedic* tree will give you flowers of *dharma* and the fruit of *Prajnana*. Thus, the *Veda* can help us in fulfilling all our desires. Whatever activity we undertake, unless we take the necessary care and bestow the necessary attention, we cannot enjoy the results. The *Vedas* are being handed down from generation to generation from times immemorial. But, we are neglecting them thinking that they relate to the older people or the ancients. We are not making efforts to reap the fruits of this tree of *Veda*.

In this context it is necessary for us to make a detailed enquiry about two aspects. One of them is the life force into individual *jiva*, which is called the *pindanda* (Microcosm) and the other is the aspect relating to the entire universe which is called *Brahmanda* (Macrocosm). In the *pindanda* of the *jivas* the presiding deity is the *Nara*.

In this context, God or *Paramatma* who is also the presiding deity for the entire universe consisting of moving and non-moving things, is also called *Nara*. All the life in this world is created by divinity in the form of *Nara* and therefore the entire creation has also been referred to as *Nara*. The source which is responsible for spreading this aspect in the world has been called *Ayana*. Here we can see that the source as also presiding deity together become Narayana. God who is formless and attributeless is in this context called as *Nara*.

In these three—*Nara*, *Narayana* and *Ayana*—there is some common aspect implied. Amongst the lifeless materials and the living beings, they have always considered the living beings as something more distinctive and important than the lifeless material. The aspect of Narayana has always been considered to be something superior to the aspect of *Nara* or the *Jiva*. This superior aspect has been described by the *Veda* as *sathyam*, *jnanam* and *anantam*. This aspect of *satyam*, *jnanam* and *anantam* is also referred to as *Narottama* or the superior *Nara*.

These three steps in the hierarchy of the universe—the *Nara*, *Narayana* and *Narottama*—are experienced at different times and in different circumstances. They

have also been referred to as *Ida*, *Saraswathi* and *Bharati*. For the three *Nara*, *Narayana* and *Narottama*, *Saraswathi* is in the place of the mother. *Saraswathi* is the Goddess of speech and is in the form of a mother to *Nara*, *Narayana* and *Narottama*. Here, when we refer to the place of *Saraswathi* as a place of a woman, we imply that she makes the child play and enjoy and take part in all activities. The mother teaches the children how to play.

Saraswathi should not be understood here as the wife of *Brahma* as we do in the mythological context. Here *Saraswathi* should be regarded as the Goddess of speech. It is from the speech that the three aspects—*andanda*, *pindanda* and *Brahmanda*—arise. This is the reason why *Saraswathi* has been given an important place in the *Vedas*.

To learn the meaning of such words, we must have a *guru* and the *guru* himself is a *jnani*. From times immemorial, the *Veda* has been transmitted to different people, not in the form of printed text books but by memory from a *guru* to a disciple. Whatever has been learnt by sitting at the feet of the *guru* has been referred to as *jnana* or wisdom. On the other hand, if what you listen to is later absorbed by repeating and recapitulating it and contemplating thereon it has been referred to as a

kind of superior wisdom, namely *vijnana*. Here we should differentiate between *jnana* and *vijnana*. What you have listened to by *Sravana* will only get into your head and thereafter only certain limited experiences follow from what you have listened to. That is the reason why it is called *jnana*. Later it may slip out from the head under some circumstances. But once you recapitulate, contemplate and absorb what you have listened to, then it will be like taking a print of these things on our heart. The knowledge that is acquired by mere listening will be like a responsibility; on the other hand what you have learnt after constant contemplation and finally absorbing, will be rightfully yours. Therefore, *manana* and *nididhyasana* consists of listening and then absorbing what you have listened to.

There is a small example for this. There is a vast ocean. Suppose you collect water from this ocean and bring it home. This water which you have collected directly from the ocean will taste salty. When the same ocean water is converted by the sun's rays into vapour and then comes down as rain from the clouds an amount of sweetness will be added to the same water. The knowledge which we get by reading or listening to *Sastras* is to be compared to the water collected directly

from the ocean. On the other hand, *vijnana* is comparable to the sweet water raining from the clouds.

