

## XI

**BHAKTHA:** Swami! I have one doubt. Can I ask you?

**Swami:** Certainly. Why do you say, “Can I ask you”?

**Bhaktha:** Some people describe Brahman as Asthi-Bhaati-Priyam; what does it mean? How are these related to Brahman?

**Swami:** Is that the doubt? Asthi means “that which is.” Bhaati means “that which shines.” Priyam means—of course, you know it, don’t you?...pleasing, desirable, capable of satisfying. All that is Priyam to you is Brahman!

**Bhaktha:** I have understood it clearly, Swami. Now I know what is meant by the “obstruction of the past.” What are the “obstructions of the present?”

**Swami:** Good, I shall tell you. The obstructions of the present are of four types: attachment to sense objects, cynical criticism, dullness of understanding, and absurd conceit. The first is the cause of attachment to objects that attract the senses. The second makes men discover wrong meanings in the teachings of the Guru. The third causes confusion, because things explained by the Guru are not grasped at all. The last obstruction makes one feel that one is a great scholar, pundit, or ascetic, mistaking the body and the senses for the Atma.

**Bhaktha:** And the “obstructions of the future”?

**Swami:** Oh! They come always through sinful deeds. They come and obstruct unawares!

**Bhaktha:** How are we to meet them, Swami?

**Swami:** It is not possible for all. The aspirant can to some extent be cognisant of the approaching wrong and its wiles. It creates a desire, which puts on the cloak of want. Then you must recognise it as an “obstruction of the future.” It is difficult to be forewarned like this as the result of the effort of one single life. It may take many births to acquire this education.

**Bhaktha:** Are there any who have so learnt it?

**Swami:** Why, there are. The scriptures speak of Bharatha and Vasudeva. Bharatha required two or three births. Vasudeva had to be born once.

**Bhaktha:** That means these three obstructions cannot be overcome except after many lives. Can we not succeed without all that bother?

**Swami:** Why? The aspirant can, by reasoning out the nature of these three, escape from being worried by them. Otherwise, it may take many lives.

**Bhaktha:** Swami, how to get over the “obstruction of the present”?

**Swami:** There is a way for this also. Through Karma, the appropriate Karma. There is no obstruction that cannot be surmounted. Attachment to sense-objects can be removed by *Sama*, *Dama*, *Uparathi*, *Thithiksha*, by developing purity, self-control, withdrawal of desires and the ability to suffer. Dullness of understanding can be removed by listening again and again. Constant meditation on the things heard will abolish the habit of cynical criticism. All absurd conceit will vanish through the teachings one imbibes.

**Bhaktha:** Swami, to master all this seems impossible for everyone! To make it easy for all, tell me which is important?

**Swami:** My dear fellow, to know a thing, *Vijnana* (higher wisdom) is necessary. *Ajnana* (false knowledge) makes one ignorant, don't you know?

**Bhaktha:** So many people say so many things about this Vijnana and this Ajnana. What is the basic thing about

this Vijnana and this Ajnana? What is the basic thing behind both, tell me.

**Swami:** Now you have come again to the very first step. Ajnana is the mental attitude that has reference to the external Object and Vijnana is the mental attitude that has reference to the internal Subject. Ajnana is known also as *Manas* and *Chiththam*. When the activity and attitude turn inwards, they are called *Buddhi* and *Antahkaranam*.

**Bhaktha:** Some say that the Jnani will have only two things, the desire to attain the other world and the burden of the past Karma. Is that true?

**Swami:** Both the Jnani and the Ajnani will have desire, absence of desire for the other world, and the burden of past Karma, all in equal measure. Their experiences also will be in equal measure. Only, the Jnani will not have the consciousness that he is the doer; so, he will not be bound. The Ajnani is conscious that he is the doer and so he gets bound. This is the distinction. I have already told you, haven't I, that “the mind” is the cause of bondage as well as of liberation? The mind is the cause of everything.

**Bhaktha:** Mind, mind, they keep on saying. What is it? What is its form?

**Swami:** “Cognition,” “understanding” is its form. If you know the basis of that knowing, there will be no bondage at all!

**Bhaktha:** What is the basis?

**Swami:** The basis is what you refer to as I. Seeking for the I, if you are in that I state, however many “understandings” come or do not come, you will remain unaffected.

**Bhaktha:** Right. That is very good, Swami. Please make all this soak into our brains, so that we may realise the purpose of our lives. I shall take leave, Swami.

**Swami:** Do so. Depart gladly and return later. Take my blessings with you.

## XII

**BHAKTHA:** Swami, at Venkatagiri, during the “Adhyatmika Sabha,” You said some things which I could not clearly understand: can I ask about them now?

