

32. Man's true kith and kin

Truth is the mother;

Wisdom is the father;

Right conduct is the brother;

Compassion is the friend;

Peace is the spouse;

Forgiveness is the son;

These six alone are the Real relations for everyone.

IN THIS vast phenomenal universe, we consider the body as the mother. But the body is perishable by the very name given to it--Shareeram---that which decays. The bodies of the mother and the son are both impermanent. Hence for every human being the real mother is *Truth--Sathyam Maathaa*. Truth is that which remains unchanged for all time. Truth is eternal and changeless. Hence from ancient times the sages esteemed Truth as Divine. Truth, therefore, should be considered one's real mother.

Pithaa jnaanam (Wisdom is the father). Is the one who fosters and protects your body the father? He is only a guardian. The true father is wisdom, which is Divine. The Upanishaths hailed Truth and Wisdom as Divine.

Dharmo bhraatha (Righteousness is the brother). The uterine brothers who are elder or younger than one are not one's real brothers. From the worldly point of view they are one's brothers. But one's true brother is *Dharma* (Righteousness), which is Divine.

Compassion is one's true friend

Dhayaa Sakhaa (Compassion is the friend). People look upon associates with bodies as friends. This is not correct. One's true friend is Compassion.

Shaantham Pathni (Peace is the spouse). One's true spouse is peace, without which no existence is possible. Peace is a shining ornament for man. It is Divine.

Kshama puthrah (Forgiveness is the son). This is not obtained easily by everyone. Today, because of the influence of the *Kali* age, sons are more keen on getting at the properties of their parents than on rendering them service or looking after them. Shri Raama was a son who had such supreme regard for the honour and good name of the father that he willingly chose to go into exile to the forest and face all difficulties. Hence Raama is hailed as the very embodiment of *Dharma Raamo vigrahavaan Dharmah*. Such a son is verily the Divine. To have *Kshama* (forgiveness) as one's son is to possess the Divine.

These six qualities are the right relations for every man. Human birth has been conferred on humanity to acquire these relationships.

Today these basic human values have been forgotten. People remember what happened yesterday or today, but do not remember the great truths inherited from the past. With the result that man is plunged in misery and worry perpetually.

Men have forgotten their ancient culture. They are lost in the transient values of modernism. Remembering this, you students should pledge yourselves to uphold human values.

You should become "Lovers of the *Aathma*"

What you should seek to acquire today are not scholarship and wealth. You must acquire the supreme quality of *prema* (love). The Vice-chancellor (in his speech earlier) said that you should prepare yourselves to become soldiers. You should become not "soldiers" but seekers of "soul-dears." You should become lovers of the spirit. The term soldiers has a political tinge. But you should become "Lovers of the *Aathma*" Cultivate human values. Remember that you are born in Bhaarith, breathe the pure air of Bhaarith, live in Bhaarith and grow in Bhaarith. The denizens of Bhaarith have been described as Hindus. What is the meaning of Hindu? Anti Kumar said (in his speech earlier) that Hindus are those who have abjured *himsa* (harming others). This is not correct. Hindu stands for the five following qualities. "H" for Humanity. "I" for Individuality. "N" for Nationality. "D" for Divinity and "U" for Unity. These embody the Hindu tradition.

These five qualities are the *Pancha-praanaas* (five life-breaths). They are the *Pancha-Thatthvas* (five vital principles). The ancient Bhaarithheeyas, who have drawn sustenance from these five values, have esteemed them as the *Samskrithi* (essence of their culture).

Samskrithi means that which has been refined. To make a silver tumbler you have to subject a piece of silver to the process of melting, processing and shaping it into a tumbler. Only after the metal goes through all these processes can it become a tumbler. This applies to every object of utility. The raw material has to be processed before it can become a useful object.

The four goals of human existence

Men should consider, however, of what use is their ceaseless pursuit of material objects, forgetting God? All day long men everywhere are pursued by endless desires and worries. Only a proper culture can convert these desires and worries into purposeful actions.

It is for this reason that the ancient sages placed before Bhaarithheeyas the four goals of human existence. *Dharma* (Right Conduct), *Artha* (the acquisition of material things), *Kaama* (satisfaction of desires) and *Moksha* (Liberation).

