

18. The greatness of *Raama-Raajya*

*That day alone is a true day
When all good devotees gather
to pray to the Lord;
When people serve the poor and the needy
in a spirit of brotherliness;
When a feast is offered to the servants
of the Lord who sing His glories;
When holy men visit our homes and relate
the exploits of the Lord;
All other days are days of mourning.*

IT WAS the great day of Shree Raama's Coronation. The City of Ayodhya was *en fete*, with the people rejoicing in the festive celebrations. The crown that was first worn by Manu, had been worn by successive emperors according to hallowed tradition. That day the sages Vasishtha, Vaamadheva and Jaabali earned the crown for the coronation of Shree Raamachandhra.

To participate in the historic ceremony several kings, chieftains and lesser rulers were entering the Durbar Hall, along with many sages. At the main entrance gate, a gigantic message was blazoned across the gate in a novel manner. The message read in Sanskrith: "*Sathya-Dharmaabhih yukthaanaam naasthi mrithyu bhayam*" (Those who adhere to Truth and Righteousness will have no fear of death). The message declared that for the one who adhered to Truth and Righteousness there was no fear of rebirth. This means that such a one need have no fear of death again after this life because he will have no re-birth. Without birth there can be no death.

Adherence to *Sathya* and *Dharma* in *Raama-Raajya*

The Raamaayana brought home to one and all this significance of Truth and Righteousness. The glorious story of Raama spread the name and fame of Bhaarath to all countries. In the *Raama-Raajya* (reign of Raama) the two words, *Sathya* and *Dharma*, (Truth and Righteousness) reverberated everywhere in the Kingdom. *Dharma* prevailed everywhere and young and old, men and women, scholars and illiterates, one and all adhered to these two principles.

As is the ruler, so are the ministers. As are the ministers, so are the administrators. As are the administrators, so are the common people. The ministers strictly adhered to Truth and Righteousness. Lakshmana, Bharatha and Shathrugna were assigned the duty of enforcing Shree Raama's orders in all parts of the Kingdom. They kept a close watch over what was happening in every nook and corner of the realm, how far the people were adhering to truth and righteousness and how they were getting on in dally life. For this purpose a large body of officials were employed to go round the country. These messengers gathered all information everyday about the difficulties experienced by the people and their conduct. This system prevailed as long as Raama reigned over the Kingdom.

Raama performed a hundred *Ashvamedha yaagas* (horse sacrifices) and many other sacrifices. Together with these sacrifices Raama propagated among the people the qualities of truth and right conduct.

The golden days of *Raama-Raajya*

In Raama's reign, all married women were *Sumangalis* (whose husbands were alive). Widowhood was unknown. It is natural for parents to die before their children. But it is unnatural for children to die earlier than their parents. In *Raama-Raajya* there was not a single case of premature death. Death of young people was not known. There were none suffering from disease. There was no sign of poverty. The rains came in the right seasons. The harvests were bountiful. There was no shortage of food. Unrest was unknown. All people were happy and peaceful.

Comparing those days with the present times, we realise what apathetic plight is ours. Bhaarith will enjoy Raama-Raajya only when it has rulers like Raama, ministers like Sumanthra, saintly advisers like Vasishta and Vaamadheva and brothers like Lakshmana, Bharatha and Shathrughna. During Raama's reign there was no conflict anywhere. People did not indulge in mutual recrimination. Everyone in the Kingdom was grateful for any act of help and was eager to repay the act of kindness.

Raama expresses gratitude to all who helped Him

The first pronouncement which Raama made on the occasion of the coronation is remarkable. He said: "Who is it that is primarily responsible for making today's celebration possible? Hanumaan was solely responsible for the successful search of the whereabouts of Seetha and helping me to recover her. Hence, at the outset I express my deep gratitude to Hanumaan."

Raama then expressed his gratitude to Jataayu, who sacrificed his life in fighting against Raavana while he was carrying away Seetha.

Next, Raama expressed his gratitude to Sugreeva, who had helped him in organising the search for Seetha and in providing the hordes for the war on Raavana. He next expressed his gratitude to Vibheeshana, who had come over to him, despite the suspicions of Raama's companions, and who had revealed to Raama many of the secrets of the enemy.

Above all, there were the huge hordes of monkeys, who had no direct connection with Raama or Seetha, who endured many hardships and even laid down their lives for his sake and he expressed his gratitude to all of them. In this manner, Raama expressed his gratitude to one and all who had helped him in the epic Raama-Raavana battle.

The supreme lesson to be learnt from the Raamaayana is that one should be grateful all his life to anyone who has helped him in a crisis. Only the man who shows such gratitude can be termed a human being. The ungrateful man is a demon. The human and the demonic are not different in external appearance. It is by his actions that one is called human, demonic or divine. All those who indulge in bad thoughts, bad speeches and wicked acts are described as demons. Equally, those who do harm to those who have helped them were regarded as demons. So also, those who renounce Truth and Righteousness and cherish falsehood and wickedness as their life-breath were treated as demons.

