

26. The Divine and destiny

The Goddess of Wealth flourishes at the tip of the tongue.

Friends and kinsfolk grow from the tip of the tongue;

Bondage and realisation emanate from the tongue;

The tip of the tongue makes death certain.

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Aathma! Speech constitutes the wealth of the world. Speech promotes friendship and kinship. It is speech that lends sweetness and affection to all relationship. Speech, again, leads the way to death.

Speech is endowed with immense power. The power and potentialities of speech represent the Divine feelings of man. Hence, one has to be very vigilant in speech.

The mysteries of creation are marvellous. When two persons meet at any time or place, the differences between them are patent. Their forms and manners differ. They differ in their cleverness and intelligence. Their opinions also vary. Without understanding what underlies these differences, the materialist thinkers emphasize the differences. Today, growing numbers of intellectuals, ignoring the unity that underlies the diversity, propagate the cult of differences. The good persons who realise the unity behind the apparent diversity are dwindling in numbers from day to day. This is highly unfortunate.

Lay stress on unifying factors than differences

Man's foremost task is to recognise the unity that underlies the multiplicity. If one enquires into the matter with a pure and unselfish mind, one will see what is common to all beings. Birth and death are common to all men. Hunger and thirst are experienced by every person. These are truths that apply to all persons, whether they are destitutes or millionaires, whether they are scholars or ignorant men.

Every human being has a body and a Spirit. Consequently everyone enjoys a certain degree of freedom. This is described as "Free Will." Not comprehending the nature of this freedom, men tend to stress the differences rather than the unifying factors.

Man is a combination of two kinds of traits. One is the animal nature. The other is divinity. Swayed by evil qualities like lust, anger, greed, delusion, conceit and egoism (the six enemies of man), he degrades himself to the level of the animal. On the other side is the one who makes right use of the good qualities conferred by God such as intelligence, wisdom and virtue, pursues the path of truth and righteousness, engages himself in divine activities and ultimately realise the Divine. Man can choose either the path that leads him to animality or to Divinity because the potentialities are common. What is important is the path one chooses. "As the thoughts, so the outcome." The mind determines the goal one pursues. Hence it is essential to divert the mind on the right path and realise the true nobility of human existence. If you have a knife, you can use it for slicing vegetables and preparing a good meal. The same knife can be used for taking away another person's life, behaving in a demonic manner and ceasing to be human.

State of the mind depends on nature of thoughts

Thus, the same mind is responsible for either animal or divine behaviour. In *Vedhaanthic* parlance, this is stated as: "The mind is the cause of human bondage or liberation." The state of

the mind depends on the nature of the thoughts with which it is filled, even as the smell of a paper depends on what is wrapped up in it, flowers, fish or potato chips. When the mind is used properly, man achieves fulfilment.

Men perceive the world in terms of diversity. But, as the scripture declares-"There is only the One. The wise call It by many names." People experience heat and cold, joy and sorrow, darkness and light, profit and loss. All these are opposite aspects of the same thing and not two different things. For instance, darkness helps one to enjoy light. If there were no darkness, light would have no value. Darkness is absence of light. Light is absence of darkness. Darkness lends value to light. Sorrow contributes to the value of happiness. Likewise, censure has its value. It enhances the value of praise. Censure is the stepping stone to praise. The two are inter-dependent.

For all the experiences in the world relating to pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, the cause is one. All the troubles one experiences are stepping-stones to happiness. This is the essence of *Vedhaantha*.

Hence, for man, the proper spiritual *saadhana* consists in cultivating equal-mindedness, without succumbing to grief or getting elated over a happy event. In daily life, people experience all kinds of happiness and distress. The scripture declares: "Treat joy and sorrow, profit and loss alike."

Peace, Truth and the Self

Embodiments of Divine Love! What is the purpose of your joining the *aashram*? What is its inner meaning? You have come to lead a peaceful, sacred and blissful life dedicated to the Divine. This peace does not lie in the external world. Peace is your very form. Truth is equally so. It is folly to think that you have to search for Truth somewhere. To know one's Self is Truth. To experience the Self within is Peace. Peacelessness is caused by involvement in external experiences, ignoring the Self within.

