

cry for so many things between your birth and death. Have you at any time cried for *dharma* or for attaining something good in life? Why and for what purpose did you cry? Did you cry for the sake of crying? We should not cry and feel sorry simply to spend our time.

All the effort that we make should be towards attaining our objective and the ideal for which we stand. This can happen only through love. From time immemorial, the love which one shows towards God has been called *bhakthi* by the citizens of Bharath. To enable us to earn the grace of the Lord, there are so many different paths. To reach God, to be close to God, and to understand the Lord and his miracles, it is this kind of *prema* and *bhakthi* that will help us. *Bhakthi* has also been used by man as an instrument in order to go closer to the Lord in some way or the other. The meaning and significance of *bhakthi* is to get close to the Lord by some means such as by showing love as a father, as a mother, as a brother, as a wife, or as a son, etc.

There are other paths also for achieving the same objective. These paths are described as the path of *jnana* (wisdom) and the path of *karma*. However, to take the path of *jnana* is a difficult matter because certain qualities like perseverance, wisdom, intelligence

## 14. The Path Of Love Is The Quickest To Reach God

**I**n areas where there is no *prema*, plant the seeds of *prema* and get the ecstasy of *prema* to pour out in the form of rain in such a dry area. Get the rivers of *prema* to such places. “Oh! Krishna, play your *murali* in such a way that the rivers of *prema* will flow in the hearts of men.”

*Pavitratma Swarupas,*

Boys and girls, so long as we have the illusion that the surroundings and the material world are realities, our troubles are not going to leave us. Today, in the context of the present situation, young people like you should develop faith in God and thus progress in life. You cry when you are born, you cry when you die, you

are required if you want to follow this path. So, the path of *jnana* appears somewhat more difficult in comparison to the path of *bhakti*. If we talk of the path of *karma*, then self-confidence is very necessary. In this path of *karma*, one depends on one's own strength and capacity, and one does not depend on God. To follow this path of *karma*, depending on our own capacity all the time, appears somewhat difficult. If we consider the path of yoga, we come to the conclusion that it requires certain discipline to go through the various types of yoga such as the *Astanga Yoga* (eight-fold discipline), and also you will have to have a correct type of guru. These other paths—the paths of *jnana*, *karma*, and yoga are somewhat more difficult than the path of *bhakti*. The path of love is an easy and short path. This kind of love or *prema* is not something which is fixed either on an individual, or on a community, or a specific object. It is a wide-spread aspect. It is only when we can broaden this concept of love that we will be able to understand and experience the sacredness of love and the divinity of such love. God is an embodiment of love. To reach God and to understand his divinity, the only path that is available to us is the path of love.

When the moon comes up in the sky, you can see it directly. You do not require the aid of a torch light,

or a petromax lamp, or any other artificial light. The reason why you do not require another light is that it is possible for us to look at the moon by the light of the moon. In the same manner, if we want to go near God, who is an embodiment of love, or if we want to understand God, it becomes possible to do so only by means of love which is characteristic of him. God, who is the embodiment of love, is not confined to one place or spot. He is present everywhere, in every nook and corner of the world. It is very essential for young people to love all and to regard loving all as loving God, who is present in all of them. Since God is selfless, we also should promote our love in a manner in which it becomes selfless love.

To enjoy the love of God (who is selfless) in a selfish manner and confine his love to yourself is not the right thing to do. But until we reach a certain level, we should try and experience the Lord in a limited manner. When we are in a limited position, and when our own life is not broad enough, it is not possible to experience the love in a broad manner. Therefore, the first step for us is to practice certain methods by which our love can be broadened sufficiently. We have a small example.

