

## 10. From the Mother to *Moksha*

WE hear in common parlance the terms mother, father, preceptor and God being used in that order. This has a significance of its own. It is the mother that a child sees as soon as it is born. The mother shows the child to the father. The father leads him to the preceptor and the preceptor leads him to God. Everyone should understand the inner significance of the four terms.

We hear from spiritual aspirants the four terms · *Bhakti* (devotion), *Jnana* (wisdom), *Vairagya* (renunciation), and *Tatwam* (reality) in the same order. There is a significance in the order in which these terms are mentioned. Devotion awakens wisdom, wisdom promotes renunciation and renunciation confers the knowledge of Reality. We can reach the mansion of *Mukti* (liberation) if we walk on the stepping stones of devotion, wisdom, renunciation and the knowledge of Reality.

The Bhagavatam in its very title testifies to this truth. The term Bhagavatamu in Telugu is made up of five letters: Bha, ga, va, ta, mu. Here Bha signifies *Bhakti* (devotion): ga signifies *Jnana* (wisdom): va signifies *Vairagya* (renunciation): ta signifies *Tatva* (the knowledge of Reality): and mu signifies *Mukti* (Liberation). The Bhagavatha bestows on us liberation by leading us through Devotion to Wisdom, Renunciation and the knowledge of Reality. Prahlada has given us a *dhvaadashaakshara mantra*, a twelve-lettered holy formula: "*Throva vedhuku konuta dodda buddhi.*" This consists of twelve letters in Telugu. It means that the highest intelligence consists in finding the way. What is the way to be sought? It is the way to Divinity. How is it to be found? It is by knowing the source from which you have come from the Divine and you have to go back to the Divine.

### **From God to God**

The tenth stanza in the fourteenth chapter of the Bhagvad Gita reveals that we have come from God. The Lord's utterance is: "*Mamaivaamso Jeeva loke Jeeva Bhuthah Sanatanah.*" This means: "You are an aspect of Me. You are not an aspect of Nature and its five elements. Since you are an aspect of Mine, there is no peace and joy for you till you reach and merge in Me." Just as a child cannot be without the mother, as a river must seek the ocean from which it has come, as the branch of a tree cannot survive separation from the tree, and as a fish cannot live outside its sustaining element water, so also man, who has come from God, cannot have real happiness until he returns to God.

One devotee sang in Kannada language thus: "Having forgotten You, I have come to this world. Leaving the Eternal that You are, I have plunged into this transient, temporary world. What joy can I reap in this clod of earth, as all joys are in You alone?" We are born in this world because we have forgotten God. We have to find our way back to God, our destination, retracing the steps by which we have come. "All living beings have to go back to the source from which they came into existence", say's the Bhagavata. It is our misfortune that we have forgotten this vital message today. To remember the source from which we came is the essential spiritual endeavour that every man should make.

### **Man should not be content to live like animals**

Man who came to this earth in quest of the *Atma* (Divine Self) is wasting away his time in the frivolous pursuit of *anna* (material things). Animals are always busy seeking food. Man, who is endowed with intelligence should not be content to remain like animals. He should strive to

reach Reality. Food, sleep, fear and mating are common to both birds and beasts. Man's life today is largely confined to these four things. Birth as a human being should be used to realising the Divinity within and not in frittering it away in sensual pursuits. Chaitanya declared: "We have installed today on the throne of our heart vicious thoughts and feelings, instead of making it the seat of the Lord."

### ***Samsara and Samskara***

It is obvious that most of us have to lead a normal family life, but it is not the life in which you should be wholly immersed. It is not *Samsara* (family) that follows us all through. It is the *Samskara*, the purity that you have achieved, that stands by you in afterlife. Some elders come to Swami and pray to Him to show them the way of God. What is the way? The way is journeying back to the place from which we have come. Suppose you go to a town and stay there in a hotel for a few days, you have to come back after finishing your work in town. You cannot live in the hotel forever, mistaking it to be your home.

The phenomenal world is like a hotel to which we have come to experience the consequences of our actions in the past. The body is a room in the hotel in which we have to undergo the *Karmic* consequences. Our time and body should be used for carrying out the mission on which we have come. We are engaged in accumulating wealth, gold and other material possessions. It is true that we need money to lead our life in this world. But there should be a limit to the acquisition of these worldly objects. True welfare and happiness cannot be achieved without observing limits in life. An uncontrolled life reduces man to the level of the animal.

Forgetting the primary goal of life men are wasting their time. Time is precious. Death is dangling its sword over every head. Our life span is fast diminishing like water leaking through a broken pot, or a melting block of ice. Death overtakes many even before they realise their mission in life.

*The body is made up of five elements!*

*It has to fall one day.*

*The Dweller in the body is eternal.*

*Free yourself from the delusion of birth and death!*

*'The Dweller is indeed Divinity.*

This is the truth that all have to realise. Fulfillment in life cannot be found by indulging in eating and drinking.

