

8. Dharmakshethra

THIS is the Inaugural Meeting of the Prashaanthi Vidwanmahaasabha established to promote the knowledge and practice among all mankind of the fundamental truths, beliefs and disciplines of *Sanaathana Dharma* (Eternal Religion). The Raaja Saheb just now gave expression to his great joy and satisfaction that the Wheel of Revival is being set in motion by Me at this place, from the Palace, in spite of the claims of many other places for that honour. It was at Rajahmundry last year, on Shri Raama Navami Day, that I announced to the Pandiths gathered around Me on the sands of an island in the river Godaavari, the aims and objects of this Sabha. Naturally, devotees resident there were hoping and preparing themselves in that hope, that the Inaugural Meeting could be arranged in their town. Without doubt, Rajahmundry is a place competent to bear that honour. With its historic past and large number of *Aasthika Sanghas* (Associations of believers) and institutions that it is fostering, it ranks high among the upholders of tradition. But, like all good things and all lucky chances, this too is won, not so much by effort, as by merit—merit accumulated through years, and even through centuries and ages !

The Godward path is *Karma* based on *Dharma*

This is an epoch-making event. For, it is no less than the Dawn of the Golden Era of the Liberation of Humanity. Venkatagiri has been for centuries the seat of a Royal Family dedicated to the support, protection and promotion of *Dharma* and so, it has earned this honour.

Consider how many temples were built or renovated or maintained by the Raajas of Venkatagiri! Take count of the number of Pandiths they have patronised and encouraged, the number of religious books their donations have helped to see light! Consider the atmosphere of *Dharma* which they established in this State for centuries. See the interest the family is taking even now, when their State and status have been swept away by the storms of political change.

Bhaarathavasha (Mother India) has kept before her this ideal of *Dharma*. That is the taproot of her culture, the source of her vigour and vitality. The Godward path is action based on righteousness (*Karma* based on *Dharma*). That is the path, also towards joy, contentment and therefore of strength. Now, the path has become hidden by an overgrowth of briar and bush; the bridges and culverts are in disrepair. People have forgotten the goal, the path, and the habit of walking on it. That road is the only refuge; it must be trodden tomorrow, if not, today, for the goal lies at the end of that road. It was laid down centuries ago, beyond the memory of history, in the *Vedhas*. *Sathyam vadha, Dharmam chara---*"Speak the truth, practise righteousness," the *Vedhas* call on 'you. These Pandiths well versed in *Vedhas* and *Shaasthras* know what *Dharma* is and they can explain it to you without distortion. That is why you have to go to them reverentially and seat them amidst you and get enlightened by them. Knowing is not being. You must try to translate into daily life what you learn from them. The moral life is the best prescription for joyful life.

Learn to live in His Glory

Every one's heart is a *Dharmakshethra* (the scene of Mahaabhaaratha war) where the battle between the forces of Good and Evil is fought. Why, the whole country is *Dharmakshethra*. So, the mothers and children of this land must be devoted to *Dharma*, above all. The Geetha begins with word, *Dharmakshethrae*, and ends with the words, *Sarva Dharmaan parityajya*: through *Dharma*, you have to transcend *Dharma*. That is why Kaushalya exhorted Raama when he went

into the forest, "May the *Dharma* which you are upholding by this act, be your guardian when you are in the forest, as an exile." And, Raama too upheld *Dharma* even under the most trying circumstances. When, after the death of Raavana, Vibheeshana's Coronation was arranged, he prayed that Raama himself should crown him in the city of Lanka. But, Raama declared that His vow and His father's orders did not allow Him to set foot in a city during the years of exile. That period was not yet over, He said. So, the function was attended only by Sugreeva and others. Raama thus demonstrated by His actions how scrupulously *Dharma* had to be observed. We want mothers who are so wise, and children who are so steadfast in the practice of *Dharma*.

Practice---that is the real thing in spiritual matters. Scholarship is a burden, it is very often a handicap. So long as God is believed to be far away, in temples and holy places, man will feel religion a burden and a hurdle.

But, plant Him in your heart and you feel light, burdenless, and even strong. It is like the food basket; when carried on the shoulder, it feels heavy; you are too weak even to carry it. But, sit near a stream and eat it. Though the total weight has not decreased, you feel lighter and stronger. That is the consequence of taking the food in: do likewise, with the idea of God. Do not carry it on the shoulder, have it 'in.'

Keep the memory of the Lord and His Glory always with you; that will quicken your steps and you will arrive soon at the Goal. The mother, coming from the well, with a pot of water on her head, another on the hip and a third in her hand, hurries home, since she is always conscious of the infant in the cradle. If she forgets the infant, her gait slows down and she wanders around, chatting with all her friends. Similarly, if God, the Goal, is not cherished in the memory, one has to wander through many births and arrive home late.

God is the life-breath of every soul. So, learn to live in His Glory, in His Memory, in His Contemplation, every moment. That is what the *Vedhas and Shaasthras* teach.

Venkatagiri, 18-2-1964

If there is righteousness in the heart there is beauty in character.

If there is beauty in character there is harmony in the home.

If there is harmony in the home there is order in the nation.

If there is order in the nation there is peace in the world.

Shri Sathya Sai