Today, people have given up the first and last of these four goals--*Dharma* and *Moksha*--and are immersed only in the pursuit of *Artha* (wealth) and *Kaama* (sensory pleasures). What is necessary is to infuse *Dharma* (Righteousness) into the pursuit of *Artha* and *Kaama*. The acquisition of wealth and the enjoyment of sensory pleasures should be based on *Dharma*. The entire life should be founded on Righteousness. Only then wealth acquires real value.

Human life is related to both *Artha* (material) and *Paramaartha* (spiritual) wealth. The combination of material wealth for daily life and spiritual wealth for achieving supreme bliss constitutes the meaning and goal of human life.

These basic human values have been forgotten today and human life has been devalued. Today the price of everything has gone up inordinately. Even a broomstick is very costly. But the value of man has depreciated, because men no longer possess the qualities which a human being should have.

Learn to speak sweetly and avoid excessive talk

Human values are essential for man. They are the hall-mark of his humanness. These values should be manifested in daily life. Your words should demonstrate their sacredness. Your actions should sanctify these values.

Oh Students! Pay heed to my words!

Eschew harshness in speech.

Excessive talk is harmful.

Idle strolling is a bad habit.

Let your light shine;

Become lamps for others.

The first thing students should learn is to speak sweetly and avoid excessive talk. They should avoid going from room to room like rats and cats. This is part of the culture they have to imbibe.

In the culture of Bhaarith, there are three basic elements: *Naithikam* (Morality), *Dhaarmikam* (Righteousness) and *Aadhyaathmikam* (Spirituality). These are the threefold aspects of man.

First, *Naithikam* (Morality). This is based on pure thoughts. When there is purity in thoughts, there is righteousness in speech. Out of righteousness ensues spirituality. There should be unity in thought, word and deed.

Love is the force that binds person to person

Whatever you may learn or do, the fundamental requisite for right living is love. Love promotes truth in speech. That speech should be both pleasing and wholesome as indicated in the Geetha "*Sathyam Hitham preethikaram.* "

There is love in *Jnaanam* (wisdom). Without love wisdom is like bagasse after the sweet juice has been taken out of the sugarcane.

The *dharma* should be rooted in love. Of what use is charity or an act of goodness without love in it? There is love in peace and in all other qualities. It is the undercurrent flowing through truth and other qualities. Without love, there can be no genuine relationship between different beings. Love alone can foster unity. Hence love and unity are essential for mankind. Unfortunately men have become morally blind without the two eyes of love and unity.

Love is the force that binds person to person. Unfortunately today, though Bhaarith has achieved freedom, she is far from achieving unity. Let us have a look at the past. You know about Emperor Ashoka. The top of the Ashoka Pillar, with figures of four lions looking in the four directions, is independent India's national emblem.

A lesson from Emperor Ashoka

Emperor Ashoka had established a certain custom of giving presents to his feudatory Kings on the occasion of his birthday. Today is India's fiftieth Independence Day. On the occasion of Ashoka's fiftieth birthday, all the feudatory rulers had assembled in the capital.

A ruler from the east submitted to the Emperor the following message: "Your Majesty! I have collected this time three, times as much revenue as in previous years and I am offering it to the Emperor's treasury." The Emperor appeared pleased with the offering and accepted it.

Then came a ruler from the western region. He said: "Your Majesty! I have cut down as much as possible the public expenditure in my kingdom, reduced the salaries of public servants and have brought six times as much tribute as I used to give in earlier years." The Emperor requested the King to resume his seat.

A ruler from the northern region made the following submission. "Oh Lord! I have been unable to bring any offering to your Majesty because of the failure of rains in my kingdom. Owing to the poor harvests I could not make any collections from my subjects." The Emperor expressed his approval and requested the king to resume his seat.

Next came a ruler from the south. He informed the Emperor: "Your majesty! This year I have had to raise the taxes, reduce the expenditure and put down unrest in different parts of the Kingdom and round up all the troublesome elements. As a result peace has been established all over the kingdom. This is the offering I am making to the Emperor." The King requested him to resume his seat.

Then the ruler of Magadha rose from his seat and approached the Emperor: "Your Majesty! My sole concern is about the welfare of my people. I have used all the taxes collected from the people for establishing schools and hospitals for the people and to provide other amenities to them. I got wells dug for providing drinking water to the people. I got tanks to be dug for storing water. Without causing any hardship to the people, I spent all the money collected from them for their own benefit. All the people are happy. I did not reduce the emoluments of public officials. I allowed them to use the money collected from the people to be used for the benefit of the people, thereby encouraging them to discharge their responsibilities with zeal. Hence, I could bring to the Emperor only my love on this occasion. I offer the well-being of my kingdom to Your Majesty. My people are living in peace and plenty."

