

The Lion that Discovered Itself

Gopaalan was a shepherd boy. He had a fine flock of sheep. Everyday he would take the sheep to the forest. While the sheep grazed on the green grass and leaves, Gopaalan would climb a tree on the riverbank and play on his flute.

One day Gopaalan saw from the top of the tree a lioness lying dead on the riverbank. Beside it lay its lovely newborn cub. Gopaalan came down from the tree. He understood what had happened. The lioness had jumped across the river from the other bank. The effort made her deliver the cub. But the effort also took away her life. So the cub was an orphan. It looked very pretty.

Gopaalan took the cub home. He gave it sheep's milk. He kept the cub in the shed along with the sheep. He gave the cub grass and milk. So the cub grew up amidst the sheep. It went with the other sheep to the forest. It ate grass and drank sheep's milk. It bleated like a sheep. Thus, in many ways it grew up as a sheep.



One day a big lion sprang upon Gopaalan's sheep grazing on the riverbank. Gopaalan had gone away a little distance on some other business. The terrified sheep ran away in all directions bleating. The lion cub also followed the running sheep. The attacking lion was surprised. It could not understand why a lion cub was afraid of lions and running away like sheep. It pounced upon the lion cub and held it between its paws. It told the cub "What a fool you are! You are not a sheep. Look at me. You are a lion just like me. Why

do you bleat and eat grass?"

But the lion cub did not believe the lion's words. It was sure that it was only a sheep. So it continued to run. The lion however would not let it go. It took the cub by its neck to the riverbank. The lion said "Look at your image in the water. Do you not see that you and I look alike?" The lion cub, in great fear, looked at the two images in the water. It was surprised to find that its own image was exactly like that of the lion, only on a smaller scale. It looked at the lion in surprise.

The lion now gave a loud roar and said "You also roar like me". The lion cub at first only bleated. But when it tried again it found its real voice. Presently it was roaring like a lion. It began to enjoy the roaring. After a few trials it roared in chorus with the big lion.

The lion wanted to complete the education of the lion cub. It killed a deer grazing near by. It thrust a piece of the deer flesh into the mouth of the lion cub. The young fellow



had been eating only grass until now. But the flesh, freshly killed, was tasty. So it ate the flesh with delight. Then it gave a tremendous lion's roar without any prompting from the lion. Finally the lion and the lion cub walked away into the depths of the forest.

We are all like the lion cub, which had forgotten its real nature. Every one of us is a spark from the divine fire - a Spot Of the Universal Lord

(SOUL). But, we do not realise this truth. It is only when a great soul tells us and proves to us our real nature that we give up our weaknesses and become divine. We must not be sheep. We must grow every day into our lion nature.

