

5. From love : to love

*How can anyone conceive of a form
for that Formless Divine?
For One who has no hands or feet,
What ornaments can one fashion?
It is fanciful to attribute this or
that name and form to that One;
To ascribe the effulgence of a billion
suns in a flight of imagination.
How can anyone attempt to reveal
the form of the Formless Absolute?
The Atma is the Eternal Formless
Illumining the entire Cosmos.*

*Brahman is Love incarnate
Love can be realised only through Love;
If one holds fast to Love
Oneness with the Divine can be experienced.*

PAVITRAATMASWAROOPULAARA! (Embodiments of the sacred *Atma!*)

You have to note how you have secured this appellation. *Pavithra* is a word derived from the Latin root, '*Vir*' which means 'man.' Hence man is the embodiment of *Pavithra* (sacredness). The *Atma* is associated with Divinity.

After the rise of Christianity in Rome, the Romans gave a distinctive name to „Jesus in recognition of His divinity. He was called "Persona," meaning one who is Divine. The English word "Person" is derived from "Persona."

The Indian term *Vyakti* is related to the term "Person." *Vyakti* means the one that makes manifest the Unmanifested. What is it that is unmanifest? That is *the Atma* (the Cosmic Spirit). Man is described as *Pavitraatmaswaroopa* (the sacred embodiment of the Divine) because he manifests the divinity inherent in him.

God is the very embodiment of *Prema* (Love). Man is the spark of the Divine. You may find a man without anger, without truth or without peace, but you cannot find anyone in the world devoid of love. Love is present equally in all human beings as the one effulgent divine quality. This love may be expressed in different ways, but its nature is the same.

Man is thus an aspect of the Cosmic Consciousness. Unfortunately, however, because man directs his love towards worldly objects, he is unable to recognise his divinity. His mind gets polluted because of association with the external world. As a result:, even his love gets tainted

and his mind becomes incapable of cherishing the beautiful form of the Lord. Only when he directs his love towards God will man be able to experience the Divine within him.

The mind and Divinity

On the disturbed surface of the pond, the reflection of the moon is wavy. But on a clear surface, the moon's reflection is clear and steady. In a muddy pond, the moon's reflection is muddy. Likewise in the lake of a man's life, if it is confused and fickle, his love also gets distorted. When the mind is pure, unselfish and unwavering, the Divine appears in all His purity and fullness. But because of the pollution of the mind through obsession with multifarious external objects, man today is unable to experience the Divine that is omnipresent and is equally in him.

Many persons declare that God is present within them. This is wrong. This statement belittles the Divine. When I hold a flower within my palm, the flower is obviously smaller than my palm. If you say that God is within you, you suggest that you are bigger than God. The truth is: You are in the Divine and not the Divine in you. It is only when you have such a wide vision that you can experience the Divine.

Firm faith is essential for realising the Self. Faith is the basis of self-confidence, without which nothing can be achieved. The word *Manava* (man) itself means one who has faith. When he acts upto his faith, he experiences peace and contentment. Love is the means through which faith is strengthened.

People offer prayers to God. Prayers should not mean petitioning to God for favours. The object of prayer should be to establish God firmly in one's heart. Aim at linking yourself to God and not at seeking favours. Aspire for earning the love of God. That is real penance. That is why it is said: Looking ahead is *Tapas* (penance); looking backward is *Tamas* (ignorance). *Tapas* does not mean giving up hearth and home and retiring to a forest. It means giving up all bad qualities and striving to live ceaselessly for God's grace.

True devotion is to feel closeness to God

Love is the primary factor in this process. There is nothing greater than love on earth. Anything can be accomplished through love. Therefore, make every effort to promote love.

True devotion consists in offering all your thoughts and actions to God and yearning for His grace. *Bhakti* has been described as the state of non-separation from God. Regardless of time, space or circumstance, one should feel closeness to God--that is true *Bhakti*. Nowadays devotion is confined to the brief spell spent in the *puja* room (shrine) or in a temple. During this period devotion appears to swell within you and you feel you are at peace. But once outside, the peace is lost and anger takes its place. This cannot be called devotion. True devotion transcends the limitations imposed by the daily routine and obligations of life. It should not be subject to changes in time, place and circumstance. Love for the Divine should be present in any situation. "*Sathatham Yoginah*" (Always remain as *Yogis*), it is said. You must strive to cultivate such love and experience the joy of sharing that love with others.

Occasionally one's devotion cools off when one's desires are not fulfilled. This is not a sign of true devotion. Devotion should not be related to physical needs. It is concerned with the heart and should not be affected by vicissitudes relating to the body and the mind. Devotion transcends the concerns of the body. Such devotion has been described as *Parama Bhakti* (Supreme devotion). It may also be described as *Ananya Bhakti* (one-pointed devotion). Only such one-pointed devotion can get rooted in the heart. Our love should not vary from time to time.

