

12. Mother's Love and Divine Grace

EMBODIMENTS of Love! There is no nobler quality in the world than love. It is wisdom. It is righteousness. It is wealth. It is Truth. Everything is permeated with love. Everything in the cosmos arises from love, grows by love and merges in love.

Every human being is born from the mother's womb. He is fostered by the mother's love and enjoys many things in life because of the mother. He enjoys, all happiness in life because of the mother's love. Hence, there is no higher divinity than the mother. But this divinity relates to the body alone.

Man has to recognise the truth that the food which sustains his body is derived from the sun. The sun helps food crops to grow. Hence, without the sun man cannot have food to sustain life. The term *Sathyam* (Truth) is made up of three syllables which represent life, food and the sun. It follows that man is inherently an embodiment of truth. As such, he should lead a life based on truth. Unfortunately, man today leads a life divorced from truth. Consequently, he becomes a prey to innumerable troubles. He has no peace. He is racked continually by many afflictions.

Man has to recognise the significance of Love and Truth, which are fundamental to human existence. The mother represents these two basic qualities.

Love the mother and revere the father

Raama attained godhood because he was the son of Kaushalya' Lava and Kusha became heroic children because of their great mother, Seetha Dhevi. It is the noble thoughts of the mother which make the children great. A mother may go wrong in other respects, but she will always strive for the well-being of her children. Hence every son has to love the mother as the primary duty. Then he should love the father and revere the preceptor. The mother confers the body. The father protects it. The preceptor imparts knowledge and wisdom. For every human being all three are essential for getting on in the world.

Many great men have embarked on noble deeds after securing the blessing of their mothers. For instance, before going to battle to fight against the demon, Taarakaasura, Sanat Kumaara got the blessings of his mother, Gowri. Similarly, Parasuraama received his mother's blessings before he went to fight his foes. Likewise, Vinatha blessed her son Garuda. Every mother similarly blesses her son by saying: "Shri Raama Raksha" (May Shri Raama protect you always.)

It is because of the blessings of noble mothers, the wives of great sages, that many men were able to perform heroic deeds. Shankaraachaarya taught that sons who did not get the blessings of the mothers suffered from various vicissitudes in life. Those who had the blessings of their mothers often secured freedom from rebirth.

Many high-souled men have extolled the greatness and power of mothers. It is the foremost duty of children to secure the blessings of their mothers for their worldly well-being.

However, spiritually man's obligation is different, according to *Vedhaantha*. Here, there is room in the heart only for the love of God. Affection for the mother and reverence for the father are necessary. But parents and preceptor are transient. Even friends are impermanent. God alone is permanent and unfailing and God alone should have the permanent place in the heart.

Use the body as a divine instrument

The human body acquires its sacredness from the fact that it is the abode of the Divine. The Geetha refers to the body as *Kshethra* (sacred field) and the Divine Indweller as the *Kshethrajna*. Because of the sacredness of the body, it should be used properly as an instrument of the Divine.

Man should develop faith in God. Without that faith, life will be meaningless. Man can have no happiness or satisfaction in life without the grace of God. Men today are too much immersed in affairs of the world. The result is they have no peace of mind. They can have peace only from the supreme embodiment of peace: God. He is the abode of infinite love and enduring peace. God's love should be secured by chanting the Lord's name. You should be grateful to your mother for endowing you with a body which enables you to chant the Lord's name. The greatness of the Lord's name is illustrated by the following episode.

Once, Hanumaan's mother Anjana, went to Kaushalya because her son was a great devotee of Raama. Kaushalya did not know Anjana and so she asked Anjana who she was in a sweet tone. Anjana was proud about her valorous son. She replied: "Mother! Have you not heard about me? Hanumaan is my son. He leapt over the ocean in one jump. How is it that you did not know about one who had performed such a great feat? Staying in this palace you did not know about my son?"

Kaushalya replied in a soothing tone- "Dear mother! I now know that Hanumaan is a really great hero."

While the two were conversing in this fashion, the mother of the sage Agasthya came there. Kaushalya made kind enquiries about her. She replied: "I am the mother of Agasthya. Don't you know that my son drank in one gulp the ocean over which Hanumaan merely leapt? Are you not aware that I am the mother of such a pious saint's son?"

Then, Kaushalya addressing the two ladies said: "For your son's leaping over the ocean and your son's drinking the ocean in one gulp, it is the name of my son that enabled them to accomplish these exploits. Because they remembered his name they could do these marvellous deeds."

By then, Kaama arrived on the scene. He was apprehensive about disagreement among the three ladies. Raama was totally free from pride and egoism. He was pure in heart and free from selfishness. He told his mother: "Mother, it is not because of my name that Hanumaan and Agasthya performed their great exploits. This body of mine was given the name of Raama. The greatness of the name Raama enabled Hanumaan to leap over the ocean and Agasthya to drink it one gulp. The power of the name is at the root of their achievement."

Thus, the power of the Lord's name is incalculable. However great a mother may be, if the son does not have the grace of the Lord he will not be able to accomplish anything great. For this reason, mothers always pray to the Lord to shower His grace on the children.

