

## 16. What great mothers mean to the nation

*The father, to teach the child the truth,*

*May chide, reprove or beat.*

*The mother may pinch the cheek*

*To make the child drink the milk.*

*Forget not at any time*

*These marks of paternal Love.*

*Doing good deeds, one will never reap bad results;*

*Wickedness will never yield good fruits;*

*Will the neem seed produce mango fruits*

*Or the mango seed yield neem fruits?*

*EMBODIMENTS of Love!* The earth is one. But, if you sow neem seeds, you will get only bitter fruits. If you plant sweet mango seeds, you will get sweet mangoes. The earth makes no difference between them. Only the differences in the seeds account for the differences among the fruits. Likewise, the womb of a mother is like the womb of Mother Earth. The thought which prevails at the time of conception results in the kind of child that is born. If the parents desire to have virtuous, exemplary and noble children, they have to observe righteous practices and lead virtuous lives.

### **Mothers should possess good qualities**

It was because Aryamba was a devoted and pious woman and observed sacred practices that the great world-teacher, Aadhi Shankaraachaarya was born to her. For Vivekaanandha to achieve world wide renown, his mother's sacred life was responsible. Raamakrishna Paramahansa was able to preach the sacred doctrine of love to the world and achieve greatness because of his mother's good qualities.

Gaandhi earned the appellation of "Mahaathma" because of the sacred "*Kokila Vratha*" observed by his mother. Gaandhi's mother used to observe everyday a vow ritual known as "*Kokila Vratha*". As soon as she completed the ritual, she would wait for the call of *the Kokila* (the Indian cuckoo) to have her breakfast. However, on one day, she waited for a long time, without taking food, for the call of the cuckoo. Noticing this, the young Gaandhi went out of the house, imitated the cooing of the cuckoo and then told his mother, "Now that the cuckoo has made its call, please, mother, take your food." Unable to contain her grief, the mother slapped on the cheeks of Gaandhi and wailed: "What sin have I committed that such a liar should be born to me! What a great sinner am I to have begotten such a wicked liar as son, Oh Lord!" She was shedding tears as she spoke. Deeply moved by his mother's words, Gaandhi made a promise to her "In my life, henceforth, I will not utter falsehood."

In those days, the mothers used to watch the behaviour of their children and strove to keep them on the right path. Gaandhi became a 'Mahaathma' because of the severe punishment meted out to him by his mother.

Gaandhi's mother Putlibai, had a maid called Rambha. One day; Gaandhi came running to her saying: "I am afraid, I am afraid!" Rambha was a worthy maid of Putlibai. She told the young fear-stricken lad: "Don't have any fear. Whenever you feel afraid, repeat the name, 'Raam, Raam,' and your fear will leave you." That teaching was remembered by Gaandhi all his life and he died with the name of Raama on his lips.

### **As is the seed, so is the plant**

Mothers of those days led a pure and pious life, cherishing sacred thoughts, fostering virtues and setting an example to the world. Parents today get up from their beds quarrelling with each other. When the parents wake up hurling abuses at each other, the children wake up levelling blows at each other. As is the seed, so is the plant. Parents today should ponder over the sacred ideas cherished by parents in the olden days. For all the bad ways followed by youth today, for all their wayward behaviour and bad conduct, the parents are to blame. If the mothers are good, there will be no room for bad behaviour by the children. Although parents may appear innocuous like fig fruits, they are responsible for the misbehaviour of their children, like the worms inside the fruits.

### **Will of the Divine in shaping the children**

However, in some cases, through the grace and intervention of the Divine, some children are rescued from going astray and are guided on the right path despite the desires of their parents. For instance, King Shuddhodhana adopted many methods to prevent his son Siddhaarta (who became The Buddha) taking to the path of *Vairaagya* (renunciation). But he could not prevent it. This is due to the Will of the Divine. It is only when human effort and Divine Will are in unison that the great consummation takes place.

