

25. The bubble of pride

MAN is a pilgrim towards *Dharmakshethra*, the pride of *dharm*, which is the abode also of *Shaanthi*; but, on the way, he is led into the bylanes and alleys of objective pleasure by the senses to which he has become a slave. Man is eager to know about all kinds of trivialities, like the details of other lives and other places, but, he has no keenness to know about himself or the place from where he himself has come. Man is sunk in ignorance about himself, his source and substance, his goal and fate. He reduces himself to just one individual; he, the inheritor of unlimited wealth and fortune, feels himself a pauper. Remove this ego boundary; then only can you recognise the vastness of yourself.

This microphone before Me must have been made by someone, is it not? He is not seen or known by you, but of his existence, there can be no doubt. Besides, it is certain he must be knowing all about this. microphone which he has made. So too, there must be a creator for this universe and He must be knowing all about it. This universe is composed of the five elements and He is the master of all the five, their manipulator, aware of their subtle characteristics and properties. He is the *kshethrajna* (Indweller), he who knows this *kshethra* (field). When I speak into the mike, all of you can hear Me clearly; but the tape recorder here, the fan, the bulbs, the tube-lights, all operate on account of the self-same unseen electric current that animates each of them.

Diwan Bahadur Raamaswamy Shaasthry, *Yogi* Suddhanandha Bharathi, and others addressed you now, each one on a separate note, but, all described only the self-same *Kshethrajna*, the Universal knower, who is known by all names and who is in all forms. He is the impersonal person described in a hundred different ways in the *Vedhas*, the *Shaasthras*, the *Mahaabhaaratha*, the *Raamaayana* and the *Bhaagavatha*. Hold on to Him and live your lives; you will not slip. Build your activities on that basis; your career will not cave in. You will also develop courage, consolation and faith in yourself and in your destiny.

Krishna's lessons to control the ego

Krishna addresses Arjuna in the Geetha sometimes as *Kaunteya*. Now, what does that appellation mean? It means, "One who assimilates quietly" as you are doing now. You are seated comfortably under this pandal, in fine weather and you can afford to listen in silence. But remember, Arjuna was between two opposing armies, eager for the fray for which they had prepared for years with unquenchable vengeance. It requires extraordinary self-control and yearning to command concentration at that time. Krishna addresses him as *Kurunandhana*, which means that he takes delight in *karma* dedicated to the high ideals he had in view. Every mode of address of Krishna has an inner meaning and appropriateness, as well as a lesson for others.

Arjuna was trained by Krishna, without break, to control his egoism. Before the *Mahaabhaaratha* war, Arjuna once happened to be at Raamasethu, near Raameshwaram. Arjuna spoke of the bridge with some scorn in the hearing of Aanjaneya who was there and said that he would have built a bridge of arrows, single-handed and not bothered about subduing the sea and getting monkeys to pile up rocks one over the other. Aanjaneya asked him to build one. When Aanjaneya walked gently over the bridge, the arrows broke under his weight!

Krishna suddenly presented Himself and suggested that it should be done in his presence, for there was no witness when the challenge was made and accepted. In order to save Arjuna from

humiliation, Krishna bore the second arrow on His back, when Aanjaneya walked on it, so that Arjuna saw the tell-tale streaks of red, where the arrow points had pierced the Lord's back. Thus, Arjuna's pride was humbled. He prayed to Aanjaneya to fight on his side at Kurukshetra; but Aanjaneya said that the Kaurava army would be too infinitesimal a foe for his prowess; it would not be fair to pit him against such a weak enemy; he would only watch the fight, from the flag of Arjuna's chariot, he said; and the offer was gladly accepted.

Egoism is a tough enemy

Arjuna's pride was humbled during the war in another interesting manner by Krishna. About the end of the war, one evening, Arjuna felt proud that Krishna was his charioteer, and his 'servant.' He felt that as master, he should get down from the chariot after Krishna and not before Him. So, that day he insisted that Krishna should get down first, that he should come down only afterward. But, Krishna was adamant; Arjuna must come down first, he said. After wasting a long time, pleading and protesting and praying, Arjuna got down, very unwillingly, swallowing his pride. Krishna then came down, and, immediately the chariot went up in flames! Krishna explained the reason. The incendiary arrows and missiles that had stuck on the chariot were powerless so long as He was on it; but, when his presence was no longer there, they set the chariot on fire. Thus, Krishna showed that every act and word of the Lord had significance and a purpose, which mortals cannot gauge. Egoism is a tough enemy and it requires constant vigilance to conquer it.

