

13. Bliss Through Dedication

Today is indeed a day of joy, since we have met here to share love (*prema*). The joy is marred to some extent by the want of accommodation in this Hall and the suffering all of you are put to. I feel it is not proper to keep you long in this physical torment while I have comparative comfort on this less crowded platform. That explains partly why you are restless and agitated, an attitude quite different from what you should have on such occasions.

The same group of people, you will have observed, differs in its reactions and behaviour when it is in a marriage pandal, a cinema hall, an exhibition enclosure, a temple, or a football match. They are moved by totally different impulses in these various places. In a gathering devoted to the needs of the spirit, what is expected is eager attention, quiet calm, and reverential, prayerful silence. Here, obviously, only the eye and the ear need function; the tongue has no business to wag.

I have come to share with you the gift of *prema* that I have brought, but you seem to be satisfied with the confusion that you already live in!

The unhealthy are to be nursed back to health

Now, that is very much better. It is the silence that is wanted in all gatherings where deeper spiritual disciplines are talked about. Of course, everywhere and every time, it is best you curb your tongue; that is the very first exercise that I prescribe for spiritual progress.

What I have to say now is not for those who are endowed with devotion, for they know the path and are already marching on: nor for those who have no spring of devotion in them, for speaking to them is a sheer waste of time. It is for the wavering, the unsteady, the hesitant, who are conscious of the Higher Power and are feebly desirous of contacting it, for they are either ignorant of the technique or afraid of the consequences. It is for such half-apathetic devotees that I talk. Medicine is useless for the dead as well as the sturdy. The unhealthy, hovering between death and survival — these are to be nursed back to strength.

I would like you first to learn the art of so living in the midst of people so that you do not grieve nor make others grieve. Learn to make the best life this chance offers to you to sublimate your instincts, impulses, and impressions left on the mind by past actions (*vasanas*) and rise higher and higher in the moral and spiritual plane. Make the best out of opportunities like this, and derive bliss (*ananda*) from every hour, garnering all the profit you can. This town is holy, so there are many metaphysical institutions; many pious men visit it and give valuable advice. I am glad the *Malayalaswami* of Yerpedu is now here for the four months of ascetic observance. It is a good chance for you to learn from him the teachings of the sages of ancient times. I am sure he will spread good thoughts and good impulses promoting your spiritual advance.

Become conscious of your kinship with God

This is not devotion, this holding a garland in the hand and indulging in paltry conversation in holy places. I do not want nor do I appreciate anyone bringing flowers and fruits into My presence. Bring Me the fragrant flower of a pure heart and the fruit of a spiritual-discipline-mellowed mind — that is what I like most, not these things available outside yourselves for so much of cash, without any effort that elevates the mind. To get a taste for that

kind of effort, you must keep the company of great and good men and take delight in good thoughts. By whatever means available, increase the stock of your bliss (*ananda*) and improve the quality of discrimination and try to store as much of these two as possible, so that you can draw upon the stock whenever the need arises.

The chief source of ananda is dedication to God; nothing else can give that genuine and lasting joy. Become conscious of your kinship with the Lord. That kinship is not a mere fancy or a faked theory. It has come down since ages, from the beginning of time itself. It will persist till the very end of time, or, in other words, till the end of time as far as you are concerned.

The Godavari river carries all the waters of all the tributary streams relentlessly to the sea. The rain falls on the mountains; as streams it flows in the plains, and the full Godavari rushes through the delta. So too, the individual is born in the path of righteousness, journeys through path of action, and rushes through path of sages to reach path of Supreme Reality.

The paths of action and sages are discovered by the organs of perception. Keep them uncontaminated by demonic qualities and watch vigilantly lest they slip back. The sensory organs drag you into the tangle of nature itself. The cow eats grass and drinks gruel, but out of these it creates sweet sustaining milk; so too, let the experiences that are gathered by your senses help in the production of the sweetness of kindness, the purity of devotion, and the sustenance of peace (*santhi*).

Do not worry about others and their faults

There is in everyone a spark of truth; no one can live without that spark. There is in everyone a flame of love; life becomes a dark void without it. That spark, that flame, is God, for He is the source of all Truth and all Love. One seeks truth; one seeks to know the reality because one's very nature is derived from God, who is Truth. One seeks Love, to give it and share it, for one's nature is of God and God is Love.