Here, we have to recognise the clear difference between the knowledge that we can get from just reading and listening to books and the knowledge that we get from our own direct experience. All our education today is confined to mere acquaintance with the material contained in the printed books. This kind of acquaintance with many books is not going to help us in anyway. From this kind of education not only do we not get any satisfaction but this results in our developing a lot of ego and pride. Because of this small amount of knowledge that we acquire about some small aspect of creation, we begin to forget the country and behave in a very foolish manner. Man should not allow this ego to grow. He should look carefully behind him and ahead of him. When you are troubled by ego, open your eyes and look upwards. When sorrow overtakes you, open your eyes and look downwards. If you continue to search and find out who you are, then you will develop equal-mindedness. You should acquire peace and satisfaction and thereby you will be happy every day.

There is no need for us to give place for ego to set in. In this vast world, our country appears to be a very

small one. In this small map of Bharath, you will find that Karnataka State occupies a tiny little space. In this state of Karnataka, if you try to locate Brindavan you will find that it is a speck in the map of Karnataka. In the large number of people who have assembled here, if an individual wants to locate himself and assess his dimensions, he will be a very tiny person indeed. Being such a small and tiny person that you are amidst such a vast universe, if you feel proud of your individual skills, there is absolutely no meaning at all. On the other hand if you identify yourself and feel that you are only a tiny individual entity in this vast universe, there is no room for you to feel proud or to let your ego develop. When you identify yourself with the universe there is no room for ego. On the other hand, when you want to treat yourself as a separate individual, you are so small and tiny that there is no room for ego. Unfortunately, education of today which is just acquaintance with books is only promoting ego and there is no chance of such education bringing any one happiness.

Whatever good things you have listened to (*Sravana*) must be recapitulated (*Manana*) and contemplated upon (*Nididhyasana*) with a view to absorbing it into yourself. The three aspects *Sravana*,

Manana and *Nididhyasana* are identified respectively with *Ida*, *Saraswathi* and *Bharati* and there is a kind of harmony that exists between these three aspects. We must make an attempt to experience this harmony or oneness.

Divinity is not something which you can find in a place external to you. It has to be found in one's own heart. Many people feel that the *Vedas* and *Sastras* are intended to give us commands and curtail our freedom and thereby diminish our stature. Such people say that *Vedas* and *Sastras* are only bringing us down. Such statements and attitudes are meaningless. Truly, the *Vedas* and *Sastras* are implements which enable us to rise to higher levels. They do not bring us down. *Veda* has been teaching how man should live as a human being and how one should conduct himself and try to realise the aspect of Brahman. Without recognising such truth, if you simply go on talking about human nature, you will never be able to realise the divine aspect.

A tree without fruit, a cow which does not give milk and a man without intelligence are of no use. What is the use of being born as a human being if you do not know the truth about yourself? The truth which we aspire to realise is the peace connected with the aspect of Brahman. The fragrant flower on the tree of life is our

righteous conduct. The pure heart is the sacred milk that we can get out of it. Today, we are lacking such pure heart and the flower of righteous conduct. As a result, we are missing the bliss and happiness that we get out of the aspect of Brahman. The human nature has completely disappeared and we remain human beings only in name. The essential qualities that go to make a human being have disappeared. Just because we have the form of a human being, to think that the respect due to a human being will also be given to us is not correct.

There are two horns on the head of a he-buffalo, but can we give the same value to it as we give to the two tusks of an elephant? The qualities that have to be present in a human being are *vijnana* and *prajnana*. To give the same value to a person who possesses these two and to a person who does not possess them is not correct.

You are at a young age. In this youth, your mental and physical capabilities are in a very good condition. You have the fullest possible strength in you. While that is so, you should not do things which are unsacred. You should utilise your time, energy and resources in undertaking only sacred activities. If you now render the sacred strength which you possess as waste, as time goes

on it will not be possible for you to regain such strength. You should recognise the greatness of the culture of our country and conduct yourself in such a way that you become useful to the country and society and to the people who are living in your country.

