

13. Detachment Gives Peace Even Amidst Troubles

నకినీ వలనకడ జలముతాకరళం
ఆవృత జీవిత మతకయవపలం
విల్లివార్యభ్రమన గ్రీస్తుం
అంకం వగోక హాతం వ సమస్తం.

తామనాకుపై ఆశలకలాశ్చ
నీతి బాంధ్యవేదో నిలకడ తోలితి
బ్రతు. కమనాన పుత్రులు పుట్టుతా
విసులు వ్యః బుమలతెరతా అంకము.

This world is like a shining drop of water that collects on a lotus leaf. It quivers and shakes without being steady. Heaps of attachments fill the life of man. Trouble and

sorrow constitute the screen on which the world shows itself.

As a drop of water on a lotus leaf disappears in no time, even so, we should know that our life is transient and will disappear very much like that and in no time. The world is full of sorrow and the human body is full of disease. Our life is full of turbulent thoughts and is like a dilapidated house. Under these conditions, according to Sankara, it is possible to live in a peaceful manner, only by following the divine path and getting over all our worldly attachments. So long as one does not know who he is, one cannot escape these sorrows. So long as one does not realise the *Easwara Thathwa* or the presence of *Easwara* in everything, one cannot escape this sorrow. So long as one does not understand that to be born, to grow, to live and to die is only for one purpose and that is to understand the nature of *Atma*, the one imperishable thing, it is not possible for him to escape this sorrow.

Just as the lotus flower is born in water, stays in water, lives in water and ultimately withers away in water, so also, this human life is born in the *Atma Thathwa*, stays and lives in the *Atma Thathwa* and is finally merged in the *Atma Thathwa*. This verse conveys that the *Atma Thathwa* is the pond or the lake, that *maya* is the bunch of leaves and that the *Jiva* comes out as the

lotus flower in this pond of *Atma*. This lotus spreads the fragrance of many good qualities. While spreading such fragrance, even the water in the pond becomes one with the *Atma Thathwa*. The drops of water which come out of the pond of *Atma* come to the leaves of the lotus and go back to the *Atma*. This going back to the source is what is contained as an essence in this verse. In the infinity of the *Atma*, the *jiva* comes as the lotus because *maya* spreads in the form of leaves. The *jiva* which is like the lotus spreads the fragrance of the good qualities which can be ascribed to the *Jiva Thathwa*.

Vishnu Thathwa is synonymous with the realisation of omnipresence. Out of the navel of *Vishnu* comes the lotus which gives rise to the creator, *Brahma*. The various petals that constitute this lotus are the different components of this world. Thus, starting from this *Vishnu* aspect or the aspect of omnipresence, the creator comes. Out of the creator comes the *Jiva Thathwa*. Out of the *Jiva*, come various things which in the end go back and become one with the source, the *Atma Thathwa*. This is the threefold description of what we see namely *Jiva*, *Easwara* and *Prakruthi*. Our feeling that this threefold description of the universe is equivalent to a diversity therein is an illusion. The oneness of it all is the basis of *Adwaitha*.

For a tree to be born, to grow and ultimately give you the fruit, there are three essential things. These are the wind, rain and the earth. More than these three, the

seed is of even greater importance. If we do not have the seed, even if we have the other necessary ingredients like the earth, rain and wind, we will not be able to see the tree. In the same manner, it is in accordance with the *sankalpa* of the Lord that man is created in the world. Man comes into this world as if he comes from a seed. In the case of every man, the *sankalpa* that creates him is like a seed. So long as the *sankalpa* of desires are in man, it is not possible for him to escape being born. On the day when he becomes completely free from his *sankalpa*, or desire, that day will he be free from rebirth.

In order that he may take this sacred path, free from desires, he has to surrender himself. There are certain obstacles which make it difficult for one to be able to surrender. Everyone understands that in this world, it is not possible to enter the house of an affluent person or the house of a person who is in a position of importance, with ease and without being questioned. At the entrance to the house, you will find a watchman who will ask what business you have with the owner. If in the case of a person, who has limited power and a worldly position, there are such restrictions regulating your entry into his house, what is the wonder that in the case of God, who has unlimited powers, there are regulations restricting your entry into his mansion.

