

### 33. Faith is the foundation

This day you heard the Pandiths tell you about the supremacy of the *Vedhas* and the need for establishing *Dharma*. No one can break the limits of *Vedhas and Shaasthras* and speak here; in fact, all spiritual subjects are subsumed in the scriptures. All knowledge is derived from the *Vedhas*. You cultivate your divinity in proportion to the *Saadhana* you do and the handicaps you have brought down from previous births. It is above and beyond the intellect and incapable of being reached through the senses. Divinity is its own law; it is independent of all restrictions and modes. The senses can each perform only one operation for the gathering of knowledge: the ear can inform you of sound, the eyes can speak of colour, the tongue of taste, etc. But, the Divine is beyond all sensations and systems.

*Srishti, Sthithi and Laya* (creation, sustentation and dissolution) are the three forms of the Divine will; you have to penetrate the inner meaning of *Srishti*, by means of *Karma Yoga*; you have to grasp the significance of *sthithi*, by means of *Bhakthi Yoga* and when you master the *Jnaana Yoga*, you arrive at the experience of *Laya*, of manifoldness in the One. *Bhakthi* makes you aware of the Lord who sustains and supports every being; it is *Prema*, which is *Nithya, Sathya and Nirmala*; that is to say, Love which is unchanging, sincere and pure. There is no one who is devoid of *bhakthi*; deep down in his core, every one has the feeling of kinship with all creatures. It is this that makes a lonely man miserable, that makes every one likeable to some one or other. If you have no love; you are like a lamp without the flame, blind and blinding. Love of the pure type is unmixed with hate, untampered with greed.

#### ***Karma is necessary for liberation***

Faith is the foundation for this type of devotion, faith in doing good, faith in *punya and paapa* (merit and sin), so that you examine each act in the light of its long-distance consequences, and lastly faith, in the series of births through which the present life is built up. Pilgrimage was, in the years gone by, a long and arduous process, and so, the pilgrim was educated by it in humility and fortitude. Those who came with Me to Badhri were free from fear for the road, and so, they had more time to dwell on Naaraayana and His glory.

Thirupathi has been made so easily accessible now that it is fast being turned into a paradise for picnickers! The sacred hills have been scarred and the full throated exclamation, "Govindha" "Govindha" as the pilgrims climb the steps have disappeared. People go in aeroplanes to Kaashi and return after a quick round of the ghats and shrine, in a few hours. The silent communion with the Divine and the slow infiltration of elation into the inner consciousness have been lost.

Only through karma can liberation be effected. When karma is prompted by *bhakthi*, it is *samasaara bhakthi* (devotion of the worldly); when *jnaana* also blossoms a little, it is *vaanaprastha bhakthi* (devotion of the recluse); when *bhakthi* fructifies into *jnaana*, then it is *Sanyaasa bhakthi* (devotion of the ascetic) or *Moksha* (liberation) itself. Without *karma*, progress is very difficult.

#### ***Faith is essential for consummation of saadhana***

The *jnaani* too has to do *karma*, but, like swans coming out of the water, they can swish their feathers and wings and be as dry as when they entered it: *karma* will not affect them at all. They do it with no ego, with no desire. It is their nature to wish well of the world and to engage in work that promotes the welfare of the world. When a woman who is pregnant is widowed, she

does not immediately rid herself of the marks of a married woman, for she can discard the nose-screw, the ear-rings, the *mangala suuthra* (marriage string worn by married women), etc., only after the child is born! Until then, though she has the outward marks of a woman happy with her husband, she knows she is a widow.

*The jnaani* is also of the same type; he knows that he is free, but, to the world he appears bound. Frothy youth, suffering from the fever of cynicism, laugh at *jnaanis* and treat them with dishonour. There is no use blaming them, either. The elders set the example and what else can they do?

*Prema* is the seed; *thanmayathwam*, over-powering experience of merging, is the tree; inexhaustible *Aanandham* is the fruit. For this consummation, faith is essential. Look at Arjuna! When the choice was placed before him to decide which he should receive---the army of redoubtable heroes belonging to the Yadhava clan or Krishna alone, unarmed and refusing to fight--he asked only for Krishna! He knew; he believed; he was saved. The same choice India has to make even now, when the Lord has appeared in His *swaruupa* here. What does it profit the country if it accumulates money, gold and *grain*? *The aanandha*, derived from the worship of the name and form which arouses spiritual joy, is far more desirable than these. Want of faith is the source of weakness in all fields.

### **Establishing the reign of Dharma**

In the days of Ashoka, there was a poor man living in Buddhagaya. His name was Sishupaala. Though very poor, he stuck to *dharma* and was never known to forsake that path, in spite of strong temptations. Ashoka slipped into his house one night and craved for food and shelter. Sishupaala was surprised that there was someone poorer than himself, He welcomed him and fed him with his own share of the meal; he asked his son to press his feet, to give relief to the fired limb. When Ashoka spoke praising him for his hospitality, he protested and said, that it was wrong to take such extra notice of what was his duty. "It is our dharma," he said. Ashoka asked him what he meant by *dharma* and when Sishupaala said that the land was immersed in *adharm*a and that the Emperor was not fostering dharma, Ashoka who was incognito, challenged him. "What Ashoka could not do, can you achieve?" he asked. Sishupaala replied, "Of course I shall; I bend only to God. I am not afraid of man. I care only for dharma." The guest laughed and changed the topic; but Ashoka had no sleep that night. He rose in the early morning and went out of the hut, while it was still dark.