Ranthideva declared, "*Jeevanam Sarva-bhuutheshu.*" He proclaimed the truth that he who regards food as the primary thing in life is ignorant, while the wise one is he who regards the Spirit as primary. How many of those who have plenty of food taken to wrong ways? Even with abundance of food, lacking the spiritual urge, these men have become destitute. Food may sustain the body, but it will not nourish the soul:

Chaithanya, the son of Satheedhevi, once went to Puri and had *dharshan* of Lord Jagannaath. He worshipped Jagannaath with these words: "Oh Lord! You are not merely the Lord of the earth. You are the Lord of the Universe! You are the Lord of Life!. You are the Lord of Love! Svaami! I do not need wealth or vehicles. Even less do I seek devotion, wisdom or renunciation. I do not aspire for worldly pleasures or possessions. It is enough if I am endowed with the love to love you. If I have that love, all other things will come of their own accord. The only thing I seek is love towards you. Grant me this boon."

Young people do not realise that there is this Divine spirit in human beings. They consider human existence as nothing more than living like birds and beasts. This they consider as the primary purpose of life. This is wrong. They should realise that beyond *the Annamaya, Praanamaya, Manomaya and Vijnaanamaya koshas* (the physical, the vital, the mental and the supramental sheaths associated with the body), there is the *Aanandhamaya Kosha* (the Sheath of Supreme Bliss). When do you attain this Bliss?

### **The real meaning of *Mahaaraaja***

He is not a great ruler who possesses all kinds of wealth. The real *Mahaaraaja* (great ruler) is one who has surrendered everything to the Divine. He is a *thyaagi* (renunciant), he is a *yogi* (one who is in communion with the Divine). It is for this reason that in Uttar Pradesh, whatever sacred shrine you visit, you will find pilgrims greeting the *saadhhus* and ascetics as *Maharaaj*. They are hailed as *Maharaaj* because they have renounced everything, taken refuge in the Lord, sought to merge in the Lord and practised spiritual disciplines for this purpose.

Chaithanya declared: "My property is not 'Shri' but Hari. I value not Lakshmi (the Goddess of Wealth), but the Lord of Lakshmi (Vishnu)." If you aspire for the Lord, you will not suffer from any want. There is no greater wealth than love of the Lord.

*What gift is greater than the gift of food?*

*Is there a greater deity than one's parents?*

*What virtue is greater than compassion?*

*What is more valuable than good company?*

*Is there a worse enemy than anger?*

*Is any disease worse than debt?*

*Can any death be worse than infamy?*

*What can be grater than a good name?*

*What wealth is greater than God's love?*

It is to acquire this supreme wealth that man has taken birth on earth.

There have been many mothers in the world who have sought, by their strenuous endeavours, noble thoughts and sacred practices, to bring up their children in the path of righteousness. In the city of Calcutta, there lived a mother and his son. For the education of the son, the mother made many a sacrifice. She, however, impressed on the son one lesson: "Dear son, do not be concerned about worldly education. The foolish ones acquire all kinds of scholarship, but have no understanding of what they are. By study alone, a man does not get rid of his lowly ways. Through scholarship, one learns only to engage himself in controversy but does not acquire complete wisdom. Why pursue studies which end up only in death? One should study that which frees him from death. Only spiritual knowledge can lead to immortality. It is enduring. Worldly knowledge is temporary. For earning one's livelihood, worldly education is necessary. But this education should be acquired only to lead an independent life, with limited desires. Therefore, dear son, while pursuing studies, embark also on the spiritual quest."

### **Human life should be used for service**

Prahlaadha told his father that he had learnt the essence of all education, namely, to adore the name of Naaraayana. For the realisation of the four *Purushaarthas*, there is no need for any education. Maithreyee told King Janaka that there was no purpose in having a human birth, only to lead a sensuous life like that of birds and beasts. Human life should be utilised for service and sacrifice. The mother taught her son in this manner the true aim of education.

The boy completed his education and took up a small job. One day, in that village, there was a folk festival (Jaathra). The womenfolk of the village donned their best clothes, and jewellery to

attend the festival. The mother also went with tattered clothes. The son could not bear to see that sight. He said: "Mother, you have no good clothes or any jewellery. I am distressed to see you like this. Please let me know what ornaments you wish to have, mother!" The mother replied: "This is not the right time. I shall let you know at the proper time."

### **The three ornaments sought by the mother**

Thanks to the good behaviour and diligence of the lad, he rose to higher positions in service. Once again, he returned to his mother and asked what ornament she desired. "I shall get them as far as I can," he said. The mother told him that she wished, three ornaments, but she would disclose what they were later on.

