

34. Neither different nor diminished

Pandith spoke now about the many forms of *bhakthi*: *Nishkaama bhakthi*, *paraa bhakthi*, *madhura bhakthi*, (desireless, supreme and sweet devotion), *karma bhakthi* (devotion in action), etc. When you claim to have *bhakthi*, the question naturally arises, where have you placed your attachment, your affection, your unswerving loyalty and why. If you are drawn towards pleasure-giving objects and other material gains, you are in for unending worry, fear and anxiety, *ashaanthi* (absence of peace), in fact. The happiness they contribute is as unreal as the happiness you derive from similar things in your dreams. The experience of the waking stage is as unreal and fleeting as the dream. The seen is a dream; the unseen is the real. There is a mixture of reality and unreality in the variety of the universe. That is why it deludes; that is why joy and grief are fleeting.

Bhakthi is really unswerving loyalty to God with form and attributes and a name. You can grasp with the reason that you are endowed with, only concrete name-attribute-full things. So, God has to appear before you with form and attributes (*sakaara*, *saguna*, *swaruupa*) so that you can love Him and serve Him and follow Him and get liberated by Him. But when He comes with form, do not think He is either different or diminished. Ghee when it is solidified is white and granular. When it is heated it is a colourless liquid, having no shape or form. The *niraakaara* (formless) becomes *sakaara* (with form), when it is exposed to cold. So too, in the cool recesses of the bhaktha's heart, the *niraakaara* is rendered *sakaara*.

When the formless transforms itself, it may appear as *Vibhavaakaara* or as *Swaakaara* (endowed with some particular glory or power or as the full manifestation of itself). That is to say, the *avathaara* might manifest only that part of the Divine glory as was essential for the task which brought the Form, or it might exceed the limited purpose for which it came and shine in full grandeur. Raama is a good example of the first and Krishna of the second. Krishna was not satisfied with the killing of Sishupaala and Dhanthavakra, the two demons who were formerly Jaya and Vijaya, or even with the overwhelming of various other evil persons who infested the world then.

Fame and ill-fame go together

He laid down in the Geetha and in the *upadesha* He gave to Uddhava and others, the fundamentals of spiritual life and the ways of removing primal ignorance, as a step to human liberation, ways that can be followed by various sections of the human community, from illiterate cowherds and milkmaids to learned scholars, practised *saadhakas*, ritualistic experts, adepts at social service, and experienced philosophers.

Jonnalagadda Sathyanaaraayanamurthy gave you in his speech a fine description of the pangs of separation which agonised the village folk, when the Lord kept away from them, even for a short while. When they espied a dark-blue cloud in the sky, they shed tears of joy, for it reminded them of the Krishna they adored. But Krishna was scandalised in His time and people spread wicked stories about Him! It is always so; the supply of drinking water implies the laying down of pipes for both fresh water and for drainage. Ill-fame and fame go together. Revered personalities are the targets of irresponsible irreverence.

Dedication must come naturally

The sages declare that they become sad when worldly people call them happy or find them happy. Chaithanya felt happy when people reviled him for wasting his time in *keerthan* and when they broke his *mridang* and *tal*. He said, "These people are foolish; they think a tree can be saved if the leaves are watered; the root of joy has to be watered so that joy may grow in you. The root is Krishna, the Krishna in your heart." Water the root with tears, *tears of joy* that get the chance to sing His name, to praise His glory; not *tears of sorrow*, for such tears are a sacrilege; they should not contaminate the Lotus Feet of the Lord.

It is dedication to the Lord that sanctifies all activities. He is the *raison d'etre* for activity. He is the prompter, the executer, the giver of the required strength and skill, the enjoyer of the fruit thereof. So, dedication must come naturally to you, for, all is His and nothing yours! Your duty is to believe He is the impeller of your activities, and draw strength from that belief. Until the wound heals and the new skin hardens, the bandage must protect the place. So too, until Reality is realised, the balm of faith, of holy company, and holy thoughts must be applied to the ego-affected mind.

Every one of you has in possession a ticket for liberation from the cycle of birth and death. But, most do not know the train which they have to board; many get down at intermediate stations, imagining them to be the terminus and wander helplessly in the wilderness or are carried away by sights and scenes.

Reference was made to *ajnaana*. This *ajnaana* (ignorance) is imported from outside; what is native to man is *jnaana*. His *jnaana* is fogged by the smoke of delusion, which makes things appear many or confused. Man has burdened himself with information on a multiplicity of things; he has acquired a variety of skills, but, he has no vision to see things as a whole, to see the basic unity of the objective world. Moreover, he has no equipment to live lovingly with others, to recognise the humanity of all men, to feel that the same Lord activates each of them.

Gifts of reason must not be wasted

How far can the learning which you acquire in schools and through books take you? There was a wife who was given a cheque-book so that she might imburse herself out of the bank account. She signed every cheque, "Your loving wife" and wondered why they were dishonoured. There must be adaptability, recognition of changed circumstances, awareness of the relative value of things, discrimination between the real and relatively real. The gifts of reason and conscience must not be wasted through neglect. Your story should not be a repetition of that of the wood-cutter, who was given a huge sandalwood forest as a reward, but, who out of sheer ignorance of the value of the trees, burnt the trees and sold them as charcoal at so much per bag!

The Divinity that is man is ignored and the opportunity to unfold it (which is called "life") is wasted. You calculate wealth in terms of land and buildings, gold and silver, and finally, feel unhappy to leave them and go. You drug yourself in the attempt to escape from the hold of disease; but you are unaware of diseases that eat into the very vitals of your happiness and make you a social danger---the diseases of envy, malice, hatred and greed. Get the best advice to cure these. Believe that the Lord is living in every heart and so, when you inflict pain, physical or mental, on anyone, you are slighting the Lord or denying Him. He is everywhere.

Purify the heart by being good to all

Do you say that the Lord appeared from the pillar in the palace of Hiranyakashipu though He was not there? Or do you say that He appeared there, since He was there? He was there; He is everywhere. But since Hiranyakashipu said He was not there, he could not see Him; since Prahlada said that He was there He could be seen there. If you are blind, how can you see Him, though He may be right in front? You are blind to His Omnipresence; how then can you see Him everywhere? When the magnet does not attract the needle, the fault lies in the dirt that covers up the needle. When the Lord does not approach the devotee, the fault lies in the heart of the devotee; it is not pure enough.

Purify the heart by being good and kind to all. Do not attempt to find fault with others. Look upon all with love, with respect, with faith in their sincerity. I would ask you to treat your servants kindly. Do not entertain hatred or contempt in your heart; show your resentment if you must, through words, not action. Repent for the errors that you commit and decide never to repeat them; pray for strength to carry out your resolutions.

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