

## 27. Inscrutable are the ways of the Lord

*"Kleem Krishnaaya, Govindhaaya, Gopeejana-vallabhaaya Svaaha!" Kleem means the earth. Krishnaaya means water. Govindhaaya means fire. Gopeejana-vallabhaaya refers to air. Svaaha refers to ether. Krishna's name encompasses the five elements: earth, water, fire, air and ether. This signifies that the Cosmos is permeated by the Divine.*

*EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love!* "The Cosmos is under the sway of the Divine. God is subject to the sway of Truth. Truth is subject to the *Uthama* (noble one). The Noble one is the embodiment of the Divine" explains a Sanskrit *shloka* (verse).

It is not easy for all to recognise the truth about the Divine. Only the person who can comprehend the inner meaning can recognise the nature of the Divine. The Divine, which has both an internal and external significance, cannot be understood by exercising the imagination alone.

Every person born on earth should recognise his inherent divinity and make his life meaningful by leading a Godly life. This is the primary goal of life. Only that person has redeemed his life who recognises every moment, the Divine in every atom and in every cell and who inspires in others this consciousness about the Divine. It is not enough to secure a vision of the Divine. One has not only to lead a Godly life himself but help others to live likewise. This is the supreme purpose of human existence.

Man does not devote any thought as to how he should make his life meaningful. The human heart is the seat of the Divine. Every devotee should adore the Lord seated in the heart. The spiritual aspirant should fill his heart with divine feelings and lead a life of fulfilment.

### **The Chathaka bird and gopikas**

You have the example of the Chaathaka bird. It is in continuous search of pure rain-drops falling from clouds. There is no lack of water on the earth. But the Chaathaka bird desires only the pure unsullied rain drops falling from a cloud and will go through any amount of trouble to secure them. It has no use for any other kind of water associated with the earth. Likewise, the true *saadhaka*, devotee or disciple, will only desire to secure the nectarine love of the Lord and for its sake will be prepared to go through any trouble or sacrifice.

*The Gopikas* exemplified such deep devotion in their love for the Lord. They offered all they had in the service of the Lord and performed every act as an offering to the Divine. The term "Gopi" is derived from the word "Gup". The term "go" means the *Vedhas*. It has another meaning, "the earth." It also refers to the cow. The *Gopikas* used to chant the *Vedhas*. They protected the cows. They sanctified the earth. Not understanding this sublime aspect of their nature, people have misrepresented them in various ways, regarding them as ordinary women, Even their devotion was misconstrued because of the failure to understand the true nature of their love for the Lord. On account of their narrow-mindedness, these critics could not grasp the deep significance of the *Gopikas'* devotion.

### **God is the master of eight-petalled *Hridhaya Kamala***

In every human being, there are what are known as the *Shatchakras* (the six centres of life energy). Among them, two are important. One is the *Hridhaya Chakra* the *Chakra* relating to the heart. The other is the *Sahasraara Chakra--the Chakra* relating to the head. The *Hridhaya Chakra* is described in *Vedhaanthik* parlance as *Hridhaya Kamala* (the Lotus of the Heart). This "lotus" has eight petals. Every petal is called *Prakrithi* (Nature). All the eight petals are under the sway of the Lord. This means that God is the *Adhipathi* (master) of the eight petals. Because Krishna is the *Pathi* (husband) of these eight petals, he is said to have eight "Queens," according to the scriptural text. Those who did not understand the esoteric meaning of all this, described Krishna as having eight queens and as having sported with 16000 *Gopikas*. The real meaning of the reference to Krishna's "eight queens" is that he is the Lord of the lotus of the human heart. As such, he holds sway over the heart. When this is rightly understood, the supreme greatness of the Divine will be apparent.

### **The symbolic attributes of the Divine**

God is called in His Cosmic form as Vishnu, who permeates everything in the cosmos. God is the cause and the cosmos is the effect. You must try to understand the various attributes of the Lord. Vishnu is depicted as having a conch in one hand and a wheel in another. In a third hand he carries a mace and in the fourth a lotus. What is the esoteric significance of all this? The conch is a symbol of Sound. Hence, God is described as the embodiment of Sound. The *Chakra* (wheel) symbolises *Kaalachakra* (the Wheel of Time). The Lord is the master of Time and Sound. The mace signifies strength or power. This means that the Lord holds in his hand the strength of all beings. The lotus in the Lord's hand is a symbol of the heart. This means that the Lord holds in His hand the hearts of all beings. Because the symbolism of these attributes of the Divine was not properly explained by the commentators on the scriptures, a great deal of misunderstanding and confusion came to prevail in later years.