Suppose we take a small incense stick. In that small incense stick, we see fire. If you are smoking a

cigarette, you will find fire in that cigarette also. If there is a forest fire on a hill, we see a big fire in that as well. The fire that we see on the incense stick, that we see on a cigarette, and the fire we see in the case of the forest fire, all constitute fire. In the feeling that all the three constitute fire, if you bring some logs of firewood and put them on the cigarette or on the incense stick the fire will be extinguished, the firewood will not catch fire. On the other hand, if we take even tender and green leaves and put them in a raging forest fire, they will catch fire and burn away. In the same manner, if the fire of love in you is not broad enough, you will not be able to sustain the great fire of love of God. If you begin to talk of the all-pervading love and widespread *prema* of the Lord, then there is a danger of the feeble fire of love in you getting extinguished. Before you can experience such equal-mindedness and before you can experience this love in everyone, the first step is to promote the love within yourself and raise it to a sufficiently high level. For this, it is necessary for you to recognise a form and the appropriate time for this. If you do not take cognisance of the situation and the time around you, then you will not be able to promote *prema* in yourself. God's love is like an infinite and endless ocean. Simply because God's love is infinite and endless, you cannot carry all

of it with you. What you can carry with you will depend on the size of the pot that you take.

So the first thing to do is to enlarge the size of your pot, and this can be done by the practice of *sadhana*. In this *sadhana*, the first step is respect for your mother. The *bhakthi* or love towards the mother should be such that you recognise the great love and affection with which your mother has brought you up. You must return gratitude to your mother in the form of love or *bhakthi*. The mother will also show *bhakthi* in the form of *vatsalya* (affection of mother for child), in return, to the love of the son. Mother will bathe, dress, and cajole the baby and put the baby to sleep. While doing all these, she will be attending to her daily duties. In this way, the attachment and affection between the mother and the son can be promoted. If promoted properly, that itself can be shaped in the form of *bhakthi* towards the Lord.

It is in this context that this type of *bhakthi*, or devotion, or love between mother and son has been described as *Vatsalya Bhakthi* in the *Bhagavatha*. The mother in Yasoda was looking after the Lord in the form of a baby, was dressing and cajoling him. This attachment was such that she used to put the baby on her lap like a jackfruit. Not only this, although Krishna

was born to Devaki, Yasoda was looking after Krishna as if he were her own son, and she was developing *Vatsalya Bhakthi* towards Krishna. In spite of the fact that several *gopikas* used to complain about Krishna, Yasoda loved him all the more; and she never bothered about the complaints. On one occasion when these complaints became too many, the mother was not able to hear any more; and she asked Krishna why he did not eat what she gave him and why he had to go and steal from other houses as if they did not have enough curds or milk in their own home. She was cajoling him and asking him about this in a very endearing manner. When Balarama and Satyaki came and complained to Yasoda that Krishna was eating mud, she was very confused and asked Krishna to open his mouth. When the mouth was opened, she found that the mouth was smelling of butter instead of mud. She was in confusion that she did not know what was the truth.

Although Krishna was a tiny little boy, his greatness was being seen in his own mouth. He asked, “Am I a child? Or am I so foolish as to eat dust?” When a small baby asks such a question, we must see here that he is expressing his own greatness in a remarkable manner. The greatness in Krishna can be seen in this answer itself. “When the whole universe is within me, is it possible for you to feed me with some little sweet?

While I am present in every *jiva*, is it possible for you to give me an appropriate name? While I am present in all the oceans of this world, is it possible for you to give me a bath with water?” When all the universe is present in him, really what is the meaning of feeding him? When his brightness is like that of a million suns, what is the meaning of taking a lamp to see him? When he cannot be understood and approached by the biggest of people in this world, how can anyone understand or comprehend his form. In spite of hearing and seeing all this, and in spite of being told about the greatness and the divinity of Krishna by Krishna himself, yet the mother in Yasoda was such that she always wanted to see the young boy in Krishna and in that *vatsalya prema* of a mother to a son, she was getting immense pleasure and emancipation.

