

16. Take wings and fly

KAANTHI, the Minister who spoke just now, is in charge of education in this State of Karnaataka and he knows well that the education he is arranging for the children of his people is not adequate to meet all the challenges of life in this fast-changing, quickly firing world. These Pandiths who have dedicated their scholarship and their talents for the spread of the means and methods of attaining peace are therefore valuable collaborators with Kaanthi in the field of education. I am glad he recognises that truth.

Dharma is a word related to *dhaarana* and derived from the same root. *Dhaarana* means 'wearing,' as a cloth; Dharma is the very habiliment of India, the dress that *Bhaarathmaatha* (Mother India) wears to protect her honour, to proclaim her status, to shelter herself against heat and cold, to set a standard to her sisters. When the wicked Kaurava princes seized hold of the sari that Dhroupadhi wore and tried to inflict insult on her honour, Krishna rescued her and foiled the foul design. Dharmaraja sat as if he was unaware of his fights and duties; Bheema was involved in doubt concerning his obligations to his elder brother and his consort; Arjuna cared more for his own interests; Nakula and Sahadeva waited and weighed the pros and cons. But, the Lord did not wait! His Grace knew no delay or doubt.

Now, *Bhaarathamaatha* is in a similar plight. *Dharma*, the very clothes that she has worn since centuries, which is the expression of her natural style, is now seized on by wicked irreverent hands. They wish to dress her in unbecoming styles, as their own imitative or frenzy dictates. So, Krishna has to come again for rescuing the victim of the wicked.

Everything has its *Dharma*

Krishna revealed the hollowness of the people who were confident of their capacity to dishonour Dhroupadhi and the weakness of those entrusted with the task of protecting her. Now too, I have to foil the attempts to undermine *Dharma* and to stand in support of those who are the traditional protectors and protagonists of *Dharma*.

Every single thing has its *Dharma*; water has its *Dharma*, the nature and obligation to move; fire, the *Dharma* to burn and consume; the magnet, to attract and draw unto itself. And, every one of these is keeping up its *Dharma* unchanged, including the Solar system and the stars of the firmament. Among the things endowed with Consciousness or *Chaithanga*, the plants and trees, the insects and the birds, born out of eggs or the mammals--all have managed to treasure their specific *Dharmas* unaffected by the passage of time. But man, whose intelligence sweeps from the inert and the 'infinitesimal to the' Super-conscious and the Universal, is the only living thing that has slipped, and is sliding down. The experience of many generations of seekers, who sought the means of contentment and joy, embodied in the precepts of practical living, collectively called *Shaasthra* is neglected, and new-fangled nostrums are recommended and tried on vast scale. No wonder, contentment and joy are far, far away from human grasp.

Dharma, for example, says '*Sathyam vadha*' and '*Dharmam chara*': Speak the truth and practise righteousness. *Sathyaannaasthi paro dharmah*: there is no more stabilising factor in society, no more support for individual progress than *Sathya*, Truth. Hiding the truth or perverting it or denying it or defacing it are all signs of cowardice; no bold person will stoop to cover the face of Truth. Besides, you must know the *Vedhic* injunction is: '*Dharmam chara*', "Practise Dharma." It is not enough if you learn about it; you must act it, fill every moment with word and deed and thought that reflect your awareness of *Dharma*. That type of living is the hallmark of what is

called *seelam* (character), in such statements as *Seelam param bhuushanam* · "Character is the most precious jewel."

Resist temptation to ignore *Dharma*

You must examine every moment of your waking time whether you are observing the precepts of *Dharma* or straying away' *Dharma* is now just a convenient excuse to derive benefits from others, not an opportunity to fulfil your duties to others! You remind others of it, when you desire to squeeze some advantage from them. You must remember not only the fights that *Dharma* confers but also the duties it imposes.

The temptation to ignore *Dharma* grows from egoism and the acceptance of false values. The wish to satisfy the lower desire is the root of *Adharma* (unrighteousness). This wish takes hold of you slyly, silently, like a thief in the night; or like a comrade come to save you; or like a servant come to attend on you; or, like a counsellor come to warn you. Oh, wickedness has a thousand tricks to capture your heart. You must be ever alert against the temptation. The wish makes a chink in your consciousness, enters and establish itself and then multiplies its brood and eats into the personality you have built up with laborious care. The fort is no longer under your control. You have been reduced into a puppet manipulated by these inner enemies. Whenever you try to rebuild yourselves, they undermine the structure and you have to do it all over again. That is the extent of the harm they do.

***Gopikas* state of God-consciousness**

To conquer this egoism, no rigorous system of exercise or breath control is necessary. No, not even complicated scholarship. The *Gopikas* (cow-herds) confirm this truth. They were simple rural folk, untouched by the conclusions of deep study. Naaradha was once so shocked at their ignorance of the science of spiritual progress that he volunteered to go among them and put them through some lessons in *Jnaana*.

He found on entry into Brindaavan that the *gopees* (cowherd girls) selling milk or curds in the streets forgot to shout the names of their ware but said, "Govindha, Naaraayana," instead; so immersed were they in God-consciousness. They did not know that they had sold off all the milk; they still wandered on, calling out the names of the Lord, for the dust of Brindaavan was so sacred for them. They had no *vishayavaasana*, that is, no wish for sensual pleasure; and so, they had no *Ajnaana* (ignorance). Hence, Naaradha concluded that they had no need for the lessons he had planned to give. He prayed to them to teach him the means of getting that yearning and that vision of the all-pervading Krishna.

Achieve identification with the Lord

There was a *gopee*, for example, called Suguna, who had no other thought than those related to Krishna. Now every evening, it was the usual routine in Brindaavan for every housewife to light the lamp from the flame of the lamp at the house of Nandha; they believed that getting light from the flame of the lamp of the eldest and highest is auspicious. Suguna went with the lamp of Nandha's house and when she reached the house, her mind was lost in the thrill and joy of seeing the very house where Krishna spent his childhood days, to which his pranks and prattle drew all the cowherd boys and girls. She stood there with her unlighted lamp for a long while, near the big oil lamp, illumining the central hall. She was holding the lamp near the flame, but not near enough. She had her finger right over the flame. She was not aware that her finger was being

scorched by the flame; she was too full of Krishna-consciousness to be aware of the pain. It was Yasodha who saw her plight and woke her from the reverie, or shall we say, vision? For, to her, the house was alive with Krishna wherever her eyes turned. That is the *thanmayathwam* (identification) one must achieve. There is no use if the fledgeling stays in the nest; it should develop wings and fly into the sky. There is no use if man grovels in the dust; he should take to his wings and fly.

India is the teacher of all humanity in this field. That is her special role. If the body is the temple of God, the world is the body of God. So, He seeks to establish *Aanandha* in all countries and all people. That is why I have been giving these discourses and getting the Pandiths from all parts of the country to give discourses to you.

Brindaavan, 15-4-1964