

20. True Vision

Last evening, when you heard about the Incarnation as Krishna, your hearts were filled with joy, which overflowed through the eyes, as I could see. Your minds too were purified by that experience. The *Avatar* had come in order to guard the world and to strengthen righteousness (*dharma*) as the means of guarding it. Books that contain the Lord's words and great people who know them declare that the Lord assumes human form in order to carry out these purposes.

The story of Kuchela tells how one has to meditate on Him to worship Him and to honour Him. Kuchela knew exactly what had to be given to the Lord. The Lord cares for the feeling that accompanies the gift, the attitude with which the offering is made; He is not moved by the quantity or the cost. Droupadi offered a tiny piece of leaf sticking to the side of the vessel in which she had cooked the meal, and the Lord was so fully fed that He said that He was freed from all hunger. Rukmini placed just a single basil leaf on the scale, but since she had saturated it with her devotion, it weighed as much as Krishna Himself. Kuchela took a little "beaten rice", and the Lord ate it with relish and was highly pleased at the offering so full of devotion.

A piece of paper that is white, tough, and clean is not as valuable as another piece of equal size that, though soiled and dirty, has upon it the imprint of the Reserve Bank, making it a hundred-rupee note. The imprint of devotion makes the "beaten rice" precious. Give the Lord the fruit, love, that grows on the tree of life. Develop the illumination of love and the bats of grief, envy, and egoism will fly away into the darkness.

Have the goal of merging in the Absolute always in view

You must have the goal of merging in the Absolute (*sayujya*) always in view; do not give it up or forget it. Be like the river that flows slowly to the sea.

A man who has purchased a ticket to Calcutta from Madras, because that is the place he wants to reach, will not halt at any other place on the journey; he has the destination always in view. Of course, he may be interested in the sights and scenes on the way; he might get down here and there for refreshments, but he will not seek a home anywhere, in between. Being in the same place, being near to the master, and likeness of the form of the master (*salokya*, *sameepya*, *sarupya*) may come in between; in fact, they do. But do not be satisfied with those stages. They are intermediate stations, remember. You have to reach each and travel beyond.

In this Kuchela episode, the wife of Kuchela plays a more important role than Kuchela himself. She has much more devotion. In fact, women are more devotional than men. They can master their minds better. It was her maternal love that prompted her to send Kuchela to the Lord so that her children might get a full meal. She had faith in the Lord. Kuchela hesitated and argued that Krishna might not recognise or remember him or invite him in or accept his homage.

Fear of God should be absent in a genuine devotion

Kuchela is described in the *Bhagavatham* as constantly engaged in meditation on God. But then, how can his doubt be explained? His wife urged him to give up all doubt and proceed at least as far as the gate of Krishna's Palace. She was certain that Krishna would call him in if he took at least that little trouble. Of course, fire warms

all, but one has to go near it, is it not? Staying away, you cannot complain that the fire is not warming you. Kuchela was so nervous that he could be persuaded to go only up to the gate.

Once it was decided that Kuchela would go, she took a quantity of paddy, just a handful, from the place where she had hidden it for a rainy day. She put it in boiling water, took it out, dried it and then, frying it over the fire, pounded it with a pestle to prepare the “beaten rice” that Kuchela said was Krishna’s favourite food while at school. This was tied to a corner of the cloth worn over the body, and he moved on, his fear increasing at every step. Such fear should be absent in the genuine devotee. That devotee must approach the Lord as a right and earn the grace that is their clue.

Of course, the Lord showers His mercy on the distressed person and on one who longs for wealth as well as on the seeker of spiritual knowledge and the liberated person. The distressed person is one who is ill and suffering; the one who longs for wealth is the poverty-stricken who seeks prosperity and fortune.

So Krishna called Kuchela in, with overwhelming joy, and reminded him of the happy days at school that they had spent together at the *guru*’s feet. Even while Kuchela was squirming to hide the common-place offering tied to the corner of his tattered cloth, Krishna sought out the stuff and began eating it with great relish. Devotion had made it very tasty to the Lord.

The Lord can transform poverty to wealth

It is related that Rukmini Devi held His hand when He took the third handful, and the reason given usually by commentators is that she was afraid all the riches of the Lord would go over to Kuchela if a few more handfuls were taken in by the Lord! What a silly idea! As if the riches of the Lord are exhaustible, as if He would care if devotees carried all of it away, as if the Mother of the Universe is stingy in Her gifts. This can never be true! The real cause for Her holding the hand of Krishna was: She claimed her share of the offering of the devoted heart; She wanted a portion for herself; it was her right to have a share.

Kuchela left Dwaraka rather disappointed because he was not given anything or even a promise of anything. He was sad when he remembered his family and the starving children. He was so lost in grief that he passed his own house without noticing that it had undergone a great change and had become overnight a huge big mansion. His wife saw him, called him back, and related how suddenly happiness had been showered upon them by Krishna’s Grace.

Sweeten your speech, sanctify your deeds

Kuchela’s spiritual practices started that day! Until then, he was just a ritualist, going through the outward forms of the rites prescribed in the scriptures (*sastras*). When he realised how the Lord can, through His miracle powers, transform poverty to wealth, he decided to win the grace of God to secure perpetual, undiminished joy, that is to say, to win merger with the Divine (*sayujya*). He got true vision, the vision of what is good for him (*sudarshana*). And, in the midst of the treasures that now filled his residence, he lived the life of an ascetic, without any attachment. He knew that it was all a dream, the riches now and the poverty then.

The emperor dreamt he was a beggar and wept when he was refused alms at one door and was overjoyed when he got a stomach full at another door. He woke up, and he was no longer poor; he was an emperor. Even that is a dream, an illusion.

Brahman alone is Real (*Sath*); Nature (*prakriti*) is unreal. Be in this awareness always—that is the highest spiritual discipline. Seek the vision of the Divine, make your speech sweet, and make your good deeds an offering. This is the three-fold path. Become a child, lose your conceit and pride. When you are still in the region of the qualities (*gunas*), motivated by desire (whether for the good, the grand, or the mean), you have to seek the Mother; when you are free from the bonds of the qualities, the enticements of desire, the Mother Herself will hasten toward you and fondle you in her lap. Purify your vision, sweeten your speech, sanctify your deeds—that way lies liberation.

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Ido not accept from you flowers that fade, fruits that rot, coins that have no value beyond the national boundary. Give Me the lotus that blooms in the clear pellucid water of the lake of your inner consciousness; give Me the fruits of holiness and steady discipline.

Iam above all this worldly etiquette, which enjoins you to see elders with some fruit or flower in your hand. My world is the world of the spirit; there, values are different.

If you are happy with faith in God and fear of sin, that is “service” enough for Me. It pleases Me so.

Sathya Sai Baba