

4. The search for Seetha

SINCE three days, the *Pandiths* who spoke here have been discoursing on the Raamaayana. This is understandable in the case of a specialist like Dheekshith but even the other *vidhwaan* has turned away from his usual topics; he too spoke on the Raamaayana. Of course, the Raamaayana is a limitless ocean, from which any number of canals can be dug and water drawn. I was wondering whether at least today some one will refer to *Krishna thathwam*! Not that one gets tired of *Raama thathwam*. The *Thathwam* (Reality) of the Lord is ever fresh.

Every life is a new chance, a fresh opportunity for realising the Truth. Yesterday is gone; today is the fresh chance, the new opportunity is now; tomorrow, you cannot be sure of Every minute is to be welcomed as unique and as valuable, precious, in fact. Do not pine over the chunks of time you have wasted; seize the moment that has come within your grasp.

Search for the Lord as Hanumaan searched for Seetha. He had not seen her; he had only heard her being described. He could also judge what she should be like, if Raama could aspire for her so deep. It was like the attachment of *Purusha* for *Prakrithi*, no less. Like Hanumaan, man too should seek the incomprehensible. *Aadhishakthi* (Primal Energy), among the multifarious counter-attractions and distractions of Lanka.

Through dharma and karma man can attain salvation

Since the entity is not known, one has to discover it by means of the characteristics it is supposed to have. The experience of sages is the only guide, the only map, or chart. That chart is supplied by the Bhaagavatha, the Raamaayana, the *Puraanas*. Have the *Lokamaatha* (Universal Mother), the Thripura-sundhari, in your heart, Her lineaments clear and pure; then proceed bravely into the land of *raakshasas*; and you will succeed. Saturate yourself in the search; establish yourself in the faith; then, you can fill yourself with the Bliss.

Who can describe the signs of the Seetha you seek to find? Only Raama can, for He is the master. Take Him as the truest guide. The *Vedhas* are like that. Lakshmana. Sugreeva and the rest are as the *Shaasthras*, arguing by deduction, not from actual mastery. They did not describe Seetha; they could not, for they had not seen.

When Raama went to the hermitages at Chitrakoota, the sages, saints and *Vedhic* scholars, all gathered round Him and their gratitude at getting His *dharshan* was as a garland of flowers on His breast, flowers of many hues but, all strung on a strand of deep devotion. They knew that Raama was both the Seen and the Unseen; that He had come to establish *dharma* and *karma*, for through *dharma*, and *karma* done along the lines of *dharma*, man is certain to attain peace and salvation. The *avatharas* insist on dharma it is declared that the purpose of the *avathaara* is *Dharma sthaapana* (establishment of virtue); but, what is dharma for, if not for liberation from the bondage of ignorance?

Every step of the Avathaara is pre-determined

The aeroplane has to land at certain places in order to take in those who have won the right to fly, by the tickets they have purchased. So too, the Lord has to come down so that those who have won the right to be liberated may be saved incidently, others too will know of the Lord, of His grace and ways of winning it, of the joy of liberation. There are some who deny even today the possibility of air travel; they curse the contrivance; they cavil at it. Similarly, there are many who cavil at the *Avathaara* that has come to save.

Dheekshith spoke of Kabandha who swore at Raama and wanted to eat Him up alive; but, Raama liberated him from his curse and restored him to previous glory. If you condemn the Brahmin and the *Vedhas* then, you drift afar from Me, if you desist then, you are drawn near Parashuraama, the inveterate foe of the *Kshathriyas* appeared before Raama, when He was returning to Ayodhya, after the marriage. He was blazing like fire, terrible to behold, for he had heard the twang of the bow of Shiva, when Raama broke it in twain. He challenged him to draw the bow of his father and to meet him in single combat. But, Raama said, "You are worthy of respect; you are a Brahmin and you are related to Vishwaamithra."