Embodiments of Love! People tend to sacrifice their true nature for the sake of others' approbation. They should live up to the truth of their being. That is true devotion. A real devotee is eager to experience Divine love and does not seek pomp and show.

Four different paths of spiritual practice

People speak about *Yoga*, *Jnana*, *Karma* and *Bhakti* in relation to spiritual practice. These are inextricably inter-related. Among these, *Bhakti* deserves special mention. The first; among spiritual paths is *Karma Marga* (the Path of Action). The votary of this path performs many actions for the welfare of the world. He participates in *yajnas and yagas* (ritualistic sacrifices). He is engaged in service and charitable activities. All these forms of *Karma* are fraught with certain difficulties. To perform sacrifices one must be acquainted with the *Vedic* texts. This is not easy for laymen.

The *Jnana Marga* (the Path of Knowledge) calls for knowledge of the scriptures and several other kinds of knowledge, which together lead to *Atmajnana* (Knowledge of the Self). *Jnana* has been defined as *Advaita Darsanam* (the awareness of the One Cosmic Consciousness). It means recognising unity in diversity. It is not easy to experience this unity.

The path of *Yoga*, which is concerned with control of the mind, is equally difficult. It calls for rigorous control of the senses. One has to overcome many difficulties, trials and tribulations. Very few have the mental and spiritual strength to face these difficulties and ordeals. The path of *Yoga* is thus beset with many hurdles.

Knowledge without practice is of no use

Bhakti (the Path of Devotion) is the easiest path for all. It does not call for mastery of the scriptures. It does not enjoin performance of rituals and sacrifices. The elusive quest for unity in diversity is avoided. By cultivating love for God, the senses come under natural self-discipline. Those who are well-versed in the *sastras* are good scholars but they hardly practise what they preach. What matters is practice and not scholarship. Knowledge without action is useless lumber. One must strive to put into practice at least one or two things learnt in the spiritual field. The most important goal for man is to put into practice the doctrine of divine love.

The Principle of Love is the greatest unifying force which unites all spiritual practices, all creeds, all the goals of life and all the scriptures. The foremost path for the spiritual aspirant is the path of complete surrender to the Lord for earning His love and grace. The devotee offers everything he has and does to the Lord in the same manner in which a bride renounces all that she had before her marriage in going to the home of her husband. God's love cannot be got: without such renunciation by the devotee.

Appreciate the ways of the Divine

On various occasions, the Lord subjects the devotees to different kinds of tests and trials with a view to raising them spiritually to a higher level. The Lord, who is the source of all wisdom, will confer illumination only on those who approach Him. Those who feel that *Bhagavan* has not seen them or spoken to them should ask themselves how close they are mentally to *Bhagavan* and how near they are to the Lord in their practices. Each one should engage himself in the process of self-enquiry. The Lord has neither *agraha* (anger) nor *anugraha* (benevolence). Even when He appears to be harsh, there is grace in that; harshness. When He appears to chastise, there is compassion in it. When He seems to be angry, there is love behind it.

Only those who understand the nature of the Divinity can appreciate the ways of the Divine. The Divine resorts to certain kinds of punishments to make the devotee pursue the right path and enable him to lead an ideal life. Such punishments are for the devotee's good and well-being.

Here is a story to illustrate the maxim, "No gains without pains." There was a gardener who used to water the plants in the garden carrying a pot on his head from dawn to dusk. One day while carrying the pot he got a headache and wanted to lay down the pot and go home. At that moment, the pot taught him a valuable lesson. The pot said: "Oh man! There can be no fruit without: labour, no pleasure without pain. Learn the lesson from my own story. I was just mere dust and mud, trodden upon by people. The potter gathered that mud, turned it into clay by pressing it under his feet, and made a pot from it by whirling the clay on his wheel. And finally I was placed in a kiln for firing. Whoever came to buy me, tapped on my sides with strength to test my hardness. It was because I went through all these ordeals that I earned the privilege of dancing on the heads of people. If I had not gone through all these trials, how could I have achieved this eminence? Likewise, only if you are prepared to go through trials and difficulties will you be able to raise yourself in life."

Egoism, the disease has no medicine

Hence, you should not succumb to difficulties and disappointments. You must strive to overcome them. For this purpose, you have to acquire the grace of God by developing faith. Every man is a prey to one evil quality, a kind of disease for which there is no medicine. That disease is *Ahamkara* (egoism). The egoism gets into a man's head and plays the devil with him. Egoism affects not human beings alone but even birds and beasts. For instance, a dog kept in a rich man's gate barks at every passerby to exhibit its authority. It is an example of egoism in an animal. The dog wants to show that it is the guardian of the house and that no one dare enter it. The dog assumes that "this is my house, I have to protect it," but it does not know what that "I" is.

If today a man does not know what his "I" signifies, he is in the same position as the dog. Every moment a person talks about "My body, my mind, etc," but he does not ask: "Who am I?" He alone is a *Jnani* (a man of wisdom) who has discovered the truth about himself. One who goes on using the word "I," but does not know who he is, is an *Ajnani* (an ignorant person).