Therefore, if you want to get realisation, then it is not necessary for you to follow all the various types of *bhakthi* that have been described. If you attach yourself to the Lord through one chosen path like *prema*, it will be possible to realise him. Yasoda was such that she was filled with *prema* at all times. She never spent one moment separated from Krishna or not thinking of Krishna. She used to ask if there were any bliss greater than being near to the tender rosy cheeks of the child, Krishna. She regarded this baby form of Krishna as the

form of the Lord, she expressed *prema* to that form, and thus she realised God. This has been called *Vatsalya Prema* (affection of a mother for a child) in our *Bhagavatha*.

The next is *Sakhya Bhakthi* (Devotion to God as a friend) and this was demonstrated by the gopals. They played with Krishna and were one with him. They never thought that he was God or an incarnation or an *Avatar*. They thought that Krishna was one of the gopals and that kind of intimate relationship of being one with the Lord is described as *Sakhya Bhakthi*. They used to play hide and seek with Krishna and regarded him as one of their playmates, and thus they became one with him. This was the manner in which they expressed their devotion to him.

During the afternoon all the cattle were kept under a tree and all the gopals and Krishna used to sit under the shade of another tree. They would share the food between them; and in this manner, a close relationship developed between them. Not only this, the gopals never strayed away even for a moment from Krishna, and they were always looking after the cattle. When the cattle were grazing happily, they used to come and sit with Krishna and ask him to narrate stories. Thus they spent every moment with Krishna. In their playing,

singing, and living, they took Krishna as part and parcel of themselves and they were living together.

In those days, Krishna used to play on the *murali* very well. In fact, he used to play on it much better than any other Gopala could play. He could send everyone into ecstasy when he played on the *murali*. One of the gopals would come to Krishna and say, “Sing, sing to my heart’s content and utter sweet words so that I might feel happy, take the essence of the *Vedas* and sing it through the golden voice of your flute and fill it to my heart’s content.” Another Gopala would come and tell Krishna, “Our cows are the *Upanishads* and the four feet of the cows are like the four *Vedas*, and out of the cows’ milk, take the *Vedas* and the essence of the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* and pour it into your flute and sing it for us.”

In this manner, the gopals moved around Krishna and they regarded him as a friend and identified themselves with him. These gopals used to go to the banks of the river, Yamuna, and swim in the river. When they swam, they would try to catch the legs of the Lord, and it looked as if the big fish was going ahead with the small fish coming behind, trying to catch the legs of the big fish. Thus, in their daily lives they regarded Krishna as a common human friend, and

they were enjoying the humane qualities of Krishna. Gopalas were not worried, even if their own brothers and sisters were at a distance from them, but they used to grieve if they were separated from Krishna even for a moment. Thus, we see that the gopalas wanted to get close to Krishna by some method or the other. They were not doing any *thapas* or *puja*. They were adopting methods of *prema* and love to be near Krishna.

Krishna was regarded as the ocean of love, and the gopalas regarded themselves as drops of water which have come out of this ocean of love. Their sole purpose was to take their own lives and merge them with the infinite ocean of love. So long as we hold a drop of water in the palm of our hand, it remains a drop of water; but if we take this drop of water and mix it with the ocean, then there is no more a drop of water, as it loses its individuality and merges with the ocean. Thus, the gopalas tried to take their individual drops of *prema* and merge them with the infinite ocean of *prema* of the Lord. What better objective can there be beyond wanting to merge with the Lord?

The third type of *prema* is called the *Virodha Prema* or inimical *prema*. In some way or the other, they also became close to the Lord. Kamsa, Dantavakra, Jarasandha, and Poundarika Vasudeva were examples

of such persons. They hated Krishna so much that even during their sleep, if Krishna's name was heard, they would jump in excitement. For people who have faith, a look at the form of God or hearing the description of the Lord, will make them joyful; but for people who are inimical, they are such that even when they are sleeping or eating, they will always be thinking of the person whom they hate.