Every step in the career of the *avathaara* is pre-determined. Raama knew that the coming of Suurpanakha was the prelude to the coming of Raavana; He had asked Seetha to enter the fire and remain in it as just as an outer manifestation. Even before the human manifestation, the Lord had decided that the *Shakthi* (Energy) must also accompany Him, because Raavana's *thapas* (penance) was so strong that only some major sin could make the blessings he had won from the gods null and void. The ordeal of fire through which Seetha was asked to prove herself was not an ordeal at all; it was got up only to recover Seetha from the fire in which she had taken shelter, in preparation for the Lanka episode. That is the way of the *avathaara*; it will not go about announcing its nature; it will announce itself by deeds.

Do you yearn for the Lord's mercy and grace?

Jataayu recognised the divinity of Raama; he said, "Raama! I am content; this body has realised the acme of joy; I have seen you, have been touched by you; I have spoken to you and imbibed your voice." Only Raama knows the significance of each step of His and the character of the next step; He carves His own career.

You were told that Raama showed man how to bear suffering while Krishna taught him how to overcome it. No, Raama was all Aanandha inside, though he was lamenting outwardly for Seetha. *Raama thathwa* (Divine Reality) is known only to Raama. What can the rest know?. At best, they can have but a glimpse of Raama's grace. And, even that only if they are immersed in intense inner prayer for God. Think of Him, call out for Him; He melts. Whatever form He may be shining in, that intensity will make you recognise Him. He may be a cowherd boy, standing under a tree, with a flute at his lips. You will see him and adore Him and place Him in your heart. You extol the Lord as Love, Mercy, Grace; but do you yearn to earn them? Do you believe you can win them? Do you strive to treasure them?

Have an idea of the place of your last journey

Take the example of Suurpanakha, the sister of Raavana. She was mutilated by Lakshmana, she was rejected by Raama, she was ridiculed by Seetha, humiliated beyond cure. She fled in terror to her brother and, what did she ask him to do? She described the heavenly charm, the Divine grace of Raama and advised him to fill his heart with the sweetness that Raama exhaled all around Him! Raama came to feed the roots of *Sathya* and *Dharma* and so, Seetha joined Him through correct orthodox rites. There was no *Seetha-apaharanam* (abduction of Seetha).

In the *Krishna avathaara*, the task was to foster *Shaanthi* and *Prema* Now, all four are in danger of being dried up. The *dharma* that has fled to the forests has to be led back into the villages and towns. The *adharma* that has ruined the villages and towns has to be driven to the jungle. You will have no rest until this is done. For it is your problem, the problem in which each of you is vitally involved.

Now you are unaware of the problem, the problem of Liberation. There was a courtier once with a king; he was so idle and ease-loving that whenever the king ordered him to see someone, he raised flimsy objections like, "Perhaps, he is away," "If he does not greet me, what shall I do?" "What if he gets wild?" "I may not be able to return in time", etc., etc. SO, the king got the word, "Fool" embroidered on a broad tape and commanded him to wear it on his brow so that all may learn a lesson. The courtier became the laughing stock of the palace. Within a few months, the king was on his death-bed and the courtiers vied with one another in weeping over him.

When the fool came near he told him with tears in his eyes, "I am leaving on my last journey, dear Fool." The fool said, "Wait, I shall bring the royal elephant;" but, the king shook his head and said, "Elephants will not take me there." The Fool pleaded that the king might use the chariot, but, when told that chariots too would be of no avail, he suggested the royal steed as the alternative. Even that was of no help, he was told. Then, the Fool innocently asked the king. "What is this strange place to which you are journeying?." The king replied. "I do not know." At this, the Fool untied the tape from his brow, and tied it on the brow of the dying king. "You deserve this more; you know you are going, but, you do not know whither! You know that elephants, horses, and chariots do not proceed there; but, you do not know where it is or how it looks!" he said. But, you can have some idea of that place if you evaluate your deeds and thoughts now in this life.

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