Emperor Ashoka was supremely pleased on hearing these words. He summoned his attendants and offered to the ruler of Magadha presents of the kind he had not offered to anyone before.

Duty of rulers

What is the significance of this episode? This means that rulers should be concerned solely with the well-being of their people. They should seek to provide what is essential for the people. The king built choultries, constructed roads, set up schools, built hospitals for daily life. When these are provided there will be no discontent among the people.

To ensure peace among the people, the sense of spiritual oneness should be developed, as declared in the Geetha: "*Mamaathmaa Sarvabhuutha antharaathma*" (I am the Indwelling Spirit in all beings). When this feeling prevails, there can be no room for any kind of differences and strife. If one sees the same spirit that is within him in all the others, how can he hate the others? If one sees his image in a mirror, will he hate it? Everyone loves his own self.

What Svaami wrote as a boy

In this context, I may recall a poem I wrote at the age of seven. It was as follows.

To see your face in a mirror

do you need anybody's help?
Why do you need anyone's
friendship for this purpose?
To view the moon in the sky
do you need a lamp?
To look at the moon shining in the sky
do you require any other source of light?
To know your own Aathma
why do you need a guru?
The Aathma is your God,
your Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma.
One who has realised this,
why does he need any preceptor?

Therefore, everyone should realise that the same Universal Divine Spirit is the Indweller in every being. All are embodiments of the Divine. When this sacred feeling fills everyone there will be no room for conflict or chaos.

Today people have forgotten this sacred truth. Hatred alone is ubiquitous. Envy is rampant. Selfishness prevails everywhere. Self-interest is predominant. Because of these evil tendencies, pure human relations have been undermined.

The relationship which you should develop is that of spiritual oneness. "I and you are one." That is the truth you have to realise. Who is the "You"? It is also another "I." Everyone knows himself as "I." In the declaration, "I and you are one," "You" stands for God (who is in everyone). The first name of God is *Aham* ("I"). Then came '*Aum*.' Every person, in every reference to himself, describes himself as "I" (*Nenu* in Thelugu).

When a man declares that "I am a man," the reference to man is finite and impermanent. The "I" is permanent, everlasting.

Brahman is infinite love

Hence, the scriptures declare: "*Sathyam Jnaanam Anantham Brahma*." The *Brahman* is Truth. Wisdom and everlasting. The term *Aham* applies to *Brahman*. Hence the *Mahaavaakya*, "*Aham Brahmaasmi*." Brahma here is not a four-headed deity depicted in the films, it refers to the Universal, all encompassing Spirit. *Brahman* is infinite love. It is all pervading in its expansiveness. This means that there is no place in the cosmos where love is not present.

This is illustrated by an incident in the *Bhaagavatham*. A gopika heard a knock at the door. She was in two minds whether she should open the door or not. Debating in her mind about this she realised that the one outside was the same as the one within her. "That being so, what does it matter whether the door is opened or closed?"

The *Brahman* is the same effulgence shining within you and within everybody else. The gopika experienced the Divine as a cosmic mansion which had no exits and entrances. "When the Lord of the Universe is with- in me, where is the need for a door or a welcome?" (Bhagavaan sang with feeling a song expressing the dilemma of the Gopika and the delight that fills her mind when she realises her oneness with God).

All is within us. The heart is the container of everything. It is the source of strength and of weakness. The pure-hearted man is full of courage. The man with a guilty heart is weak. Love is the source of strength. Get rid of all fear by developing love for God. Thereby the door of your heart opens and you experience Divine Bliss, which is symbolised by the term Kailaash, the abode of God.

Students! Purify your hearts by the waters of love. Apply the cleansing powder of *Shraddha* (earnestness). The heart will shine like a star, "a diamond in the sky." Every student should be like a star, twinkling in the sky.

Develop love and cherish concern for the welfare of the people. Realise the goal of union with God. (Bhagavaan explained the significance of *Namaskaaram* and *how japa* should be done). Redeem your lives by loving all and serving all.

Discourse on 15-8-1996.