

4. Kare kankanam

You heard the discourse on *Krishna thathwa*, based on the famous dialogue between Krishna and Rukmini, as the text. That dialogue appears very worldly, but the transcendent can be understood by the common man only through the language of the transitory. The unknowable has to be hinted at through the crude landmarks of the already known. Take the hymn that describes Krishna as, "*Kasthuri thilakam*". Outwardly, it delineates the beautiful form and describes the ornaments and appurtenances of the Lord. But each of these words has a deeper significance which should not be missed.

The *thilakam* or dot of *kasthuri* or musk on the forehead of Krishna is the symbol of the Eye of Wisdom, the Inner Eye, the inward-directed vision, like the third eye on the forehead of Shiva. *Kasthuri* means *jnaanam* or supersensual knowledge or wisdom. Then the hymn speaks of *kowsthubha* gem on the chest. It indicates the *aananda* in the heart, the untarnished *aananda* of the Lord who is *Aananda swaruupi* (bliss personified). Next in the poem is the shining pearl on Krishna's nose-ring. Well, the *Navamoukthikam* on His *naasaagra* (nose-tip) is indicative of the success that attends one-pointed concentration on His Glory for which the tip of the nose is considered by adepts in *yoga* as a point of help. And, the pearl is, in Hindu mythology, produced out of the rain drop, from the first, pure, unsullied showers that is swallowed by the oyster that has been waiting long for the precious gift from the heavens. It indicates the transforming effect of yearning and the natural thirst for the pure and the true which irks the human heart.

Take the next item in the description' the Flute in the hand. That reminds all of the need to make oneself into a hollow reed, with no trace of the pith of material greed. Become straight, empty yourself of all obstructing desires and the Lord's breath will flow through you, making sweet music that awakens every soul.

The three vows of Lord Krishna

And the kankana, in the description, 'kate kankana'. That does not mean 'bangles', which is the meaning given in the lexicon. Kankana is the word for dedicatory armlet, worn when a person resolves on a vow. You may wonder what the vows are which Krishna took upon Himself! I shall tell you what they are. They are mentioned in the Bhagavad Geetha, for all humanity to read, know, and believe. There are three vows in all:

(1) *Parithraanaaya saadhoonaam, vinaasayacha dushkrithaam, dharma samsthaapanarthaya sambhavaami yuge yuge---*"For the protection of the good and the punishment of the bad, for the establishment of the Moral Order, I shall concretise Myself, age after age".

(2) *Ananyaaschinthayantho maam ye janaah paryupaasathe, theshaam nithya-abhiyukthaanaam yoga kshemam vahaamyaham.---*"Whoever is wholly immersed in My contemplation, with no other thought, I shall be ever with Him- and I shall bear the burden of his welfare".

(3) *Sarvadharmaan parithyajya maamekam saranam vraja, aham thvaa sarva paapebhyo mokshayishyaami, maasucha---*"Surrender unto Me, giving up all other duties and obligations; I shall liberate you from all sin; do not grieve." These are the three vows that Krishna has taken, and the armlets are reminders of these tasks on which He is set.

Feel the truth with subtle intelligence

The poem goes on to another item, the *Harichandana* (yellow sandalpaste) that He has applied over all His limbs. He wears yellow robes and has the fragrant yellow sandal all over. The

yellow is the symbol of *Prakrithi*, which He wears as His outer apparel and attraction. In fact *Prakrithi* or Nature is what He is pleased to wear or appear in; He can don it or doff it at will. It is *His Aathma maaya*. The poem ends with the beautiful Name by which Krishna is addressed. *Gopaala choodaamani*, the Crest Jewel of the cowherds! What are the cows? The 'go's? 'Go' means the '*jeevi*,' the individual soul, of which He is the *paala*, protector; the Lord fosters the cows and leads them into safety and peace. 'Go' also means the indriyas or senses that roam about to graze in the external world and *Gopaala* is the Lord, who curbs and guides the senses into safe secure paths. This meaningful description was the product of the experience of a *Yogi*, who had the vision in his spiritual ecstasy; so, there is no suggestion of the sensual in the entire poem.

The Bhaagavatha epic is related to King Pareekshith by Shuka, the greatest of the sages who was planted in unshakable *Brahmacharya*; this is enough guarantee that no trace of the sensual has infiltrated into it. This dialogue between Krishna and Rukmini has also to be considered in the same worshipful attitude.