The main message of the Bhagavatha is devotion. The mother is the symbol for *Bhakti* (devotion). Father is the symbol for Jnana (wisdom). The preceptor is the symbol for *Vairagya* (renunciation). God is the very embodiment of *Atmic* knowledge. We can reach the *Moksha* (mansion of Liberation) only by ascending the four steps to Divinity.

### **Mother comes First**

Love for mother has to be fostered by everyone. Today this love is prompted by more greed--desire for wealth and greed than by spontaneous affection for mother. Barely one in a million realises that he owes food, blood and life itself to the mother. Wherever she may be, a mother is verily divine. It is said: *Matru Devobhava; Pitru Devobhava; Acharya Devobhava; Athithi Devobhava.* (Regard the mother as God, the father as God, the preceptor as God and the guest as

God). The mother stands foremost among these four. She is indeed the first teacher for everyone. It is only the mother who strives most for securing the well-being of the child by showering on him boundless affection and love and showing him the father. Children today do not care to heed their mother's commands, but they hanker after their mother's wealth. What is the use of having children of this kind? They are a curse on the womb that bore them.

"Of what use is a son who does not lift both his hands in prayer to the Lord, who does not proclaim the Lord's name with his mouth till it aches and who does not cherish the Lord in his heart? He is a disgrace to the woman that bore him." So says the Bhagavatha. This single verse says all that is essential regarding devotion, action, spiritual wisdom and renunciation. What are the duties of the hand and the tongue for a true devotee? God has given each man a single stomach but two hands to work with. If he works hard enough with both hands, he need not starve. There is no dearth of food. One who does not use his hands properly, has no right to subsist on others. *The Vedas* have enjoined the supremacy of Karma (sacred action).

### **Make the tongue holy**

The tongue should be employed for doing sacred functions. One should speak sweet and sacred things and should not cause pain and hurt to others by his speech. It is a sin to abuse others. The Lord resides in everyone. The person who abuses others is in fact abusing the Lord Himself.

In an exhortation to the tongue, Jayadeva said: "*Jihve, rasajne, madhura-priyatvam, satyam-hitam tvam, paramam vada madhura-akshharaani, Govinda, Damodara, Madhava.*" ("O sacred tongue, you know what is sweet, truthful and beneficent. Utter, then, the supremely sweet words' Govinda, Damodara, Madhava"). The tongue experiences sorrow or suffering in its own home without straying into the homes of others. It discretely decides beforehand whether an edible should be eaten or not. If it is sweet, it shows its consent by sending it down for digestion. But if it is bitter it spits it out. If the tongue is properly used, it can be the means by which we can attain Godhood itself.

Let the name of the Lord dance on our tongue, since remembrance of the Name is the easiest path to liberation in the *Kali* Age. We should use the tongue for uttering sweet and truthful words. This sacred instrument is often misused. The sins that the tongue commits are four: lying, backbiting, invecting and loquacity. The tongue becomes sanctified if it refrains from indulging in these four sins.

### **Example of Pundarika in serving the parents**

Everyone should treasure in his heart love for his mother, who has borne him, reared him with love and fostered him with care. The person who forfeits his mother's love will not earn any one's love.

Pundarika was the one who was devoted to the service of his aged parents. In doing so he was adhering to a self-imposed rule. He would not take any food until the parents had gone to sleep. Once he was massaging the feet of the parents. To test Pundarika's love for his parents, Lord Panduranga came to his residence in a disguise and stood behind him.

Pundarika went on with his service to his parents who had not gone to sleep. The new-comer asked Pundarika to look at him. Pundarika said, that he was seeing the visitor. The latter asked him: "In what form are you seeing me?" Pundarika said "I am seeing you as my mother." Meanwhile Pundarika's *Guru* came there and told Pundarika that the visitor was none other than the Lord Himself. Pundarika said that the parents whom he was serving were also God. The

*Guru* earnestly urged "Don't you realise that the one who has come is verily God?" Pundarika replied: "My parents also are God." Panduranga admiring his resolve, said: "Pundarika, won't you like to experience a vision of Me even once?" Pundarika replied: "Until my mother goes to sleep I will not seek your vision. If you are keen that I should see You, please wait for a while. I shall come to You after my mother has gone to sleep." It was such devotion to his parents that made the Lord reveal Himself to Pundarika and render service to him.

### **From "Ko-ham" to "So-ham"**

From the moment of birth, man is concerned about his future. The child's first cry is, "Kwa,Kwa." "Wherefrom have I come?" If you examine what is happening to you everyday, you will understand why a child cries at the time of birth. Seeing the endless troubles in store, the child cries: "Where am I?" Forgetting the place from which they came, men lose themselves in worldly desires. There are a few like Prahlada who from the moment of birth realise their inherent divinity. They utter "*So-ham! So-ham*" from the time of birth. But ordinary mortals ask "*Ko-ham? Ko-ham*" ("Who am I?") They do not get the answer till the end of their lives. They do not realise the answer is: "I am God." A few earnest seekers start with "*Ko-ham*" ("Who am I?") and end with the discovery: "*So-ham*" ("I am He").

