

25. Krishna--Prema Avatar

Prema (Love) is like a most precious diamond. It will not remain even for a single moment with selfish persons. It will not stay for even half a moment with egoistic persons. It will not remain at all with ostentatious persons. Love is alien to persons who are selfish, conceited or ostentatious.

Where, then, is this love to be found? This precious diamond can only be got in the Kingdom of Love, in the Street of Love, in the Shop of Love. It can be obtained only through a loving heart. It may be asked, "Is not the whole world permeated with Love? Why, then, is not Love readily available?" The love with which the world is considered to be filled is not real love. *Prema* cannot be associated with the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect. Anything associated with these is only *Anuraaga* (attachment). The *Atmic* (spiritual) life alone is a Love-filled life. Therefore, people must lead a spiritual life, not a life subject to the body, the mind, the senses and the intellect. A life related to the body, the senses the mind and the intellect can never be free from selfishness, conceit and ostentation.

To experience real *Prema* there is no need to practice any kind of meditation, worship or rituals. That is because in the practice of all these there is an element of selfishness. *Prema* can only be obtained by complete absorption in spirituality. It was for this reason that Sri Krishna declared in the Gita: "*Sarva Dharmam Parithyajya*" (transcending all rules). Likewise, Jesus also declared: "I am the Path." Buddha, conveying the same meaning, declared, "*Sarvam Sharanam Gachchaami*" (I am surrendering everything). This means that the essence of all religions, the root of all scriptures, the goal of all virtues, is *Sarvaathmika Bhaavam* (the experience of spiritual unity). The *Gopikas* exemplified such a spirit of surrender and oneness.

Restrain selfishness and self-interest

It may be asked whether in this mundane world it is possible to develop such a spirit of complete surrender. It may not be possible for all to be free completely from selfishness, self-interest and self-conceit. But there should be a limit to all of them. Nothing great can be achieved without restraint "*Na Shreyo Niyamam vinaa.*" When the normal temperature of the body is exceeded, the fever is a sign of illness. Likewise, there is a limit to selfishness. When this limit is exceeded it becomes a disease. *Ahamkaara* (egoism) is a disease. Ostentation is a disease. Excessive *Swaprayojanam* (self-interest) is a disease. All these diseases have been described as *Bhavaroga* (the disease of worldliness). These are the diseases which are prevalent in the world today.

When the Divine is present in everyone it is not fitting that one should fail to recognise this. One may have the faith that God resides within him, but this is not sufficient. It is not a great thing to feel that God resides within you. You have to see yourself in God. That is the true *Prema Thathwa* (principle of Love). As long as you do not see yourself in the Divine, you remain selfish and self-centred.

Experience of Ananda

Man aspires for *Ananda* (bliss) in the world. Vedantha defines Divine *Ananda* as *Yoga*. *Yoga* is usually considered as some form of breathing or physical exercise. This is not the true meaning of *Yoga*. *Yoga* means *Ananda* or Bliss. Wherefrom can this bliss be got? Only from the One who is the embodiment of bliss. It cannot be got from possessions of any kind or from position or power. Bliss can only be got from God, who is the embodiment of Bliss.

How is this bliss to be got? Srikanth (a student who had spoken earlier) referred to the single-minded devotion of the *Gopikas* and Radha. The *Gopikas* have been misunderstood and misrepresented by commentators. *Gopikas* symbolise thoughts. Radha symbolises the combination of all thoughts in the mind. So, thoughts and the mind should merge in Krishna, represented by *Prajna* (in a human being). That is the significance of the Vedantic declaration, "*Prajnaanam Brahma.*" This *Prajnaanam* pervades every part of the human body, the mind and the intellect. It is constant integrated awareness. All our thoughts, desires and aspirations should be merged in this *Prajna*.