Recognising that this word Bharatha comes from something which relates to the entire world, and yet to make it unsacred is a great sin. You should understand that the name Bharatha of our country has a *Vedic* origin. It is not as if someone has given this name to our country from a non-*vedic* source. Many names have been taken from the *Veda* and have been given to individuals and to countries. So also, this word Bharatha has been taken from the *Veda* and has been given to individuals and countries. Thus, this word Bharatha has been taken from the *Veda* and has been given to this country. You have already been told that *agni* is in the place of *Ida*, *Vayu* is in the place of *Saraswathi* and *Aditya* is in the place of *Bharatha*. This word Bharatha represents the sacred aspect of *Aditya*. *Agni* and *Aditya* are important and sacred for the entire world and therefore this word Bharatha has a significance in the context of the entire world. Bharatha here stands for *Brihaspati*, *Prajapati*, *Virat* and *Hiranyagarbha*. To think that this great word

Bharatha, which has so many different sacred meanings in the context of the *Veda* is related to some king or the son of a king is not correct.

I hope you will understand the noble meaning of the word Bharatha which applies to our country. I also hope that not only will you understand but you will communicate the sacred and noble meaning of this word to the future citizens of this country. It is, therefore, necessary in the first instance for you to realise the distinctive aspects of your country, of your language, of your birth and of your life. The authority which we draw from the *Vedas* is much more important than the authority derived from any other sources.

Bharatha could not bear the separation from his divine brother and he was very much hurt at his father's death. In such a condition he went in search of Rama hoping that he will be happier if only he had the *darshan* of Rama. When Rama saw Bharatha in the forest, the first question that he asked of Bharatha was if the people in the country were happy and if he was performing the rituals like the *agnikaryas* regularly. What is the meaning of such questions which were asked by Rama? What is the sanctity which he attached to such things in our country? This is something which you should enquire.

The human bodies have to drop away sometime or the other and they will be cremated. They will then disappear. But as long as the body lasts, if you are not able to make it do such sacred things as are enjoined upon that body, then what is the purpose of this sacred body? Whether this body remains or not, it is an important task for us to lead a life which is an ideal one in this world and which will set an example for the others. Provided you have propagated good ideas and shown good conduct and handed over such good things to others during your life time, then you will be remembered as an immortal person. So we must try to become immortal in this sense and then only will you be able to enjoy the fruits of immortality even during your life time. Until you reach the destination which you ought to reach, you will not get the desired happiness and pleasure even if you have all the material comforts. Permanent happiness is present only at the destination that you ought to reach. In the intermediate stages there is no permanent happiness.

There is a small example for this. Whatever may have been written in the traditional story of *Ramayana*, I am now giving you the underlying meaning. It has been stated that the sweet porridge which was handed over to King Dasaratha by the *yajna purusha* was distributed to

his three wives in a particular manner. I am not very much concerned with this detail, but I am concerned with the attitude which Dasaratha displayed towards the three wives. Dasaratha distributed this *payasam* to the three wives as per the instructions of his *gurus*. If it is something which he distributed by himself out of his own discretion, then there is scope for displaying a partial attitude. But, when he was distributing God's gift, he had no right to show any partiality and he had to distribute it equally to the three wives.

Amongst the three wives, the ideas and the thoughts that came were like the ones which come naturally to any other woman. The youngest among them, namely Kaikeyi, remembered the promise from her husband, the king. This was what she had in her mind and therefore she kept her portion of the *payasam* very carefully. The eldest wife, namely queen Kausalya, naturally believed that the son to be born to her will become the King and so she also kept her portion of the *payasam* very carefully. The middle one, Sumitra, did not have any ambition and so did not have any particular desire for having a son. Not only did she not have any ambition, but she was even feeling a little bit despondent and unwell. The feeling is quite natural to Sumitra. She thought that if a son was born to the eldest

queen, Kausalya, he may become the King and if a son was born to the youngest, Kaikeyi, he may also become the King on the basis of the promise which the King made to her. But if a son was born to her, that son would have to attend on and associate himself with the son of either Kausalya or Kaikeyi. Sumitra thought that there was no point in her looking for children under such circumstances.