You should cultivate an attitude of inseparable attachment to the Lord, who is your very self. If He is a flower, you should feel yourself a bee that sucks its honey; if He is a tree, be a creeper that clings to it; if a cliff, then feel that you are a cascade running over it; if He is the sky, be a tiny star that twinkles in it; above all, be conscious of the truth that you and He are bound by Supreme Love. If you feel this acutely, not with the gross intelligence, but with the subtle intelligence, then, the journey will be quick and the goal can be won. The *sthula buddhi* (gross intelligence) keeps you walking but, the subtle intelligence flies you to the destination. The gross is too much weighed down by the body; the subtle transcends the body and lightens the burden.

Free yourself from wish and will

The Shastry mentioned the axiom, *Ekamevaad-witheeyam*, One only, not Two. If it is not two, it may be three; so, it is defined also as *One only*. It is the inner motivator of all (*Sarvaantharyaami*), like the string running through all the beads. If it is inside all, why is it not observable in all, you may ask. Picture a rosary of several types of beads' coral, pearl, *tulsi*, *rudraaksha*, crystal or conch, etc. The string passes through each and holds all the beads together, no doubt; but it is only in the transparent beads that it is visible. So too, you have to make yourself transparent, free from wish and will, that hide or befog; then only, can the Inner Motivator be seen. You cannot argue that since it is not seen, it is not there. To earn transparency, purity of intention, impulse and instinct is essential; that is achieved by systematic and sincere spiritual discipline.

A ladder has to be as tall as the height you want to reach; your *saadhana* has to be as long as the time taken to reach the goal. When the walls are completed, the scaffolding is removed; when the Vision of the Reality is attained, *japa*, *vratha*, *puja*, *archana*, *sravana*, *keerthana*---forms of spiritual discipline can be dispensed with. You must be watching for every chance to dwell on noble thoughts, do elevating tasks, curb the downward pull of the ego.

Let Me give one instance. Take your own name. The name must be resonant of the real Self, not a description of the body, as Nallaiah or Kempiah or Kariyappa---the Black man, the Fair man or the Dark man. Have names that are saturated with divinity, like Raama or Krishna or Lakshmana or Bharatha. And know and follow the implications of the name.

Live up to your name

A son named Raama nowadays files a suit against the father for his share of the property! A son called Lakshmana is the leader of a faction against the elder brother! Live up to the name you are known by. Do not shorten the names and behead them into lifeless corpses, like V. D. Rao, for Vasudeva Rao, or V. A. Dani for Vishweshwara Avadhaani. Keep them as they are, so that you as well as others can have the precious chance of uttering the name of the Lord at least when they accost you. It is a crime against your parents and ancestors to defile the name that they have handed down to you, live it yourself and hand it on to your children, and children's children, unimpaired.

For all types of spiritual discipline, congenial company is very necessary. Man is shaped by the company he keeps; so, be ever vigilant of the air you breathe; it is fouled by the foul thoughts of the men among whom you move. The pure water that falls as rain from the sky is changed into a hundred tastes and colours by the soil on which it falls. But, even the slimy slush of the gutter has some hope of turning into pure water again; for, when the Sun shines, it can rise as vapour into the clouds and regain its pristine nature. To cleanse the mind, prayer is the water and repentance is the soap. Mere water or Vim cannot do the job; repentance must be followed by resolute determination not to repeat the wrong. You must pray for help *in saadhana*, through Grace.

Where there is duality, there is fear

Guard the wisdom gained from the snares of attachment and aversion---this must be the theme. For, where there is duality, there is fear, there is decline and death. Victory, at the polls ensures power for only five years: when that period ends, the M.L.A. has once again to seek the votes. Good acts done with attachment ensure Heaven, from where one has to come again to Earth, when the deposit is spent out.

A man landing at Madras with a thousand rupees is master of all the bazaars, cinema houses, hotels, taxis to the extent of that sum, but, when his purse is rendered empty he has to escape back into his village, perhaps as a ticketless traveller, harassed by policemen at every halt. No, heaven is no solution for the hunger of the soul! The river must reach the sea, not the desert sands; the waters have to merge with water. That is the consummation, named *Kaivalya*, or *Saayujya*. To keep that goal ever in focus, have the wavering mind continuously in leash. When the Sun is in the sky, the Moon is blazed out of sight. *Buddhi*, the sharpened intellect, is the Sun; the pale satellite, waxing and waning, the Moon, is the Mind. So, give intelligence full prominence; let the mind subserve the dictates of reason, not of passion.

