

VII

BHAKTHA: Greetings, Swami.

Swami: Oh, you have come, is it? You didn't come for *Dasara* (Nine Day Festival celebrating the victory of the Goddess Durga over the demons).

Bhaktha: The number of Bhakthas then would be large I thought and so I was afraid I will not be able to speak to you to my heart's content. Hence, I came now, a few days prior to Your Birthday, so that with Your Blessings I could realise the Ideal which You teach and have both Bhakthi and Jnana born in my heart, on the auspicious day of the celebration of Your Advent.

Swami: Good! Very good intention, indeed! But do you mean to say that Bhakthi and Jnana will not be born in you on days other than my birthday? Is that your idea?

Bhaktha: No, no! That is not so! You come to this world on an auspicious day at a holy moment with an auspicious form, isn't it? My idea is that at least on such a Day I could establish in my heart Your Holy words and make it pure. The day is Holy and the moment auspicious.

Swami: Fine! What is the *Sandeha*, the doubt, you have today?

Bhaktha: I have come today determined to hear and put into practice Your Holy Words, Swami. As the saying goes, "Even if you go to Kasi, you have *Saneeswara* by your side!" So I did not bring the demon of doubt with me today when I came. Nor did that demon accompany me! It is all due to Your Grace.

Swami: Very good! Understand that when these doubts do not come of themselves, nor are entertained by you, then indeed the mind is pure. When these two happen, it can be called one-pointedness. When you have none, why should I remind you of doubts? Then tell me, what shall I speak to you about?

Bhaktha: Swami, tell me how we should, generally, conduct ourselves. What are the qualities we should possess? Which type of subjects should we try to understand? To receive the Divine Grace and attain Your Holy Presence, what acts should we perform? Please tell me the more important of these, the essential things, the chosen jewels.

Swami: Oh! It seems, Parvathi asked Iswara once, “It is difficult to retain in memory the *Sahasranama*, the Thousand Names of God. It takes a long time to learn them and repeat them; so, please tell me One Single Name which is the essence of all the thousand.” Similarly, you too perhaps find it difficult to grasp all that I write and explain and so you are also asking me to tell you about the MOST important, is it? But you see, Names have their essence, the subjects you ask about are different. Though their objective and final result are one, the practices, the paths of activity, cannot be one. They cannot all be summarised in one word! Still, I am giving you now some selected jewels, maxims of conduct, that are very important. Collect and treasure them well. Experience them well, put them into practice and derive joy therefrom. Wear these jewels and beautify yourself.

Bhaktha: Exactly what I wanted! How lucky I am!

Swami: Then listen carefully, I shall tell you.

1. Prema, Love, should be considered as the very breath of Life.
2. The Love that is manifest in all things equally, believe that the same Prema is Paramathma.
3. The one Paramathma is in everyone, in the form of Prema.

4. More than all other forms of Prema, man’s first effort should be to fix his Love on the Lord.
5. Such Love directed towards God is Bhakthi; that is the fundamental test, the acquisition of Bhakthi.
6. Those who seek the Bliss of the Atma should not run after the joys of sense objects.
7. Sathya, Truth, must be treated as life-giving as breathing itself.
8. Just as a body that has no breath is useless and begins to rot and stink within a few minutes, similarly, life without Truth is useless and becomes the stinking abode of strife and grief.
9. Believe that there is nothing greater than Truth, nothing more precious, nothing sweeter and nothing more lasting.
10. Truth is the all-protecting God. There is no mightier Guardian than Truth.
11. The Lord who is *Sathyaswaroopa* (Expression of Truth) grants His *Darsan* (vision) to those of truthful speech and loving heart.
12. Have undiminished kindness towards all beings and also the spirit of self-sacrifice.
13. You must also possess control of the senses, an unruffled character and non-attachment.

14. Be always on the alert against the four sins which the tongue is prone to commit: (1) Speaking falsehood (2) Speaking ill of others (3) Backbiting and (4) Talking too much. It is best to attempt to control these tendencies.
15. Try to prevent the five sins that the body commits: Killing, Adultery, Theft, Drinking intoxicants and the Eating of flesh. It is a great help for the highest life if these also are kept as far away as possible.
16. One must be always vigilant, without a moment's carelessness, against the eight sins that the mind perpetrates: *Kamam* or craving; *Krodham* or anger; *Lobham* or greed; *Moham* or attachment; Impatience; Hatred, Egoism, Pride. Man's primary duty is to keep all these things at a safe distance from himself.
17. Man's mind speeds fast, pursuing wrong actions. Without letting it hurry like that, remember the name of the Lord at that time or attempt to do some good deed or other. Those who do thus will certainly become fit for the Lord's Grace.
18. First give up the evil tendency to feel impatient at the prosperity of others and the desire to harm them. Be happy that others are happy. Sympathise with those who are in adversity and wish for their prosperity. That is the means of cultivating the love for God.

