

11. Role of the Pandith

THE springs of Indian culture have very nearly, gone dry under the scorching influence of foreign cultures to which Indians are fast selling themselves. The agencies which are keeping the tree green, have become weak; institutions and customary rites and rituals which kept the facets of that culture alive in the eyes of the people, have faded into feebleness. People, who were charged with the social duty of reminding the masses of their heritage, have been rendered dispirited and mendicant. The *Dharma* laid down in the *Vedhas* has to be experienced, in order to be appreciated; it cannot be merely talked about, in tall language. The use of the *Vedhas* does not consist in mere recitation, though the reciters are doing a valuable service, preserving them in correct form and style of pronunciation. *Vedhas* yield *Aanandha*; *Vedha maathaa* (Mother of *Vedhas*) is the *Aanandha maathaa* (Mother of Divine Bliss).

They provide the answer to the Question of questions: "Who am I?" Every one of you has to know that this question has to worry you sooner or later. And, every one has to discover the answer. The senses, each specialising in one small field of cognition, are powerless to give the answer, they at best very inadequate even in their own specialised provinces; there are sounds the ear cannot hear; there are colours the eye cannot take in and interpret to us and tastes beyond the ken of the buds of the tongue. They are imperfect instruments for the study of the external world. How can they serve to teach us about the intangible, invisible, inner world of the Self?. The *Vedhaanthic* vision alone can reveal to you "the smaller than the smallest, the bigger than the biggest" (*Anoraneeyaan mahatho maheeyaan*).

When you have vision, you do not realise its value; you take it as just natural. It is only when you lose it or when it gets dim, that you run to the ophthalmic hospital. When the *Vedhaanthic* vision of India had become dim, Shankaraachaarya restored it and so saved the country. If he had not done so, believe Me India would have become another China.

Dharma is eternal, basic, fundamental

When you are boring and fixing a pipe to draw the water up, you have to take good care, lest water or air gets into the pipe and spoils the creation of the vacuum that is needed. So too, if you desire success in your effort to unravel the truth of your inner Self you have to take good care that the outer self does not enter and spoil the concentration. You have to prevent thoughts of the outer world from entering the mind. The senses are positive handicaps in that field of research.

One of the dangerous tricks of the modern times, which is misleading a number of people, is the claim made by many, that they have been sent to re-establish *Dharma*. Each one is doing it in his own fashion, and as it suits his skill and idiosyncrasy. When a bridge on the highway gets damaged, no single pedestrian, however eminent, can start repairing or re-building it; nor can the villagers living in proximity to it, start the operations, according to their own ideas of bridge-building. The very authority which laid down the road, and planned the bridge has to come down and draw up the plan. *Dharma* is the road for individual and social progress, in this world and through the world, to the next. It is eternal, basic, fundamental. The principles may not be altered or adjusted to suit personal whims, or pressing problems, that appear formidable to the eyes of some individuals, or group of persons. It is like the mother who has to be accepted, not like the wife whom you can choose or discard.

Man is basically Immortal

Vaaranaasi Subrahmanya Shaasthry spoke of *Dharma* as expounded in and through the Mahaabhaaratha. That is a prop which can sustain any drooping heart. If you can inquire deeply and reason fearlessly, you can appreciate the Indian point of view that, instead of seeking a lower standard of *aanandha* (happiness) by feeding the senses, one can get lasting *Aanandha* (Divine Bliss), by training the mind to be ever in the eyes of the Cosmic, the Universal, the Lord, as It is called, when you impose a Name and a Form upon it, to enclose it in you Consciousness. Why does man get *Aanandha* when he contemplates the Cosmic and the Universal? Because he himself is the Cosmic, the Universal! It is the *thwam* (thou) called to the *Thath* (That); the *Thath* responding to the kindred voice of the *thwam*.

Man is basically, essentially, fully, Immortal; he is *Amruthaswaruupam* (of the nature of Nectar of Immortality). But, yet he is afraid he would die! He is *Aanandhaswaruupam* (of the nature of Bliss); but, yet he

is it that weeps that he is miserable. He is *Shaanthiswaruupam* (of the nature of peace); yet, everywhere he is overlaid with anxiety. This absurd self-deception is the root of the tragedy from which the world suffers today. The truth has to be driven into the consciousness of both the spiritual teachers and disciples, wherever they may be, in this country or elsewhere.

Accept what scriptures declare

Many *Gurus* do not instruct people in this doctrine of courage, they do not bring up those who go to them in the discipline of the knowledge of Self (*Aathma-jnaana*), for, they themselves are not established in the Reality of Self (*Aathma-thathwa*). They intensify the egoism of their disciples and devotees and hasten their doom, rather than avoid it. The disciples too asked for quick results and shortened courses and less and less austerity. The *Gurus* have therefore to water down the rigour of spiritual discipline, and behave as minions of the disciples themselves! They wink at many a moral transgression, and very often share in the plots and intrigues which are the daily routine of the devotees! It is a sad state of affairs, indeed! A people destined for glory, for the role of guides of humanity but, grovelling in the dark, seeking to squeeze lasting joy from food, clothing, shelter and hours of trivial entertainment.

