

8. Ignorance Is The Cause Of One's Sorrow

A bubble of water is born out of water, it is made up of water, it ultimately mixes with water and disappears. As in this analogy, man is like a bubble and NARAYANA is like the source water. Man is born out of Narayana, is made up of Him and ultimately merges with Him. What else can I tell you? This is the simple and elemental truth.

Prema Swarupas:

The *jiva* has three aspects: one is the spiritual, the other is the material aspect and the third is something connected with daily life. These three aspects resemble the deep sleep state, the waking state and the dreaming state. Just as the waves are created out of water and are contained in water, so also the worldly life is contained in the spiritual life.

The sweetness and the coolness are qualities of water. These qualities are also noticed in the waves and in the foam. *Sath, Chith* and *Ananda*, are three attributes which may be noticed in an individual. Through the individual, they show up in his worldly life and they reflect the spiritual content in him. These aspects, the worldly aspect and the spiritual aspect are inseparably connected with each other.

When we talk of the individual, we have to consider the divinity in him or the *Atma Swarupa*. The basic content of the individual or the *Atma Swarupa* will remain separate and will not mix with anything else. This *Atma* does not need any direct

evidence, and it is being felt in the world at all places and at all times.

When a child, who has not seen the ocean at all, is told by his parents that there is an ocean, and that they have seen the ocean and have had a bath in the ocean, the child believes that there is an ocean. In what he is getting from his parents, there is no direct evidence and demonstration so far as the child is concerned. It is a matter of the child having faith in his parents.

In the same manner, men, who cannot experience *Atma* directly, do not realise divinity or the sacredness of *Atma* by themselves. To such people, divine persons, sages and *rishis*, who have had this experience, must convey their experience. This is not direct evidence and demonstration to the ordinary man.

As the water, the waves and the foam are all inseparably connected with each other, the three aspects, the spiritual aspect, the worldly aspect and the divine aspect, are inseparably connected with each other. But depending on the environment and the situation which exists around, man uses one word or the other with greater appropriateness. It is in this context of the triple aspect that I have often said that you are not one person but that you are three persons: the one you think you are, the one others think you are, and the one you really are. There is one small example for this. Suppose a potter goes to a place and digs out some mud and makes a heap of the mud in front of his house. After some days he uses this mud, which he has collected, and makes pots, pans, and so on. As a result of what the potter had done, there is a pit in one place and there is a mound of mud in front of his house. As he takes out the mud from the mound and goes on making pots

and pans, you find that the mound is diminishing in size and the pots and pans are increasing in number. When we put water into the mud that is in the mound, it gets absorbed easily but when we put water into the pot, it remains unabsorbed. However, the mud that is used for making the pot and the mud that is heaped up as a mound are the same. But the features that are contained in the mud that comes out of the pit or that comes out from the mound are not the same as those of the mud used for making a pot. What is the reason for this? The reason for this is that the mud, used for making a pot, has been treated by putting it in the fire; and because of such a treatment in the fire, the pot has taken a definite shape and water remains unabsorbed in the pot. After using the pot for sometime, if one is careless about handling it, the pot gets broken; and once the pot is broken, the pieces break further and are ultimately reduced to dust and mud. Our body, which can be compared to the pot, breaks into pieces and is analogous to the aspect of the daily life. The phenomenon, which we see when the mound goes on diminishing gradually, may be described as the aspect of divinity where we recognise continual disappearance. On the other hand, the mud which remained unchanged in all the three stages of: the pit, the mound and the pot, can be described as representing the spiritual life. The name and the form may be different from time to time but the essence, the basic material, remains unchanged. What does not change and continues to exist in all the forms and names is permanent, and this is analogous to *Atma* which is present in all the three stages. In order to recognise the true nature of *Atma*, we have to make several efforts. It is not as if there is no reason for our inability to recognise the form and nature of *Atma*. There is a small story to illustrate this.

Ten friends came together and they wanted to cross a flowing stream. As the river or the stream was flowing fast,

they were somewhat confused. However, by some effort they reached the other bank of the river, and developed a doubt whether they had all been able to cross the stream. The moment this doubt entered their mind, there was also a desire to check whether all the ten people had indeed come through. One of them began counting one, two, three until nine and then he imagined that the tenth person was not present. Under those circumstances, to think that one is absent is simply the result of his own ignorance, because he was not counting himself. Not only was he under the impression that the tenth person was not present, but he also began to feel that one of the group may have been washed away in the river, and they were all in a state of mourning. The feeling that the tenth person was not present is ignorance, and the feeling that he was washed away by the river is a further step in their ignorance. To get the feeling that the tenth person was even dead and gone is complete ignorance.

At that moment another person, not belonging to the group, was moving in that direction and asked them what the cause of their suffering was. The reply was given that they were ten people when they came to the river, they were ten when they entered the river, but when they came out of the river they were only nine, and that the tenth person has been washed away and this was the cause of their sorrow. When this person was told the reason for their sorrow, he saw that there were in fact ten people and so he asked them to count again in his presence. In the recounting, it was once again one to nine and the person who was counting did not count himself, the tenth one. He was feeling very disturbed that the tenth one was not present. The new person who came in recognised the mistake which they were committing. He himself started counting, one to nine and he pointed out that the tenth person (the person who was counting) was omitting himself uncounted. They all then recognised that the tenth person was not washed away by

the river, and that in reality he did not die. Simultaneously in one moment, their sorrow was removed and they were happy. What is the reason for this sorrow which they experienced before? What is the reason for the happiness they are experiencing now? Their ignorance was the cause of their sorrow, and the removal of ignorance was the cause for their happiness.

