

31. The taming of the wild

It is indeed a pitiable fate that a people who drank the nectar of spiritual culture and spent their days in peace and joy should today be in the throes of fear, faction, failure and feebleness. The Saraswathi river that flows underground and unseen, but which sustains and fertilises the crops sown on the soil, has become dry; faith and devotion have declined, so that man looks upon brother man as a rival and as a competitor, rather than as the image of the same God that he reveres.

Great sages, filled with magnificent sympathy for their fellowmen, laid down rules, regulations, limits and directions for daily life and conduct, so that man's hand and brain, his instincts and impulses may not turn against man, but may turn towards the ideals of *sathya*, *dharma*, *shaanthy* and *prema*. They declared that every *karma* must be weighed in the balance and approved only if it cleanses the emotions and passions; it has to be cast aside if it curdles or fouls them. *Bhaavashuddhi* (purification of mental disposition) was the fruit of *karma* and any act that befogs the *bhaava* (thought process) or excites it into *Rajas* (passion) or demeans it into *thamas* (inertia) has to be avoided. *Yajnas* and *yaagas* (sacrificial rites and sacrificial offerings) were prescribed so that man may learn the glory of renunciation, not the glitter of pomp and conspicuous waste.

Yajnas imposed on the performer and participants a rigorous routine of physical and mental cleanliness that led them on to the presence of the Supreme. Like the attractive pictures in children's primers, they drew attention and held it fast; they took the delighted readers along the lessons and helped them to master knowledge itself. They learnt *Akshara* (the unchanging eternal truth) through the changing *karma*. The worship of idols, temple rituals, vows and fasts, festivals and holy days, all these are designed to tame the wildness of man and train him to tread the straight and sharp path to self-realisation.

Hanker after God more than after gold

The age-long approach to life and living that has suffered a set-back in recent years, as the Minister said, is sure to triumph again; the enticement of science and western fashion, of cynicism and ruthless egoism will fade away; it is but the ash upon the cinder that is glowing hot; blow a breath and it falls away. Like clouds that pass along the sky casting shadows on the plains, these distractions lead some away from the goal; but there is no need to despair that India will lose its heritage. Now that the rulers too are inheritors of the same treasure and aware of its uniqueness, the danger of its neglect is very much less. The rulers are not different from the ruled; the people themselves select the rulers and entrust them with powers, responsibilities and funds to plan and perform programmes of all-round uplift.

So, there must be greater mutual understanding and cooperation than in the past, when the rulers belonged to a distant country and strange culture.

The Minister described in his speech how progress in mechanisation and industrialisation has brought various social ills and individual maladjustments in their wake; he recognised the efficacy of *Sanaathana Dharma* (the eternal religion) in assuaging these evils and commended the study of the *Vedhas*, *Shaasthras* and *Puraanas*. He spoke of an advisory council of religious leaders which can help the rulers in preserving and promoting the principles and practices of *Sanaathana Dharma*. What the rulers are anxious to give, the people must be eager to take; what the people are eager to achieve, the rulers must be anxious to foster; that is the way the country

can go forward in this fundamental field of spiritual activity. Above all, people must hanker after God more and after gold, less. *Vishayavaasana*---the urge to accumulate fortune, to live in luxury, to revel in scandal, to delight in falsehood, to take pride in display---these must be cast aside. They bind a man to triviality; they smother his divine nature which struggles to blossom into service, sacrifice and all-pervading love.

Dashara, 17-10-1966

The mind is the villain; it is another name for desire; the texture of the mind is just desire; both warp and woof are desire and nothing else. If desire goes, the mind disappears. When you pull out all the yarn from a piece of cloth, you have no more cloth. So too, pull out desires from the mind; it disappears, and you are free.

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