

14. The One and the Many

MUSIC, which is invisible, is one, but the *ragas* (melodies) are many. Each *raga* has a unique form of its own. Likewise, *rasa* (taste) is one, but has a variety of forms. In Indian musicology, 64 different *ragas* are listed. They are called *Chatusshashti* (64). However great a musician may be, even if he be Narada or Tumburu, the celestial singers, if he were to sing a single tune for long, his music will pall on the audience. Hence a variety of *ragas* are required.

God, who is the embodiment of sweetness, manifests Himself in many forms. The Upanishads have declared: "*Raso vai Sah*" (He is sweetness itself). He invests that sweetness with infinite variety. *Prakriti* (Nature), which is made up of the three *gunas* (qualities) ₂

Satwa, Rajas and Tamas--is one only. All the myriad colours, sounds, smells and tastes that we witness have emanated from Nature alone.

How can God, whose manifestations are infinite, be described? The *Vedas* have declared: "From which speech and mind turn back unable to grasp It (the Supreme)." To realise the Divine, the only (easy) method is chanting the Name. There are, of course, many great ones who chant the name of the Lord incessantly. There are many others who recite the Name for days, months and years, but this effects no change in them. What is the reason for this? All their sense organs function with the feeling: "I am the body." Those who utter the name of the Lord while being immersed in the body consciousness cannot realise the Divine, however long their penance may last.

One actor: many roles

People belonging to different faiths and cultures pursue various spiritual practices according to their different backgrounds. When they find that these practices have not produced the results they expected, out of frustration or disappointment they go after a different form of worship or a different faith. Spiritual change cannot come merely by chanting a different name or even adopting a different creed. Divine grace is not secured by a change of faith. It is the *mathi* (mind) that has to undergo a change, not one's *matham* (religion). By merely changing the garments you wear, you cannot acquire divine qualities. Virtues have to be cultivated. Only the person who transforms his character can sublimate himself.

Here is a simple example! In a play one actor appears in the first scene as a beggar in tattered clothes. In another scene he appears in the robes of a king. Later he appears as a minister. The people in the audience may think that the beggar was a different person from the one in the role of the king and that of the minister. What is the reason? They go by the costumes worn by the actors. A person is judged by his dress and his actions. But see how a dog behaves in relation to its master. The dog recognises its master irrespective of the dress he wears. It acts on the basis of the voice of the master. It would seem that a dog has a better sense of recognition than human beings who judge men by external appearances.

Names and forms are artificial

Men today act on the basis of names and forms. These names and forms are artificial. Sound has the quality of permanence. If the name of the Lord is chanted with due regard to the sound, the name acquires spiritual power. The *Chinmaya* (higher consciousness) can be experienced in the utterance of the Divine Name.

Man is the embodiment of divine consciousness. Only when he is pure, he can experience that consciousness. Through attachment to worldly pleasures man gets bound to the physical and becomes oblivious to his essential divinity.

Man knows that God is the very embodiment of love. Only through the cord of love can God be bound. But it is only when love is for love's sake that this cord can bind God to man. If love is motivated by desire for worldly objects, God will be beyond our reach. You must become embodiments of love. If you are merely loving, your love will be confined to a few. Only when you become the embodiment of love can your love comprehend all. Only then will you realise that it is the same God who is the Indweller in all beings.

Krishna defines the role of a leader

During Krishna's boyhood days he wanted to go to the forest with other cowherd boys to lead the cows and calves for grazing. His mother said that he needed sandals for going to the forest when he would have to walk over thorns and stones. Krishna said that the cattle had no shoes and he as their protector should wear no shoes. He pointed out that the cows were selfless in giving their milk to others and love of the cows and calves towards him was not equalled even by Yasoda's love for him. Krishna set an example as to how a leader should behave in relation to those under his charge.

Krishna considered himself as the leader and protector of the cows. You may be a class leader, a room leader, a party leader or a social leader, but a leader of any sort should set an example to his followers and serve as an ideal to them.

In fact, every individual should aim at being an ideal person. Only then would his life be purposeful and self-satisfying. Take the example of a farmer. Before growing a crop on his land, he has to prepare the field, plough it, manure it, sow the seeds. When the seeds sprout, he has to remove the weeds and protect the crop from birds and other depredators, only then can he reap the harvest.

A similar exercise has to be done in the cultivation of the heart by everyone. The heart is like a field. It has to be cultivated properly. It should be filled with the water of love- It should be tilled by the process of *vichara* (enquiry). Then the seed of the Divine Name has to be planted in it. You must erect the fence of vigilance to guard it. You must protect the crop of devotion by weeding out egoism. Only then you will reap the fruit of love for the Divine.

In the tree of every human life, there is the fruit of love. To enjoy this fruit, you have to remove the outer rind so that you can get at the juice within. Take, for instance, an orange. To enjoy the fruit, you have to remove the outer skin first. Then you have also to take out the seeds in the fruit and the fibrous parts. You should consume only the juice. You should realise that life has been given to you by the Divine so that you may enjoy this fruit of love. Get rid of ostentation and pride. Remove the seeds of bad thoughts and bad feelings. Throw out the *mamakara* (acquisitive impulse). Then you will taste the juice of love.

Realise your true potential

This is the type of *sadhana* which everyone should undertake. Each is a kind of cultivator. Every heart is a field. This divine gift should not go to waste. What use is there in possessing land if you do not cultivate it properly? This is a sacred land. But if it is allowed to lie fallow, it becomes barren and nothing can be grown on it. Here is a boundless field, but you are failing to grow the kind of crop that should be raised on it.

Your foremost duty today is to cultivate properly the precious and boundless land that has been given to you. You do have the abilities required for this purpose. Some students pray to Swami to give them the strength to live up to Swami's ideals. When they pray like this, they imagine that they do not have the strength at present. There is no need to give them this strength. It is already there. You are failing to make good use of it, because you are not concentrating your attention on it. If you realise your potential, you will know how to make the right use of it.

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The Grace of God cannot be won through the gymnastics of reason, the contortions of Yoga or the denials of asceticism. Love alone can win it, Love that needs no requital, Love that knows no bargaining, Love that is paid gladly, as tribute to the All Loving, Love that is unwavering. Love alone can overcome obstacles however many and mighty. There is no strength more effective than Purity, no bliss more satisfying than Love, no joy more restoring than Bhakti, no triumph more praiseworthy than Surrender.

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