Every substance has its inherent quality

Today men have a fascination for untruth. Ignorant of what is meant by Righteousness they practise unrighteousness. Our *Vedhas* teach: "Speak the truth: follow righteousness." Men today are not qualified even to utter these words, much less to practise them.

Every substance has its *Dharma* (inherent quality). This quality is independent of one's belief. It is its inherent nature. For instance, that which has the quality of burning has been called *Agni* (fire). The natural quality of fire is to burn. This quality is not based on anyone's faith or opinion. Whether you are aware of this quality or not, when you touch fire it will cause a burn. Likewise, the quality of ice is coldness. This, again, is independent of anyone's belief. If coldness is absent, it is no longer ice. It has forfeited its nature. Similarly, the sun's nature is to shed light. One may fail to see the sun because it is covered by clouds or one is blind. But that does not detract from the sun's *dharma* of shedding light.

Likewise man has a *dharma*. This *dharma* (natural trait) is to perform all actions with *Thrikarana Suddhi* (purity in thought, word and deed). Man's natural function is to behave with harmony in thought, word and deed (unity of body, speech and mind). Where there is divergence between thought, word and deed, the resulting action is unrighteousness. It is because today there is no harmony between thought, word and deed in the conduct of human beings, unrighteousness is rampant. This triune unity is not prevalent among the educated or the illiterate.

One who lacks faith, but acts as if he has faith, is bound to face ruin. He is of a demonic nature.

Today Truth and Righteousness have declined alarmingly. The first task is to produce young men and women who are wedded to Truth and Righteousness. Only a nation where the men and women adhere to these two principles will be prosperous and happy. When Bharath has such men and women it will achieve great prosperity.

Rulers are to be blamed for today's troubles

Bharatheeya culture gave to the world spirituality and proclaimed the message: "May all people everywhere be happy!" In ancient times, the rulers, the sages, the householders all strove to practise Truth and Righteousness. The rulers set the example and all others followed them. Today we see that as are the rulers, so are the people. The people are not to be blamed at all. The faults lie entirely with the rulers.

Because of the lapses of the rulers, the people are subject to all troubles. Each one pursues his own self-interest and selfish gain. Each is after power and pelf. There are no leaders who are concerned about the people's needs and their well-being. If the nation's progress is to be promoted, the rulers must follow the advice of high-minded leaders in society.

Bharath's survival even in its present condition is due to the fact that in the past the rulers accepted the guidance of great sages. The sages had no personal interest of their own. Why did sage Vasishta come to Emperor Dhasharatha? He was not interested in wealth or pomp. He wanted to be there when the Lord incarnated as Raama. Seetha esteemed Hanumaan in the same manner. She said that even if she were to offer him lordship of the three worlds, she would not be discharging her debt to him. "You are the embodiment of sacrifice. You exemplify pure devotion. Because of these two qualities, you are entitled to move freely in all the three worlds. All the three worlds will experience prosperity through your presence."

Restoration of *Sathya* and *Dharma* is the primary need

What we need today is the restoration of the supremacy of Truth and Righteousness. There are some who cavil at the use of these two terms. If they do not know what Truth and Righteousness are, they cannot be deemed human beings at all. Truth and Righteousness are the inherent natural qualities of human beings. Human life is based on Truth and Righteousness. What folly is it to declare that one does not know what they are?

Truth is utterance of what you think. Righteousness is acting according to your words. The unity of thought, word and action is essential. Truth and Righteousness are not qualities to be acquired, as was suggested by Narasimha Murthy (in his speech prior to Svaami's discourse). They are inherent in man, born with him even as his limbs and his life-breath. There is no need to search for them elsewhere. They emanate from one's heart. They dwell in everyone. What is necessary is to see that these inherent qualities are not lost. No one is entitled to live in this world if he does not practise truth and righteousness.

Treat ups and downs of life with equanimity

It has been declared that for the practise of these two qualities, *Vairaagya* (renunciation) is essential. Renunciation does not mean giving up hearth and home. True renunciation consists in treating happiness and sorrow alike. One must have the spirit of equanimity in facing pleasure and pain, profit and loss. Do not get elated over 'happiness or depressed by sadness. Treat praise and censure alike. This is true renunciation or detachment. Treat the ups and downs of life with equanimity.

Consider the example of Seetha. She was a prisoner in the Ashokavana of Raavana. He had enhanced its beauty in many ways to make it alluring to Seetha. But Seetha had no interest in these allurements at all. But she was deeply moved when a small monkey sang in praise of Raama from the top of the tree under which Seetha was sitting (Svaami sang the song of Hanumaan in praise of Raama).

