

7. Karma, Dharmaja and Brahma

*Without Charity and Righteousness,
Devoid of Truth and Compassion,
With a mind bereft of scruples
And filled with bad impulses,
The evil minded man fares ill
Here and Hereafter.
Oh foolish mind!
Seeking the Vision of the Divine
Where do you wander in vain?
What you seek is within you
Know that truth.*

THERE are in the world various kinds of subjects for which knowledge is available--knowledge of music, literature, art, sculpture, economics, politics, and the like. All these are only components of worldly knowledge relating to the phenomenal world.

All worldly knowledge can help to increase one's comforts, but will not contribute to his *Mukthi* (liberation). However much we may acquire control over material conditions, this will not serve to produce peace of mind or the bliss of the soul. In a sense, the more the worldly knowledge the less is one likely to have mental peace.

Whatever is perceptible, is perishable

Worldly knowledge is no doubt necessary. But it is not the be-all and end-all. Many great kings in the past, who had ruled over vast empires and enjoyed every kind of pleasure, chose at the close of their lives to renounce everything for the sake of realising spiritual peace. "*Yaddhrushyam than-nashyathi*" - "Whatever is perceptible, is perishable." In the pursuit of fleeting and impermanent pleasures, we are throwing away the permanent, the unchanging and the real elements in human life. You imagine you are the architect of your fate. But the Author, the Master and the Enjoyer of everything is the Lord. By failing to grasp the nature of *karma* (action) and not seeking the path of *dharma* (virtue), man is making himself remote from *Brahman* (Supreme Being).

For the performance of karma, the body is the primary instrument. It is through *fight karma* that one understands *dharma* (righteousness). The *Karma Kaanda* (branch dealing with action and its reaction) of the *Vedhas* (ancient revelations of spiritual knowledge) indicates how the primary goals of life are to be realised by the performance of sacramental *duties*--*Sandhyaa Vandanam* (daily worship of Sun God), *yagna* (sacrificial rite) and *yaaga* (ceremonial sacrifice). Even as birth is related to karma, karma to dharma, and *dharma* to *Brahman*, the mother, the father, *Guru* and God are related to the individual. The mother indicates the father. The father leads one to the *Guru* (preceptor). The *Guru* shows the way to realise God. All the four are fundamental to one's life. The mother comes first because she bears the travail of carrying and giving birth to the child. Hence, the *Upanishaths* urged: "*Maathru Devo Bhava*" (Regard the mother as God). Then

comes the father, who takes the child to a proper *Guru* for the acquisition of *jnaana* (spiritual wisdom).

The primary duty of the *Guru* is to show the path to God-realisation. Prahlaadha declared: "Only the *Guru* who teaches about God is worth the name". True *Gurus* are those who show what are the true purposes of life and how they should be realised. The *Guru* is one who dispels the darkness of ignorance by leading one to the light of knowledge of the Good, the True and the Eternal. The *Guru* should demonstrate to the student that beyond the changing forms and names of the phenomenal world there is a Divinity that is permanent and unchanging.

Fruits of one's actions bound to appear sooner or later

The materialistic philosophers today speak about oneness of mankind. But how do they explain the vast and immeasurable differences among men--- differences in abilities, conditions, attitudes and impulses? One is continually sick. Another is hale and hearty. One is always cheerful. Another is continuously miserable. People do not realise that these differences are the results of past karma (action). Karma is the cause of everything that happens. The fruits of one's actions may not be evident immediately, but sooner or later, they are bound to appear.

"I shall do this, I shall do that,"

Vain is this boast, Oh man,

As you sow, so shall you reap,

As the seed, so will the fruit be.

Hence, it is only by doing good deeds can one achieve desirable results. It is for this purpose that the *Vedhas* (sacred scriptures and eternal values) have laid down in the Karma Kaanda (action-oriented part of *Vedhas*) the good deeds by which beneficial results can be got.

Even the Trinity cannot avoid of karma

The *Karma Kaanda* reveals that the Law of Karma affects everything that has a body and not merely human beings alone. For instance, even the Trinity---Brahma, Vishnu and Rudhra---cannot avoid the consequences of karma. By their actions they are demonstrating this truth to the world. For instance, like a potter, Brahma is continuously creating things in this Cosmos. This is the unceasing work. Why is he involved in this? Because he has a distinct body. Assuming the body for performing karma and discharging his dharma (righteousness) through his *karma*, he is setting an example to the world.

