

## 60. The harvest of the spiritual aspirant

In this world, there is no penance (*tapas*) higher than fortitude, no happiness greater than contentment, no good deed (*punya*) holier than mercy, no weapon more effective than patience.

Devotees should consider the body as the field and good deeds as seeds and cultivate the name of the Lord, with the help of the heart as the farmer, in order to get the harvest, the Lord Himself. How can one get the crop without cultivation?

Like cream in milk and fire in fuel, the Lord is in everything. Have full faith in this. As the milk, so the cream; as the fuel, so the fire; so also, as the spiritual discipline, so the direct experience (*sakshatkara*) of the Lord, right?

Even if the attainment of liberation (*mukthi*) isn't directly realised as a consequence of taking up the Lord's name, four fruits are clearly evident to those who have had the experience:

- (1) company of the great,
- (2) truth,
- (3) contentment, and
- (4) control of the senses.

Through whichever of these gates one enters, whether one is a householder, recluse, or a member of any other class, one can reach the Lord without fail. This is certain.

## 61. The characteristics of the devotee and worldly person

People crave worldly happiness. Analysed properly, this itself is the disease, and sufferings are but the drugs we take. In the midst of these worldly pleasures, one rarely entertains the desire to attain the Lord. Besides, it is necessary to analyse and discriminate every act of a person, for the spirit of renunciation is born out of such analysis. Without it, renunciation is difficult to get. Miserliness is like the behaviour of a dog; it has to be transformed. Anger is enemy Number 1 of the spiritual aspirant; it is like spittle and has to be treated as such. And untruth? It is even more disgusting—through untruth, the vital powers of all are destroyed. It should be treated as scavenging itself. Theft ruins life; it makes the priceless human life cheaper than a pie; it is like rotten foul smelling flesh.

Moderate food, moderate sleep, love (*prema*), and fortitude will help in the upkeep of the health of both body and mind. Whoever one may be, in whatever condition one may be, if one gives no room for dispiritedness, if one has no fear at all, and if one remembers the Lord with unshaken faith and without any ulterior motive, all suffering and sorrow will fall away. The Lord will never enquire at any time the caste to which you belong or the precepts (*achara*) that you traditionally follow.

Devotion doesn't consist in wearing an ochre cloth, organising festivals, performing ritual sacrifices, shaving the hair, carrying water pot or rod, matting the hair, etc. Instead, the characteristics of devotion are a pure mind (*anthah-karana*), uninterrupted (whatever one may be doing) contemplation on God, the feeling that everything is the Lord's creation and therefore One, non-attachment to sense objects, the embracement of all in equal love, and dedication to true speech.