All things, good and bad, in the world are related to man's actions. Your well-being is based on your conduct. Your wealth is dependent on your actions. You will secure peace and prosperity when your conduct is good. This calls for *Sahana* (forbearance). The Upanishathic prayer says: "Let us have forbearance towards each other. Let us rejoice together. Let us all strive together." Forbearance is a potent instrument. Dharmaja (the eldest of the Paandavas) was able to score many victories with the *asthra* (weapon) of forbearance. Forbearance is not a sign of weakness or cowardice. No other weapon has the power of forbearance. It should not be used only as an individual instrument. It has to be experienced collectively also. That is the reason why the scripture has commended collective forbearance at the very outset of the spiritual quest. What is its inner meaning? "Let us live and move in harmony. Let us grow together. Let us cherish the wisdom that we have acquired together. Let us live in complete harmony without any misunderstanding." Therefore, do not have any misunderstanding amongst you, All of you should live in amity as the children of one mother.

Human effort is necessary to enjoy God's grace

God is all-powerful. But, at the same time human effort is also necessary. Without it, man cannot enjoy the benefit of God's grace. It is only when you have both Divine grace and human endeavour that you can experience bliss, just as you can enjoy the breeze of a fan only when you have both a fan and the electrical energy to operate it.

In the great drama of cosmic life, the Cosmic Director, God, is also an actor. The Cosmic play is governed by certain rules and regulations. Because He is the Almighty, God cannot behave in an arbitrary manner. His actions have to be in accordance with His role in the cosmic play. There are certain rules as to how one should act according to the time, the place and the circumstances. He cannot behave according to His whims just because He is all-powerful. For instance, the officer who lays down the rules for controlling traffic cannot disobey them on the ground that he is their author. Likewise, the Creator has to conform to the rules laid down by Him for creation.

Every place is a temple for God

Not recognizing this truth, men, who are involved in worldly ways, ask questions as to why in certain situations God did not use his limitless powers to avert certain untoward events. These arise out of a narrow conception of things, without understanding how the Divine operates. They are concerned only about themselves and their interests. They ask: "Here is a sacred temple. How could something unholy occur in such a place?" They see things from a narrow perspective. They do not realise that for God the entire universe is His temple. So, whatever happens anywhere, happens in God's temple. The Cosmos is the form of God (Vishnu). God is immanent everywhere in the cosmos. When a temple is constructed on a piece of land, it becomes a temple, if it is knocked down, it becomes mere land again. For God, every place is a temple. "His feet and hands, his mouth and eyes and His ears are everywhere. Encompassing all, He remains pervading everything." (Stanza from the Geetha).

When things are seen with this broad perspective, it will be recognized that anything can happen to anyone at any place or any time. No one is competent to determine where a certain thing should take place. Life may end in a town, in water or in a forest. Each one's life will end in the place, the manner and at the time prescribed for him. This is inescapable. This is according to the operation of Nature's law based on the pairs of opposites in life--the concept of *dhvandhva* (duality). There is a continual conflict between these opposites (pleasure and pain, birth and death, etc.)

Krishna's role as envoy of the Paandavas

By way of illustration, here is an episode from the Mahaabhaaratha. Krishna was all-powerful. He was aware that peace parleys with the Kauravas would be of no avail because of their stubbornness. He knew that war was unavoidable. But, in the context of worldly affairs and having regard to public opinion, he had to make an effort to promote peace. Consequently, he went as an envoy of the Paandavas, made a vain effort to convince the Kauravas to accept a peaceful settlement, acted as if his peace mission had failed and told the Paandavas that war was inevitable. All these were scenes in his play.

It is asked, when Dhraupadhi was being humiliated in various ways, when Dhuryodhana was unabashedly behaving in a wicked manner in pursuance of his evil intentions, why did not Krishna intervene to prevent them? Why did not Krishna destroy the wicked Dhuryodhana? The reason is the time had not yet come for it. Bheema was the destined instrument for slaying Dhuryodhana. Dhuryodhana had to meet with his death at the hands of Bheema and not of Krishna. Krishna was waiting for the appropriate time.

Therefore, whatever has to happen, how, at what time and in what manner, has been predetermined and the mere fact that I am nearby will not serve to alter them.

In Duryodhana's audience hall, Sishupala was hurling abuses at Krishna. But Krishna waited. The appropriate time had to come. Only when the cause, the time and the necessary action are in fruitful combination will the event happen. Krishna was patient till the time was ripe. When the moment for action came, Krishna put an end to Sishupala.

The Lord observes His rules and regulations

The Lord always adheres to His laws, the rules and regulations laid down by Him. Man does not always abide by the rules when he faces trouble. But, whatever the situation, the Lord observes His rules and regulations. Therefore, no one can determine what limits and laws govern the Lord's actions.