**Swami:** I am happy when anyone asks Me about things which he has not understood. Of course, you have every right.

**Bhaktha:** You said *Sthula-rupa* and *Sukshma-rupa*, the gross form and the subtle form, isn’t it? These two, are they the characteristics of the Manas only? Or are they related to everything?

**Swami:** They are characteristic of everything. In fact, all the names and forms found in the gross exist also in the subtle stage! Why, the gross is there, only to make you understand the subtle!

**Bhaktha:** Well then, Swami, we see the gross firmament, the *Sthula-aakasa*; has it a subtle aakasa also?

**Swami:** My dear boy, all this exists in that subtle aakasa. The subtle aakasa is as imperceptible and as all-pervading as the gross aakasa.

**Bhaktha:** What is its name, Swami?

**Swami:** It is known as the *Sukshma Hridhayaakasa*, the subtle firmament of the heart.

**Bhaktha:** How can that be all-pervading?

**Swami:** Nothing else possesses the extent, the area, the breadth that this Hridhayaakasa has. See how many scenes, how many feelings, how many conjectures, are immersed and imbedded in it!

**Bhaktha:** Then, have we a Sun also in that subtle sky?

**Swami:** Of course! Who said, no? Without that, how can there be all this splendour, all this light and wisdom and brightness?

**Bhaktha:** What is its name, Swami?

**Swami:** When the heart is the aakasa, the Sun, naturally, is the Buddhi or the Intellect that illuminates that sky. The effulgence of the Buddhi is as bright as the rays of the Sun. So, the subtle Sun is Buddhi.

**Bhaktha:** Then it is possible that the Moon also in subtle form is in the aakasa of the heart.

**Swami:** Why do you ask about all these, one by one? Did I not tell you at the beginning itself? Every gross name and form has its corresponding subtle form and name. The Moon in its subtle form is Prema, with its cool rays pleasing to the heart. Love is the subtle form of the Moon.

**Bhaktha:** Excuse me, Swami; the Pandavas and the Kauravas waged a war, isn't it? How are they supposed to have waged the "subtle" war, these "subtle" Pandavas and their opposite number, the "subtle" Kauravas?

**Swami:** Why do you say "supposed to have waged?" They are waging it even today in the subtle form! In this war, the Evil qualities are the Kauravas; the Good qualities, Sathya, Dharma, *Santhi* (inner peace), Prema and *Ahimsa* (non-violence), are the five Pandava brothers. The evil qualities are many and so the Kauravas too are a horde. Each one under his own Hridhayaakasa, on his own *Chidbhumi* (causal world) is waging this struggle, every moment.

**Bhaktha:** Swami, they say the Pandavas are children of the King, Pandu, and the Kauravas are the offspring of the King, Dhritharashtra. In the "subtle" form, how are we to recognise them?

**Swami:** Both are disputants for the kingship of the selfsame Heart; they are in everyone as *Ajnani* and *Sujnani*, the Unwise Personality and the Wise Personality. The unwise blind ruler is Dhritharashtra; the wise Pandu is the father of all good qualities. Have you understood?

**Bhaktha:** But then, Swami, excuse me; in that war there were millions of soldiers and chariots, and the subjects; who are they in this "subtle" conflict?

**Swami:** Of course, they are all there, in man. The million feelings and thoughts and impressions are the soldiers and subjects. The ten Indriyas are the regiments; the five senses are the chariots. In everyone's heart there is this perpetual war being fought between Good and Evil, between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Is that clear?

**Bhaktha:** Well, who is Lord Krishna in the subtle war; He who was then neutral in that struggle for power?

**Swami:** Don't you know? He is the Witness, known as Atma. He is Sarathi of the Chariot of the Jiva.

**Bhaktha:** Another question. All these people had Hasthinapura as their capital then. In man, which is the Hasthinapura?

**Swami:** The basis for all these subtle manifestations, these men, chariots, Pandavas and Kauravas is, as you know, this Asthinapura, the City of Bones, this Body. This

skeleton is Asthinapura! Both have Nine Gates. There, both the Kauravas and the Pandavas were born. They played and were trained there. They grew up together there. So also, in this same Asthinapura all the qualities, good and bad, are born and do grow. They develop and subside, they watch and hate each other, all in the same Body. Are not the warring rulers in this body also Ajnani and Sujnani, the Unwise Personality and the Wise Personality?

**Bhaktha:** Yes, Swami. There is an intimate connection between the Mahabharatha war and the qualities and conduct of man. Really, the relationship is there, without doubt. What a fine comparison! As you said, this type of warfare is taking place in everyone, even now. Well Swami, when will this war end?