As regards the *Sahasraara Chakra* in the head of the human body, it is a thousand-petalled lotus, each petal having sixteen *Kalaas* (phases). There are thus 16000 *kalaas* in the *Sahasraara*. These phases were symbolically described as the wives of the Lord. The inner meaning of these expressions should be properly understood.

Going only by the superficial and literal meaning of these terms, the nature of the Divine is misconstrued and misinterpreted.

### **The Lord confers freedom**

It is necessary to get at the inner meaning of what is said in the Raamaayana, the Bhaagavatha or the Bible or any other scriptural text. The good is liable to be misunderstood and construed in perverse ways. There is need for protecting carefully what is good and sacred. A beautiful parrot is kept in a cage. No one bothers to safeguard the crow. Likewise, the wicked are without restraint. Only the good are subject to restraints, ordeals, tests and difficulties.

Krishna was born on *Ashtami* (the eighth day of the Lunar month). From the moment of birth, He was subject to troubles. But whoever cherished the name of the Lord in the heart was free from bondage. Vasudeva was a prisoner. But the moment Dhevaki placed the infant Krishna on her husband's head, he became free. The moment the Lord touched his head, Vasudeva's fetters dropped away. As long as he carried Krishna on his head and till he deposited the child in Repalle, he was free. He placed the child in Yasoda's house. Then he returned to his prison and

became bound as before. What is the meaning of this episode? As long as Divine thoughts fill our minds, there is no bondage. But when you give up the Lord, you get bound in every way.

There are deep inner meanings for the actions of the Lord. Kamsa tried every conceivable means to kill Krishna. But the Lord is beyond the grasp of anyone. Small-minded persons, consumed by hatred and jealousy, may entertain such designs. But these evil plans only recoil on the plotters and can cause no harm to God. They will only enhance His, glory

### **The foes of Krishna**

There were reasons for Kamsa's hatred. An ethereal voice had declared that Kamsa would meet with his death at the hands of the eighth child of Dhevaki. Out of the selfish desire to save his own life, Kamsa sought to do away with Krishna by various means. All his efforts were of no avail. Kamsa carried out a slaughter of the children in Repalle in the hope of killing Krishna. Krishna eluded his grasp. A man's intellect turns crazy when he is facing destruction. Because of his wicked actions, Kamsa came to a disastrous end.

This, however, is not the end of the story. Two other wicked men, Sishupala and Dhanthavkra, rose against Krishna. After these two had been slain by Krishna, Jaraasandha came forward. Many demons in human form sought to eliminate Krishna. They all failed utterly. They brought disaster upon themselves. Thus, from aeon to aeon, the Divine is confronted with such hostile elements. Happiness cannot be got without going through difficulties. Fame is the product of blame.

Such incidents happen in the life of every *Avathaar* and in every age. They serve to promote the greatness of the *Avathaar* and not to tarnish it.

Is it possible for any ordinary individual to make his appearance simultaneously in numerous different places? If it is stated that the same person appeared simultaneously in the homes of 16000 *Gopikas*, not only will people today disbelieve in it, but many will ridicule it. But this is the reaction of petty, unthinking people, who have no spirit of enquiry. If one enquires into the truth, it will be seen that even in modern times such a phenomenon is taking place. The broadcast of music programme from Delhi is heard in millions of homes in its completeness, all at the same time in a myriad different places. A person speaking on T.V. can be seen in a million homes. If a man made *yanthra* (contrivance) can have such a far-reaching power, why should it not be possible for the power of *manthra* to reach millions simultaneously?

### **How God's grace operates**

The image of Krishna could appear in the hearts of the *Gopis*, though they were far away from Him. What is necessary is to purify the heart. The image of the Divine will not be reflected in an impure heart. There is no limit to the power of the Divine. Only the small-minded have limited power. God alone knows to whom, in what circumstances, at what time, to what extent and in what form His grace should be showered.

