



SANDEHA NIVARINI

I

Bhaktha : Swami, can we ask you freely about any topic concerning the spiritual path, which we do not know?

Swami : Certainly. What is the objection? Why this doubt? What am I here for? Is it not for explaining to you things you do not know? You can ask me without any fear or hesitation. I am always ready to answer; only, I want earnest inquiry with a desire to know.

Bhaktha : But some elders say it is wrong to vex the Guru with questions. Are they right, Swami?

Swami : That is not correct. Whom else can the disciple approach? Since the Guru is everything to him, it is best that he consults him in all matters and then acts.

Bhaktha : Some say that we should reverentially carry out whatever the elders ask us to do without raising any objections. Is that your command also?

Swami : Until you develop full faith in them and know that their words are valid, it will be difficult for you to carry out their orders reverentially. So, until then, it won't be wrong to ask them the significance and the validity of their orders, so that you may be convinced.

Bhaktha : Swami, whom are we to believe, whom are we to discard? The world is so full of deceit. When those, whom we believe are good, themselves turn out to be bad, how can faith grow?

Swami : Well, My boy! Where is the need for you in this world or any world to grow faith in others? Believe in yourself, first. Then believe in the Lord, *Paramatma*. When you have faith in these two, neither the good nor the bad will affect you.

Bhaktha : Swami, faith in the Lord too diminishes sometimes. What is the reason for that?

Swami : When one is deluded by the mere external world and when one does not attain success in such external desires, faith in the Lord diminishes. So, give up such desires. Desire only for the spiritual relationship; then you won't become the target of doubts and difficulties. The important thing for this is faith in the Lord; without that, you start doubting everything, big and small.

Bhaktha : Until we understand the Reality of Paramatma, it is important, they say, to be in the company of the great and the good and also to have a Guru. Are these necessary?

Swami : Of course, the company of the great and the good is necessary. To make that Reality known to you, a Guru too is important. But in this matter, you should be very careful. Genuine Gurus are scarce these days. Cheats have multiplied and teachers have retreated into solitude, in order to realise themselves undisturbed. There are many genuine Gurus but they cannot be secured easily. Even if you get them, you must thank your destiny if they vouchsafe to you more than one single *Sadvakya* (word); they won't spend time telling you all kinds of stories! There should be no hurry in the search for a Guru.

Bhaktha : Then, what in the world is the path?

Swami : Why, it is just for this that we have the Veda, Sastra, Purana and Itihaasa. Study them; adhere to the path they teach and gather the experience. Understand their meaning and the trend of their message from pundits. Follow them in practice. Meditate on the Paramatma as the Guru and as God; then, those scriptures themselves will help you as your Guru. For, what is a Guru? The Guru is that through which your mind gets fixed on God. If you consider Paramatma

as the Guru and do *Sadhana* (spiritual practice) with unshakeable Love, the Lord Himself will appear before you and give *Upadesa* (Spiritual instruction) just as a Guru. Or, He may so bless you that as a result of the *Sadhana*, you may meet a *Sadguru* (Philosopher and guide).

Bhaktha : But nowadays, some great big persons are granting *Upadesa* to all who ask. Are these not *Sadgurus*, Swami?

Swami : I won't say they are or they are not. I declare only this: It is not the sign of a *Sadguru* to grant *Upadesa* to any and every person who comes to him with praise, without considering the past and the future, without discovering the qualifications of the pupil and testing whether he is fit.

Bhaktha : Then Swami, I have committed a blunder! When one great person arrived at our village, and when all were receiving *Upadesa* from him, I too went and prostrated before him and asked him for it. He granted me a good *Upadesa*. I repeated the manthra for some time; but soon, I came to know that the great person was a cheat. Since that day, I lost faith in the Name he gave me. I gave up the *Manthra* (sacred formula). Was this wrong? Or, am I right?