Conquer the foes of the inner realm

Pride raises its head in every stage and state. Like grass which covers the earth with a green carpet, as soon as the rains fall even in places which appeared dry waste, pride thrives upon opportunity. Sikhadhwaja, the King, got a feeling of extreme renunciation and left for the forest for ascetic practices. His queen Choodala had the spirit of detachment in greater measure, but, she did not make a show of it as her husband did.

The queen put on a male attire, wore ochre, spelt a rosary and sought him in the jungle. Discovering him at last, she asked him who he was. The king replied that he was the ruler of the realm, that he had given up his riches, his treasure, his army, his court, etc. "For the sake of what did you give up these?" asked Choodala. "For the sake of peace," replied the king. But, he had to confess that he had not attained it. Then, Choodala taught him that the giving up of "things" will bear no fruit, that the desire for things, the pride of possessing things, of having once possessed them, has to be given up, that one must be detached from the objective world so that he might turn his eyes inward and conquer the foes of the inner realm and become a master of himself. When the king attempted to fall at the feet of the new *Guru* that had come to him, Choodala revealed her identity. She was a *sathi* (virtuous wife) who was the *Guru* of her *pathi* (husband); there were many such women in ancient times, when they were honoured and educated much better than today.

Tremendous power of mind over body

You must develop the devotion of the *gopees*, of Raadha, of Uddhava, of Hanumaan. Raamakrishna Paramahansa did intense *saadhana*, transmitting himself into the attitude of Hanumaan and even his physical attributes changed to suit the role. He developed a small tail during the period; such is the tremendous power of mind over body. Many husbands and mothers-in-law tried to scare away the *gopees* from Krishna by spreading scandals about Him but how can any one keep the Jeeva (individual soul) and the *jagadeeshwara* (Lord of the

Universe) apart? *Vyaasa*, the great saint, says that words are inadequate to describe the intensity of that devotion, the devotion of the *gopees* to the Lord. They had no egoism left in them and that is why they became the supreme devotees of the Lord.

Learn the art of overcoming the ego from the *Shaasthras*, whose repositories are here before you, in the Prashaanthi Vidwanmahaasabha. There are still many such in our land, in spite of decades of neglect and the glitter of other studies. You must have heard of Bhojaraaja, the great patron of Pandiths, such as these. He was at first not so considerate; but an incident happened which turned his attention to this essential task. The Pandiths of his realm had the grace of God in good measure, no doubt; but, they were extremely poor and had to struggle to keep their families above starvation. One Pandith was so down and out that he decided to turn thief and steal, not from any poor man's house, but from the king's palace itself, for the king cannot be made poorer by the loss. He crept into the private apartments at dusk and though he had access to a large quantity of silverware and gold cups and plates, he felt that he should carry away with him only what he needed most and so, he stole only a few seers of wheat flour. While moving about with the bag of flour in a dark corridor he heard noises and so he entered a room whose door was ajar, and hide himself under a cot. It was the bedroom of the king!

Scholars must have faith in their learning

The Pandith spent the night under a cot, unable to move or cough or sneeze or even breathe aloud. An hour before dawn, the king rose and sat upon the bed, reciting aloud a stanza he had composed at night, while trying to sleep. There was a gap in the last line which the king could not fill; the appropriate word was evading him. The Pandith heard the stanza; he had the word on his lips and he could not but shout it out from underneath the cot. He forgot for the moment that he was a thief with the tell-tale bag in his hands. The king peeped under the cot, and welcomed the Pandith and honoured him for his scholarship and poured largesses on him in sympathy for his plight. It was thus that Bhojaraaja learnt of the misery in which the scholars of his kingdom lived.

The Pandiths also must have this faith: that their learning will never injure them, never destroy them, that it will sustain them, provided they follow them strictly, gladly, sincerely and in the fear of God. The faith in God will be instilled by *naamasmarana* (the repetition of the Name of God)---the remembering of the glory of the Lord and of his infinite mercy and power.

When a mother is feeding her child, you can see her with the child on her hip and the plate in her hand, inducing the child to eat, by means of harsh words or a smile, a joke, a threat or a story, diverting its attention, showing the child a dog or a flower or the moon. I have also to adopt the same tactics to make you listen and assimilate the valuable food that is so necessary for your growth. That is the reason why I relate stories, sing, recite poems, etc., in My discourses!

Madras, 16-8-1964

*Birth and death are
two high cliffs between which
the river of life flows.*

*The force of Aathma-shakthi is the bridge
that scans the chasm, and
for those who have developed
that force and faith,
the floods are of no concern.*

*With Aathma-shakthi as their safe support,
they can reach the other bank,
braving all dangers.
Shri Sathya Sai*