Like the paddy seed, which contains rice, the husk is the delusion (*maya*) that covers the seed within; the rice is the individual soul, and the essence of the rice, the sustaining element, the food, that is the Supreme *Atma*. So, develop inner vision; do not worry about others and their faults. Do a little examination of the Self. Study the *Upanishads* and spiritual texts — they might help you a little. Remember, only a little help. They are but maps and sign posts. You must put them into practice; act and experience.

Meditate on the truth, and you will find that you are but a sparkling bubble upon the waters — born on water, living for a brief moment on water, and dying upon its breast, merging in it. You owe your birth to God: you subsist on God and you merge in God. Every living thing has to reach that consummation; why, every non-living thing too. So do it now; take the first step. Purify the heart, sharpen the intellect, or at least begin the recital of the name of the Lord. That will give you all the rest in due time. When one plants a mango seed, one is not sure of living to eat the fruit, but that is beside the point. To plant, to nourish, to guard, to grow, that is the duty; the rest is His look out. That is the real renunciation of the fruits of action.

Holy things can be cognised only by holy seekers

Above all, cultivate love (*prema*) toward all. That will destroy envy, anger, and hatred. God (Rama) and desire (*kama*) cannot coexist in the same heart. Trust begets trust, love begets love.

When I am talking to you with so much *prema*, you cannot develop any hatred toward Me! *Prema* makes

the whole world kin. It is the greatest instrument of concord. The farmer plants the seedling and watches over it with great care; he removes the weeds; he destroys the pests; he lets in water as and when necessary; he spreads manure; and he awaits the day when he can reap the harvest and fill his granary. So too, you must nourish *prema* and pluck out the weeds of hatred and envy.

Wear red glasses, and all things appear red. Wear the glasses of *prema*, and all will appear lovable and good. Reference was made here to service of the poor; the eye of *prema* will see all as God (Narayana); not only the poor but the rich also. The rich too need sympathy. You must pity the rich, for they have so few chances of developing the attitude of renunciation! See all as embodiments of Lord Narayana (*Narayanaswarupa*), and worship all with the flower of *prema*.

Even My nature can be understood by you only when you wear the glasses of holiness; holy things can be cognised only by the holy seeker. You get what you search for; you see what your eyes crave for. The doctor is found where patients gather; the surgeon stays in the operation ward. So too, the Lord is ever with the suffering and the struggling. Whenever people cry out in agony: “Oh God,” there, God will be.

To supplement spiritual discipline, lead a regulated life

The credentials of one doctor can be examined and judged only by another doctor; the patient has to believe and carry out the doctor’s instructions if he desires to improve. He can give his judgement on the doctor only after the course of treatment is finished. Unless he obeyed the orders of the doctor strictly and to the very letter, he has no authority to pronounce judgement.

So what can you now speak about Me? Follow My prescription! Naturally, it will be a different one for every one of you; it will depend upon the nature, the age, the virulence of the disease, and the treatment you have already undergone to alleviate it. Adhere also to the dietary and other regulations that the doctor recommends. That is to say, it is not merely spiritual exercises like repetition of holy Name, meditation, remembering the Name of God, etc., that will have to be done, but in order to supplement the effect of these, you have to lead a regulated life, a life conducive to good thoughts, with virtuous (*sathwic*) food and noble (*sathwic*) pursuits. Until you try out My prescription fully and sincerely, it is best you keep quiet. You do not know even a pebble; how can you evaluate a peak?

You may be “unafraid”, you may not fear anything else, but you have to fear Truth. There is nothing as awe-inspiring as Truth; your Truth, for example, for your Truth is the Truth of the Universe.

Today, you may feel you have no need of the Lord, but when the pangs of hunger gnaw, you start pining for food. Therefore, wash your hearts with tears of joy so that the Lord might install Himself therein. A zamindar may own all the fields up to the very horizon on all sides, but he will deign to sit only on a patch that is clean! In the same way, when the Lord chooses the heart of a devotee, it does not mean that all other hearts are not His. They are not clean, that is all He means. He is everywhere, everything is His, His gaze is on all. If God was not all this how could they shine, or exist even as much as they do now?

Therefore, have full faith in God and in yourselves. Engage always in good deeds, beneficial activities; speak the truth, do not inflict pain by word or deed or even thought. That is the way to gain peace (*santhi*); that is the highest gain that you can earn in this life.