

23. The temple

I ALWAYS take delight in going to villages and meeting villagers. The villager has a pure unsullied mind and the atmosphere of the village is sincere and untouched by artificiality. Today is a great day in the history of your village, because you are getting a Hospital and a Health Centre under the Community Development Scheme. I am glad you are aware of its importance. You have made arrangements to celebrate the event in a grand manner, all of you joining together joyfully to carry out the various tasks allotted by the organisers. It is this spirit of co-operation and this joyful comradeship which your village has shown that has brought Me here today. I am *Prema* and I want to see *Prema* progress in all places and affairs.

Man suffers from two types of ills, physical and mental; the one caused by the dis-equilibrium of the three tempers of *Vaatha*, *Pittha* and *Sleshma* (wind, bile and phlegm) and the other caused by the dis-equilibrium of the three *Gunas*: *Sathwa*, *Rajas* and *Thamas* (qualities of serenity, passion and inertia). One peculiar fact about these two types of illnesses is that the cultivation of virtue cures both. Physical health is a pre-requisite for mental health and mental health ensures physical health! An attitude of generosity, of fortitude in the presence of sorrow and loss, a spirit of enthusiasm to do good, to be of service to the best of one's capacity--these build up the mind as well as the body. The very joy derived from service reacts on the body and makes you free from disease. The body and the mind are closely interrelated.

Despair is a sin against God

You are mostly agriculturists and so I need not tell you that hope is what you feed on, most months of the year. Hope sustains you, while you plough, sow, plant and manure the crops that you raise. That hope you must make a mental habit even in things distinct from agriculture. That will sustain you in all walks of life. Do not give any chance for that vile thing, despair, to eat into the vitals of activity and effort. Despair is a sin against God; when He is in you, why do you lose hope? That is why the Lord says when I am here, why do you fear? Be always joyful, optimistic and courageous.

You said that river Chithravathi that flows near Puttaparthi flows by the side of your village too, and that it is a link between us both. But it is a very feeble link, if at all. For, it is full only for a few days in the year; the rest of the year it is a sandy waste! If the life-giving waters of courage flow in your heart of hearts, then that Chithravathi is more precious than this dry stream; it is a truer link between you and Me.

The village is the backbone of the whole country. The child becomes man, the village grows into a town; only, we should see that the innocent, simple, sincere child does not grow into a cruel, hard-hearted man. Similarly, we have to see that the quiet, God-fearing simple village does not grow into a noisy negative town. Tomorrow's leaders are being bred in this and other villages all over the land. If you have virtue, the towns will have virtue tomorrow. If you have strength, towns will be strong. If you are quarrelsome, the towns will be affected by it. Learn to live and work in amity. Make the joyful experience of today a permanent feature of your life.

Do not depend on government for all your wants

Factions and parties in villages are the bane of our community life. All the profit of hard toil is wasted in litigation engendered by hatred arising from them. You grow the food and the material for clothing for the people. You set the example of industry to the indolent. You rise with the cock-crow and you go to bed when the fowls go to sleep. You sweat and toil and watch the sky prayerfully with hands folded in devotion; and you live humbly and thankfully. There is an intimate relationship between the '*rithu*' and the '*rythu*' (the Season and the farmer). Your life runs on an even keel, following the regularity of the seasons. You do not hurry ahead of nature, as townsmen do.

I want you to be grateful to the persons who made this hospital possible and to the Government who are running it for you. The Government collects money from you and arranges these amenities. But you should not depend on the Government to satisfy all your wants. Even the officers are not all powerful. They are only servants, who have to obey others. The Government is the chauffeur of the car, which is the State. You own the car and you

are the passengers too. Select proper chauffeurs and be vigilant to see that the driver at the wheel does not harm the passengers or the car. That is the duty of the owner, is it not?

The greatest instrument by which success can be ensured for all your efforts is *Bhakthi*. That will give health, wealth and prosperity too, for it will eliminate hatred and faction and give more power to your elbow when you plough the land. A man with *bhakthi* will do every act as worship of the Lord and so the act will be done better and more efficiently, without any malingering or insincerity. It will also win the Grace of the Lord, and so, a *bhaktha* (devotee) will be able to raise more crops and enjoy greater health and mental happiness.

Do some inner cultivation

If all the thousand persons in a village sing the glow of the Lord together, that will produce greater harmony and social cohesion than the thousand clamouring and shouting one against the other. *Prema* will flood the village and fertilise all your efforts if you take the Lord's name and sing together. Do it for some time and you will yourself bear witness to the changed atmosphere.

Sometimes, the cloud of envy and hatred comes to darken relationship. This is due primarily to fear, fear that causes anger. All that will disappear with the emergence of *Bhakthi* and the humility and wisdom which come in its wake. Anger wastes time, health and character. Do not allow it free play. Do some inner "cultivation" too, as you are now doing external cultivation in these fields. That has to be done in the field of 'feelings, motives, desires and promptings.'

I saw your temple while coming in procession on that bullock-cart. I found it dilapidated and not in a good clean condition. The heart of the village is the temple; the lamp burning there is the life of the entire village. Keep it burning bright and clear. Some one has placed a broken bandy cart on the narrow verandah of the temple; that is as bad as dishonouring the abode of the Lord. It will not inspire devotion in the people. Keep the temple, however simple and small it may be, clean and free from encumbrances. Do not treat it as some villagers do as a refuge for idlers, who loiter around

and play cards or gamble. Get together a *Bhajana* group in this village. I know you have one; but it must be more active; it must attend the daily *Puuja* in this temple and make it a fountain of devotion. That will demonstrate that you have gratitude to the Lord for all the blessings He has showered on you.

Develop the spirit of mutual help

The doctor in charge of the Hospital now appealed to you for co-operation. He meant that you should not neglect the bodily ills and damage the tabernacle of God. It is an instrument which has to be well cared for. The doctor is an expert in that subject, having studied medicine for long and being moved by a spirit of service. Honour him for his skill; have faith in him and his medicines and do not, by neglect or resort to quacks, worsen the diseases you may have.

I say this specially to you, people of *Budilli*! Develop the spirit of mutual help. Villagers have been ruined because one person cannot tolerate the prosperity of another. This is the bane of the Indian character. Every one is bent on pulling down his neighbour; whereas in the West, they encourage the slightest sign of superior intelligence and industry and show no rivalry. Jealousy is the cause of ruin. It is born of the undue importance attached to the body, the senses and the accumulation of objects that cater to the senses. See things in their proper perspective, give them their worth but no more. There are greater things that grant joy and peace. Try to get hold of them; every one of you has a right to possess them. None can keep them away from your grasp.

Fix your attention on the eternal values

You spoke of the Brahmeshwara Temple that was once here but that has since gone under the sands of the river. Let not the temple of the Lord that is in your innermost heart be similarly overwhelmed by the sands of *kaama* and *krodha* (lust and anger). You talked of many *Rishis* and *Yogis* who have done *thapas* (penance) here, according to tradition. Well, those *Rishis* and *Yogis* knew which is real and which is unreal. They controlled the vagaries of the mind and dwelt in *shaanthy*. Fix your attention on these

eternal values; then you will not be swept off your feet by gusts of passion or fits of fury. Then this village, filled with love and mutual helpfulness, will become the ideal for miles around.

Budili Village, 9-9-1959