

56. Perform good deeds, with constant remembrance of God

If the person is ill or even if the mind is immersed in something else, the taste of food cannot be grasped. So also, if the heart is full of ignorance (*thamas*) or is wayward, no joy can be experienced even if one is engaged in remembrance of the name (*nama-smarana*), devotional singing, recitation of the name (*japa*), or meditation.

The tongue will be sweet as long as there is sugar on it. Likewise, if the pillar of light called devotion continues to burn in the corridor of the heart, there will be no darkness. The heart will be illumined in bliss. A bitter thing on the tongue makes the whole tongue bitter; when the qualities greed and anger enter the heart, the brightness disappears, darkness dominates the scene, and one becomes the target of countless griefs and losses.

Therefore, those who aspire to attain the holy presence of the Lord must acquire certain habits, disciplines, and qualities. The usual ways of life won't lead to God. They have to be modified somewhat by means of spiritual discipline.

Look at the crane; it walks about pretty fast in water. But while walking, it can't catch fish; for that purpose, it must become quiet and stand motionless. So also, if one proceeds with greed, anger, and similar qualities, one cannot secure the fish of truth (*sathya*), *dharma*, and peace (*santhi*). Whatever spiritual practice one may have, one must practise uninterrupted remembrance of the name (*nama-smarana*). Only then can one master the natural attributes of greed, anger, etc. All the scriptures (*sastras*) teach but this one lesson: since the Lord is the universal goal and this journey of life has Him as the destination, keep Him constantly in view and subdue the mind, which makes you wander from the path.

All the good qualities automatically gather around the person who practises control of speech and constant contemplation of the Lord. See! In the *Dwapara* era (*yuga*), the Kauravas were engaged in wicked deeds even while experiencing the fruits of their previous good deeds. On the other hand, the Pandavas were thinking and doing only good deeds, even while undergoing sufferings due to their previous evil deeds! This is the difference between the wise and the unwise. The Kauravas were slaves of the appetites of hunger and sex, and the Pandavas did every act for the sake of the Lord, with truth (*sathya*) and *dharma* as their charioteers.

Those who are overwhelmed by grief can never feel interest in either a feast or a fight; similarly, the real aspirant who is immersed in thoughts of God can never taste or even think of worldly objects of enjoyment.