A business magnate from the West, Mr. Kilman, came to Puttaparthi and, during the discussion on various spiritual problems, he asked Me, "Why build temples, when what we want are wells, dams, hospital and factories?" I told him to find out from the well-fed, and well-employed whether they are happy, whether they have inner calm! The *Aathma* alone is the source of inner strength, it is the fountain-spring of Joy---joy unaffected by reverses or victories.

You may ask, "How do you know, or rather, how are we to know that there is an entity called the *Aathma*?" Well, how do you know that today is the 24th day of February? The Sun did not rise today, after an announcement from the skies that is the twenty-fourth day of the month called February. Some person whom you respect, said that today is the 24th February, that is all. You accepted their word and you were glad that your acceptance made things smoother for you. Similarly, when the *Vedhas* and the Scriptures declare that you are *Aathman*, instead of mistaking yourself to be the gross body, accept it and find in it a great source of peace and step by step, the truth will be revealed to you in your own unmistakable experience.

The world is a training ground

The Lord has declared in the Geetha, '*Mama Maayaa*' My Illusion; that is to say, this relative world is His Handiwork, His *Leela* and His *Mahima* (Divine Play and Greatness), devised as a training ground, an inspiration, for those who desire to see Him, the Source and Substance of all this. "This objective world is My Play," He says. From illusion, you must get interested in the Author, the Master, the Lord. Once you see the world as the arena of His activity, the stage for His play, then, you will never more be misled; you will not be deceived by any tricks of the play or of the stage-effect; you will not be distracted; you will not be led to believe it as genuinely real. It is valid so long as it lasts, and you are in the theatre.

Take the base (*Aadhaara*) as more real than the structure (*Aadheya*); the Lord as more real than the world. This is the basic lesson of Indian thought. Among all the principles of *Vedhantha*, this is a pearl. The world is like a mirage; the mirage does not originate from any rain; nor does it reach any lake or sea. It was not there before the Sun shone, nor will it be there when evening falls. It is just an intervening phenomenon; it is best left alone.

This Prashaanthi Vidwanmahaasabha has been established in order to give each thirsty soul a cup of solace and strength, from the well of the *Vedhas* and *Shaasthras*, to lead the waters of fertility to every parched area. Ghandhikota Subrahmanya Shaasthry read out some verses he wrote about Me. These Pandiths are not with Me to extol Me; nor is there any need to extol Me or them. I have no other purpose than this: to lead you to the path of *Aanandha*. I have no special attachment to the Vidwanmahaasabha because I have established it. All *Sabhas* and *Sanghas* (Associations) and individuals that do this same task, according to their capacity and means, are dear to Me. I do not call upon you to cultivate faith in Me or to worship Me. I want only that you should cultivate faith in yourselves, and worship the Lord who is utilising you as His instrument.

Practise the teachings you heard

Realise that your essential core is the *Aathma*. I have no need to seek fame through these meetings or associations. Not that the statements made by Ghandhikota Subrahmanya Shaasthry are wrong. But, I know that some of you sitting here suspected, when he was reading his poem, that he and others have collected here, just to eulogise Me! Let Me tell you, I do not like such demonstrativeness and show; they are against My very Nature and Purpose.

After hearing these Pandiths for three days, morning and evening, do not go home without becoming richer; let it not be the story of, "I went; I sat; I saw; I heard; I came." That is what the dull-witted do. Make the teaching your own by practising it. Let the meaning circulate in your veins and enliven your earnestness. There are some weakwilled persons, who are dragged hither and thither by others. They see some one going and they too go to Puttaparthi. They see some one staying away and they too stay away. Why be moved by the vagaries of others and why lose the lucky chance that may not recur at all?

Of course, I love all; those who come to Me, as well as those who stop coming; those who stay at the Nilayam, as well as those who stay away; those who praise, as well as those who blame. For no one is beyond the boundary of My love.

Hold your right palm, spread it vertically before you! You find that the thumb points towards you and is keeping apart from the other fingers. That represents the *Paramaathma* which is aloof and unaffected. The forefinger is the *jeevi*, the self attached to the three gunas, the three-stranded complex of the objective world. It seeks to mix with this, that and the other, to show this and

mark out that; it is ever busy identifying objects and so it gets the company of only the three qualities (gunas). But, once let it turn towards the *Paramaathma* (Supreme Self), let it achieve *Saameepya* (proximity) with it! Then it will lose the contact with the gunas; it and the thumb will form the *Chin-mudra*--the sign of the *Puurna* (Full), the completed Consciousness.

I bless you that your attention and activity be always focussed on the Self within you; that is the purpose for which the Prashaanthi Vidwanmahaasabha has been established.

Rajahmundry, 24-2-1964