Swami : Do you doubt the right and wrong of this? It is very wrong. Just as the Guru, as I told you now,

examines the qualifications of the disciple, the disciple too has to critically examine the credentials of the Guru before receiving Upadesa. Your first mistake was that you did not pay attention to this but hastily accepted Upadesa. Well, even if the Guru gave it without the necessary qualification, why did you break your vow and stop repeating the Name? That is the second mistake: casting the fault of another on the sacred Name of God. Before receiving Upadesa, you should have taken time and known his genuineness and developed faith in him. Then, when the desire to accept him as Guru emerged, you should have received the Upadesa. But once you accept, you must repeat it, whatever the difficulty. You should not give it up. Otherwise, you commit the wrong of accepting without deliberation and rejecting without deliberation. That wrong will be on your head. You should not accept a Name when you are still afflicted by doubt or a Name which you do not prefer. Having accepted, you should not give it up.

Bhaktha : What happens when it is given up?

Swami : Well, my boy. Disloyalty to the Guru and discarding the Name of God—on account of these, your one-pointed endeavour and concentration will wither away. As the saying goes, “The diseased seedling can never grow into a tree.”

Bhaktha : But if the Guru grants the Manthra though we lack the merit?

Swami : Such a Guru is no Guru. The result of his wrong act won't fall on you. The evil of that wrong will devolve on him only.

Bhaktha : If the disciple acts according to the promise made to the Guru, irrespective of what the Guru may turn out to be, and honours him as before, can he realise the goal?

Swami : Certainly, what doubt is there? Don't you know the story of Ekalavya? Though Dronacharya did not accept him as his disciple, he installed an image and took it as Dronacharya himself; revering as such, he learnt archery and achieved mastery of all arts. Finally, when the Guru, blinded by injustice, asked for his right thumb as his fees, he offered it gladly. Did Ekalavya take to heart the injury done by the Guru?

Bhaktha : Of what avail was that offer? His education was all a waste, that was all. What was the net result of his achievement?

Swami : Though Ekalavya lost all chance of using his skill, the character that he earned by that training was never lost. Is not the fame he acquired by his sacrifice enough compensation?

Bhaktha : Well, what is past is past. Hereafter at least I shall hold fast and try not to discard the name. Please grant me upadesa yourself.

Swami : Your attitude is just like that of the person who, after having witnessed the *Ramayana* being enacted throughout the night, asked someone at daybreak how Rama was related to Sita! I was telling you that the Guru and the upadesa will come when your qualifications ripen. It will come by itself. There is no need for you to ask! Really speaking, the disciple should not ask for upadesa on his own. He cannot be aware of his being ripe for it. The Guru will be watching for the proper moment and he will himself bless and help. You should not get upadesa more than once. It is not repeatable. If you give up one upadesa and take up another, whenever you feel like it, you will be like a married woman gone astray.

Bhaktha : So, what is my fate now? Is there no way to save myself?

Swami : Repent for the mistake committed, but continue meditating on the Name you received. For *Namasmarana* (Remembering God through His Name), apart from *Japa* (Repetition of the Holy Name), you can use as many names as you like. For *Dhyana* (meditation), the Name got by upadesa alone should be used, remember. Don't change that sacred Name. Transform yourself by persistent yearning and effort and proceed.

Bhaktha : Swami! Today is indeed a great day; for all doubts have disappeared by the message you gave.

As you said, upadesa created the doubt. Your *Sandesha* (message) dispelled it. If permitted, I will return now to my place and when I come again, I will bring some new doubts to be cast away in Your Presence in exchange for Peace and Joy. If you so command, I shall come next month.

Swami : Very good. That is exactly what I want—that persons like you should rid themselves of doubts, should grasp the real significance of life and welcoming the *Sandesha* with faith and steadfastness, dwell in constant remembrance of the Name of the Lord. Whenever you come, whatever comes, learn from Me the method and means of ridding yourself of grief and doubt and worry. Never suffer from grief. For with that pain inside you, you will not be able to do any *Sadhana*. Whatever *Sadhana* you do will be like rose water poured on ash. Very well, go now and come later.

II

Bhaktha : Namaskaram, Swami.

Swami : Happy to see you. You seem very tired; and in this summer, travel is even more exhausting. Take rest for a little while. We can converse thereafter.