Aadhi Shankara's intense yearning for Divine Mother

Here is another illustration from the life of Aadhi Shankara. He was born in Kaaladi in Kerala. When he was a six-year old boy, his mother, Aaryaambha, told him- "Son, your father was a very pious person and. He used to worship God according to the prescribed rituals. You must follow his example. You are very lucky. I am always devoted to God. Having taken birth as my son, you should conduct yourself in such a way that you achieve great name and fame and bring a good name to me. Act according to your father's example. It is the mother who makes the son

noble and great. It is a noble son who brings glory to the mother. Hence, remembering this, act according to your father's injunctions."

The father of Shankara was a regular worshipper of Dhevi Raaja-raajeshvari for many years. He used to offer milk every day to the goddess. One day, when Shankara was barely four years old, the father had to leave his home to visit a neighbouring village. Every day after finishing his *puuja* and offering milk to the goddess, he used to distribute the remaining milk to his wife, son and others as *prasaadham*. He told the boy: "Son, your mother cannot perform the worship which I do. You better do the worship today."

After the father left, the boy followed the father's instructions. He filled a tumbler with milk, placed it before the image of the goddess Raaja-raajeshvari and prayed "Mother! Accept this offering of milk." He went on praying to the goddess. When he found that the milk remained untouched, he was in great anguish. He cried: "Oh Mother! What crime have I committed? When my father offered the milk you used to take it. Why are you not taking it when I am offering it?" He was in deep distress. He was thinking whether there was any lapse on his part. He became desperate. He declared in agony: "Mother! If you don't take the milk I shall end my life. I would have dishonoured my father. I would also be guilty of failing to fulfil my mother's command. If I cannot please my parents, what use is there in my living?"

Cherish the mother and seek God's grace

He prayed intensely to the Goddess in great agony. Moved by the naive entreaties of the boy, Raaja-raajeshvari appeared before him. She told him, "Child! Be happy. I am immensely pleased with your devotion. I shall drink the milk." So saying, she drank all the milk offered in the tumbler. The boy was aghast to see that the whole tumbler was empty.

"Oh mother!" he cried. "If you drink all the milk, what is left for distributing as *prasaadham*? My mother will think I have drunk all the milk. I have to *give prasaadham* to her. My father used to give some milk as *prasaadham* to others also. Therefore please restore some of the milk in the tumbler."

How can the milk once consumed be brought back? Can the river that has joined the ocean be made to return? Can an apple that has been digested be brought back?

The goddess told the boy that it is impossible to bring back the milk that had been consumed and vanished.

The boy was in deep distress again. He thought within himself: "I will get a bad name from my mother." He prayed: "Mother! Please give at least a little quantity of milk." Responding to the prayers of the young boy the goddess drew milk from her breast and gave it to the boy. It was the sacred power of the milk which enabled Shankara in later years to master all the scriptures and earn lasting fame as a great spiritual teacher, revered by all. Knowledge of all the *Vedhas* came to him effortlessly: It was due to the grace of the Divine Mother and the love and blessings of his own mother. When one is blessed with *Prema and Anugraha* (love and grace) he is transformed from the human to the Divine.

Hence, every person, man or woman, should respect the parents, install the Divine in the heart and pray to God constantly. It is everyone's duty to bring a good name to one's parents. When the children are good, they bring a good name to the parents. It was because of the noble behaviour of Lava and Kusha that their mother, Seetha, became renowned. When Lava and Kusha were engaged in a battle with Raama, Lava aimed an arrow at Raama with the prayer that if his mother

Jaanaki was a *Saadhvi* (a supremely noble woman) the arrow should render Raama unconscious. Raama became unconscious when the arrow hit him. See what happened. The mere thought of his mother lent so much power to his arrow!

This shows that when you cherish the mother and seek God's grace, the blessings of the mother become more powerful.

God-realisation is the supreme achievement

In the world today such mothers are rare. Many mothers are worried about the future of their sons if they adhere to the righteous path. They fear that such children may not be successful in life. In ancient days mothers thought otherwise. They would be immensely happy if they found the children devoted to God. They would feel happy with the thought. "My son will be a good man. He will earn a good name."

Even now, in this sacred land of Bhaarath, parents should strive their utmost to bring up their children on right lines. Children also should revere their parents, who account for their physical existence. But they should realise what they owe to God, who is the basis of all life. Recognising this double obligation to the mothers and to the Divine--they should redeem their lives by purposeful living. There are greater things than even life itself. The supreme achievement is God-realisation. It is the summum bonum of human life. This was the lesson which Aaryaamba taught to Shankara. She assured him: "When you have secured the grace of Dhevi, what is it that you will lack in your life? You will bring fame to the country as a whole."

Achieving a great name, however, is not all. Shankara lived in a state of perpetual bliss. Within a short span of 32 years he achieved incredible things. All because of Dhevi's grace.

I wish all young people to develop faith in God and lead worthy lives.

Discourse in Kodaikanal on 6-5-1997.

You wear coloured glasses and see everything through these glasses. Correct your vision; the world will be corrected. Reform yourselves; the world will be reformed. You see many because you seek the many, not the One.

Baba