Seetha found more beauty in the monkey than in all the flowers in Ashokavana. It was the chanting of Raama's name which lent beauty to the monkey's face. She was full of bliss at that moment. The name was like nectar to her. Bliss without beauty is sterile. Raamaayana taught the integral relationship between beauty and bliss.

Wherein lay the bliss of Seetha and Raama? It was in the well-being and happiness of the people. They sought nothing from the people. They were interested only in giving and giving what was good for the people. This applies to all *Avathaars* from Raama to the present day. What is it that I am asking from you? I do not ask even for a small shell. Free education is given to the students. Free treatment is offered in hospitals. All that is offered by Svaami is free. The students bear only their mess charges. Where can you see such free provision of education and medical aid? Nowhere else. I do not ask for anything from anybody. This is the bliss I shall experience if you lead good lives and stand forth as noble citizens.

The mistaken attitude of people

In the world today you find that only when students pay a heavy price for education, they show greater interest in studies. People have greater confidence in hospitals where they pay heavily. In private hospitals you are asked to deposit in advances Rs. 2 lakhs for a heart operation. The patients feel that they will get high-class treatment because of the heavy charges they pay. This is sheer folly. Little attention is paid to the patients after the operation is over.

In the Sai Super-Speciality Hospital everything is done free, the best facilities are provided and loving concern is shown for the patients. All this is taken for granted because no fees are paid to the doctors. This is a totally mistaken attitude. No doubt the value of what is offered free will be realised in due course. But I am sorry that such wrong impressions should exist. If even students feel in this way, what is the benefit they derive from their education in Sai institutions? Is it for merely earning a livelihood that you are pursuing your studies? Earning money is no great thing. Even dacoits make money. Even beggars are known to have amassed large sums by beggary. Education should be sought only for the acquisition of *Vijnaana* (wisdom), not for acquiring wealth. The one who is interested only in money will never be able to foster good qualities. All our Institute students should be concerned only with fostering virtues. Many Kings have enjoyed wealth and passed on. Where are they now?. Only their wicked deeds are remembered.

Character matters more than riches and affluence

During the past ten days you must have heard a great deal about Raavana. There was no limit to his riches. Kubera (the god of wealth) was his cousin. His fort and city were paved with gold. What was the use of all his riches and affluence? He had no character. Ultimately he lost everything.

Hence, promote your character. Acquisition of good qualities is the mark of true education. What matters how much wealth a man has if he has no morals? A rich man hardly enjoys peace of mind.

No doubt money is necessary for carrying on one's life. But excessive money is harmful. You owe a duty to your family. For that purpose you have to earn an income. Excessive wealth is the cause of all bad thoughts and feelings. You can see that in most cases it is the children of the rich who go astray.

People should always remember that the ultimate end may come at anytime. One should reform one's life well before the end comes. Greatness consists not in wealth but in virtue. A true human being is one who recognizes the Divine within him. He should lead a godly life. Everyone should strive to recognise the Indwelling Spirit within, which is the master of the body and the senses. The highest education is *Aathma-Vidhya* (Self-Knowledge). The Spirit is invisible like the roots of a tree. But it is the basis of real bliss, just as the fruits of a tree are derived from the roots. The external pleasures you enjoy are based on the power of the Spirit within. The air you breathe, the light you see, the water you drink are all derived from the Divine.

Stand by your plighted word

Students should recognise the Divine power that sustains everything in the universe. It was the faith in the Divine that sustained Seetha during the ten months she lived alone as a prisoner in the Ashokavana. The divine power that sustained Seetha in her captivity is in everyone. Rely on that power. All that you have to do is to turn your vision inward. Follow the dictates of your conscience. Education should teach you good qualities, right thinking, right conduct, discipline and devotion to duty.

Students should develop unwavering faith in truth and Righteousness. Stand by your plighted word. That is the message of Raama's life. "One word, one wife, one arrow." Raama exemplifies these three signs. You must experience the Raama Principle residing in your heart.

Raama is not the remote son of an emperor. He is the Eternal Spirit in one's heart. Live upto your conscience and you will please God.

Every human being has to develop faith in *Sathya* and *Dharma*, practise them in daily life and lead worthy lives.

Students! Boys and girls! You are likely to assume positions of leadership in the nation in future years. The nation's future depends on how you conduct yourselves. Go forward to serve the nation, whatever trials you may have to face, do so with faith in God. Follow the divine injunctions. It will contribute to your welfare and the welfare of the nation and the world.

Discourse in Sai Ramesh Mandap on 29-5-1996.

See in Me yourself, for I see Myself in you all. You are My life, My breath, my soul. You are My Forms all; when I love you. I love Myself, when you love yourselves, you love Me! I have separated Myself from Myself so that I may love Myself. My beloved ones, You are my own Self.

Baba