Bhaktha : When there is no peace of mind where can rest be got?

Swami : Well my boy, rest is for the sake of peace of mind. Once you have that peace, where is the need for rest? There is need for a bandage until the wound heals; after that, what is its use?

Bhaktha: Swami, just now my mind is restless. I cannot decide upon anything. I do not know what the reason is. What shall I do?

Swami : Well, no effect can take place without a cause. You do certainly know the cause of your present condition....Well, nothing else need be done: At such times of mental pain, do Namasmarana for a while sitting in a lonely place; or sing Bhajan songs loudly in a raised voice; or if that is not possible, spread the bed and sleep for some time. Thereafter you can think about all this.

Bhaktha : You have told us that in this world, each one has some dearly loved thing or other, and that if any harm comes upon that thing, peace of mind cannot be had. How then can I have peace of mind, when something happens like this...another person either disrespecting my dearly loved thing, or finding fault with it? What am I to do then?

Swami : Well. A good person who has understood what is *Atmavichara* (inquiry into the nature of the Atma) will not blame like this the things that others love. Nor will he even associate with such men. For he would argue within himself, that when he blames another's *Ishtam* (chosen deity), he will feel as much pain as he himself feels when his own *Ishtam* is blamed. Therefore, be at peace with yourself, realising that those who abuse like this are people ignorant of *Atmavichara*. Engaged as you are in *Atmavichara*, you have nothing to do with ignorant persons who do not know *Atmavichara*. Well, let it go. What has really happened to cause all

this? The whole trouble will end if what is inside comes out.

Bhaktha : The world knows well how You are vouchsafing courage and daring and guiding men to do good spiritually, physically, and mentally; how You have rendered educational and medical help. You have never done any harm; nor caused harm to anyone in any form. How to suppress the persons who invent and spread all kinds of silly stories about such as You? Do they gain anything by this?

Swami : Oh, so this is the story! Well don't you know that good and bad are of the very nature of the world? If all are engaged in selling, who will be the buyers? With regard to God, fault finding has come down from the beginning of time; it is not new; only, present-day persons might manufacture some new tales. Well, why should you take to heart such abuse? Take it that they are only remembering Swami by this means. *Premasmarana* (Remembering with love) and *Dweshasmarana* (Remembering the Lord with hate) are two types. Of these, *Dweshasmarana* is *Avidyamaya* (absence of right awareness); it is related to *Rajo Guna* (Passion, violent emotion). *Premasmarana* is *Vidyamaya* (Right awareness); it is related to *Sathwa Guna* (Noble or pure quality). *Avidyamaya* results in *Dukham* (grief); *Vidyamaya* results in *Ananda* (Bliss). Their results are indicated there itself. Now, why should you suppress? You asked

about the gain isn't it? They don't need any gain. Finding fault with others has become their habit. They do it as their duty. As the saying goes, "What does the moth care or gain, whether the sari costs a hundred *tankas* or is cheap? To gnaw and tear is its nature." The moth tears equally a costly sari or a rag. Does it know the value of things? Its work is such. So be at peace, realising that the work of these faultfinders is the same as the work of these moths.

Bhaktha : Swami! What You said is the truth. We can take it that ignorant persons, when they behave like this, are of the brood of moths. But when people who are well educated, who are great, who know, when these are devoting themselves to spreading such stories, how can it be endured?

Swami : Learning means *Atmajnana* (Knowledge of the Self); it is not the knowledge of things related to the world, which trains for a living, and is useful as basis for a living. To compare *Atmajnana* with such *Vidyas* (Knowledge) is a great mistake. Great men are those who do not abuse others, who search for the reality with good intentions. Spiritual matters cannot be understood by those without the power of discrimination, who are puffed up with the authority they have; or by those who are unaware of any *Atmajnana*. So consider those whom you described as educated and great as belonging to the brood mentioned above and, without yielding place to such

ideas and worries, engage yourself in strengthening your belief.