Vishnu comes down in human form whenever *dharma* declines on the earth and is in danger of extinction. Facing the censure of the wicked, punishing evil-doers and protecting the good and the innocent, and receiving the praise of the devotees, Vishnu is carrying out His duty of protecting *dharma* and reforming mankind. It may be asked, "Why should Vishnu go through this ordeal as the protector of dharma?" It is no ordeal. It is only a demonstration of the duties that are related to the assuming of a certain form. *Eeshwara* (Shiva) covers Himself with *vibhuuthi* (sacred ash), dwells in the burial ground and subjects Himself to various rigorous disciplines. Thus even Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara, by their actions, have been setting an example to mankind as to how to make human life purposeful.

There are in human beings three aspects: *mala*, *vikshepa* and *aavarana*. "*Mala*" is the cause of *ashaanthi* (mental disquiet). "*Mala*" represents the fruit of actions done in previous births. As

long as this is not eliminated, like the faeces resulting from the digesting of food, it will give rise to all kinds of trouble and sorrow. How can there be peace or joy when the fruit of past karma remains in us? Only when we are rid of the burden of karma can we attain peace. The results of past sins continue as "*mala*". To get rid of "*mala*", we have to engage ourselves in sacred tasks.

The Lord looks at your heart, not your wealth

The Lord judges you by the sincerity of your thoughts, not by the forms of your worship. The Lord sees your *bhakthi* (devotion) and not *shakthi* (power). He cares for your *gunas* (qualities) and not your *kula* (caste or lineage). He looks at your *chiththam* (heart) and not at your *viththam* (wealth). You must strive to purify your heart and engage yourself in righteous action, with devotion and integrity. No *saadhana* (spiritual discipline) is of any use if you are involved in sinful deeds.

"*Vikshepa*" consists of worldly distractions to overcome which various *saadhanas* are undertaken for realising the Divine. The *saadhanas* include meditation, concentration and performance of good deeds for achieving purity of mind. When one succeeds in overcoming *Vikshepa*, one is confronted with "*aavarana*" (the thick covering in which one is enveloped). This covering is known as *maaya* (delusion). It envelops everything in the universe. The eyes with which one can see everything that is outside cannot see themselves. Likewise, *Maaya*, which reveals the entire universe, cannot reveal the Divine. Because we are enveloped in *Maaya*, we seek worldly pleasures and do not seek our own Divine essence.

Gaayathri Manthra is the royal road to Divinity

Young people should realise the connection between food and the state of one's mind. For much of the demonic qualities prevalent among men today, the primary cause is the food they consume. One will develop good qualities if one takes *Saathwik* food, which is wholesome and moderate in quantity. It should not involve causing pain to others. And all that is eaten should be regarded as an offering to God. This is the inner significance of the *Sandhayaa Vandhana manthras*. When uttering the different names of Vishnu--Keshava, Naaraayana, etc.---one should bear in mind the meaning of each name. Naaraayana, for instance, means that He is the Lord of the Five Elements. If the name is recited, bearing in mind what it signifies, the full benefit of reciting the *manthra* will be got.

The *Gaayathree manthra* is the royal road to Divinity. There is no fixed time or regulation for reciting it. Nevertheless, the young *Brahmacharis* (celibates) would do well to recite it during the morning *Sandhyaa* and evening *Sandhyaa* (worship during dawn and twilight hours) to derive the greatest benefit. However because the Divine is beyond time and space, any time, any place is appropriate for repeating God's name. The Bhaagavatha declares: "*Sarvadhaa, sarvathra, sarvakaaleshu Harichintanam*" -- "Contemplate on God always, at all places and at all times." You must learn to think of God in whatever you see, whatever you do and whatever you touch. You must realise that you are playing temporary roles on the cosmic stage. You must get back to your true Divine Selves when the play is over. By regularly reciting the *Gaayathree*, you must purify your lives and be an example to the world in righteous living. This is my benediction for you.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, Bhagavaan's Discourse on 17-3-1983

When someone suffers from acute stomach pain, his eyes exude tears! For, there is one consciousness pervading and activating all parts of the body, and producing appropriate reactions everywhere. Similarly, the world too is just one body and pain anywhere naturally affects other parts. No single part can rejoice when another part, however distant, however insignificant, is in pain.

Sri Sathya Sai