19. Patience is all the strength that man needs.
20. Those anxious to live in joy must always be doing good.
21. It is easy to conquer anger through love, attachment through reasoning, falsehood through truth, bad through good and greed through charity.
22. No reply should be given to the words of the wicked. Be at a great distance from them; that is for your good. Break off all relations with such people.
23. Seek the company of good men, even at the sacrifice of your honour and life. But be praying to God to bless you with the discrimination needed to distinguish between the good men and the bad. You must also endeavour, with the intellect given to you.
24. Those who conquer states and earn fame in the world are hailed as heroes, no doubt; but those who have conquered the senses are heroes who must be acclaimed as the conquerors of the Universal.
25. Whatever acts a good or bad man may do, the fruits thereof follow him and will never stop pursuing him.
26. Greed yields only sorrow; contentment is best. There is no happiness greater than contentment.

27. The mischief-mongering tendency should be plucked out by the roots and thrown off. If allowed to exist, it will undermine life itself.
28. Bear with fortitude both loss and grief; try and search for plans to achieve joy and gain.
29. When you are invaded by anger, practise silence or remember the name of the Lord. Do not remind yourself of things which will inflame the anger more. That will do incalculable harm.
30. From this moment avoid all bad habits. Do not delay or postpone. They do not contribute the slightest joy.
31. Try as far as possible within your means to satisfy the needs of the poor, who are really *Daridra Narayana* (The Lord in the form of the poor). Share with them whatever food you have and make them happy at least that moment.
32. Whatever you feel should not be done to you by others, avoid doing such to others.
33. For faults and sins committed in ignorance, repent sincerely. Try not to repeat the faults and sins again. Pray to God to bless you with the strength and the courage needed to stick to the right path.
34. Do not allow anything to come near you, which will destroy your eagerness and enthusiasm for

- God. Want of eagerness will cause the decay of the strength of man.
35. Yield not to cowardice; do not give up Ananda.
 36. Do not get swelled up when people praise you. Do not feel dejected when people blame you.
 37. If among your friends anyone hates another and starts a quarrel, do not attempt to inflame them more and make them hate each other more. Try, on the other hand, with love and sympathy to restore their former friendship.
 38. Instead of searching for others' faults, search for your own faults yourself; uproot them, throw them off. It is enough if you search and discover one fault of yours. That is better than discovering tens of hundreds of faults in others.
 39. Even if you cannot or will not do any *Punya* or good deed, do not conceive or carry out any *Papa*, or bad deed.
 40. Whatever people may say about the faults that you know are not in you, do not feel for it; as for the faults that are in you, try to correct them yourself, even before others point them out to you. Do not harbour anger or bitterness against persons who point out your faults. Do not retort, pointing out the faults of those persons

- themselves, but show your gratitude to them. Trying to discover their faults is a greater mistake on your part. It is good for you to know your faults. It is no good your knowing others' faults.
41. Whenever you get a little leisure, do not spend it in talking about all and sundry, but utilise it in meditating on God or in doing service to others.
 42. The Lord is understood only by the Bhaktha. The Bhaktha is understood only by the Lord. Others cannot understand them. So, do not discuss matters relating to the Lord with those who have no Bhakthi. On account of such discussion, your devotion will diminish.
 43. If anyone speaks to you on any subject, having understood it wrongly, do not think of other wrong notions which will support that stand but grasp only the good and the sweet, in what he says. True meaning is to be appreciated as desirable, not wrong meaning or many meanings, which give no meaning at all and cause only the hampering of Ananda.
 44. If you desire to cultivate one-pointedness, do not, when in a crowd or bazaar, scatter your vision to the four corners and on everything, but see only the road in front of you, just enough to avoid accidents to yourself. One-pointedness will become firmer if one moves about without taking

- one's attention off the road, avoiding dangers, and not casting eyes on others' forms.
45. Give up all doubts regarding the Guru and God. If your worldly desires do not get fulfilled, do not blame it on your devotion. There is no relationship between such desires and devotion to God. These worldly desires have to be given up some day or other; Bhakthi feelings have to be acquired some day or other. Be firmly convinced of this.
 46. If your Dhyanam or Japam do not progress properly or if the desires you have entertained do not come to fruition, do not get dispirited with God. It will dispirit you even more and you will lose the peace, however small or big, that you might have earned. During Dhyanam and Japam you should not be dispirited, desperate or discouraged. When such feelings come, take it that it is the fault of your Sadhana and endeavour to do them correctly.