As soon as the *yajna* was over, Dasaratha brought the *payasam* along with the *gurus* and the *Rithwicks* of the *yajna* and distributed it equally between the three wives. He advised them to have a bath and wait for the *rishis* to come and bless them and thereafter to take the *payasam*. The three wives had their baths and were keeping the *payasam* very carefully, but so far as Sumitra was concerned she was not very enthusiastic but she did not want to display her emotions to her sisters. So she went up to the terrace of the building and was drying her hair pretending that she was quite unconcerned about what was going on around. She kept the *payasam* in a golden cup in a corner; but as ill luck would have it, a bird came and took away the *payasam* from the golden cup. Sumitra was not very sorry for having lost the *payasam*, but she was worried what the King Dasaratha would say if he comes to know of the loss of *payasam*.

She immediately ran down and told her sisters, Kausalya and Kaikeyi, about the incident. The three sisters were living as friends. They had no envy or jealousy among them. Each one was sympathetic to the difficulties of others. So, Kausalya and Kaikeyi immediately shared their *payasam* with Sumitra by redistributing it among themselves what was with a view to assure Dasaratha that everything was normal and there is no cause for unhappiness. In the meanwhile, Vasishta, the *guru*, arrived there, blessed them and advised them that they might now go to their respective puja rooms and take the *payasam*.

You all know the story that unfolds thereafter. Kausalya and Kaikeyi each had one son born to them. Sumitra, who was not interested in children at all, had two sons. God's will is always incomprehensible. If man wishes to do something, something else will happen. That is why it is said "man proposes God disposes". There is no meaning in man wishing something to happen and working out a plan accordingly. On the other hand, man has to adjust his plans according to God's will. It is not correct for him to stick to his own plans and take decisions.

Whether it is pleasure or pain, happiness or sorrow, everything is to be taken as the grace of the Lord. You

cannot get pleasure out of pleasure. Pleasure is an interval between two pains. Normally, man cannot understand what kind of pleasure comes out of what kind of pain.

Rama, who was born to Kausalya, was taking his feed normally and happily; and similarly Bharatha, who was born to Kaikeyi, was also happy and was taking his feed normally; but the two sons born to Sumitra would never take their feed normally and they were crying continuously all through the day and night. They were very much agitated. Sumitra was very unhappy that these sons troubled her even before their birth and were troubling her after their birth. She sent for various doctors and tried to get them cured so that they take their normal feed and be happy. But they would not be cured by any kind of *manthra* or medicine. Neither they would stop crying.

As a last resort, she represented her problem to sage Vasishta, the family *guru* and requested his help. Vasishta was an all-knowing saint and could see quite easily what had happened and what had to be done to remedy the situation. Vasishta told Sumitra that she should take Lakshmana and put him in the same cradle in which Rama was sleeping and put Satrugna in the

cradle in which Bharatha was sleeping. The moment Lakshmana was near Rama, he became quiet and went to sleep very easily. He also had his feed normally. Since out of a portion of *payasam* intended for Rama came Lakshmana, he was not happy till he joined the original part. Same is the case with Satrughna, who was united with Bharatha. In this context, we have to understand the truth that until we join the place from which we have come, we will be very unhappy and we will not have any peace of mind.

Neither Lakshmana nor Satrughna could bear any separation from their counterparts and that is the reason why, although they were born to a different mother, Lakshmana was inseparable from Rama and he was always moving with him. Their views and ideas were also similar. Similar is the case of Bharatha and Satrughna. For the purpose of demonstrating to the world what an ideal life should be, what an ideal brother should be, what an ideal family should be and what an ideal relationship between husband and wife should be, Vasishtha felt that Rama incarnated as the embodiment of *dharma*. That is why, he declared *Ramo Vighrahan Dharmaha*, i.e., Rama is the embodiment of *Dharma*.

Students, boys and girls!

Whatever line of action you wish to take and whatever position of authority you may come to occupy, you should not forget that your ultimate goal is *Brahmananda*. Whatever work you do, you may do it with the aspect of Brahman in your mind. That should lead you back to your original source that is Brahman.