

25. Krishna's Prema Tathwa

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! Love is God. Everything is filled with love. This love can be experienced only through love. There is no other way than love to realise the One Who is the embodiment of love. This (Divine) Love is not something which grows in one moment and falls off in another.

This Love dwells in man as *Atma* (the Spirit). The body has been described as the temple of God. In this temple Love is enshrined as *Atma*. Such sacred and pure Love can dwell only in a pure heart.

Fear and anxiety get entrenched in a heart devoid of love. A heart filled with love of the Divine will enjoy peace and be totally free from fear. True love is not a momentary feeling. In the eternal Spirit of man love shines as pure and eternally effulgent flame. In this context, it would be more appropriate to describe God as Love itself rather than as an embodiment of love.

Pure, unsullied Atma and the fickle mind

Recognising the Divine as Love, spiritual aspirants have been worshipping it as the Supreme Spirit. Because love is Divine the body is considered a temple. It is also regarded as a mansion. "*Nirdosho nirmalo naathah: sadosho chanchalo vadhuh*" (The master or husband is immaculate and pure; the wife is fickle and prone to go astray). A husband who is pure and a wife who is fickle are residing in this body. When a pure husband and a fickle wife live together, how can there be peace in such a home? To ensure peace and happiness in such a home, either the husband has to follow the wife or the wife has to follow the husband. When these alternatives are examined it will be seen that it is not proper for a pure and immaculate husband to follow the dictates of a fickle and wayward wife. The natural course is for such a wife to follow the ways of the husband. In this instance, who is the husband and who is the wife? It is the *Atma*, pure, unsullied and steadfast, that is the husband. The mind is the fickle, wavering and wayward wife. The effort to make the mind follow the pure, unsullied *Atma* is *Bhakti* (devotion.)

Many names are attributed to this devotion. The *Bhagavatha* equates devotion with service to the Lord. "*Bhaja Sevaayaam*" (Adore Service as worship). "*Hrishikesa sevanam Bhaktiruchyathe*" (Service to Hrishikesa, the Lord of the senses, is termed *Bhakti*). In other words, devotion means directing the mind towards God. Leading a life with the vision of the Divine in view is *Bhakti*. Leading a life with the body-consciousness is *moha* (delusion). Hence, the lovers of Vishnu, the worshippers of the Lord, are devotees; the lovers and adorers of the world and worldly objects are mere humans.

How to experience God

The gopikas were worshippers of Krishna. They always yearned for Him and were devotees in the highest sense. Those who hanker after worldly things are ordinary *jivis* (beings). For *jivis* to get divinised they have to develop the spiritual vision. The *gopikas* sanctified and redeemed their lives by constant contemplation of Krishna.

It may be asked in what form the Lord appears to man and how is man to experience God. God has the following six attributes or characteristics: *Aiswarya* (Divine sovereignty); *Dharma* (the source of all Righteousness); *Yasas* (fame); *Sampada* (wealth); *Jnana* (wisdom) and *Vairagya* (non-attachment). He has another name called *Vishatkaara* (One who has six forms of wealth). He is also known as *Vibhuh* (One with matchless splendour). He is the Master of the past, the

present and the future. For this reason He is called *Bhaavah*. He is the One that abides in all the three aspects of Time. Another meaning for the word *Bhaavah* is that of creator of the universe. He illumines all the stars, suns and planets in the universe and hence is called *Bhaavah*. He is the prime cause of the process of creation, growth and dissolution.

What is the proof for the existence of such an omnipresent God? A simple illustration will suffice. If you seek to know where God is, the answer is that He is present wherever you have air and water. Both air and water have come from the *Atma*. Air and water are essential for life. They represent the spiritual principle of the *Atma*.

Thus, while there is clear evidence of the omnipresence of the Divine, man is not able to recognise this. God is subtler than the subtlest atom and rarer than the rarest. He dwells in the human body in the form of *Atma*. This *Atma*, however, is present in every being. The *Upanishad* declares: "Pervading everything, everywhere, inside and outside, the Lord Narayana is omnipresent."