It is only when in your daily conduct and in all actions you automatically behave and act in this manner and along these lines that you can attain the Divine principle, very easily. Therefore, hold on to these maxims firmly. Chew and digest these spoken-sweets distributed on the Birthday Festival of your Swami and be happy! Have you understood?

Bhaktha: Your words are like *Amritha* (Divine nectar), Swami. Yes, Amritha! In all these ordinary dealings of life, man does not know the road; he follows the wrong track; there are no books also to tell him the means of a happy journey; for all such strugglers like me, what you have said is *Prana*, the very breath! We are indeed blessed! Bless me, that these words get imprinted on my heart and are realised in practice, every day. There is no good in simply listening or reading them. It is only when Your Grace accompanies them that we get strength. I shall take leave, Swami!

Swami: All right! Go and come for the Birthday Festival. There are just seven days more, isn't it? Today is 16th; the Birthday is on 23rd; so there are seven days left. Till that time let this sweetness fill and overflow your heart!

VIII

SWAMI: Oh! How is this? You have come so early this time?

Bhaktha: You made me come, and so I have come! Is there anything I can call mine?

Swami: That is true; but will even a scrap of paper move without some cause? So too, for you to come so early, there must be some reason.

Bhaktha: Nothing else, Swami! Hearing that You are proceeding to Trivandrum on the 16th itself, at the invitation of Sri Ramakrishna Rao, the Governor of Kerala, I felt that I may not get much chance to speak to you if I come on that day only. So, I came now, excuse me!

Swami: That is well done! But why do you ask that I should pardon you? Really speaking, one should not ask for

pardon, even when one commits wrong! Then, what is the fun of asking for it, when you have done the right thing?

Bhaktha: Why, Swami? Why should we not ask for pardon, when we commit wrong?

Swami: No, you must not ask, either for pardon when wrong is done, or for reward, when right is done! Doing right is but man's duty. It is its own reward. What other reward can there be? The joy of having done one's duty is your reward! Doing wrong is against the duty of man. So, one should pray repentingly, for the intelligence and discrimination necessary for not repeating the wrong already committed. Beyond this, it depends on His Grace, whether He punishes and protects or pardons and corrects.

Bhaktha: That is very fine. Henceforward, I shall do so, Swami.

Swami: Let that be. Are you treasuring the gems given on the Birthday and making good use of them?

Bhaktha: As far as possible! With my maximum effort, using the quality of Buddhi granted by You, I am putting them into action.

Swami: What do you mean by "as far as possible"? For Bhakthas like you, what other task is there greater than this? Why is it not possible? You only need Faith and

the Will. Then it should not be difficult at all to carry out the Duty.

Bhaktha: Swami, You have Yourself said that even when there is Faith and even when one has the Will, putting things into practice may be difficult for want of favourable circumstances and also because the meaning of things may not be grasped clearly.

Swami: Oh! That means that both these, want of favourable circumstances and want of understanding, are bothering you! Well if you have not understood, ask; and if you have no favourable atmosphere, tell me what is the obstacle?

Bhaktha: Doubt is the biggest obstacle. What can be bigger than that? Even after hearing so much, the demon catches hold of me off and on. I do not know why.

Swami: The first reason for that: your not having faith in yourself, born out of the conviction that you are really *Atmaswaroopa* (God Himself). The second reason: taking the Divinity in humanity as humanity only and getting lost in the pursuit of sense enjoyment. These demons pounce on you for just these two reasons only. Instead, if you establish yourself in God, understanding the Divinity in man as Divinity itself, this demon of doubt will not attack you. You simply must give up this *Adhyasa* which makes you mix things up.

Bhaktha: There! You use now and then ununderstandable words! That makes me even more confused, Swami!

Swami: I will never tell you ununderstandable words. You have no power to understand; so you feel worried. I use them, really, in order to make you understand their meaning! Now, in what I told you, which is the difficult word?

Bhaktha: You used the word, *Adhyasa*. What does it mean, Swami?

Swami: What? You do not know the meaning of that! “Seeing one form and taking it to be another, superimposing one thing upon another.”

Bhaktha: How is that? On which object do we superimpose another? Tell me.

Swami: Well, seeing a rope and imagining it to be a snake; seeing waves of hot air in the sun and imagining them to be horses; seeing a mirror shining in the sun and taking it to be a lamp.

Bhaktha: But what is it that I see and what do I take it to be?