The son in the course of years reached a very high position. Once again he entreated: "Mother, I have now some money. Please let me know what jewels you would like. I shall get them for you." The mother said "Dear son! I am now not in a state when I can wear jewels. However, there are some ornaments in which I am interested and I shall tell you what they are.

Drawing the son nearer to her, she said, "In our small village, I am grieved to find that the children have to go to distant places for education. My first ornament I desire is that you should set up a primary school in the village. Secondly, our people have no facilities for medical relief even for small ailments. I spend sleepless nights thinking about their plight. If you set up a small hospital for the village folk, that will be your second ornament for me. The third ornament is something which you have to do by yourself. In the days to come, your reputation may grow. If anybody asks "who is your mother?" you may mention my name. Your conduct must be such that you will uphold your mother's name. You must share with others the benefits of the education you have received. Do not go after wealth. The worshipper of Mammon will not yearn for God. The seeker of God will not seek for wealth. Observance of this is the third ornament I desire from you."

The young man who heard these words from his mother and later became famous and earned the people's esteem was none other than Eeshvar Chandhra Vidhyaasaagar. He earned a great name in Calcutta.

### **The hall-mark of education is humility**

Once he was proceeding to a neighbouring village to deliver an address. People used to gather in large numbers to listen to his lectures. A young officer, who wanted to listen to Eeshvar Chandhra Vidhyaasaagar's lecture, got down from a train with a suitcase to go to the lecture-hall. Eeshvar Chandhra Vidhyaasaagar also got down from the same train. The young officer was calling for a porter to carry his suitcase. Eeshvar Chandhra went to him and said, "Why do you need a cooly to carry this small suitcase? Can't you carry it yourself and save the money?" He replied. "It is not in keeping with my dignity to carry my suitcase. I am an educated person." Eeshvar Chandhra told him: "The hall-mark of education is humility, not pride. If you cannot carry your own bag, how are you carrying your body? If, however, you cannot carry your bag, I shall do so." And Eeshvar Chandhra carried the officer's bag. He acted on the motto: "Plain living and high thinking." Eeshvar Chandhra left the bag where the officer got off. The young man wanted to offer money to his "Porter". Eeshvar Chandhra told him. "To serve you is my reward."

The young officer left and was later proceeding to the venue of the meeting. There people were offering garlands to Eeshvar Chandhra Vidhyaasaagar to welcome him to the meeting. The

young officer realised that the man who had offered to carry his bag at the station was none other than the respected lecturer of that evening, Eeshvar Chandhra Vidhyaasaagar. He felt ashamed that he had made such a great man carry his bag. He reflected: "What is his education and what is mine? I have behaved like a little monkey. I am like a glow-worm before the Sun."

### **The joy of the mother**

Eeshvar Chandra's mother shed tears of joy when she realised the great fame her son had achieved. "Having begotten such a son, my life has been redeemed. It does not matter what happens to me hereafter," she said to herself. That is why, the saying goes: "The father does not rejoice merely at the moment of a son's birth." These days, the petty-minded people celebrate the birth of a son with the distribution of sweets, etc. This is not a sign of wisdom. It is said: "The father rejoices when people praise his son for his great qualities." The father may feel that a son has been really born to him when he hears the praises of his son for his character and good qualities.

### **The *Kali* age has become the *Kalaha* age**

In this manner, from ancient times the relations between mother and children have been hallowed as a result of the purity, the virtue and the integrity of the children. The relationship was full of love, mutual esteem, intense devotion and nectarine sweetness. The children had deep love for the mother. Today the children have no respect for the mother. Mothers have also little concern for the children. With the result, the *Kali* age has become *Kalaha* age the age of discord.

Who are responsible for this situation? The mothers are the root cause. It is because of the pampering of the children in all sorts of ways by the mothers that the children tend to go astray.

After the Burma war (in the Forties), a mother and her son came to Madras as refugees. This son used to go out begging for food and bring it home for both of them to eat. Seeing the pathetic condition of the young one, the mother said that from the next day she herself would go out for getting food, leaving the boy in the shed. Moreover no mother would like to see her son going out as a beggar. For this reason also she decided to go out herself. For some days she went out begging, but could manage to get only a small amount of food. She gave the food to the child and starved herself, but told him that she had already eaten. After some time the woman was too weak to go out begging. The son started going out to beg for food and kept feeding his mother. Her condition deteriorated from day to-day. She could not bear the pangs of hunger. The son went out and begged for food at an officer's residence. The officer, who was glancing through the day's newspaper, heard the boy's cry for food to appease his hunger. The Officer brought some food and gave it to the boy and asked him to eat it in his presence.