Next morning, a gorgeously dressed courtier appeared before the hut and inquired whether he had, by any chance, blamed the Emperor to someone during the night. Sishupaala said that he had done so, but that what he said was correct. The courtier was entrusted with the mission of bringing him to the palace, where Ashoka appointed him as *Dharmadhevatha* (deity of Righteousness), to establish the reign of dharma in the land. He told him, "If the slightest deviation from dharma happens anywhere you will be executed, beware. I shall give you all the military help you need to transform the conduct of the people." Sishupaala agreed. He said: "I shall do so; I do not need your army. I have full trust in God." Ashoka was rather disappointed that the man placed no trust in him! But he decided to watch the progress of this new experiment in administration, which was to last for ten days.

And the unexpected happened. There was no theft, no breach of the moral code, no violation of the *Shaasthras* anywhere in the land. Young women decked with jewels could go from one end of the empire to another, even during nights, without any fear of molestation or theft.

### **Emperor Ashoka submits to *Dharma***

Ashoka really got envious of the capacity of the new administrator. He went incognito one night to the house of a prostitute and banged at the outer door, demanding entry. The lady protested and refused to admit him, since *Dharmadhevatha ruled the land*. There was an altercation between Ashoka and the hefty watchman at the door, which became hot. A fight ensued, and the watchman was slain.

That was on the seventh day of the new regime. Ashoka had it announced that since a murder had been committed in the town, the man from Buddhagaya had to be executed.

The news spread like wildfire and every one wept at the plight of the good man. Sishupaala, however, had discovered that it was no less a person than the Emperor who had done the deed; he had actually visited the house where the incident happened and recorded details of the persons involved. So, when he was about to ascend the steps and place his head on the block, he shouted "Stop," and asked that Ashoka himself be brought to the place of execution, for, it was he who had killed the watchman. Ashoka too was prepared; he had made an image of himself in gold and that was beheaded in his place, as the *Shaasthras* allow. The gold was distributed as gifts, and *dharma* was observed.

### **Contribute your individual effort**

You must use all the talents awarded to you in a prayerful and humble mood. Until then, you have no right to seek the help of the Lord, His intervention. A devotee of Hanumaan was once driving a cartload of grain to the market. On the way, the wheel got stuck and the cart could not be drawn forward by the bullocks. The cart slanted too far to one side and the bags fell on the ground. The devotee sat on the ground and started praying to Hanumaan. He finished reciting the *Sthostras*, the 108 names, and even the 1008 names. The cart did not regain balance. He began to blame Hanumaan and started reviling Him for not coming to his rescue. Hanumaan appeared and took him to task. "Foolish fellow; instead of applying all your strength on the job, you have reviled Me, for not doing what is really your task. Come on, put your shoulder to the wheel; engage in karma; contribute *purusha prayaitana* (individual effort)."

*Karma* cleanses the mind, if it is done as a dedicatory act, the consequence being left to the Will of the Lord. Repentance saves even sinners from perdition. No ceremony of expiation is as effective as sincere repentance. The shop-keeper may give short measure; but, he will not accept less cash. The bill has to be paid in full. Pay it through repentance. You cannot deceive the Lord by insincerity or by ruses. Unless you correct yourself by detachment and sacrifice, you cannot reach God. Give up egoism; then only you can see him.

Raama taught dharma, treading in his own life every one of its steps. Krishna paid more attention to teaching it through Arjuna. Small people who cannot overcome their egoism dare judge Krishna and point the finger at what they call his "pranks." Such men were found then, as well as now. They are ever engaged in seeking faults in the great. They dare declare that the Lord should be such and such, of this form and with such characteristics, as if they could ever glimpse the edge of His glory, as if the Lord will assume the form these men decide.

### **Feel you are the instrument of God's Will**

The Lord can be understood only if you approach Him, develop attachment for Him, have faith in Him, and maintain unswerving loyalty to Him. He is understood only when you feel that you

are but the instrument and that He wills every little movement everywhere. Who is there so bold that he can say, "the Lord must wear only this dress, the Lord must act only in this manner?" Who can limit His glory or set its direction! He is immanent in all beings and He gets done all activities through them, just as electricity makes the bulb shine, the mike to transmit the voice, the stove to cook, the refrigerator to cool.

The river of life has four causeways, while the river Vankaperu, which flows in this taluk, has two: one on the road to Penukonda and another on the road to Dharmaavaram. The causeways are *brahmacharya*, *grihasta*, *vaanaprastha* and *sanyaasa* (celibate, house holder, recluse and monk). Of these, the *grihasta* causeway has sunk and become impassable. Repair it and become good *grihasthas*; then the path of life is smooth for the journey.

On the road to Prashaanthi Nilayam from Kothacheruvu, the Bapanapalle culvert has broken down. But the villagers cannot of their own accord reconstruct it according to their sweet will. It has to be reconstructed by the very authority that first erected it. So too, when dharma has gone into disrepair, He who laid down the dharma has to come again and get it repaired. The four bridges were laid by the Lord, and He has come to rebuild them now. The engineers and others are here, in the Prashaanthi Vidhwanmahaasabha; very soon, the rebuilding work will be completed and the inaugural ceremony celebrated.

Cultivate faith and detachment. Revere elders and take to heart the advice they give, out of their mature wisdom and experience. Cross the ocean of death and birth and be "children of immortality," (*Amrithasya Puthraah*), every moment of your lives.

*Prashaanthi Nilayam, 12-10-1964*

*Once you rise to the  
higher level of consciousness  
and live at that level,  
all those events cease to have the same meaning  
and so have less and less effect on you.  
Instead, you remain happy and calm at all times,  
merely observing events  
as they come and go, for that is what they do.  
Shri Sathya Sai*