When this *Prajna* (constant integrated awareness) is present in all beings as the Divine (as Brahman), what is the need, it may be asked, for the descent of *Avatars*? There are reasons for the advent of *Avatars*. There are two kinds of perceptions viz. *Prathyaksham* and *Paroksham* (direct and indirect). There are also two kinds of potencies: internal and external. For example, there is fire within a piece of firewood. It is only when the fire latent in it is brought out that it can be used for cooking. Likewise, everybody is like a piece of firewood. The *Atmic* principle is latent within it. To make it manifest, some form of love has to be practised. Just as you have to strike a matchbox to produce fire, Love has to merge in Love to experience the Divine.

Difference between divine love and human love

You may consider that the love within you and that the love represented by God are the same. But there is this difference. God's love is totally selfless. It is absolutely pure. It is eternal. It is flawless. Human love is self-centred and tainted. Such a love cannot merge with God's love. It is only when one is free from egoism, pride, hatred and envy that God will abide in you. Without *Thyaaga* (renunciation) if a person is immersed in worldly pleasures and leads a mundane life, all his devotion is only artificial and a kind of self-deception. Such devotion will not lead him to God.

Today the world is full of such persons. People claim that they are loving God. I have not seen a single person who really loves God. Everyone loves God for his own sake and not for the sake of God. This is pure selfishness. Man seeks all things in the world for his own reasons. Even God is sought for such a reason. God cannot be got so easily. The heart has only a single seat. There is room in it for only one person. If you install worldly desires on that chair, how can you expect God to sit on it? God will enter that seat only if you empty it of all other things.

Selfless devotion of the *Gopikas*

Today, in the name of *Prema*, men are playing a game of musical chairs with their hearts. The chair of the heart is being used for occupation by different persons at different times. The *Gopikas*, however, dedicated their hearts to one person alone. All their thoughts were centred on Krishna. All their senses were dedicated to the Divine. They spoke only about God. Their thoughts were centred on God. They listened only to the Divine words. Their hands were engaged in Divine work. All their limbs and senses were dedicated to the Divine. They did not consider anything as their own. Krishna was their all.

Here is an episode from the life of Krishna to demonstrate the total devotion of the *Gopikas* to the Lord. Once Krishna feigned that he was suffering from a headache for which the cure was the application, to His head, of the dust from the feet of a devotee. Sage Narada sought to collect the dust from Sathyabhama, Rukmini and others, whom he regarded as great devotees of the Lord. But all of them declined to give the dust from their feet because they considered it sinful to offer

their dust to be placed on the Lord's head. Ultimately Narada went to the *Gopikas*, who did not have the slightest hesitation to offer the dust from their feet if only it would give immediate relief to the Lord, regardless of the consequences to themselves.

The *Gopikas* did not consider whether it was right or wrong for them to offer the dust of their feet. They were only concerned with giving relief to their Lord by any means. They declared, "Our entire life is dedicated to Krishna. His joy is ours." This was the spirit of oneness with which they offered the dust of their feet. And that very moment Krishna was rid of His ailment. By the time Narada reached Krishna, the Lord was found wreathed in smiles. Krishna told the sage, "You are boasting that you are devotees of the Lord. But none of you has the utterly selfless devotion of the *Gopikas*."

How to obtain Divine Love

Today there are many who claim to be devotees of the Lord and close to the Lord. But few can be described as real devotees of God. In each one there is some element of selfishness in his or her devotion. As long as there is an element of selfishness and egoism, the Lord will take no notice of such devotees. The love of the Divine is all the time present. But like the cloud that hides the sun from a person, the selfishness and ego of the devotee comes between God's love and the devotee.

To proceed from the human condition to the Divine in man, the only means is the *Prema Thathwa* (Love Principle). All other means are of no avail. From the *Mahabharatha* take the example of the fate of Karna and the destiny of Arjuna which indicates the difference between one who does not have Divine grace and another who has the benefit of Divine grace. While Karna, who was associated with the wicked Kauravas, met with a tragic end, Arjuna, who was a firm devotee of the Lord, was blessed with victory. All Indian scriptures and *Puranas* demonstrate the power of the Lord's grace to transform the human to the state of the Divine.