The boy said he would not eat there, but take the food home. The Officer questioned him why he would not eat there when he was hungry. "You are not really hungry. You are lying," shouted the officer. The boy was too weak to stand and dropped down at the feet of the officer with the food in his hands. The officer noticed that the boy was muttering some words to himself. He went close to the boy's mouth and heard him say: "First for mother, first for mother." Saying those words, the boy passed away.

### **Children should abide by mother's injunctions**

What an example is this of the love of a mother and the devotion of a son. Even though he was hungry, he wanted to give the food first to his mother. Does this kind of feeling exist even a little

among students today? Of what use is education or office, wealth or authority? Children who have no love for their mothers have no reason to live at all.

We must have children who revere the mother as God. Abiding by the mother's injunctions, you may do anything.

Bhaarath has become a prey to numerous troubles because of the lack of exemplary mothers. What is it the mothers ask for today? Not compassion, good character, integrity and such virtues. They want their children to get educated, secure a big job, marry a wealthy girl and lead a comfortable life. Is it this kind of animal existence that one should seek? "Earn a good name. Become an ideal son. Use your wealth in righteous ways. Develop compassion. Lead a just and moral life." This is what mothers should impress on their children. Such high-minded mothers have become rare these days. Integrity and morality are going down day by day in the country.

### **Nation needs mothers who lead an exemplary life**

The nation needs noble mothers who lead an exemplary life. They should manifest in their life the great culture of Bhaarath. Then, the culture will be transmitted to their progeny. Many great men in the past brought up such worthy children and enhanced the name and glory of Bhaarath. Today the children are being spoilt only by the parents. If the children are brought up on right lines from childhood, they will grow up properly. The fathers today are behaving like Dhritharaashtra (the father of the wicked Kauravas). The mothers today are behaving like Kalakanthi (the woman who had Chandhramathi's son bitten by a serpent). The fathers, instead of chastising children who take to wrong ways, pamper them and encourage them. Children who misbehave should be severely dealt with. Youth today are forgetting God, revelling in sensual pleasures and ruining their lives. They have no reverence for the mother or the Motherland.

After the war in Lanka, when Raama was entreated by Vibheeshana and others to crown himself as ruler of Lanka, Raama told them that the mother and the Motherland were greater than Heaven itself and nothing on earth would tempt him to give up his love for Ayodhya. How many today are observing the great teachings of Raama regarding love of the Motherland? There are today many sons who will deprive their mothers of their earnings and spend the money for their own pleasure. Are such sons human beings? They are not human at all. Their education is a waste. Of what use are they to the nation?

### **Develop healthy patriotism**

Students today should develop a healthy patriotism. They must honour their mothers. Only then will they be ideal men. Today corruption and dishonesty are more rampant in cities with universities, high courts and all other paraphernalia than in forest areas where illiterate tribal people live. There is greater co-operative spirit among the hill tribes than among the denizens of metropolises.

The spirit of sacrifice should grow among students. They should develop a broad outlook.

Once Raama told Seetha, while they were staying on the Chithrakootha mountain, that as few could comprehend the subtle principle of Divinity, people should adore their parents as the visible embodiments of God.

Only when there are good mothers and good sons will the nation be free from troubles. Otherwise, the nation will break into pieces. This is the lesson of the Mahaabhaaratha where the wicked Kauravas brought ruin upon their entire clan by their evil ways.

What the nation needs today is not material prosperity or high education. It needs men and women of character.

The people should develop faith in God, have concern for the good name of society, cherish fear of sin and dedicate themselves to Godly activities. Then the nation will enjoy peace and security.

Every mother should be regarded as an embodiment of the divine. Then every son will enjoy peace and prosperity.

*Discourse in the Sai Ramesh Mandap, Brindhaavan, on 6-5-1993, Easwaramma Day.*

*The act of service is not to be judged according to the cost or publicity it entails; it may be only the offering of a cup of water in the depth of a jungle. But, the need of the recipient, the mood of the person who offers--these decide whether the act is gold or lead.*

**BABA**