For example, take the case of Dhraupadhi. In his vast audience-hall Dhuryodhana was inflicting humiliation on Dhraupadhi. Unknown and unseen by anyone, Krishna was giving to Dhraupadhi an endless number of saris. How are ordinary persons likely to view the situation? They might ask: "How is Krishna tolerating this kind of disrobing of Dhraupadhi? Why does he not reduce Dhuryodhana to ashes that very moment? Why does He not put an end to his life? When the devotees are in agony, should the Divine merely look on?" The ignorant may tend to react in this fashion.

But the Divine, who is the embodiment of peace, love and truth, has to take note of *Kaarana*, *Kaarya* and *Karthavya* (the cause, the remedy and the task to be done). In the great cosmic drama, the Lord is also an actor. The time should be ripe for the role He has to play in a particular sequence of events. His action should be appropriate to His role. He cannot act otherwise.

### **God's role in the great cosmic drama**

For instance, if Krishna decided to kill Dhuryodhana at the moment of Draupadi's humiliation, He would be going against His role in the play. He has to play His specific part. Krishna knew that Dhuryodhana's end lay in the hands of Bheema and not in His. It would be against his *dharma* if he did what Bheema had to do. Bheema alone should slay Dhuryodhana with his mace. This is the law of creation. Krishna waited for the ordained event.

Likewise, in various situations, the Lord remains as a witness. Is the Lord powerless or is the devotee's prayer ineffective? This sort of doubt arose once in the mind of saint Thyaagaraaja. His elder brother subjected him to many ordeals. Resenting the action of Thyaagaraaja in rejecting the treasures sent by the ruler of Thanjavur to the saint, the elder brother cast into the river the idols of Raama and others worshipped by him. Thyaagaraaja made a frantic search for the missing idols. Although a great devotee, Thyaagaraaja felt frustrated. He asked the Lord, "Oh Raama! why are you subjecting me to these difficulties? Is it because my devotion has weakened? Or has your power declined?" Thyaagaraaja felt that his devotion had not diminished. So Raama's power must have weakened. But, pondering over it further, he realised that Raama's strength remained undiminished. He began to sing a song in praise of Raama's prowess. "Without Raama's power, could a monkey have been able to cross the ocean? Or would the Goddess of wealth have chosen to be his consort? Or Lakshmana serve him? Or the supremely intelligent Bharatha revel in beholding him and worshipping him?" Thyaagaraaja ecstatically extolled the infinite prowess of Raama and blamed his own ignorance for having doubts about Raama.

Many devotees, out of their worldly pre-occupations and narrow-mindedness, tend to develop doubts about the Lord. The Lord, however, always remains at the same supreme level. He is not elated by praise or depressed by censure. The Lord is unchanging.

### **Lord's concern for the well-being of the world**

The Divine, therefore, has to be viewed from a wide perspective. Whatever the Lord does is for the well-being of the world. His sole concern is the welfare of the world.

It was this which made Bhaarath declare from ancient times, "Let all the world's people be happy." From early times Bhaarath held forth great ideals to all other countries in the realms of ethics and spirituality. With the passage of time, faith in these ideals has waned. Man today is plagued by scepticism. He is racked by doubts. The combination of these two is the cause of all troubles.

In the Mahaabhaaratha, Shakuni represents *Anumaana* (doubt). Kama symbolises *Avishvaasam* (lack of faith). When these two come together, *Asuuya* (envy) in the form of Dhuryodhana emerges. Envy is accompanied by wickedness in the form of Dhussaasana. When the four came together, the fate of the Kauravas was sealed. The Kauravas represent bad thoughts, bad intentions, bad actions and bad attachments.

Krishna clearly foresaw the fate of the Kauravas long before the Kurukshethra war. He told Arjuna: "Get up. Be prepared for war Justice will prevail. Selfishness will suffer disaster. This is the *Dharma* of every age. The parents of these wicked ones will have none of their children left to offer them the last rites. That is the decree of fate." Krishna concluded His call to Arjuna with the declaration that there has to be a downpour of arrows to ensure world peace after the wicked Kama, Shakuni and others had been destroyed in the fires of hate stirred up by them.