Although people have been taking birth after birth because of their attachment to worldly pleasures, they have not been able to get rid of their involvement with worldly concerns. Hence they are unable to experience the bliss of oneness with the Divine. All the bad thoughts and bad actions which they have experienced in previous lives continue to prevent them from experiencing the Divine. It is only when one gets rid of these impure thoughts that he can experience Divine feelings.

Cultivate love in its purest form

The *Prema Thathwa* (Love Principle) is the essence of *Krishna Thathwa* (Krishna Principle). It is associated with the Divine. Worldly love cannot be equated with Divine Love (*Prema*). The term *Prema* is used in ordinary parlance to describe what is really worldly attachment. People are attached more to names and forms than to the inner spirit of things. To get over this false attachment to external forms and names, it is essential to cultivate love in its purest form. There is no greater path to the Divine than this love. To manifest this love, the first requisite is to get rid of selfishness and self-interest.

Dear students, dear devotees! It is not so easy to experience the Divine. You may imagine that you have comprehended the Divine. But this is a delusion. You are immersed in the affairs of the phenomenal world. This cannot lead you to the Eternal Reality. Only those who are dedicated to

the realisation of the Eternal can attain it. This is illustrated by the *Gopikas*: total dedication of their lives to Krishna. They sought the complete merger of themselves in the Divine.

Surrender completely to the Lord

People today are totally immersed in worldly concerns and do not devote any attention to the spiritual quest. It is true, involvement in worldly affairs cannot be given up totally. But all such actions can be sanctified by performing them in a spirit of dedication to the Divine. The *Bhagavatha* demonstrates how this kind of dedicated life can be led by a devotee. It is not enough if you claim to be a devotee of the Lord. The Lord must recognise you as a devotee. Only then does one's devotion acquire value. Arjuna, for a long time, felt proud about his closeness to Krishna and about his devotion to Him. It was only towards the end he realised that he had to abide by the words of Krishna and completely surrender to the Lord. He then declared "*Karishye Vachanam Thava*" (I shall carry out your words).

No one should feel that it is beyond his capacity to surrender himself completely to the Lord. If there is firm determination, this can be accomplished. It is only through earnest endeavour that Divine wisdom can be got---"*Shraddhaavaan Labhathe Jnaanam.*"

Today the world is afflicted with the epidemic of *Ahamkaara* (egoism). There is really no basis for this kind of self-conceit. It is born of ignorance. It has to be totally eradicated. If everyone realises that the body has been given for the pursuit of righteousness and acts on that basis, he will be able to realise the Divine.

Avatars come to propagate Divine Love

Embodiments of Divine Love! Experience the Love Principle. Thereby you will rid the world of hatred. Once hatred goes the world will be free from violence and strife. For all the cruelty and violence that we find in the world today, the root cause is selfishness. This has to be eradicated. Cultivating the Love Principle and manifesting love in all your thoughts and actions, you will experience the bliss of Love. When one is filled with Love of the Divine, all pains and troubles will be forgotten. It is to propagate this principle of Divine Love that the advent of *Avatars* takes place from time to time.

Although the Divine dwells in every person, this fact remains latent like oil in the *thil* seed. To manifest the Divine within you, you have to go through certain trials and ordeals. Love of the Divine should grow as a result of such experiences of adversity. Just as gold improves in brilliance the more it is heated in the crucible, your devotion has to go through a constant purificatory process. Today all thoughts and actions are polluted in one way or another. All one's words or looks or thoughts are polluted. Young people should realise that they have to lead ideal lives. Only then will they be true to the message of the *Ramayana* and other Indian epics. Every student should aim at becoming an ideal example to the world. For this purpose they should cultivate good company; the company of persons filled with Divine Love. Unlike in previous *Yugas* people today pretend to be what they are not. They have to get rid of their animal instincts and progress from the human to the Divine.

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Everyone has ultimately to base his life on some one truth; that truth is God. No life can be lived in complete defiance of truth.

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