Jesus Christ declared: "I am the Son of God." But when he was crucified, God did not come to his rescue. Christ even cried out in anguish: "Oh Father, Why are you not coming to save me?" But the Lord acts having regard to the time, place and the circumstances. He accords to each person the honour and esteem that is due to him. Christ became a glorious figure in the moment of his crucifixion.

Thus by a certain action, in a certain context, a person achieves name and fame. For instance, d pleaded with his mother to be allowed to fight his way through the maze Padhmavyuha, organised by the Kauravas. The mother tried to dissuade him in all possible ways.

In the last resort, she told him: "The maze is a dreadful trap. The great Bhishma is commanding the enemy's hosts. Neither your father Arjuna, nor your uncle Krishna is near. Your wife is enceinte. It is not proper in these circumstances for you to embark on this perilous adventure." She spoke all this as a mother.

But Abhimanyu had to speak out from the son's point of view. "Oh Mother, is it right for you to ask a lion's cub to refrain from attacking a herd of petty animals? You should have ordered me to go and fight them like a warrior and return victorious. Instead, is it not infamous if I am asked to keep away from the fight?" Saying so, he left for the battlefield.

Abhimanyu could not refrain from going to the battlefield. No warrior can fail to respond to the challenge for a fight. Death is preferable to the infamy of cowardice. Recognizing the validity of Abhimanyu's reasoning, his mother permitted him to go. "Son! You may go. May all the goddesses protect you even as they blessed their sons when they set out to fight the demons. Above all, let Shri Raama be your protector." All these blessings did not save Abhimanyu.

The Lord is a witness to all happenings

Abhimanyu was destined to die in the *Padhmavyuha* (the Lotus Maze). Could the blessings save him? Because he died in the *Padhmavyuha* he found a place in the Paradise reserved for heroes. Such fame is not got by dying in an accident or from a disease or old age. For every kind of fame, there is a specific form of death.

Death however, is born together with birth. And death must come in the way it is bound to come. The Lord, however, is a witness to all happenings. In some instances, He gives prior indications and warnings. When these are heeded, the person concerned gets sanctified. When one disregards them, he forfeits his sanctity. One, therefore, should do his duty. The Lord's heart is boundless. He is concerned about the collective well-being of all.

Man, however, tends to have a narrow and limited perspective. A narrow outlook can lead only to a limited result. God makes no distinction between one group and another. He loves all

equally. He blesses all. He wishes good for every one. "Let the whole world be happy, is His benediction. Whatever people's desires are, they will be fulfilled by God only according to their deserts. One cannot go to the Ganga with a small tumbler and hope to get more than a tumblerful of Ganga water. But when one acts according to the Lord's command, the capacity of the container may get enlarged.

In the Mahaabhaaratha, Krishna wished to avoid the charge that he had done nothing to prevent the great battle. Hence, he chose to go as an ambassador of peace to the Kauravas, though Arjuna expostulated with him in strong terms that there was no use in having peace parleys with the wicked Kauravas.

Overcoming calumny manifests glory of the Divine

The noble and the pure have been subject to calumny in all ages. From ancient times to the present, the evil minded have assailed the high-souled men who have sought to serve their fellowmen. Such untoward events happen from time to time. Only when these attacks are faced and overcome does the glory of the Divine become manifest. No great man has ever achieved eminence without overcoming abuse and calumny, trials and tribulations. Gold acquires greater brilliance by being heated in the crucible. Likewise a diamond becomes more brilliant when it is cut to produce more facets. Trials and tests are stepping stones to fame for good people.

Devotees should develop firm faith

The world is steeped in trouble because of the divisible forces which have broken up human society on various irrational grounds. Devotees should develop unwavering faith, disregarding whatever happens in the world. Those who have pure and unselfish hearts will remain unshaken in their faith like an iron ball which remains unmoved even in a storm. But those who are swayed by mundane desires will waver like a dried leaf blown by a slight breeze. Let your devotion be firm. It is good for you.

Consider for a moment where you are and for what purpose you have come here. You have come to this *aashram* (hermitage) to fill your hearts with sacred thoughts. Not the *aashramites* alone, but everyone has to develop fraternal feelings and eschew hatred altogether. You have to develop equal-mindedness and face all situations in life with equanimity and fortitude. Anger, hatred, ostentation and pride are animal qualities. Love, kindness, forbearance, compassion and sacrifice are natural human qualities. Spirituality does not consist merely in offering worship, doing *bhajans*. It calls for the elimination of the animal qualities 'in man and striving for the realisation of oneness with the Divine. "*Adhveshtaa sarva bhoothaanaam*" said Narasimhan in his speech earlier. Bear no ill-will towards anybody.