Over the ages, the wicked have behaved in the manner of the Kauravas and have met with the fate they deserved. There is no escape for anyone from the consequences of his actions. Death may come at any time,, in any place, in any form. No one can tell time or manner of anyone's death. It is pre-ordained. There is no meaning in analyzing the pros and cons of such happenings. Even good devotees sometimes develop doubts and argue over trifles.

### **How anger reduces one's strength**

Once Krishna set out to kill Jaraasandha. But whenever Jaraasandha came out of his city to fight Krishna, the latter would flee from the battlefield. Was Krishna afraid of jaraasandha? Not at all. But Krishna wanted to find out the appropriate means of slaying Jaraasandha. Krishna had a strategy. Each time Krishna went to challenge Jaraasandha, he would get enraged. He would come out to pursue Krishna. Krishna would go on retreating. By repeating these tactics several times, Jaraasandha was made to expend his strength in futile rage.

A man's strength is considerably reduced by his anger. A man's life-span is cut to pieces by the shears of envy, anger and hatred. Envy is the main cause of shortening a man's life; when a man gets angry, his whole body trembles. His blood gets heated. It takes three months for the blood to get cool again. One moment of anger may consume the energy got from six months of eating. This is the way anger debilitates a person. By systematically weakening Jaraasandha in this way, ultimately Krishna managed to slay him.

### **The Lord is not visible to the non-believer**

Consider the cases of Hiranyaaksha and Hiranyakashipu. They were not ordinary men. They were the incarnations of Jaya and Vijaya, the divine guards at the gate of the Lord's mansion (in Vaikunta). Hiranyakashipu developed bitter hatred towards Vishnu as the slayer of his brother, Hiranyaaksha. He searched for Vishnu in every conceivable place--in the ocean, deep in the earth and in the sky--but could not find Him. Had Vishnu run away from Hiranyakashipu out of fear? No. He was omnipresent. But He could not proclaim it Himself. He made Hiranyakashipu's son Prahlada declare it. He asked Prahlada: "You simpleton! You go on praising Hari. Where is that Hari? Show him to me. I have explored every particle of the Universe. I have not found him. Hence I am the Lord whom you should worship." Prahlada replied: "How can I worship the enemy of Hari? Hari is everywhere." "Can you show Him?" asked his father. "Certainly," replied Prahlada. "Is he in that pillar?" "Yes, he is," said Prahlada. The Lord came out of the pillar to confirm his devotee's faith. Prahlada had affirmed the omnipresence of the Lord and the Lord testified to the truth of his belief. The Lord is not visible to the non-believer.

### **Lord observes the rules of the Cosmic game**

Whether the Lord makes his presence felt in certain situations or not should not be judged by narrow human considerations. The Lord will reveal His powers only at the appropriate moment, when the time is ripe. Just as a fruit takes time to ripen, God also bides his time. It is improper to speculate on the nature of the Divine's actions. Even the omnipotent and omniscient Lord has to

respect the time factor. He has to observe the rules of the Cosmic game. He cannot violate His own rules and regulations even as a traffic authority cannot transgress the traffic rules made by him.

For instance, God has endowed a lamp with the power to shed light and the wind with the power to blow out the lamp. When a lamp is exposed to the wind, the Lord will not direct the wind not to blow out the lamp. Everything in creation has to act according to the laws of its existence. The five elements are governed by laws which they have to observe.

The Bhaagavatha relates many episodes which give rise to questions. The answers to these questions may vary according to the understanding of the persons concerned. But no one can fully comprehend the ways of the Lord. Whatever is destined to happen must happen. No one is competent to ask of God why he has not prevented something. God alone can decide this matter.

Few can account for the actions of the Lord. For five thousand years, men have been exploring every kind of phenomena in this Universe. But no one has been able to unravel the mystery of the Divine. God is all-powerful, all-knowing and all-pervasive. But whatever happens in the Universe is governed by cosmic laws. Their working cannot be easily understood. That is why a devotee said: "Is it possible, Oh Krishna, to recognise your mystery? You are subtler than the atom and vaster than the vastest thing in creation. You are present in the 84 lakhs of species in the Universe and permeate every place in the cosmos. You are present in the good as well as the wicked and make them play their respective roles. You are in the accuser and in the accused. How can anyone understand your Divine mystery?"

When men declare their belief in the idea that God is one, irrespective of differences in names, they should act upto their belief by developing equal-mindedness towards everyone. This is the cardinal principle of Bhaaratheeya culture: to treat joy and sorrow, loss and gain with equal serenity.