There was an incident when Sisupala was sitting at a place and the shadow of his leg was seen on the wall. Looking at this shadow, he was terrified because he thought that Krishna had come. The inimical *prema* is such that, at all times, and under all circumstances, they are afraid of the Lord, although they think of the Lord only in an inimical way. In this way, God's name and form get permanently imprinted in their hearts. By such a close relationship, they also become close to the Lord. How does it matter how you achieve your sleep as long as you sleep? Does it matter whether you sleep in the choultry or in the veranda? Fire has the quality of burning, and it will burn you whether you touch it knowingly or unknowingly. The shining brilliance of Krishna was such that it always purified whether one came near it willingly or unwillingly. It does not matter how or why one does it, but when one thinks of the name and form continuously, he gets liberated.

The fourth one is called *Gopika Bhakthi* or *Madhura Bhakthi*. In this category, the *gopikas* always thought of Krishna and they completely surrendered themselves, their thoughts and ideas to Krishna. They would say that all their wealth, their body, their mind, and whatever else they had was all surrendered to Krishna. Whatever they did, or ate, or talked was all in the name of Krishna. They regarded their entire life as being dedicated to Krishna. If there was any moment of time, it had to belong to Krishna. If Krishna was not there even for a moment, they regarded themselves as lifeless. When Krishna used to go away with the cowherds, these *gopikas* always used to think of him and his comfort. They were always worried whether he had proper protection or not, whether he had slippers on or not, whether he had any discomfort of any kind, and so on. They would always think of Krishna and his comforts. One of the *gopikas* would be thinking that originally Krishna was dark-complexioned and was worried whether his visit to the forest would make him darker because of sunburn, and was thinking how nice it would be if he would take an umbrella the next day to protect his skin. In this way, all the time they were thinking of Gopala and his comforts. They were always thinking of Gopala. During the time they were eating their food, they were wondering whether Gopala was

getting the correct food or not. While they were resting, they were thinking whether Gopala had a good place to rest. Thus while they were eating, sleeping, or resting, they were always thinking of Gopala and enjoying their own life, *Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati*. So if we think of God and if our ideas are turned towards God, we will become one with God. At all times, because their thoughts were completely filled with Krishna, they were turning themselves and their bodies into being like Krishna.

Under these circumstances, there came a new daughter-in-law to the village of Gokula. When this new daughter-in-law came, the older people described to her the beauty and greatness of Krishna. Even before she came to this village, Niraja, the new daughter-in-law, knew about the greatness of Krishna and she was longing to get an opportunity to see Krishna.

Niraja's mother-in-law was a very harsh woman. She gave the injunction that Niraja should not stir out of the house, should not attempt to see Krishna, and should not even utter the name of Krishna. The reason for this is that there was a feeling amongst the people that by playing various games with these girls, Krishna was actually spoiling the reputation of various families. Krishna, at that time, was a seven-year-old boy and

there was no room whatsoever for entertaining such thoughts; but because of certain ill-feeling, there were people who were spreading such irresponsible views and stories about Krishna. Such bad people existed even at that time. In truth, there was no basis for such statements.

There was a custom in that village, according to which, Nanda was regarded as a leader of the village, and all the people used the light in Nanda's house to start a light in their own house. It was considered auspicious if a light was got from the house of the leader. One day the mother-in-law of Niraja was having fever, and, therefore, Niraja was asked to go and light the lamp and bring it back. She was also told that she should not enter the house of Nanda and not attempt to look at Krishna. Niraja felt very happy that she had this opportunity of going to Nanda's house and at least look at the sacred house in which Krishna lived. But when Niraja went there, all her attention and all her thoughts were immersed in Krishna; and she was waiting for the opportunity of Krishna coming there at that time.

She was so immersed in the thought of Krishna that she was unmindful of the fact that the wick was already lighted and that the fire had spread onto her hand. Yasoda came out and saw this, and said that

Niraja was apparently new in the village, and was surprised to see that her hand was burning, and yet she was not mindful of the event. At these words of Yasoda, Niraja regained her consciousness and was begging Yasoda not to tell about this incident to her in-laws as they would only harm her if they had known about this. She explained that she was lost in the visions of Krishna which she saw in the flame which she was lighting.