**Swami:** When will this war end, you ask? When both “bad qualities” and good qualities fade out and man becomes qualityless; then alone can man have Santhi.

**Bhaktha:** At that time, this battlefield, this Asthinapura, the City of Bones will not exist, is it?

**Swami:** When there is a battle, there must be a battlefield. When you have no battle, why bother about a field.

**Bhaktha:** Can we not avoid the battle altogether?

**Swami:** Why not? Kings develop the spirit of war because they have confidence in their subjects. The subjects

encourage the rulers to unleash the hounds of war. Delusions are the subjects, who push the individual into the battle. When there is a paucity of such subjects, war too will not be waged. So divest yourself of such subjects as delusions, illusions, feelings of “I” and “Mine,” and then, you can be at peace, enjoying undisturbed Santhi, my boy! You can go now! Wait! Let me tell you one thing: entertaining doubts of all kinds is also a delusion, *Vyamoha*! Strive to be free from even this trait! Well, go and come sometime later.

### XIII

**BHAKTHA:** Swami, last time you spoke of the Mahabharatha war; in the same manner, does the Ramayana also happen in everyone's heart?

**Swami:** Undoubtedly! It does take place systematically and in the same sequence.

**Bhaktha:** Then, in what form does Rama come in this?

**Swami:** The Atma is Rama. He has come, in the character of Jivi, wearing the dress called body.

**Bhaktha:** Then, being a *Sankalpasiddha*, whose Will prevails, and being Omnipotent, who is all powerful, why does He suffer so much?

**Swami:** It is all play: His *Leela*, Sport. What can be Joy for Him? And what can be Suffering for Him? He is *Anandaswaroopa* (Embodiment of Bliss), who knows

neither. By His Will He can produce everything. He has enacted the Ramayana on the stage of the theatre of the World, with Himself taking a role and showing each quality or Guna as a separate Form. Such a Ramayana is taking place, in every heart. The Rama in the Heart, the Atmarama, is observing everything, as Witness.

**Bhaktha:** But the inert material Jada, the Jivi, how does it enter into this Ramayana?

**Swami:** This Jada accepts the Active Chaithanya, viz. the Knowledge of Brahmam. Chaithanya is born with the name of Seetha. The Jada-Chaithanya become One. This is referred to as Seetharama. So long as the Jada and the Chaithanya are One, there is no trouble and no suffering. It is the separation of one of these two that gives rise to all the bother.

**Bhaktha:** How is that, Swami?

**Swami:** Seetha, who is *Brahmajnana*, goes away from the Atma which is in the form of the Jiva; hence, falling into the Darkness or the Jungle is inevitable. Rama has acted in this way to show us this; if Seetha or Brahmajnana is allowed to be lost, one cannot escape wandering about in the Jungle of Darkness.

**Bhaktha:** If that is so, what is the reason, Swami, for this Lakshmana to be always with Him? In our life what does he stand for?

**Swami:** One should not be alone in the dark jungle of life. One should have the Manas ever by one's side. It is for this that Lakshmana is kept near, always.

**Bhaktha:** In the Ramayana, Vali and Sugriva are described. Who are they?

**Swami:** When wandering in the dark jungle one gets Despair when one should get Discrimination. They have vengeful hatred of each other. Vali who is Despair has to be destroyed; then only can success come. Despair is Vali. Discrimination is Sugriva.

**Bhaktha:** Hanuman, who appears between these two, who is he?

**Swami:** He who is of great help in the conquest of Despair, viz. Courage! That is Hanuman. He is Courage. Associated with Courage, it is possible to cross the Ocean of Illusion. That is why Rama built the *Sethu* or Bridge with the help of Hanuman.

**Bhaktha:** After crossing the Ocean of Illusion, what is to be planned?

**Swami:** Don't you know what Rama did after crossing over the Bridge? Conquering *Moha* or Illusion, He slew Rajo Guna and *Thamo Guna* (Quality of sloth) in the form of Ravana and Kumbhakarna. The remaining brother, the last, the Sathwa Guna, viz. Vibhishana was crowned King. The three gunas have been illustrated

in the characters and careers of the three brothers, Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Vibhishana.

