

29. Krishna as Love

Repeat the name, Krishna, in your mind, every moment of your life. You will find It sweeter than sugar or honey: indeed, It will taste more delicious than ambrosia. MEN whose intellect is narrow and unable to reach out to the vastness beyond, men who do not dive deep into the mysteries of existence, cannot achieve success in the task of promoting world peace and prosperity. These depend on establishment of peace and prosperity in society and since society consists of individuals, the individual has to attain peace and prosperity in order that the world may shine in their glory. And, for the individual to discharge this obligation, he has to derive the faith and fervour from the Divine that is his Reality.

Unless man marches on in the spiritual path, he cannot be at peace with himself and his fellowmen. That march will confer peace, and with peace, welfare. Today, wherever we turn, people talk of peace but their actions belie their profession. They only increase the feelings of anxiety and fear. Each individual desires to outstrip the other in this game. As a consequence, the spirit is neglected and the mind is polluted. There is no genuine understanding and sincere goodwill among men. Life is a meaningless passage of time.

Ten highly intellectual pupils of a sage named Paramaanandha waded across a flooded river and reached the other bank safe. They wanted to be assured that all the ten had survived the feat. So, they stood in a line, to be counted. Since the one who counted did not include himself as the tenth, every one of them who did the counting by turns, found one man missing. They started bewailing for the tenth man "who was carried away by the raging waters!"

Man is in bondage, though unaware of it

Similarly, men who are proud of their attainments and achievements on earth and in space, bewail their lot because Peace has escaped their grasp. Man can now count the stars and walk on the Moon. But, he has no knowledge of his own self. How then can he experience the delight of kinship with others? When can he claim to have reached the goal of fulfilment? The bliss of fulfilment is not available in the objective world. It must be won through turning the vision inwards. Man is now in bondage, though he is unaware of it. But he is so deeply sunk in this ignorance that he makes no effort to liberate himself.

Wife and children, kith and kin, house and land, properties and possessions are declared by some people as bonds. One can discard these and free oneself from them. It is a comparatively easy process, for these are not the things that bind you most. The tightest bondage is the "ignorance of one's own reality." Not to know who one is---this is the biggest handicap. Until this is overcome, grief is inevitable. For, man is involved by this ignorance with *thamas*, with the unreal and with death.

Urge to expand is the Principle of *Aathma*

Without self-knowledge, man is led into the belief that the objective world is true and lasting, and into the neglect of the really true and the really eternal. What is the self? Here too, man mistakenly entertains false beliefs. He holds on to the belief that the self is the body and revels in describing its components and characteristics. He ignores the *Aathma*, sublime, serene and ever-fresh, Divine Principle that he is. It is the ever-present urge to expand and to illumine. The urge to contract and limit is the feature of the animal. Denying the *Aathma*, disregarding its mandate, ignoring its existence---these are the roots of grief.

Now, about death. The *Aathma* has no birth, and so, no death. It is ever-existing never disappearing. It has no beginning and no finish. It does not die; nor does it kill, nor can it be pronounced inert. It is the witness in each and all. The moment one becomes aware of the *Aathma*, one is freed from the bondage to grief. Forget that the objective world is valid; it is at best a mental image that serves as a test. This is the reason why the prayer of the sages was: *Asatho maa Sath gamaya* (Lead me from unreal to the Real); *Thamaso maa jyothir gamaya* (Lead me from darkness to Light); *Mrithyor Maa Amritham gamaya* (Lead me from death to Immortality).

The true goal of human life is to visualise *Brahman* and merge in It. The ancients declared that there are three stages in the path towards the goal: *Karma jijnaasa*, *Dharma jijnaasa* and *Brahma jijnaasa* (seeking spiritual knowledge through activity, virtue and Divinity). These three steps have been demarcated, described, and analysed by scholars for centuries. Through *karma* (activity) one becomes a moral individual (*dharma*) and one starts seeking the basis of morality (*Brahman*). One discovers that virtue and morality add to one's *Aanandha* and that all *Aanandha* everywhere flows from *Brahman* Itself. One realises that activity devoid of this awareness is barren and binding.

Man is proving worse than animals

The *Upanishathic* declaration, "*Kaarunyam paramam thapah*" is based on this awareness. It means "Compassion towards all beings is real spiritual discipline." Man is the crown of creation; he is the highest among living beings. Therefore, he bears great responsibility. He has to love other living beings, serve them and save them, for they are his kith and kin and they too have the Divine Principle as their core. But, man is proving himself worse than animals through the cultivation and practice of self-centredness, conceit, envy and anger. Though man is endowed with pity, charity, sympathy, fortitude and joy, he has given up these virtues and become inhuman in conduct and behaviour. Imagine a tiger gaining entry into the cattle shed! Vicious tendencies are like tigers; they destroy the *Saathwik* (pure) virtues. Once you recognise the extent of this calamity, you have to resolve to destroy these wild intruders.