People bandy the word *Vedanta*. When a scholar is asked, "What is *Vedanta*?" the answer is: "The *Upanishads*, which come at: the end of the *Vedas*, constitute *Vedanta*." That is not the real *Vedanta*. The ending of the "I" (the ego) is *Vedanta*. If you wish to know Me, you have to first know who *you* really are. Look into yourselves. Without understanding who you really are, how you can seek to understand Me? When your vision is concentrated on the external, how can you understand the inner being?

Iswara's three forms

Iswara is said to have three forms. One' *Viraat-Swaroopa* (the Cosmic form). Two' *Hiranyagarbha* (the subtle form). Third: *Avyaakruta* (the Causal entity). *Viraat-Swaroopa* is *Viswa-roopa*---the entire manifested Cosmos is His form. All the myriad forms and names in the universe are contained in His form. This is described as *Jaagrata-Swaroopudu* (the Cosmic form as experienced in the waking state). The second one is the Divine as experienced in the dream state *Hiranyagarbha*. In the waking state we use our limbs, see with our eyes and hear with our ears. In the dream state, we perform many actions. What are the hands which we use, what are

the legs which we walk? What is the mouth that speaks in dreams? When all the organs and senses of the body are not functioning in the dream state, how do these experiences occur? That is the subtle form of *Hiranyagarbha*.

Avyaakrutudu, the third form, is the Causal entity. It has no specific form and therefore is called *Avyaakruta*. But *Ananda* (Bliss) is present. There is consciousness of experience. The physical, the subtle and the causal are the three forms respectively of *Viswaroopa*, *Hiranyagarbha* and *Avyaakruta*. You are the same person experiencing the waking state, dreaming in the sleeping state and enjoying the bliss in the *sushupti* (deep sleep) state. The one entity existing in all three states is the *Atma*--in the body in the waking state, in the mind in the dream state and in the *Chitta* (Higher Consciousness) in the deep sleep state. The Iswara principle unifies all the three entities.

Desire and hatred conceal the Divinity within

Today we celebrate *Siva Rathri*. It means Auspicious Night. Who is this Siva and where is He to be found? All kinds of answers are given. Kailasa or other places that are mentioned are only "care of" addresses. The true answer is: "*Isaavaasyam idam sarvam*" (All this is pervaded by Iswara). He is omnipresent. There is no place, object or being where God is not present. You have to correct your outlook and recognise the unity in the apparent diversity.

When God is omnipresent, what need is there to go in search of God? The search is meaningless. If one gets rid of the attachment and the hatred in him, he will experience the Divinity inherent in him. This is the *sadhana* (spiritual exercise) one has to do today--to get rid of desire and hatred which conceal the Divinity within.

Many people come to Swami and ask: "Swami! Show us the way." All that you have to do is to go back to the source from which you came. Where is the need for seeking the way? The *Bhagavatha* has declared that it is the natural destiny of every living being to go back to the place from which it came.

Seek to know the purpose of life

Embodiments of Divine Love! Consider for a moment, wherefrom the rain comes. It comes from clouds. The clouds have come from water vapour rising from the sea. The rain becomes a channel on the earth, then a rivulet and then a big river which joins the sea. A pot made out of clay, when it is broken, is cast on the ground, where, in course of time, it becomes clay again. Water from the sea joins the sea, clay from the earth goes back to the earth again, man alone forgets the source from which he came.

Man must seek to know the purpose of life. With all his knowledge and intelligence, man should try to rise above the level of the animal to a realisation of his divinity. A great deal of time is being wasted on futile controversies. The educated boast about their scholarship. They should be more concerned about discovering their true nature and living according to it.

The word *Manava* (man) means one who lives free from ignorance. What: is this ignorance? It is to regard himself as that which he is not. He is not the body. He is not the mind. When he acts as if he is the body and the mind, he is living in ignorance like Dhritarashtra.

The besetting evil in man is the sense of *Mamakaara* (mine), the acquisitive and possessive feeling. This is the cause of all other evils. Man has to develop the consciousness that he is

Divine. The breath which man inhales and exhales 21,600 times a day conveys the message of "So-ham" (I am He)--the truth about man's divine reality.

We regard as *Bhakti* (devotion) a few minutes devoted for worship, or going to sacred shrines and the like. But true devotion is an expression of gratitude to God for **all** that He has given us--the human body with its various capacities, the intelligence we are endowed with and the many natural amenities made available to us such as air, water and sunlight. A person without gratitude is worse than a wild animal.

Develop love for God. There is nothing more powerful than Divine love.

Discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on 6-3-1989.

Change your vision and the world will appear accordingly. Let the eye be charged with the Divine, it will see all as God. It is foolish to try to shape the world. Shape yourself as the embodiment of Peace, Love and Reverence. Then you will see all as Love, Compassion and Humility.

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