**Bhaktha:** After this, what has to be achieved?

**Swami:** Has to be achieved, do you say? Next, is the attainment of *Anubhavajnana* or Seetha; the Jnana reached after experience, Jnana realised in actual life. When both Jada and Chaithanya unite again, that is the *Pattabhisheka*, the Coronation; that is to say, *Jivanmukthi*, Salvation for the Jiva. Therefore, the fundamental teaching of the Ramayana is this: "The Jiva, Manas, Jnana, Despair, Discrimination, Courage, Delusion, Rajas, Thamas, Sathwa; these demonstrate themselves each in a different Form. It is to be learnt how and in what ways each of these can be either acquired or subdued. All this is done by the Atma, who has come in the form and with the name of Rama, by His acting, behaving, directing and guiding. So the Ramayana has not ended long ago. So long as in each one's life there is a struggle for achievement through these paths, and persons attain the Anubhavajnana in the end and Sathwa Guna is crowned at last, until then the Ramayana will continue to take place in the heart of Man. On one side the Mahabharatha war, on the other side the *Ramayana*; and on another the *Bhagavatha*; thus is life led perpetually. These are the Sukshma forms of the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharatha* and the *Bhagavatha*; do you understand?

**Bhaktha:** That means, in the Ramayana of actual life, Atma is Rama, Manas is Lakshmana, Brahmajnana is Seetha; and when that Seetha is lost, Rama falls into the forest of existence; there, in that forest, there are Despair and Discrimination. If we associate ourselves with Hanuman or Courage, we can go across the sea of delusion, with the army of zest, strength and steadfastness represented by Jambavan, Angada and other Vanaras. As soon as we cross it, we can destroy the Rajasic quality and the Tamasic quality symbolised by Ravana and Kumbhakarna. The Sathwic quality or Vibhishana can then be crowned; Anubhavajnana or Seetha is then attained. This union of Japa and Chaithanya, that is, of Seetha and Rama is the Ananda, the Jivanmukthi, Salvation for the Soul. Ah! What a splendid Ramayana! The Ramayana accomplished as the Son of Dasaratha is being enacted now as the Subtle Ramayana, through Gunas and Indriyas, qualities and senses in each individual so to say.

**Swami:** There is no “so to say” in this. It is happening as the subtle Ramayana!

**Bhaktha:** You said, Swami, that each Guna and each Indriya adopts in Ramayana a separate form. It causes some surprise to imagine that the Senses also put on some Form! In these, the gross and the subtle Ramayanas, in what form do the Senses appear? Please tell me this.

**Swami:** Whatever may be the Guna or quality how can it express itself, without the help of the senses? Gunas are bred in the senses. The Senses of Action are five; the Senses of Knowledge are five. These ten, with the help of the Manas, create attachment, isn't it? Otherwise, there can be no merging at all. “Born in Maya, bred in Maya, Man's mission is to master Maya,” it is said. So too, born in the Senses, bred in the Senses, the Jada Chaithanya has to master the Senses. That is their basic duty, don't you know? Do you know where Rama, the Jivi, was born? Whose son is He? Dasaratha has that name because he symbolises the Dasendriyas, or the Ten Senses. Whichever Guna or Rupa we consider, it cannot be unrelated to the Ten Senses, the Senses of Action and of Knowledge, the Karmendriyas and the Jnanendriyas, in the form of Dasaratha, we have the Ten.

**Bhaktha:** Four sons were born of Dasaratha. Of what were they the forms, Swami?

**Swami:** From the Ten Senses, not only four, but any number of Gunas and Rupas can originate. But only the chief, the four, symbolising the four faces of the Lord, originated by His Will. They are born as Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha and Sathrughna. They are Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema in the subtle form. These are the Four Faces of the Lord.

**Bhaktha:** Who among these, Swami, is Sathya? Who represents Dharma, Santhi and Prema?

**Swami:** Can't you discover? Rama is Sathya. "The status and the honour should go to him who has the right, not to me," said Bharatha when he was offered the crown, and so he is Dharma. Placing complete faith on the Atma, that is, Rama, believing that there is no Ananda sweeter than its uninterrupted company,

Lakshmana followed Rama and so he is Prema. Having no individual separate ambition of his own, treading the paths followed by these three, Sathrughna was calm and unperturbed and so he is Santhi. Is that clear?

**Bhaktha:** Yes, Swami, but these four were born of three mothers; who are whose mothers?

**Swami:** As I said just now, "born in Maya, bred in Maya, one has to transcend this Maya"; so also, one is born from Gunas, one is brought up with Gunas; finally, one has to transcend the Gunas. The three mothers represent three Gunas! Among them, Kousalya is Sathwa Guna, Kaikeyi is Rajo Guna, and Sumithra, Thamo Guna; they play those roles, in the epic. Dasaratha in the form of Dasendriyas is associated with these Gunas and so he is *Indriyagunaswaroopa*. It is because man cannot easily grasp the truth through the senses and the gunas only that the Lord taught him through the Ramayana, the Lord teaching us even to this day. The Lord performed that day the gross Ramayana; and today He is performing the *Sukshmaramayana* on the stage of the heart of Man.