The means to prolong or shorten one's life lie in one's own hands. Your life-span is prolonged when you are full of joy, when you are calm and filled with pure thoughts. When you are filled with envy, anger, hatred and conceit your life-span gets shortened. The envious man gets no sleep at all. Sleeplessness ruins the health even more than lack of food. Envy torments a man all the time. These troubles lead to shortening one's life. As for hatred, the man filled with it cannot even bear the sight of his enemy. He suffers from hallucinations which consume his body and spirit.

True devotees should always be smiling

Anger is the cause of destroying the divine potencies in man. Hatred ruins a man's circulatory system. Envy drives the man crazy by depriving him of his sleep. In that condition he cannot

relish his food. Thus, these three evil qualities--hatred, envy and anger---are wasting diseases. When you consider yourselves as devotees of God you should get rid of these three evil qualities.

Lead peaceful and pure lives. To call yourselves devotees but to look with envy at others is totally unbecoming. True devotees should always be smiling. Exude joy always. That joy will manifest itself when you experience your oneness with the Divine within you. If you are unhappy, it is because you have not experienced the Divine.

Don't worry about what has happened, what is happening or what-is to come. Let things happen in their due course. You have, however, to learn lessons from what has happened. "*Thasmaath Jaagratha! Jaagratha!*" (Therefore, be vigilant, be vigilant). In many matters people tend to be careless. Troubles occur from time to time to warn us to be on our guard. Recognise the truth that whatever happens is for your good. Realise that even what seems to be bad is for your good. Even calumny is a precursor of greater renown. Alongside of censure, praise also grows, as in the digging of a pit, when a mound rises by its side. Look up to the good name that is in store for you. Do not bother about the trifles that happen. Nor should you blame others or revile at them. Be vigilant and foster your good nature. Share your goodness with those around you and experience the joy that results from such sharing.

A good man sees good even in what is bad

Our young students are tender hearted. As Sainath, (a student who spoke earlier) said, the students have been resorting to *paaraayanas* (reciting scriptures), fasting, prayer and other such practices by way of atonement for what they regard as their lapses. They are a prey to all kinds of apprehensions and fancies. They should not bother about what is past or what is likely in the future. They must concentrate on the present, which is a product of the past and the parent of the future. Live in the present and be happy. Entertain only happy thoughts. Behave like brothers.

Keep away from bad company. Even a noble and a generous hearted warrior like Karna suffered grievously because of his association with the evil-minded Shakuni, the wicked Dhuryodhana and the malicious Dhussasana.

You must cultivate good company. How do you decide who is good and who is bad? Think over the matter deeply. The one who sees the bad in what is good is a bad man. The one who sees good even in what is bad is a good man. Therefore seek the company of the good alone.

Man, it is said, is a combination of Truth and Righteousness. Truth is God. Righteousness is Divine. Verily there is no greater Righteousness than adherence to Truth. We must live in the mansion of Peace, whose foundation is Truth, whose walls are Righteousness and whose roof is Love.

Act according to promptings of your conscience

Dear Students! You are yourselves the exemplars of your pure hearts and unselfish lives. You are feeling sad because of the feeling that a slur has been cast on the good name of the Institute students. Don't give any thought to this. When you are free from blame why should you worry? In a bag of rice there may be a few grains of paddy. You should not feel that because of the misbehaviour of a few, the taint affects all students. Act on the conviction that no blame attaches to any of you. Act according to the promptings of your conscience. That will lead you to Divinity.

Carry on the *Saadhana* which you have taken up. You are bound to earn a good name and bring credit to your parents. Even the Institute will be vindicated. As youth, your journey is long. You must stick to the path of Truth and lead ideal lives.

Devotees also should conduct themselves with fortitude. Fear sin. Show gratitude to the Divine. When you have fear of sin and love of God, you are bound to observe morality in society. Carry on your activities with zeal and faith.

Svaami will return soon to Prashaanthi Nilayam and fill you all with joy and enthusiasm. Never cease to meditate on God. Cultivate a spirit of broadmindedness. Devotees, men and women, tend to magnify trifles. Avoid commenting on others. Love all, greet everyone with a smiling face, eschew harsh language. A soft answer turneth away wrath.

Recognise first of all that the Divine is in every one. Understanding others is the key to adjustment.

Discourse in Prashaanthi Mandhir on 21-7-1993.

In all lands the true sense of values has to be restored, and faith in the divinity of man has to be implanted. This is the work for which I have come. The world has to be saved from the consequences of limited knowledge, and from the blinding pride that precedes a fall.

BABA