Bhaktha : Many *Asthikas* (Pious, God-fearing people) in this world are changing into *Nasthikas* (Atheists) on account of such people, isn't it, Swami? Is there no weapon to put down these persons, who without any regard for their own learning and without any effort to know the reality, abuse the *Mahapurushas* (Great persons, saints)?

Swami : Why? There is. "A load of rags is placed on a ragged saddle," is the saying. The words of such persons will be listened to only by such persons; no real *Asthika* will associate with them. Even if they do, they will move far away as soon as they understand that those stories are fictitious. So the weapon to put down these persons is in their own hands. Haven't you heard the story of *Bhasmasura*? Placing his hand on everyone's head, he reduced them to ashes. Finally, placing it on his own head, he himself was reduced to ashes! Similarly, accusing others, they themselves will be finally accused by their own words.

Those who find fault with the Lord are of four types:

1. Persons who have no interest at all in matters related to God.
2. Persons who on account of individual spite cannot endure another's greatness.

3. Those who have neither personal experience, nor contact nor knowledge of anything and so merely manufacture stories based on hearsay to which they have become enslaved.
4. Persons who come with some worldly desire, and who accuse the Lord, as an excuse for the failure caused by their own destiny.

Only these four types of people clamour as you say; the others will not shout or jump about like puppets. Even if they do not have personal experience, when they hear such stories, they will just analyse them within themselves and arrive at conclusions, for their own satisfaction. They won't abuse others.

It is not the correct path—to disbelieve one's own mind and give room therein to another's words. Besides, there is no profit in discussing with those who do not know the Reality. As a matter of fact, Reality does not admit of any discussion at all. To argue with those who do not know either but who are in the intermediate stage is like seeing the trunk and believing it to be the entire body, as in the story of the Blind Men and the Elephant.

Well. Note this! It is not good to spend time in this type of conversation. Abuse and faultfinding are natural and common. Knowing this, those who aspire to become true *Bhakthas* should search only for bases on which to build their *Ananda*. All the available time should be used

for holy purposes, it should not be wasted. You have nothing to do with the good and the bad in others. Instead of wasting the time, it should be utilised to discard the bad and develop the good in you.

Ask me about some Sadhana or Sandesha which you need and seek something that is worth while. Hereafter do not bring near me such stories of faultfinding indulged in by others. You too should not take in such things.

Bhaktha: All this happened because we too have the same human nature. But now that I understand the subject from your answers, courage and joy have entered into me, driving away the doubt and sorrow I had. Through the talk of such men, even the little faith, devotion and earnestness that men have, are being reduced. That was the reason for my asking you these questions. Otherwise, I have also nothing to do with such topics. Pardon me, hereafter I won't talk on these lines to you.

Swami: Very good! During the little time available, if you don't think of some good subject, but merely recollect the ignorant prattle of others, it is as if you too joined in blaming those persons. That is harmful to Bhakthas. Whatever others may say, you should not give up your faith. Once you are firmly established in that, you will not be in want any day. One word following another produces anger and pain. *Bhakthi Marga* (Path of

devotion) is designed for suppressing, not developing these qualities.

You tell me that devotion and faith disappear because people listen to such accusers—but for how long? As soon as the truth is discovered, will they be trusted again? Will their words be valued again?

The talk of those faultfinders is as the sound of bronze. Cheap metals make more sound; gold which does not make sound is very valuable. True Bhakthas will be mute. They will follow the path of Silence. Their tongues will be so fully engaged in the repetition of the essential greatness of the Lord. It is best they have no respite for any other word. So do not permit the words of the bronze-voiced persons to enter your ears; but fill them with the name of the Lord, which is the *Pranavananda* itself.

Next month, if you get any problems regarding such useful topics as Sadhana or *Anushtaanam* (action), come here and have them solved. But do not bring with you bundles of such doubts!

Bhaktha: I am indeed blessed this day. On account of them, You have vouchsafed to me the light of wisdom. Seeing all this, I feel that the saying, “All is for our good” is true. Henceforward, whatever anyone may say, I will be patient and won't take it in because “All is for our good.” Namaskaram. Allow me to take leave.