

13. The voice of thunder

I must exhort you to make the best use of the fine chance that you have now got, with the opening of the Sai Baba Temple by Me in this town, where you are now struggling in the sea of worldly confusion and anxiety. The chance must be used for the best profit; that is the sign of the intelligent man. As the heart is to the body, so is the temple to a village or community. Building of temples, installation of idols therein, celebrating various festivals in connection with worship there---are all *sath karmas*, (good deeds); they provide training in service. They give opportunities for sacrifice, detachment. They are a form of *thapas* (penance). So, I am glad this temple has come up, through the penance of the people.

Of late, this is deteriorating into a fashion, this building of temples and *mandhirs*. First, people must instal the Lord in their hearts. Then they become entitled to engage themselves in building temples for the Lord. Again, the construction of new *mandhirs* and temples has led to the neglect of old ones, which is a very wrong thing to do. The old temples have been built in strict accordance with *Shaastraic* rules and many generations of devotees have filled them with their piety and prayer. It is a sacrilege to pave the way for their decline. Moreover, this has become a new type of business, this multiplication of temples. In order to raise new ones, (and hasten the ruin of the existing temples), people start collecting funds and in the process, many enrich themselves, at the cost of the gullible public. When there is the anguished cry for food and shelter, money is spent on temples, where they exist in plenty already. This is not to be encouraged; the same Lord is worshipped everywhere, and you need not build a temple for every new Name or Form. Tell people to see in all Forms and under all Names the same God. That is the training they need.

Multiply virtues, not buildings

The search for Truth, the fostering of morality---these have been the ideals of India, and these were considered essential for the realisation of Godhead. That is the reason why into this narrow sector, on this long narrow road and along the bye-lanes and cross-lanes, this flood of humanity has poured itself. I suggest to this Committee that they should change the venue of the meeting tomorrow so that people may sit comfortably and listen to the discourses. Seeing your devotion and patient suffering, those .who doubt the description of the devotion of the *Gopaas* and *Gopees* of Brindavan in the Bhaagavatha can be convinced that the Bhaagavatham is right. It is to slake this thirst that you all have for spiritual inspiration and knowledge, that the Prashaanthi Vidwanmahaasabha, about which Patrudu spoke, has been established by Me. It will perform this duty all over the Country.

In past ages, many sages, kings and ascetics left home and dwelt in the solitude of the forests and having earned *unlimited Aananda* themselves, they taught others the source of their bliss, namely, the Divine that is encased in the human. Remove the vices of lust and hatred and put out the raging flames of anger and greed; then, they said, the innate *shaantham* and *soukhyam* (tranquillity and happiness), the *swaruupam* and *swabhaavam* (one's own form and nature) of Man, will manifest unhindered. *Shaantham* is the *swaruupam*, *soukhyam* is the *swabhaavam* of Man.

Individual reconstruction is much more important than the construction of temples. Multiply virtues, not buildings; practise what you preach, that is the real pilgrimage; cleanse your minds of envy and malice, that is the real bath in holy waters. Of what avail is the name of the Lord on

the tongue, if the heart within is impure? Injustice and discontent are spreading everywhere due to this one fault in man: saying one thing and doing the opposite, the tongue and the hand going in different directions. Man has to set himself right and correct his food, his recreation, his method of spending his leisure as well as his habits of thought.

World is the 'middleman' between 'I' and 'You'

There are only two entities at first: "I" and "You", *Thath* and *Thwam*, *Aham* and *Brahma*. But a third, this *Prakrithi* (world), has come between, or rather deludes us as being in between. You know some people who go about carrying proposals of marriage, the middlemen. They go to the bride's parents and suggest a certain groom and they praise him to the skies and create a desire for securing him in marriage for the daughter; then they move on to the bridegroom's village and persuade that party to insist on a large sum as groom-price before agreeing to accept the daughter of the first party; when at last the marriage is concluded, they disappear. *Prakrithi* is like this middleman. When "I" and "You" have united, *Prakrithi* disappears. Its role is to reveal the "you" to the "I"---that is all.

As a matter of fact, the "I" is of the same nature as "You," like the river and the sea, or like the wave and the sea. That is the reason why I always address you as *Amritha-swaruupulaara---You*, whose nature is immortality! *Prema-swaruupulaara---You*, whose nature is Love? *Shaantha-swaruupulaara---You*, whose nature is Tranquillity!. No one addresses a gathering as *Dushtulaara---O* you wicked ones! or *Durmargulaara---O* you vile ones! For such words are not true, they do not describe man's real nature, which is love, tranquillity, goodness, immortality. This wickedness, vileness and vice are errors of judgement, straying away during the pilgrimage, through ignorance, delusion, confusion, etc.

The various brakes operating on man

Go straight along the path of *karma* (action) and *dharma* (virtue) towards *Brahma* (the Supreme Reality); this is your destiny. *Karma* has to be done, there is no turning away. Each has his allotted task, according to the status, taste, tendency and earned merit. Do it, with the fear of God and of sin, deep in your heart. Welcome pain and grief so that you take both success and failure as hammer strokes to shape you into a sturdy *saadhaka*. Inner content is more important than outer prosperity.

Dharma is the moral code, the experience of sages, the controlling discipline which checks the mind and the senses. There are many such brakes operating on man' *Vyakthi dharma* (controls affecting the individual, as such), *Sahaja dharma* (controls affecting the nature of man, as man), *Aashrama dharma* (controls affecting the stage of life, like student householder, ascetic), *Vama dharma* (controls pertaining to the duties cast upon man as a limb of the community), etc. All these brakes are complementary, they do not cause confusion, they help progress, each in its own way. Krishna reminded Arjuna of his *Vama dharma* as a *Kshatriya*, and also of his *Sahaja dharma* as a *jeevi* (an instrument in the hands of the Lord). Besides these, there is also the *Visesha dharma* (obligations on special occasions or when faced with special situations). You must therefore walk warily towards the Goal.

This temple is but brick and mortar. This idol is but stone. But, you are determined to see in it the Divine Principle. If you can penetrate behind the stone and see the Divine Basis, how much easier it is to see the Lord who resides in the heart of every living, every human being? Try to realise that first, so that your faith in this idol and this temple can be well settled. Revere Man;

that is the first step towards reverence for God; for, Man is *prathyaksha* (perceptible), God is *paroksha* (imperceptible).

Recognise that you are Shiva

The *Upanishads* say that thunder teaches *Da, Da, Dha...Daya* (compassion) to the ogres, *Dama* (self-control) to the gods and *Dharma* to men. Now, since man is all three---part ogre, part god, part man---he must practise all three himself; *daya* (be kind to all), *dama* (be the master of your mind and the senses) and *dharma* (be constantly alert on the path of fight); that is the advice given from the sky in the voice of thunder. The journey of every man is towards the cemetery; every day brings you nearer to the moment of death. So, do not delay the duty you must carry out for your own lasting good. Recognise that you are *Shiva* (God), ere you become a *shava* (corpse); that will save you from further deaths.

The very first thing you have to do, to impress upon your mind the reality, is to recite the Name of God and dwell on His Glory in the mind, so that the tongue will not stray into lesser topics or the mind drag you away into inferior fields. I shall therefore make you sing a few names now.

Kaakinada, 24-3-1965.