Kalpataru: The Wish Granting Tree

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Kalpataru in Sanskrit means a tree that grants wishes. It is a female word. This Kalpataru tree was originally in Swarg (heaven). The gods owned this tree. It came out of the Samudra Manthan. It had immense powers and could fulfill any wish.

It is believed that this tree is quite different from normal trees as it never loses a single leaf.

This is a divine tree. Its saplings have been planted in many parts of the country. There are many parts of the country where you can spot a tree that the locals claim to be a Kalpataru. Threads are tied to this tree and these trees are worshipped. They are believed to have powers that can make any wish come true. Interestingly many stories are associated with it too.

Ramakrishna Paramhansa was a great spiritual leader of his time. It is said that on the first of January every year he himself would become Kalpataru and grant the wish of those who came to him. He had a very interesting way of explaining everything. He was once explaining the concept of Kalpataru to his followers. He started with an interesting story. There was a tree that could fulfill all desires. A group of children once went to the tree and asked for candies and toys. They did get these but with candies they got decaying tooth and with toys they soon got bored. Now they asked for more toys and candies thinking this would make them happy but that did not.

When these kids grew older they started asking the tree for money, fame and power. The tree granted the wish. However, they soon realized that with lot of money came tension, with lot of fame came criticism and with lot of popularity came enemies. When they became old and they got tired of wishes they asked for death. The tree as its duty granted the same.

These people were surprised that they were again born under the same tree and they would have to go through the same cycle again. This is because you will always be born within the cosmos in some or the other form. Then Ramakrishna would say all these people are fools they don’t know what to ask for. The wish should be pure and for others. Any prayer that is done for others has more power than anything else. To explain this better he would give an example of a boy who could not walk. He would look at other kids play and be happy. One day he came across this tree.

He started to ask things for all his friends so much so that he almost forgot to ask anything for himself. This pleased the tree and it granted him Moksha [liberation from reincarnation] and declared him enlightened. Kalpataru does fulfill all desires but one must not forget that it is desires that cause the maximum grief on earth. If anyone can be free from desires only then they can be free and attain salvation.

Even the other spiritual leaders like Sai baba too would fulfill wishes of people. However, he too told his followers that if they want to experience true freedom then they will have to do away with desires. The term Kalpataru is now associated with anyone who has the ability to fulfill wishes. All one needs to do is sit under the tree and ask for what he wants and he will get that without any delay.

On deeper thoughts you will definitely see that there is a much deeper fact that is attached to this idea. Our own mind is our Kalpataru tree. Whatever we think and wish for we ensure that we work towards it and eventually we get what we wanted. Many a time we get it immediately. Whereas there are times when there is a long gap between our desires and actually getting what we had desired for. This gap makes us often forget what we wanted. I am sure that we all must have experienced this feeling of wishing something and our wish being granted. It is our mind and thoughts that make us whatever we are.

There is an interesting story that is said in connection to this fact. One day a man was walking by Kalpataru. He was tired so he slept under this tree. When he woke up he was hungry. As soon as he expressed his thought he got the food. He was hungry so he ate. After food he wanted water. Even before he could utter his desire he got water. The man now got scared. He pinched himself to see if he was awake or it was just a dream. Now he started to think that there are demons near the tree and they were fulfilling his wishes. He could see the demons and he got scared that they will kill him. This is exactly what happened. So whatever he was thinking—whatever was in his mind—actually came true.

Perhaps there is a deeper meaning to Kalpataru. It might be a way of our ancestors to ensure that we respect trees and not cut them mercilessly. After all trees play a very vital role in maintaining the weather cycle and the balance of life on earth.  It is true that there is no end to desires. The more we get the stronger the desires become. It has been felt by many that when they want something with a lot of intensity they feel that a force is guiding them towards their goal.

We can control our lives if we learn to control our minds. This is what Kalpataru tree actually means. If we want a change and a miracle, then we ourselves have to become the change. Our mythological stories have so much depth in them. I hope this will help you understand Kalpataru tree as a concept better and also give you a new way of looking at your life.