### **Submitting to God's will leads to bliss**

Realise that it is not possible to comprehend fully the ways of the Divine. Strengthen your faith in God, carry out the Lord's injunctions, experience the bliss derived therefrom and redeem your lives. Do not indulge in futile speculation or controversy. All are aspects of the Divine. Whatever happens is for your good. Fill your hearts with this conviction. Consider everything as coming from God for your good. God knows what is good for you even as a loving mother knows what a child needs. No one can expect to receive whatever he prays for, because in his ignorance he may ask for what is not good for him. The wise man will not seek anything from God, but leave everything to God.

### **Chaithanya's firm faith in the will of the Divine**

Chaithanya exemplified this quality of unquestioning faith in the will of the Divine. When he was going about in his native village Navadhweep, chanting the name of Krishna, some envious persons attacked him and took away the cymbals from his hands. Chaithanya accepted the loss as a sign of grace from Krishna and continued singing, using his hands for clapping. He said; "Oh Lord! I am using these hands you have given to me for clapping, while singing your praise. I can do without the cymbals." The miscreants then bound his hands to prevent him from clapping. Chaithanya exclaimed: "Lord! I shall keep the rhythm of my chanting with. my voice. Your love

will be my tune. I know *no yoga*. I have done no penance. I do not care for the treasures of the world. My greatest and only wealth is your love. Confer this wealth on me."

Of what avail are *japa*. and penance without the love of the Lord? They are like preparing an excellent food in an untinned vessel. The entire food gets poisoned. Likewise, one may practise the nine forms of devotion, but without love of God in the heart, they are useless. Chaithanya declared. "Oh Lord! I want your love alone and nothing else."

At his birth, the name given to Chaithanya was Gauraanga, because of his fair complexion. But as he was always chanting the name "Krishna, Krishna," he got the popular name "Krishna Chaithanya" (one who was immersed in Krishna consciousness). The moment he repeated Krishna's name he used to lose his consciousness.

In this manner, there are many great ones who have the names given to them at birth and the names by which they get known later on. The lives of these great ones should be regarded as ideals for the rest of mankind.

### **Strive continually to develop Divine Love**

*Embodiments of Divine Love!* It is not enough if you merely celebrate this day as a festive occasion because it is Krishna's birthday. Krishna was the very embodiment of love. He attracted every one by His love. He melted the hearts of one and all. He made the lives of many meaningful. Love was at the root of all He did.

All must strive continually to develop love. In earlier ages, men had fear of sin. The Lord's command was: Fear sin, love the Lord. Unfortunately, today in the *Kali Yuga* (the present age of discord), people love sin and abhor God. Why should anyone fear God? Those, who ought to be afraid to commit sin, are having fear of God. Instead of loving God, people are loving sin. This is the reversal of what ought to prevail. People are leading lives opposed to what is proper.

The Chaathaka bird will not shrink from being near a cloud to catch the fresh raindrops even if there are dreadful thunder and blinding lightning. It prays constantly for the pure unsullied raindrops. This is the attitude *saadhakas* should cultivate today. They must be prepared to face any kind of censure, criticism, trouble or obstacle. They should adhere to their goal regardless of anything. The *Gopikas* exemplified this type of devotion. They had no fear of any threats or abuse. They were totally unaffected.

### **Love God and fear none**

Hence, stick to your truth. Love God and fear none. Only the guilty need fear. Why fear when you are innocent? Without any fear in your hearts, meditate on God. This is the royal road to the Divine in the *Kali Yuga*.

There is no protector like the Divine. This was demonstrated in the case of Dhraupadhi, when none of her valiant husbands or others came to her rescue and Krishna alone saved her from humiliation.

The Lord alone is the saviour of the helpless and the forlorn. Do not waver in your faith in the Lord in any circumstance. Go ahead with your tasks with faith and determination.

God tests people in many ways. They are intended only to promote your spiritual progress. None can affect God in any way. Why lose your faith in Him? They are signs of weakness. Give no room for such unfortunate doubts. Strengthen your faith and realise God by your devotion.

*Discourse in the Sai Ramesh Mandap, Brindhaavan on 10-8-1993, Gokulaashtami Day.*