

41. Full of fangs

YOU have been receiving these ten days highly nutritious spiritual food which has filled you with strength and vigour. I shall therefore talk to you about the ways in which this strength and vigour have to be utilised for the highest purposes of life. When you know the way; endeavour will become more effective. Wandering will be given up. Life becomes worthwhile. When the Queen Kaikeyi persuaded her husband to agree to her two requests---enthroning her son Bharatha as the Crown Prince and sending the legitimate Raama into exile for fourteen years---Lakshmana, another brother of Raama and Bharatha, did not acquiesce tamely. He argued that man must meet every little crisis with courage and self-reliance, and that he should not yield craven-like, to the machinations of intrigue. He boasted that his arrow can avert any crisis!

But the arrow is an inferior weapon, even a negligible weapon, when compared with the efficacy of Love. Raama heard him coolly and advised him to desist from that hasty *karma* (action); "*Dharma* (virtue) must guide *Karma*," He said. Then alone can it be praiseworthy and successful. Kausalya, the mother of Raama, reconciled herself to the sudden turn of events; she blessed her son when He left as a hermit for the jungle, "May the *Dharma* which you represent guard you." That *Dharma* is expressed as Love, Love towards man, sub-man, super-man, animal, bird and beast.

Conducting *yajna* is the most precious activity

The coconut tree thrives best on the sea coast; the tree of *Brahma-thathwa* grows best on the soil of *prema* (love). The region of the heart has to be transformed into a region of compassion. Man's native characteristic is *prema*; his nature is *prema*, his breath is *prema*. The fog of desire clouds *prema* and distorts it. Like the dog which took its image in the canal as another dog and started to bark it off, man too barks at his own image (fellow- men) who are as much images of *Brahman* as he himself is. To separate the image from oneself is the basis of conscience. Fix your attention on the identity, not the difference. That is the road to peace.

Investigate the Truth as far as your intellect leads you; you will come up against the principle of love. *Yaajnavalkya* was questioned by Janaka about the basis for all activity; he replied, "It is Light." When the Sun sets, the Moon sheds light; when there is no Sun or Moon, the ear is the guide; behind the ear is the mind, behind the mind is the *Aathma* (Supreme Soul), which is a spark of the Supreme. The final offering in the sacrificial fire which you saw is called *Poornaahuthi* (the full offer). It is when the flames rise high that darkness is fully destroyed. Surrender all that you have---all that you have so far believed to be valuable---in the sacred fire. See them being reduced to ashes before your very eyes; look on it without a quiver, as Janaka saw, when *Mithila* was aflame. It is a call to dedicate all that you now assess as valuable and desirable to the Divine purpose. The *yajna* (sacrificial fire) is a symbolic sacrifice, of both earthly riches and heavenly aspirations. This is the most precious activity---this dedication and surrender. People see only the outer ritual, not the inner meaning; so, they concentrate on the external pomp and exaggerate the exhibitionistic aspect by means of competitive pageantry!

Good thoughts feed the roots of virtue and love

The *yajna* is an occasion for the fixation of the mind on *manthra*, that is to say, on the formula or sound symbol that saves (*thra*) when it is meditated upon (*manana*). The poet is called *manthra-dhrashta* (he who sees *manthras*, through his mystic insight, the discoverer of the secret key to inner peace). The effect of the utterance and glorification of these sound-symbols of the Eternal

Absolute is felt all over the world. So it produces *loka-kalyaana* (peace and prosperity all over the world). Good thoughts have a way of purifying and cleansing, of feeding the roots of virtue and love. To judge things dedicated to God, God alone is competent. I like yajnas; I direct that yajna be done. You have no authority to judge because you have no knowledge. You have no mastery of the science of *yajnas* and of *manthras*.

All is *Brahman*; the *yajna manthras* delineate Him in various ways; they declare that all creation is *Brahman*; it is not something different and distinct. You should revere Nature as *Brahman*; *Sarvam Brahma-mayam* (all this Nature imbued with *Brahman*, is *Brahman*, is immanent *Brahman*). It is to cure the vision that perverts Nature as 'not- *Brahman*' that *yajna* is ordained. You have to pour into the fire the limited vision and earn in exchange the larger vision. The *yajna* is *saadhana* (spiritual exercise) in sacrifice and surrender.

Overcome the tendency of inflicting poison

Transmuting humanity into divinity is the task allotted to man; his thought, word and deed are instruments for this unavoidable destiny. By unremitting practise, this has to be achieved. The priest in the temple has to ring the bell with the left hand and wave the camphor-flame with the right hand---an exercise in manual co-ordination which comes only as a result of practice. A new priest will wave both hands or shake the camphor plate! Vemana has said that while the serpent has poison in its fangs and the scorpion in its tail, man is capable of inflicting poison through his tongue, eye, hand and mind. He has to overcome this acquired tendency and remind himself that he is *Amrithasya puthra* (the child of immortality) conferring sweet nectar, not death dealing poison.

By means of *saadhana*, this consummation can be achieved. Believe that you are the imperishable pure *Aathma*. Then, no gain or loss can affect you; no sense of humiliation or despair can torment you. Only men with weak foundations can dread these. The strong man casts them away without any regret. When the senses are dominant, equanimity is a dream. Be their master; you can be yourself undisturbed and free.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 2-10-1968