Understand the promptings of the heart

Man has two important organs: the head and the heart. The head is ever engaged in seeking external objects. It desires only transient and mundane objects and the things and beings of the phenomenal world. Its chief characteristic is *Pravrithi* (preoccupation with the external). All thoughts arise out of contact with the external. Qualities like truth, love, kindness, forbearance and compassion, which are signs of inner vision, emanate from the heart. Man becomes pure only when he concentrates on the heart. Hence the *Vedanta* has enjoined cultivation of the *Antardrishti* (inner vision). The first is the *Pravrithi marga* (path of the external), the second is the *Nivrithi marga* (path of the internal). One who is absorbed in the *Pravrithi marga* cannot understand the *Nivrithi marga*. One who regards enjoyment of worldly objects and transient sensory pleasures as the summum bonum of life and continually strives for securing them cannot understand the promptings of the heart and cannot experience its ecstasies. Although the heart is inside the body, the body is unable to grasp the unique significance of the heart. Can the tree know the sweetness of the juice of the fruit which it bears? Can the creeper know the fragrance of the flowers that bloom on it? Can the sweetness of a poem be experienced by the book in which it is printed? Can a scholar preoccupied with knowledge of the external be aware of the joy arising from the experience of the internal?

Heart is like a fruit in the tree of body

The juice is in the fruit of the tree, but the tree cannot taste its sweetness. Our body is like a tree. In it the heart is like a fruit. The love flowing in the heart is the juice. The physical body can have no understanding of the sweetness of the love that fills the heart. Nor can it experience or share the joy of that love. It is because of this that man is a prey to sorrows, disappointments and despair.

As long as one is unable to understand the principle of love, one can never be free from fear and anxiety. The moment love awakens, fear flees. For instance, a railway passenger, who has a ticket, even while travelling by second class, is free from fear. But a ticketless traveller, even if he has got into a first class compartment, is haunted by fear of being caught and punished. Likewise, if a person has the ticket of divine love in his heart, he has no fear of anything in the world.

Life is one long journey. In this journey if you have the pure selfless love of God within you, you can go anywhere free from fear and worry of any kind.

Today every man is harried by some kind of fear or other. Fear follows him in whatever he undertakes, because he lacks the love of God. If you have the love of God, you can accomplish anything. However great one may be as a scholar, whatever riches and comforts he may command, if he has no faith in the Self he will be haunted by fear. Self-confidence is the prime requisite. Without it you cannot succeed in any enterprise; you cannot enjoy anything.

By filling the mind with all kinds of desires, you become subject to worry. Wherever you turn you see only worshippers of *Mammon* ("siri" or wealth) and not devotees of God (Hari). In whatever one says or does, self-interest is predominant. How can enduring bliss be derived from this?

Love of the Divine is the first requirement in the march towards the realisation of one's humanness. You must have one-pointedness and strength of mind. The mind must be unwavering and the heart must be pure and unpolluted. You must fill your life with unselfish deeds.

Uddhava and the *gopikas*

Once, Uddhava went to *Gokulam* with a message from Krishna to the *gopikas*. Uddhava told them: "I have brought for you a remedy for the pain you are suffering as a result of separation from Krishna. You must take this medicine. Through this *yoga* you will be relieved of the *roga* (the ailment) from which you are suffering."

The gopikas replied: "Oh, Great One! We do not suffer from any malady. Hence we don't need any *yoga*. It is enough if we know the *yoga* by which we can back Krishna." Uddhava asked: "What is this *yoga*?" A *gopika* replied: "The ordeal we enjoy on account; of *thyaga* (renunciation) is itself a kind of *yoga*." Uddhava observed: "How can there be anything common between renunciation and enjoyment? The renunciant does not seek enjoyment. The one who enjoys is not concerned about renunciation. As the two are irreconcilable, how can you regard the enjoyment of separation as form of *yoga*?"

The *gopika* said: "You simpleton! Is this all you have learnt from your nearness to Krishna? When a person gives up egoism in his doings and attachment to the enjoyment of their fruits, then *Thyaga* (sacrifice), *Yoga* (spiritual austerity) and *Bhoga* (enjoyment) become one. First get rid of the conceit that I am the doer. Then free yourself from the desire to enjoy the fruits of your actions. When you have no attachment to the fruits of your actions and have no sense of ego in what you do, then there is no difference between *Yoga* and *Bhoga*."

Only firm faith in God secures His blessing

In the world, you have rains and rivers, which enable crops to grow. The sun and the moon illumine the sky. For whom does all this happen? All this is not for the sake of any single individual. It is for the benefit of all mankind. Everyone is entitled to benefit from these phenomena. All beings in the natural state are entitled to enjoy the benefits provided by Nature. But only a few can acquire the competence to experience the Divine. Only those who have firm faith in God can secure this blessing.