If you want to enter the palace of *Moksha* or liberation, you will find that at the main entrance there are two guards. This entrance is the place where you

offer yourself and may be called the gate of surrender. The two guards who are there are *Srama* (effort) and *Dama* (patience). The meaning of this is that you must make an effort and you must have patience. These are the two guards at the door. However much you offer yourself in surrender, it is not possible for you to enter God's abode without *Srama* and *Dama*. This would mean the control of your outer and inner organs. Today, it has become rare for us to find a *sadhaka* who has achieved control over his organs. Everywhere you find the path of falsehood. You do not find people who follow the path of truth. Although for external appearances one is a man, the ideas and thoughts are those of a monkey. Where one should naturally laugh, one is found to cry and where one should naturally cry, one is found to grin. Is this not a path of falsehood?

So long as you put on such false appearances, God, who is all merciful, will never show himself to you. All these external and false appearances are described as acting in a drama, whereas what is truth in you could be referred to as the aspect of Narayana. While devoting your life to such worldly pleasures and ideas, it is not possible for you to realise God.

There is a story of a King, who used to ask all people who came to his kingdom to tell him the correct path for realisation. Each one, basing himself either on some standard texts or on what elders had told him, used to say that a particular path was the right one for

liberation. While this was going on, a servant close to the King was listening to the many descriptions of the right path for liberation that were being given. He found that the king was listening continuously to various methods of attaining *moksha*, but he was not putting any one of them into practice.

With the intention of teaching the king a good lesson, one day when the king was sitting and talking to many people in the central hall, the servant came from outside shouting loudly. The king then got up and asked the servant why he was shouting. The servant replied, with some anxiety in his face, that all the camels in the zoo were climbing up to the top of the terrace and running away. The king asked how the camels could climb the terrace and run away. The servant then said that if the king, steeped in luxury, can aspire to climb up the path of spirituality and attain liberation and *moksha*, there need be no surprise at the camels climbing to the terrace and then running away. The king understood that the servant was wanting to point out to him the absurdity of his attempts and that he should first sacrifice all the worldly pleasures before hoping to attain liberation. From that day, realising the truth, the king started thinking of God and putting good things into practice. You can attain *Moksha*, even while performing worldly duties, if your mind remains immersed in divinity. You will then be working in consonance with God. However, on account of the influence of this age of *Kali*, almost

all of us fail to understand and implement the inner meaning of these practices.

Vedanta teaches us that once we recognise the essential basis of all that we see, there is no need for any more *sadhana*. If you have a pot with a hole in it, you can never fill it with water. In the same manner, if the pot of our mind has got many holes in the form of sensory desires, then all the work that we do will not fill our mind with sacred thoughts. Only when there are no holes, can your attempts become fruitful and take you to the divine.

There is a small story to illustrate this. There was a *guru* with a large number of disciples and the *guru* was telling them some good things. One day, when the lesson was going on, the teacher told the disciples that while they are engaged in *puja* and meditation, no matter what obstacles come their way, they must take care to see that their meditation is not disturbed. The disciples had great faith in the *guru*. There were also some disciples who were staying in the *ashram* itself. On a birthday of the *guru*, one disciple decided to offer special prayers to the *guru* by repeating the 108 names of the Lord. The disciple collected a photograph, 108 flowers and wanted to perform the *puja* in the traditional manner.

Another disciple invited the *guru* and took him to his house. The *guru* while going told the disciple, who wanted to do the worship at the *ashram* itself, to be

careful and asked him to keep the front door closed. The day was very hot and the *guru* neither had slippers for his feet nor did he have sufficient hair on his head to protect him from the sun. When the *guru* returned to the ashram and wanted the door to be opened, the disciple inside was engaged in offering *puja*. The *guru* knocked at the door and asked the disciple to open the door. The disciple replied that he was engaged in *puja* and that the *guru* must wait till the *puja* was over, as the *puja* was not to be interrupted.

