

29. The supreme physician

The deha (body) is a vehicle that even gods aspire to possess. You know that gods seek to come into human form so that they could utilise the intelligence, discrimination, detachment, etc., that the human body alone is capable of exercising, to realise the Ultimate Reality, which when known makes everything else known. The body with which the hospital is concerned is the *ratha* (the chariot) of the individual or *the jeevi, the dehi, the resident, the master*. It is the castle from which one can fight against the foes of attachment and egoism; it is the boat by which one can cross the sea of change and chance. The realisation of the reality, through *Adhyaathmic saadhana* (spiritual discipline) is an arduous enterprise, as fraught with calamity, as playing with fire or duelling with tigers or battling with barbarian hordes. One has to be alert; vigilant and fully trained to meet all emergencies. Many quail before its impossible demands. The *Upanishads* have compared the aspirant's path to a razor's edge.

Man is the monarch of all animals; his is the most glorious chance among all living beings. Though the elephant lives longer, the lion is more fierce, the eagle more far-seeing, the cock more punctual in early rising, the cow more imbued with the spirit of sacrifice, man has in him vaster potentialities which can be brought out by proper culture. If only he intensifies his thirst for God, he can live in perpetual content, instead of grovelling in perpetual discontent, pining for land, buildings, bank-balance, furniture, status, power, authority and all such trivial satisfactions. At last, when man is about to leave the world, as leave he must, he is surrounded by his wife and children who lament loudly, asking, "What is to happen to us when you leave?"; but the poor fellow is confronted by a more urgent, a more personal problem: "What is to happen to me?" And he has no more time to discover the answer or to prepare for something good to happen.

Men born with a cry should die with a smile

In fact, if he had tried he could have known the reality and gone with a smile, instead of a groan or a whine. Men are born with a helpless lamenting cry; they should die with the smile of happy joy. That is the purpose of the years between. But those years are wasted now. God, who is the anchor that will save man from stress and storm, is neglected and ignored. Man is tossed about from one want to another, one grief to another, until he is blinded by despair and exhausted by foiled pursuits. Most illnesses are due to this despair and this exhaustion.

The *deha* (body) has to be nourished so that man can reach the *dehi*, the real indweller. Bheeshma taught from his bed of arrows that the body is to be fostered since it is an instrument for good deeds. Three fishes lived in a tank; one told the other two that the water was getting dry and they would be well advised to leave, ere it was too late. But, one said, it could save itself when the contingency arose; the third was caught by the fisherman, though the first migrated early enough and the second managed to break through the net. Yama is the fisherman; unless early notice is taken of the process of drying to which the tank of one's span of life is subject, one gets caught. Migrate into the sea of Grace, which will not dry; or learn the art of breaking through the net of death. It was the *sathwa guna* (quality of goodness) that moved on to God; the *rajo guna* (quality of activism) broke the net; the *thamo guna* (quality of inertia) got caught. Grow into the *saathwik* stage and save yourself. Discard sloth, denounce fanaticism and declare yourself a dedicated servant of the Lord. Then, Grace will be showered on you.

Pronounce the Lord's name with love and joy

Naamasmarana is the process by which this dedicatory attitude can be cultivated and confirmed. When confronted by calamity, you must attach yourself to this *saadhana* even more firmly, instead of losing faith in it and getting slack. The drug should not be given up when it is most needed. The pity is, when the first disappointment faces you, you lose courage and confidence and give up Raama or Krishna or Sai Baaba.

Another point about this *Naamasmarana*. There are some who ejaculate Raama or Sai-raama or Mahaadeva when they are disgusted with some happening, or when they are displeased or depressed, in a tone indicative of distance or unwelcome surprise. They say it with a sigh or a groan. This is wrong. The name of the Lord must always be pronounced with joy, thankfulness, exultation, awareness of the uniqueness and the splendour. Say it with love, say it with sincere yearning.