Uddhava asked *the gopikas*, "If you are not prepared even to listen to Krishna's message, what sort of devotion do you have towards Krishna? What is the form of your devotion?" *The gopikas*

gave the essence of *yoga* in the following words: "Uddhava! We have only one mind. That mind is no longer with us. It has gone to Mathura along with Krishna. As we have no mind of our own and have become totally mindless, how can we receive your message? If we had ten different minds like you, we could listen to your message, think about Krishna, attend to the commands of our mothers-in-law and husbands and do other things."

The essence of all the *sastras* can be declared in one sentence: "We have to believe firmly that the same Divinity dwells in all beings." The mind is the cause of all worries. Even the yearning for God is through the mind. Man is pursued by worries from birth to death, all through his life. There is only one means by which all worries can be banished and that is *Prema* (love).

God transcends *Kaala*, *Desa* and *Vasthu*

In this love there is no room for any kind of difference. The Divine presence is recognisable in everything. Divinity is omnipresent. God transcends the categories of *kaala* (time), *desa* (space) and *vasthu* (matter). No one can say God is present in one country and not in another. It is not possible to declare that He is present in one thing and not in another. This means that God cannot be assigned to any particular place, time or object. The term "*Bhagavan*" means One who pervades everything. That being so, can any particular place be assigned to Him? He is immanent everywhere. It can be firmly asserted that God is everywhere. Again with regard to time, it cannot be said that God was present at one time and did not exist: at another time. How can one, who has no beginning, middle or end and who is present in all the three categories of time, be limited by time? Because of His omnipresence and all-pervasiveness, God is described as "*Sarvaathmaka*" (the Spirit present in all things). Every term that is used to describe God is pregnant with significance.

God is not a *vyakti swaropa* (specific definable entity). He is the Indwelling Spirit in all. The *Atma* Principle that permeates the universe is One only. That *Atma* principle assumes a form from time to time for the sake of redeeming the world and establishing righteousness.

The *gopikas* experienced the presence of Krishna in everything. What joy can be had when God's omnipresence is experienced can be known only to those who have had the experience. Many have treated the *gopikas* as deluded simpletons carried away by their own fancies. This is a grievous mistake. Their hearts were pure and filled with selfless love. Mundane love believes only in receiving and not in giving. God's love revels in giving and not receiving. This is the difference between worldly love and Divine love. The *gopikas* were able to experience the Divine by pure selfless love. For them there was no difference between Krishna's words, Krishna's music and Krishna's form.

Body is a temple when filled with thoughts of God

The body has been described as a temple. But when does it become a temple? Only when it is filled with thoughts of God. When there is no thought of God, it becomes a mere *bhavanam* (dwelling place) and in due course becomes a *vanam* (jungle). There is no need to go elsewhere in quest of a temple. When the name of the Lord dances on your tongue, your body itself becomes a temple. Once you regard your body as a temple you will have to keep it pure and unpolluted to be worthy of God's residence.

This is precisely how the *gopikas* considered themselves. They were totally indifferent to gold and other worldly goods. For them God was everything. They were totally immersed in Krishna Consciousness and were oblivious to everything else. They were aware that Krishna was the

omnipresent Divine. But still they were devoted to the particular form of Krishna. This is true of other devotees of God. Mirabai adored the Lord as "*Giridhara Gopala*." Sakkubai worshipped the Lord as "*Ranga! Panduranga!*" and was devoted to that particular name and form. Other than "*Gopala*" Yasoda was not interested in any other appellation of Krishna. That name alone was sweet and dear to her.

The gopikas, though they knew that Krishna was the omnipresent Lord, adored Him only in the form of the flute-playing Krishna. The *gopikas* alone fully understood the Krishna Principle because of their intense and unqualified faith in His divinity.

Krishna Tathwa as understood by Gopikas

What sort of personality is Krishna? Although He moved amongst all kinds of persons, sported and played with all, He was not attached to anyone. He was ever content, ever blissful. He transcended all qualities. He was free from egoism. He was a sovereign without a crown.

Though he conquered many kingdoms, He did not rule over any of them. He enjoyed witnessing others rule over the kingdoms. He was totally free from all desires. Whatever He sought was for the sake of others. In this way He revealed His divinity. Like the rays emanating from the sun and the trees growing out of the earth, love sprouts from the heart. The nature of Divinity can be properly understood only when the Love Principle arising from the heart is rightly understood. Making selfless love as the basis and treating the phenomenal world as the superstructure, you have to lead a life of purity which unifies both love and the world. Love is the impelling cause and the world is the instrument. Love is related to the Divine. The world is associated with Nature.