Lord Krishna's life was His message

Now, man can be saved only through *bhakthi* and *prapatthi* (devotion and dedication). *Bhakthi* (devotion) does not end with *japa*, *bhajan* and *dhyaana*. It consists of devotion to the ideal, the ideal of getting rid of the beast and rising up to the Divine; give up the *pashu* (animal) and gain *pashupathi* (God)---that is the call only those who give ear to that call deserve to be labelled Men. In order to hold forth before man this Supreme destiny, this divine destination, God himself (though free from birth) takes on the human form, for He is *Gopaala*. 'Go' denotes not only the cow, it denotes the *jeevi* (humans and other living beings). This day, Krishnaashtami, is the Day on which the *Avatharik* (incarnational) career of Krishna began. Krishna gave man the call to rise from the beast to *Brahman*. By devotion and dedication to Him, man must earn the awareness that he is unrelated to all things that 'bind' him---body, riches, kith and kin, attributes and feelings.

For Krishna, the *Avatharhood* was a *leela* (divine sport). His life was His Message. He was the embodiment of the noblest and the most fruitful *Karmayoga* (divine communion through selfless dedicated action). His actions had no trace of selfishness or pride or envy.

He took upon Himself the assignment of driving the war chariot of Arjuna. After the day's battle, He washed the horses; He fed and tended them, applying balm on the wounds. However insignificant the task, He executed it with as much care and enthusiasm as must be given to the most important task.

Man has been equipped with *iccha shakthi* (Will Power) for this very purpose---to will the good, the ennobling and the elevating. The two other *shakthis* gifted to him are *jnaana shakthi* (the power to know) and *kriyaa shakthi* (the power to act). To make the interdependence of these three *shakthis*, here is an example: "Your wish to drink a cup of coffee is so insistent that you will to have it fulfilled. But, mere *iccha* (will) cannot produce coffee. Next, you use your *jnaana* (wisdom) and provide yourselves with a stove, a quantity of water, sugar, milk and coffee powder. But still, your original *iccha* is unrealised. Next, you use *kriyaa* (action) and prepare the coffee you wanted and knew how to make."

Various *saadhanas* prescribed to attain God

Well. The *iccha shakthi* wills to attain God, let us say. Mere wish is too weak to gain the goal. *Jnaana shakthi* advises you not to despair. There are ways by which you can win. It lays before you various *saadhanas*. *Kriyaa shakthi* takes these up and inspires you to act, to persevere in practice, until you attain the objective. Unfortunately, 99 men out of 100 use only the *iccha shakthi*; they stop with the wish; they do not pursue and attain the bliss that waits. Their faith falters; they do not march on boldly. The *iccha* prompts you to earn a first class in the examination but the *jnaana* is ignored and the *kriya* is left undone. If a thousandth of that eagerness is shown in *kriya*, in the test, the first class can be secured easily.

Krishna has elaborated, in the Bhagavathgeetha, the methods in which these three powers can be cultivated and utilised by man. Above all, the evil desire to harm, injure and insult others must be uprooted from the mind. The saplings of devotion and dedication can grow only on minds that are soaked in *karuna* (compassion). How can even the best of seeds sprout on salty soil? Compassion means reflecting in our minds the joys and sorrows of others, and responding with exhilaration and sympathy. For this to happen, the mind has to be cleansed and transformed into a fine mirror.

Practise equality to win Krishna's Grace

God will respond to your prayers for relief only when you respond sympathetically to the needs of others. Life should not be wasted in the selfish activities, blind to others' distress and deaf to others' groans. Suffer equally, rejoice equally---this according to Krishna is *Samathwam* (equanimity). Practise this equality and succeed in it---this according to Him is the way to win His Grace. You may not be rewarded materially by compassionate acts but the highest reward is the joy that you derive and the joy that you confer. The body with all the precious and unique qualities which are its equipment has been given to you in order that you may 'will' so, 'know' how and 'act' thus. A block of 'time' has been allotted to you so that you may benefit by using it profitably for these holy sanctifying purposes.

But, every one is overcome by egoism. He wants others to respect him but he is not willing to respect others. He strives to be happy but he is unwilling to make others happy. Most people are content if they are happy; many are content when they as well as others and around them are happy; a few do happily undergo misery themselves, so long as they render others happy. The first group can be compared to the bulb that sheds light only on the little room where it is lit; the

second is like the Moon, whose light, though widespread, is not bright enough to give clear knowledge of things; the third is the Sun, shining on all things and revealing their nature and characteristics.

Avoiding Krishna's teaching is a sacrilege

Among devotional disciplines, installing a picture or idol of the Lord in the home and adoring it, is the least valuable. The celebration of Krishna Janmaashtami should not be confined to special *puuja* and extra dishes for lunch. This narrow schedule arises from the desire to attract the Grace of Krishna. But that Grace can be won only by the observance of the teachings of Krishna. They will not be conferred on pride and pompous display. Adoring Krishna and avoiding His teaching is a sacrilege. You can give up the adoration; nevertheless, you can earn Grace if you sincerely attempt to proceed on the path He has marked out.

Krishna was the embodiment of Love. Hence, Love is the virtue He appreciates most. Love has to turn into concrete acts of compassion. Cultivate compassion and develop sympathetic understanding, until you reach the goal, of merging in the embodiment of love, Krishna.

There are many among you who are engaged in *saadhana*. What is the basic purpose of *Saadhana*? Each exercise of the *saadhak* (spiritual aspirant) is a stream that moves on to the sea of Grace. Believe that the love that prompts you to serve and sympathise is a spark of the love of God.

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