Today ninety-nine out of a hundred people are like this disciple. They only worship the photograph of the person whose grace they long for, and continue to do so even when the latter is knocking at the very door of the worshipper. In the process, they are willing to even cause harm to the very objective. In this way, even when God is available to us for worship in person, we are getting mixed up in various things and we adopt un-understandable and meaningless methods, by which the worship is not properly done. If we do not recognise the divinity in living beings, how can we recognise it in lifeless photographs and speechless stones? Therefore we must first understand what is meant by seeing divinity in everyone. It will then become quite clear to us that the *Atma Thathwa* in every being is one and the same.

Our faith diminishes because our ambitions are limitless. There is a small story for this. There was a rich person who had a daughter with a flat nose. The

father wanted to get this girl married. Every person who came and looked at the girl used to go away, although they were tempted by the wealth. In those days, persons who could perform plastic surgery were not available. In desperation, he announced that he would give plenty of money to anyone who would marry the girl. He somehow found someone willing to marry her.

The marriage was performed and thereafter the couple developed considerable faith in God. They visited many temples, went on many pilgrimages and bathed in many sacred rivers. They met a saint who advised them that no one who is involved in worldly matters can give a good nose. Only He, who created the nose can bring it back to normal. Although they had lots of wealth, they were not happy at all. The girl used to feel that others were looking at her and making fun. She suggested to her husband that they should both go to the lonely Himalayas and pray to God and spend a month there in that manner. He agreed and they did so. The girl had a great desire to get back her nose, so she began to pray to God in great earnestness. God appeared, due to her good luck and asked her what she wanted. As soon as God appeared, she asked for the grant of a good looking big nose. God said, so it shall be and granted her the boon.

As soon as God disappeared, she looked at her face. She looked at the big nose and felt that she had become uglier than before. She prayed again more earnestly and God appeared again and asked her what

she wanted. She said that she did not want that big nose. God said, so it shall be and granted her the boon. She immediately found that her nose had completely disappeared. She had thought that she was praying to God for a good nose and in the process, she lost her nose completely.

The moral of this story is that although God is present before you, playing with you and talking with you, you do not know what to ask, when to ask and where to ask. Not knowing what we should ask, we are asking him for one thing while really we want something else. In this process, we are getting ourselves into difficulties. God is always ready to give you all that you want, but you do not seem to know what is good for you and what you really want. Since you do not know what you should want and under what circumstances, it is better and easier to surrender yourself completely to God and simply ask for His grace.

The names of those who, without any thought of God, have endeavoured to bring about material prosperity in the world will remain only as those inscribed on the surface of water. Such names will gradually be forgotten. Even if it is a very powerful electric current, it will be of no use to you if there is only the positive aspect and you cannot combine it with the negative. On the contrary, if a machine is only on the negative and is not connected to the positive side of the electric current,

the machine will be a lump of metal and no more.

The world is like the negative pole. Divinity is like the positive pole. It is only by bringing them together that we can get peace and happiness. Great saints like Kabir, Jayadeva, Gauranga, Tukaram, Ramakrishna Paramahansa and rishis like Vyasa and Valmiki have their names engraved on our hearts eternally because they had realised the need for bringing the world and God together by converting work into worship.

We should serve the world and earn the grace of God. This is very necessary for youth. Many young people ask the question if there is God. They further ask if God is present, where is He, and so on. They waste their time in asking such questions. In that context, Totaka, a disciple of Sankara, was approached by some young man and was asked such questions. He was also asked why he was wearing the yellow robe and why he was wasting his time by remaining with the *guru*. Totaka said that his *guru* only could answer such questions and took the young man to Sankara. Sankara asked him whether his doubt is in regard to his God or Totaka's God. The young questioner asked why Sankara was distinguishing between his God and Totaka's God, while God is only one and is not different for different people. By asking such a question, he displayed his foolishness in accepting the existence of only one God and yet was questioning His reality.

Young students,

What really exists is only God. Everything else is false. We are questioning what truly exists and accepting the reality of what is false without questioning. We should have belief in the existence of the one truth and that is divinity. By such faith, I hope you will pursue a sacred path for going through your life and bring glory to your country.