Divine is eternal in the changing world

Take, for example, this silver tumbler. Silver is the basic material. The silversmith was instrumental in making the tumbler from the silver. The creator of the silver was none other than God. The person who made the tumbler is a human being. What is a tumbler now, can be remade into a cup or plate or something else. Whatever the change in the form, the silver remains as silver. That is the basic factor. From this it should be understood that the Divine is unchanging while the phenomenal world would be subject to change. In this changing world, there is the Divine that is eternal and unchanging. The universe is the combination of both.

The need for an unchanging basis for a changing world will be clear from the example of a car going on a road. The road is firm and steady and because of that the car is able to move on it. It would be hazardous if the car had to travel on an unsteady and unstable road.

This relationship between the changeless Divine and the ever-changing phenomenal world is not properly understood. Very few, in fact, care to seek the truth. If the true nature of Divinity is grasped, one will not be affected by all the vicissitudes in the phenomenal world. He will have no fear regarding the ups and downs of life. It has been well said that one who knows how to swim need have no fear of the depth of the water in which he is plunged. Likewise, if you have earned the love of God, you need have no fear regarding the difficulties you may have to face in the world. It was the privilege of the *gopikas* to have earned such love.

You are celebrating the birthdays of Rama and Krishna as festive occasions. What is the use of celebrating such festivals? You should put into practice the teachings of those whom you

worship as God. All the worship you offer is of no use if you do not practise the teachings of the Lord in daily life. At best, they can only be regarded as pious actions.

The different aspects of Krishna

Among: all the *Avatars*, the *Avatar* of Krishna is the most attractive incarnation. The very word "Krishna" means one who *attracts*--"*Karshatiti Krishna*" (Krishna is one who attracts). "*Krishyatiti Krishna*" (Krishna is one who cultivates) is another derivation for the name. In the case of the *Avatar*, this means that Krishna is the Lord who cultivates the heart of the devotee by removing the weeds, sowing the seed of good qualities and growing the crop of love. "*Kushyatiti Krishna*" (Krishna is one who gives delight). Krishna thus means the one who cultivates our hearts and raises in them the crop of bliss.

The difference between the Kauravas and the Pandavas was this: the Kauravas had no faith in the Divine and turned away from Krishna. They believed only in worldly pleasures. The Pandavas had implicit and unwavering faith in Krishna and did not care for anything else. In the conflict between the Kauravas and the Pandavas, the Kauravas were utterly destroyed, while the Pandavas were victorious. The Mahabharata reveals the difference between the Kauravas and the Pandavas in their attitude to Krishna and what reliance on Krishna as the Divine means for believers.

The Pandavas placed God first, the world next, and "I" (themselves) last. The Kauravas placed "I" (self-interest) first, the world next and God last. Whoever places God first and foremost is bound to be successful in life. This was the lesson which Sanjaya gave to Dhritarashtra at the end of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

***Prema Tathwa*--message of life of Krishna**

Faith in God is the guarantee of victory. Thyagaraja said: "Oh Rama, if I have the benefit of your *anugraha* (grace) all the *navagrahas* (the nine planets) will be subject to me." Hence, if we acquire God's love we can achieve anything in life. Love is the one all-pervading element. Everyone has to strive to make that love the basis of his life.

The supreme message of the life of Krishna is the uniqueness of the *Prema tathwa* (Love Principle). This message is all that the world needs. Krishna is the embodiment of Love. This love can be understood only through love. This love is strong, brilliant and unbreakable like diamond. It is extremely precious. If you want to secure such divine love, your love (for God) must be equally strong. You can cut diamond only with diamond. If there is any defect in your love, it should be removed only through love. Love begets love. Hatred can only beget hatred, not love. Jealousy begets jealousy. Anger breeds anger. Therefore, if you want to foster love, you have to get rid of hatred, jealousy and anger.

To attain Krishna, the very embodiment of love, love is the only way.

Discourse on Krishna Jayanthi day, in the Poornachandra Auditorium on 24-8-1989.

The Gita says, you must be without hatred to all beings-- "adweshtaa sarva bhoothaanaam"; but, that is not enough. A wall has no hatred towards any being! But is that the ideal? No, you

*must positively Love all beings, actively Love, actively engage
yourself in acts of Love. That alone wins the Grace you crave for.*

BABA