Every man is prone to commit mistakes either wittingly or unwittingly. But one mistake he should not commit in any circumstance, that is, to forget what he owes to his mother. Love of a mother can redeem a man's life, whatever his other lapses may be. The greatest gift of the parents is the body, with all its powers. Although the Lord rules over all lives, it is the parents who have endowed the body to the child. Clay and water are the gifts of Nature. But it is the potter who makes the pots out of them. Hence gratitude to the parents is a primary obligation.

### **Youth, wealth and strength are transient**

Students these days ask: "why should we be grateful to our parents?" They should remember that if they cause distress to their parents now by their behaviour, they should not be surprised if in the later years their own children cause similar distress. This is the law of action and reaction that is always at work. Do not get conceited because of your youth, your wealth or strength. All these are transient. Adi Sankaracharya warned in strident language: "Do not get proud because of companions, wealth or youth. Time will take away these in a moment. Placing their trust in these tansitory possessions men are forgetting the eternal verities and the source of real bliss. Whatever things you may possess, whatever amenities you may enjoy, only faith in God will confer real peace of mind. An air conditioner may cool your body, But only grace of God can cool the heated brain and the troubled heart. That grace will come to those who are grateful to their parents and render loving service to them. Starting with mother, gratitude should extend to the father and preceptor. If you show gratitude to these three, you will realise the presence of the Triune Lord in them and you will reap the fruit of worshipping the Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva).

### **Parents' fault in not correcting the children**

It is an unfortunate fact that today ninety percent of the children are spoilt by the parents themselves. The parents do not exercise timely control over the children. If the wrong actions of the children are corrected then and there, they will grow in the proper way. The parents should show no indulgence towards children who go astray. It is misplaced affection to let erring children go uncorrected.

What use is there in having children who do not behave properly? What did Dhritarashtra gain from his hundred wicked sons? He would not restrain them despite the warning of Krishna and Vidura. Ultimately the entire family was wiped out. There is no meaning in rejoicing when a child is born. The time for rejoicing will come when the child grows up, earns name and fame and brings credit to the parents.

Every son should see that he makes his mother happy. He should seek from the mother nothing but her love and blessings. Mothers should strive to keep their children on the straight path. Only such mothers and children are worthy of the name. When mothers and children act properly, the nation will develop along the right lines. Righteousness will spread from the family to the whole world.

There are parents who question their children when they go to Swami: "What madness has seized you? Why are you going to the Sai?" What form of madness do these parents desire for their progeny? Do they want them to become rowdies and goondas? Do they want them to be crazy about money? What will money give them which can equal the grace of God? What everyone should seek is the grace of the Divine, which is a treasure greater than all the wealth in the world.

### **God above all is the destiny of human life**

Nothing should come in the way of your seeking God. You must be prepared for any sacrifice or face any opposition for the sake of God. Pahlada faced the wrath and hatred of his father Hiranyakasipu in adhering to his faith in Narayana. Vibhishana renounced his brother Ravana when the latter stood in the way of his devotion to Rama. If a mother stands in the way of your devotion to God, you must be prepared to give her up, as Bharata did when Kaikeyi sought to separate him from Rama. Meera was prepared to renounce her husband rather than give up her devotion to Krishna. Emperor Bali rejected the advice of his *Guru*, Sukracharya, when the latter advised him to retract his gift to Vamana (Vishnu). These are the examples of the devotees who did not flinch in vindicating their devotion to God.

The realisation of God is the goal and destiny of human life. From the moment of birth, suffering pursues man in one form or another throughout life. If in all these ordeals, one has to maintain equanimity and peace, he has to lead a righteous life, with firm faith in God. There is no need to give up the normal duties of a student or a householder. But everything that is done should be done as an offering to God. Thereby every ordinary act becomes sanctified. Love of God should express itself in the form of consecration of every action. This is my message to you on this sacred day.

*Discourse at Brindavan on Easwaramma Day, 6-5-1987.*

*Those attached to God, aspiring God, aware of God, adoring God have distinct marks by which they can be identified. Such people have a compassionate heart. If a person turns the rosary on the fingers and is intently engaged in watching the tip of his nose, unmindful of the distress that dances around him, we can at best name him a sloth, that is all. Get up, place the rosary in its bag, and activate yourselves in relieving distress—that is the true spiritual path. Do not waste all your years with stone images, pictures or idols. Learn to see in every living, vital, active person,*

*the embodiment of all energy, all beauty, all beneficence, namely,  
God.*

*BABA*