There was a great sage who was bitten by a serpent during a *yajna* which he was celebrating. His disciples lamented the incident and cursed the wily reptile. But, he quietened them and said, "No, the snake is a messenger from God. All beings are our kith and kin. This serpent is sent by God to liberate me from this body. Honour it, welcome it; do not beat the messenger of the Lord." Death is not a deplorable event; it is the journey's end, the owner getting out of the car when the time is out and the goal is reached. It is a consummation, a happy conclusion, or at least it ought to be, if only all are wise enough to treat it as such and be prepared for it.

A strong will is the best tonic

Buddha's father decided that he should get attached to the world and the senses; he built around his son a wall and a garden of delight and pleasure; but Buddha escaped into the atmosphere of detachment, to discover the secret of human sorrow and devise a cure for it. Now, people seek to realise God while clinging on to the world and its fake joys. This is like the mother-in-law who hated her daughter-in-law so intensely that she wished she would become a widow, but she loved her son so much that she wanted him to live. How could the girl be widowed when the son lives? The two are incompatible; God cannot be gained through attachment to falsehood. You must have a proper sense of values. A woman attacked her husband with a pestle; the pestle broke and she bewailed its loss; she did not worry much about the husband's head, which had also broken. Is this a sign of wisdom? Can you call it an awareness of values? The body is a house given to you for rent; the owner is God. Live there so long as He wills, thanking Him and paying Him the rent of faith and devotion.

A strong will is the best tonic; the will becomes strong when you know that you are a child of immortality or a person who has earned the Grace of the Lord. Medicine and hospitalisation are for those who doubt and hesitate and argue about this doctor being more efficient than the other, this drug being more powerful than the rest. For those who rely on the Supreme Doctor, His Name is enough drug. The Paandavas had faith and devotion; so they won grace and they succeeded in defeating the wily stratagems of their foes. The reinforcements provided by the Lord are the most reliable means of support. When you get them, dishonour, defeat and despair-fade away like fog before the sun. Disease too dare not approach you. On this day, when the Hospital is celebrating its Anniversary Festival, I advise you to avoid disease, to avoid drugs and hospitals by strengthening your spiritual urge and invoking the Grace of God.

***Aanandha* is the best cure for mental depression**

Mrs. Macrae of New York spoke in her Presidential Address, of her experiences in the mental clinics she runs in the United States of the curative value of music. She has tried the same curative treatment in the hospitals for defectives in Hongkong also. *Aanandha* (spiritual bliss) is the best cure for mental depression; as a matter of fact, it is when the inner springs of *aanandha* are ignored that man gets depressed. India has recognised the salutary effect of music on the mind; its potency to restore calm and equanimity, to still the waves of agitation and worry. Music is the instrument by which passions are sublimated, emotions are tamed, impulses directed to higher purposes. We have forgotten the great role assigned to music in our culture.

We are admiring the lilts and jingles of the films and losing the profundities of classical music. People talk loud and long on Indian culture and its preservation and promotion, but when it comes to practise, they fail miserably. When this body had attained its ninth year, I had written a drama on this fundamental trait of modern man, saying one thing and doing its opposite. When *Vedhas* are ignored, *vedana* (pain) is the consequence. The teachings of the *Upanishads* and the *Geetha* which give all human activities the correct sense of proportion are invaluable in preserving mental and physical health. They direct man along the paths of peace to the realm of inexhaustible bliss.

Prashaanthi Nilayam: Dashara, Hospital Day, 15-10-1966

You might say that karma of the previous birth has to be consumed in this birth and that no amount of grace can save man from that. Evidently, someone has taught you to believe so. But I assure you, you need not suffer from karma like that.

When a severe pain torments you, the doctor gives a morphine injection and you do not feel the pain, though it is there in the body. Grace is like the morphine, the pain is not felt, though you go through it!

Grace takes away the malignity of the karma which you have to undergo.

Sathya Sai Baaba