Become the ruler of the senses, not their slave. *Hrishikesa*, an appellation of Krishna, means Master of the senses; *Gudaakesa*, an appellation of Arjuna, also conveys the same sense. That is the reason why they two became comrades. The senses drag you into the jungle of nature; so, what use is it for you to flee into the jungle, with the senses wild with hunger? Why did the sages go into the jungle? To sink their minds in the silent calm of the forest; to dwell ever in the thought of God whose voice is heard when all other voices cease. If you close the windows that bring in the other voices, then, your home can be transformed into a Forest of Freedom, a

Hermitage of *thapas* (penance.) "Where Raama is, Ayodhya is" said Sumitra to Lakshmana. Instal Raama in your heart, it becomes Ayodhya, that is to say, 'invincible,' 'incapable of being captured by foes.'

Reduce contacts to a minimum

Be silent yourself; that will induce silence in others. Do not fall into the habit of shouting, talking long and loud. Reduce contacts to the minimum. Carry with you an atmosphere of quiet contemplation, wherever you happen to be. There are some who live in a perpetual hullabaloo, in a tornado of noise. Whether they are in an exhibition or a fair or a hotel, or a temple or the Prashaanthi Nilayam, they wag their tongues and will not stop. These will not proceed far on the Godward road.

There are others who relish disputes and arguments; they are never content with obvious facts; they must create doubts where none existed before, and shake faith. They dispute whether Raama is superior to Krishna, or whether Krishna is a fuller or a lower incarnation of Godhead! People who have not touched the outskirts of the Capital City dare dispute about the appearance and glory of the Emperor, who resides in the Palace in the heart of the City! That is the pitiable state of scholarship today.

The Maharaajah of Burdwan once held a Conference where the excellences of Shiva and Vishnu were considered. *The Panchaakshari* (five-letter) *manthra* of Shiva and the *Ashtaakshari* (eight-letter) *manthra* of Vishnu were expounded by rival Pandits and extolled. The Maharaajah refused to offer exclusive loyalty to either Shiva or Vishnu; he wanted the Chief Priest of his palace, who was a great scholar and *Saadhaka*, to pronounce his judgement. He said that none of the Pandits had seen Shiva or Vishnu, though they were all prepared to argue on behalf of them. He declared that any one who had seen either will be silent about not only what he had seen, but even of what he had not seen. That declaration put an end to the quarrels, and every one returned home rather shamefaced at their inexperience!

The first step of the spiritual discipline

Winnnow the real from the apparent. Look inside the event, for the kernel, the meaning. Dwell over on your *Aathmic* reality; you are pure, you are indestructible; you are unaffected by the ups and downs of life; you are the true, the eternal, the unchanging *Brahmam*, the entity which is all this. A mere five-minute inquiry will convince you that you are not the body, or the senses, the mind or the intelligence, the name or the form, but that you are the *Aathma* Itself, the same *Aathma* that appears as all this variety. Once you get a glimpse of this truth, hold on to it; do not allow it to slip. Make it your permanent possession.

As a first step towards the acquisition of this *viveka* (wisdom) and *vairaagya* (*detachment*), enter from now on into a discipline of *Naamasmarana*---the incessant remembrance of God through the Name of the Lord. A fashionable excuse that is trotted out by those who do not like this discipline is 'want of time!' It does not need any special time or extra allotment of time; it can be done always, in the waking stage, whether you are bathing or eating, walking or sitting. All the hours now spent in gossip, in watching sports or films, in hollow conversation can best be used for silent contemplation of the Name and Form, and splendour of the Lord.

Now, you complain of want of appetite for God. You have lost appetite because you have eaten unwholesome food, not because you have had a surfeit of good food. You have no knowledge of which food is wholesome, what are its components, etc. You believe that the unwholesome food you get, through the impure gateways of the senses, will keep you healthy! Learn this lesson

from here and return, better equipped, to your places. If you fail to learn this, then you have wasted money and time coming and staying here.

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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.

SHRI SATHYA SAI