

the country of the great ṛṣis, for more than half our scriptural declarations have been either given out by the divine mothers or were addressed to them directly by the ṛṣis!

Then why this special preference shown to the masculine sex? At this juncture we must bring our discriminative capacity to understand that when these qualifications were given out, they were not given out with reference to the body. With the body, no sādhanā can be undertaken as explained in Vedānta. The main practices in Vedānta are reflection and meditation, which are to be undertaken by a healthy mind and a keen intellect. So, it means that feminine qualities of mind and intellect are to be eschewed. A masculine inner personality, full of courage, discrimination, detachment, equilibrium, peace and cheer, is the fittest instrument for a quick march to the goal indicated by Vedānta.

When applications are invited by a government, say, for the police force and for the engineering department, the qualifications required by the two categories will be different from each other. An applicant for the police force will be rejected if his height is less than the prescribed minimum but an engineer, if fully qualified and experienced, will be accepted even if he looks unhealthy, lean and pale! In the former category what is wanted is a good physique while in the latter, the candidate is expected to fulfil a subtler demand, the required intellectual quality. An expansive chest and a pair of strong biceps are not needed to design a bridge or to plan a power project for the nation; while not much intelligence or calculation is needed in making a successful lāṭhī charge!

What is meant is, qualifications are declared according to the functions required of the applicant. A seeker in Vedānta is expected to carry out daring intellectual flights to the unknown through a process of deep study, vigorous reflections and tireless meditations. So here, when it is said that, according to the śāstras, he must be a 'he-man', it must necessarily mean that he should have a special quality of the head and heart.

Woman is the symbol of softness, attachment, sentiments, and anxieties, she is essentially a mother. Wherever these qualities predominate, there we have a 'woman'. In this sense, there are many 'women' among bearded ones and if firmness of determination, detachment, intellectual hardiness and steadiness of composure are signs of a better evolution, these masculine tendencies of head and heart are amply seen in many women. Therefore, the verse refuses none that chance to study the scriptures and seek through Vedānta one's self-development, simply because one happens to have a feminine body.

vipratā – This again is a term upon which the orthodoxy built up an absurd interpretation that Self-realisation is available only for those who are, (by sheer accident of birth), worthy or unworthy sons of Brāhmaṇas. This misunderstanding has been glorified to the status of wisdom and the amount of devastation it has brought to Hinduism looks almost irreparable now. As before, we must consider this qualification also as indicating a special quality of head and heart.

Santoṣa (contentment), samādhāna (spirit of self-surrender) and śānti (peace arising from right knowledge) are the special qualities (sāttvika temperaments) of a well evolved man. Man in any generation, when observed closely, can be classified into three distinct categories – the animal-man, the man-man and the God-man. He who is ever a victim of his gross instincts and a hopeless slave to his emotions and impulses is classified as an animal-man. When he has disciplined these instincts in himself, he is considered a full-grown, mature he-man. Such a vipra, meaning a man-man has the necessary vipratā to strive rightly and grow steadily into the last stage of his evolution the super manhood or godhood, when he becomes a God-man.

Vaidika dharma mārṅa paratā – When one has a human body along with the serener qualities of the heart and the sāttvika attitude of the intellect, one is indeed blessed with all the preliminaries for his evolution. But all these can run to waste