As she was saying these words, other *gopikas* quickly rushed in and saw this event. The *gopikas* who surrounded Niraja were not silent, and they were quick in reporting this incident to all the others in the village. When the *gopikas* were singing like this, Niraja was very much afraid of the consequences and was worried what her mother-in-law would say; but she felt happy that all this was not half as important as the *darshan* of Krishna which she had had. She was prepared for the consequences. Such love is the best with which to approach the Lord. In this matter, the *gopikas* were thinking of the form of Krishna all the time.

To all these *gopikas*, there was one who was like a leader and this was Radha. It was not as if Radha wanted to be the leader, but the other *gopikas* chose her as their leader. Whenever there was any difficulty, they would go and tell her. Radha should not convey to you

the picture of the kind you see in cinemas or dramas today. She was the kind of person who was always in the thought of Krishna, and her name, itself, conveys her greatness and sacredness. If you start with “R” you get Radha, if you start with “A” you get Adhar, if you start with “D” you get Dhara and if you read backwards, you get *Aradh*. This means that the very basis of Radha is the *Aradhana* (adoration of the Lord) of Krishna.

If you really want to understand the intimate relationship between Krishna and Radha, you will have to note an incident which took place when Radha went out into a bamboo thicket and was sitting in a lonely place. Her attachment to Krishna can be understood from her words. She was sent out of the village and in agony she sings, “There is trouble in the village and there is not a shade where I can take shelter! So I have come and I am maintaining this life breath in myself for your sake. This life exists for your sake. Show yourself at least in my dreams. My mind cannot rest even for a moment if I cannot see you. You are like my eyeball within myself if I am to describe you; but if I have to see you, you are like a small baby who is outside me. But if I have no eyeball in me, then I cannot even look at this small baby. You are the one who shows and you are the one whom I aspire to see. In your gross human form, will you not show yourself to me at least once?”

At that time, Krishna was in Mathura, where he had gone to kill Kamsa. In that prayer of Radha, we notice that even though there was no place for her to take shelter, yet she was maintaining the life breath solely for the sake of Krishna. While she was engaging herself in this kind of introspection, it looked to her as if her companions were playing some games. One group of *gopikas* were singing and saying that Gopala had returned to Repalle. As soon as she heard that song, she thought that Gopala had really returned, and she jumped out of the bamboo thicket into the hot sand and she was running forward to meet Gopala, not minding the heat of the sand. Radha’s *bhakti* was such that she was always on the banks of the Yamuna, both in the heat and in the cold. In the heat, her body was getting scorched and as the body was getting scorched she never bothered. She always remained on the banks of the Yamuna braving the ravages of the heat and the cold. She was singing to the Lord, praying that he should come to her with the jingling of the anklets which he used to wear at the time of the killing of the great serpent. She was singing in ecstasy and addressing her Lord and asking him to come to her. In such ecstasy, she dropped dead.

*Gopikas* had such sacred ideas and had such selfless *bhakti* and selfless *prema*. We are unable to

understand the sacredness of their *prema*, and we misinterpret all their actions and give them wrong meanings. Because of this selfless and sacred nature of the *bhakti* of the *gopikas* towards Krishna, they remain very strongly in the minds of the people of this country, and we talk of them even today. On the contrary, we do not talk so much about Rama as he was insisting on *Karma* or work. He was of a different kind and was insisting on action, *karma*, or work. When we talk of Krishna *Bhakti*, we should not misinterpret it and give it a wrong meaning. The *Bhagavatha* preaches the sacredness of Krishna *Bhakti*. There is no hatred, jealousy, or anger in divine love; and so it can give happiness to the entire world.

***Students, boys and girls,***

We should accept selfless *prema* as an essential type of *bhakti* and promote it in our country. We must make it an ideal so far as our relationship with God is concerned, and make Bharath an ideal to other countries. If there is any unsacred or selfish *prema* in your heart, throw it away and promote selfless divine love. I am hoping that you will do this and purify your heart.