Swami: You see Paramathma in this form of Prakriti, and take it to be mere Prapancha, or the world, and you are afraid. It is on account of this delusion that you have become the victim of all these varieties of

weakness, and you are declining through doubt and illusion. If you see it right, the delusion will vanish. The fear will disappear; the faith that it is Paramathma will be firmly and boldly established in you. To get that firmness, the lamp of *Viveka* (discrimination) is necessary. How much a man suffers, so long as he sees the rope as a snake! How much is the fear! The delusion! Can it be realised how all that vanished as soon as it was seen in the light? Similarly, these doubts and delusions too will vanish unawares, as soon as you know that Prakriti is Paramathma. Imposing a delusion on a delusion, imagining one object to be another, this is called *Adhyasa*, my boy!

Bhaktha: But, Swami, how can Prakriti be said to be Paramathma? When you ask me to discern this world, which appears as *Prapancha* to the eye, as Paramathma, doubt is sure to arise.

Swami: That is true. Still, if the reality is reasoned out, even what you now see will appear as Paramathma. Cloth cannot be formed without yarn, isn't it? Yarn is essential for cloth. In fact, it is all yarn. In spite of this, yarn is not spoken of as cloth, nor is cloth called yarn. This is exactly the relationship, between Prakriti and Paramathma. Paramathma is the yarn of which the cloth, Prakriti, is formed. Has the yarn and the cloth become separate? No. The yarn is used in one way, the cloth in another way. But for this reason only it would be wrong to consider yarn and cloth as different.

Bhaktha: Yes, Swami. Since Prakriti is formed of Paramathma, it is clear that they are not separate. Now, if both these are the same, which among these is Jiva?

Swami: That is exactly the doubt that is tormenting you, my boy. The Jiva is the "I" consciousness! The Jiva is associated with the limitations of body and the senses. But He is the Atma, *Jivatma*, (Individualised Soul) *Prathyagatma* (Inner presiding Atma), *Chidatma*, Doer, Enjoyer, everything.

Bhaktha: Again another word Jada is used to mean inert matter, etc. What is it, this Jada? How does it operate? Tell me.

Swami: From Buddhi to Body, all transformations of Prakriti are Jada. This is the unreal, the unconscious, the Asath, the Achethana. You must take everything that is not Sath and Chith as Jada. In essence the world is really Jada and nothing else. But Jada is inseparable from *Chaithanya*, or Chith and Sath, just as air is inseparable from the atmosphere. Why, it has been said in the Gita in the past, that all movable and immovable creation is due to the union of Prakriti and Purusha, don't you know?

Bhaktha: Then what is the relationship between Buddhi and Manas on the one hand and Atma on the other?

Swami: Well really, there is no special relationship between them and the Atma; Atma is pure and without blemish.

Buddhi too is pure and without blemish. And just as the Sun is reflected in a mirror, the splendour of the Atma is reflected in the Buddhi. Then the shining Chaithanya of the Buddhi is reflected in the Manas; the shining of the Manas falls upon the senses; the light from the senses falls upon the Body. Now, what is the connection between all these? The relationship of all *is* the splendour of the Atma, is it not? The activity of every other thing is caused by the fact that there is a Buddhi which can reflect that splendour, is it not? So, note how the Buddhi is related: this side with the Atma; and that side, with the Manas and the Indriyas, senses!

Bhaktha: Then, what is the relation between the Jiva which says “I” and the senses and the body?

Swami: There is no relation at all! The “I” is separate from the body, the mind, etc. The “I” simply superimposes on the Jiva, that is, Itself, the body-consciousness and the internal behaviours of the mind, etc. “I am fair” says the Jiva, superimposing upon itself something with which it has no connection. “I am dumb,” it says, making the same mistake about the senses. It says it has this desire and that and imposes on itself the activities of the Manas, etc. All this is mere superimposition. The basic truth is only One, the Paramathma, The *Paramjyothi* (supreme effulgence), The Eternal, the True, is only One! Understand this well.

Bhaktha: Ah, what superb teaching, Swami, if only this teaching of the Principle of the Atma, which even children can grasp, spreads over the whole world, the world will emerge from darkness to light.

Swami: That is the reason why I converse with you about every point and allow all to partake in it. The sun’s light falls upon the mirror, the light from the mirror falls upon the bungalow, the light upon the bungalow falls upon the eye. Similarly, this “Sandeha Nivarini” has been decided upon in order that the illumination of My Teaching may fall upon the Bhaktha mirror, and thence onto the “*Sanathana Sarathi*” bungalow; in order that from there its effulgence may shed Light on the Peace and Harmony of the world.