

Date: 8 October 2005 Occasion: Dasara Place: Prasanthi Nilay

With courage and purity, realise Divinity

by
Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Everyone has to face the consequences of his karma (actions).
Who made the bats to hang from the branches of a tree
with their heads downwards?
Did anyone tied them upside down out of hatred?
No, it is their fate.
Likewise, nobody can escape from the consequences of karma.
(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Yesterday, I was telling you about the coronation of Parikshit. At that time, there were many who had offered advice to him and assisted him. Many were supportive for his advancement. Parikshit was very young, almost a boy. It was not easy to raise a little boy to be an efficient emperor. There were no elders left in the lineage of the Pandavas. Bhima, Arjuna, Dharmaja, Nakula and Sahadeva had all started on their way to the Himalayan slopes. The lone representative of the Pandava clan was this little boy Parikshit. He was just put to schooling in the traditional way. But there was none who could ascend to the throne, except him. The young lad was thus caught in a complex situation.

He, however, proceeded on the path shown by three preceptors who were available. The young Parikshit was in tears and was pleading with his granduncle and grandmother (Dharmaja and Draupadi), asking them whether it was fair on their part to abandon him, leaving such a heavy responsibility on his shoulders. Dharmaja told the boy that the consequences of the passage of time were inescapable. Even Krishna, who was their constant support, had left them to fend for themselves. They also had no choice but to follow the foot steps of Krishna. After all, they had been strict adherents to the advice and guidance of Krishna. Krishna treated the Pandavas as bosom friends. He had reared them as His own children. He had been their closest relative. In fact he had sustained them in every manner of relationship. He alone was their refuge. So, they advised Parikshit to face his responsibilities with courage and confidence. Thereafter, they tarried awhile to see how Parikshit would tackle the situation.

Parikshit replied bravely that he would not shirk his responsibilities nor let down the glory of his lineage. "I shall rule this kingdom," he averred. He was full of confidence and courage. Dharmaja and Draupadi were happy and relieved. They were astonished at the courageous demeanour of the young lad.

One has to note some events that transpired at that time. Dharmaja was in his human form and was preparing to proceed to the spiritual and divine realms. To go from the earthly realm to the divine realm needed a lot of courage. Dharmaja traversed the entire plane of the spiritual and the mundane and made a proper mix to achieve ability to advance to the divine realms. In fact, he got this capacity by seeing the self confidence of young Parikshit.

Parikshit was then reminded of the happenings prior to this. He had gone to each of the Pandavas and asked them to take up the responsibility of ruling the kingdom. But all of them had declined and insisted that Dharmaja alone was qualified to rule the kingdom, which was also the wish of the people. Finally they settled on the young Parikshit as the only suitable person. Hearing this, young Parikshit was frightened and fell at the feet of his grandfather with tears and pleaded whether it was possible for such a young person to rule such a large kingdom. It was Draupadi who gave the necessary reassurance to Parikshit. Thus, the crowning of Parikshit as emperor took place.

On the second day after his coronation, Parikshit assembled all his vassal kings. People thought that the young king was frightened and that was why he was assembling all of them. All the kings were collected and seated in the chamber of the court. Parikshit spoke to them. "You see a young boy as your lord before you. But be sure I shall not flinch from my duties, nor should you from yours. We are together committed to see to the welfare of this empire; so, I want now to know your intention. Some of you, I know; others I cannot even recognise. So, you make your decision to go along with me for the sake of the empire or follow your own ambitions."

After he spoke thus, the assembly split into two factions, one supporting Parikshit and the other pursuing their private ambitions, thinking that the youthful king lacked determination and could be flouted easily. After this, a war broke out between the factions. Parikshit fought the battle with the names of his grandfather Arjuna on his lips (Arjuna had 12 names:

Arjuna, the pure
Phalgun, the one born under the star Phalgun
Partha, scion of the Prithu lineage
Kiriti; one born with a crown
Swaetavahana, one mounted on a pure white charger
Bheebathsu, one who is above the emotion of revolution
Vijaya, ever victorious
Krishna, the dark one
Savyasachi, ambidextrous
Dhananjaya the victor of all wealth.)

Thus, as he battled, all the Pandavas were present around him (in their spiritual form). Even Draupadi was there. Few know this fact that Draupadi was a great leader in her own right.

It would be a mistake to think that Parikshit plunged into warfare in his first act as emperor. In fact, Draupadi was his mentor, physically as a child and spiritually in the later part of his life. She had warned him that it would not be proper on his part to drag himself into strife as soon as he became the king. First, he had to infuse confidence in his own people and, thanks to the training given by Draupadi he was able to succeed in good measure. All his subjects young and old stood by him addressing and adoring him as Maharaja —the king of kings— with affection and awe. They became confident and fearless. With such a king presiding over their welfare, where was the room for any fear? And Parikshit reassured them that in spite of his being so young, he was fully favoured by God's grace and, as such, there was no power on earth that could oppose him. God alone was his refuge. He undertook the administration of the empire with full faith under the guidance of God.

Do not be under the impression that all this training was only after the decision of the Pandavas to proceed to the Himalayas. Right from the end of the Great War, it was known that the sole heir to the empire was the infant son of Abhimanyu. Draupadi decided to take up the task of grooming of the child for his future role. So she told Dharmaja that though he was the repository of all virtues, he was at times prone to indecision. Thus, right from the beginning Parikshit, was under the care of Draupadi.

Even before the formal coronation of Parikshit, Draupadi, along with Dharmaja, used to address the people of Hastinapura, saying that, this young child was their future ruler. "Do not be misled by his youthful looks. He is blessed with the grace of God and is replete with all kingly virtues. The duty of a ruler of a large population is to look after their needs like a mother. At present, he is a small child and needs your support and protection. Take this up as a duty conferred on you by God. In due course, he will be the king and he will look after your welfare like a dutiful son. We are not concerned with enjoyment and pleasure. Do everything as a matter of duty. And, when the time is ripe, you shall be protected and provided with your needs by him as he is verily a gift of God to us and to all. Everything happens according to the will of God. The will of God cannot be tampered with by any other force."

Thus, Draupadi and Dharmaja already paved the way for the crowning of Parikshit. That was the manner of political administration in those days. Every single person in the kingdom shall be well looked after, like the children of a close knit family. When such a family of elders and children are in control where is the room for fear or worry? Thus, Parikshit became a great emperor. Are there any parents who can bring up their children in this way? Even if you are prepared to train the young boys in the right way, the children will not be ready to listen. But Parikshit was a good learner as well as a leader with courage. Courage is the means of all successful results. This is also a true spiritual practice. That is the true strength. Armed with such divine and spiritual strength Parikshit achieved greatness. And the whole empire prospered thereby. Such a motherly preceptor is very rare.

Parikshit summoned all his ministers and also representatives from the subcontinent and spoke to them on the importance of unity. In fact purity is dependent on unity and purity is the way to divinity. With divinity, all tasks will become fruitful. It is enough to sustain and maintain this purity both in the individual and community. This concept of individual and collective behaviour was taught to his subjects and thereby an ideal community was created in his empire. The young king Parikshit smilingly approached his people and even apologised to them for any mistakes that he might have unwittingly committed. The type of communication that should exist between the ruler and the ruled was exemplified by Parikshit par excellence. Young Parikshit had full faith in God, whose benevolence and love ensured his welfare and that of his subjects. All of you have the same firm faith in God and maintain purity and you can be certain of the success of your **sadhana** (spiritual exercise).