The moral of this story is that the non-recognition or recognition of one's own self, can be the cause of sorrow or of happiness as the case may be. Here it is also established that this happiness which we experience is one's own form or one's own self. The permanent bliss that one gets by the knowledge of *Atma* has been described by several people by saying that *Atma* is all-knowing and *Atma* is above duality. *Atma* is one and not two. *Atma* is permanent. *Atma* is unwavering. *Atma* is above description and above suffering. There are different ways of describing *Atma* but these words cannot undertake to tell us the form of *Atma*. It is not possible for anyone to establish its form. One can only experience this for Oneself. It is not possible for others to give a description which enables another person to experience this. Here the bliss or the happiness, which can be got out of demonstration or description, will not be as good as that obtained from direct experience. Thus, knowledge of this *Atma* can come only out of experience and cannot come out of reading books. There is one other example for this.

There is the ocean. When we bring water from the ocean and drink it, we find that the water tastes salty. The same water of the ocean, because of the heat of the sun, is converted into vapour, forms clouds and comes down as rain and such water will be sweet and not salty. Where has this change from salty taste to sweet taste come about? The sweetness had come

when the ocean water was being changed into vapour as a result of the heat of the sun. There is a possibility, in this situation, to recognise the difference between the sweetness on the one hand and the salty taste on the other. This sweet water is something which you realise with your own experience. The knowledge that the water, which comes directly from the ocean, is salty is something which we acquire by frequent hearing. The knowledge acquired by hearing and by reading is not very satisfactory. Knowledge coming from one's own experience gives real happiness. How can we get such experience? The knowledge that is contained in the ocean of grace has to be transformed by using one's intelligence like the heat of the sun. When that vapour can be changed into clouds, it can be compared to the truth. Out of clouds of truth should form rain drops of *prema*. When the individual drops of *prema* come together to join, out of that will come a stream. This stream is the real bliss. This stream of bliss will go back again and merge with the ocean of grace. As the water, which came out of the ocean became vapour, then became cloud and rain and went back to the ocean, so also the divine grace that comes to us turns into fruits as clouds, turns into drops of *prema*, drops join and become stream of *prema* and the stream goes back to the ocean of grace.

Human beings of today are not making any attempt to get some idea of the ocean of grace. How can they transform themselves into clouds of truth? If they cannot realise the clouds of truth, how can there be drops of *prema*? When there are not even drops of *prema*, how do we get streams of happiness? The first thing which we have to accept is that there is no *dharma* which is different from truth.

Truth has been accepted as the very first basis. For this truth, *prema* should become the support. If *prema* is present in

us, it will be possible for us to earn the grace of the Lord to a large extent. Love lives by giving and forgiving. Self lives by getting and forgetting. In this context, Dasaratha is a perfect example of one who has taken the path of truth. He has also a title called Sathya Parakrama. There was another title for Dasaratha, i.e., one who was bound by *dharma*. Atirathi was another title for him and this means one who could give happiness to a large extent. He was also called a *Rajarishi*. A king and yet a *rishi* shining with brightness because of the several great qualities in him. He was a king for the kingdom and was always taking the support and advice of eight persons of his kingdom. These eight persons were such that they always practised the highest *dharma*. The last one of these eight persons was Somantara. He has also accepted two persons Vasishtha and Vamadeva as his *Gurus*. In Dasaratha's daily life, he was using these two *Gurus* as his *purohits*. In addition, when Dasaratha had some doubt or when he found that the people's prosperity was being obstructed or when he wanted some advice, he used to have six people as his principal advisers. The first among these six people was Suyagna, the others were Jabali, Kasayapa, Pascheya, Markandeya and Gautama. These six persons were retained by him as his principal advisers. He was ruling the whole of Bharath. There was no injustice, there was no untruth, there was no crime in the whole of Bharath during his rule. At that time he had eight ministers and six advisers. The rule of that day was such that Dasaratha looked into the prosperity of the people. If we look at the situation in some depth and try to understand the significance and the inner meaning, we should note that man has got five working organs and five sensory organs. Altogether he has got ten *indriyas*, and Dasaratha literally means the human body which has got five working organs and five sensory organs. Dasaratha symbolises this chariot of the human body which has got ten organs. Dasaratha

also attracted three *gunas* in the form of Kausalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi. The four *Purusharthas*: *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha* are symbolised by Dasaratha's four sons. Dasaratha was one who proclaimed such a significant inner meaning to the world and urged the people to lead an ideal life.

Sita is the daughter of the king of Mithilapura whose name was Videha. Videha means one who has no body or one who has no consciousness of his human body. The capital of Dasaratha was Ayodhya. Ayodhya means a city into which enemies cannot enter. Dasaratha had such noble qualities and ideals that he was carrying on the rule of his country in an exemplary manner. Sita can be identified with wisdom, and Sita marries Rama or becomes one with Rama who is *dharma*. When wisdom comes together with *dharma*, in the ordinary course, such a good event will meet with some obstacles. It is customary and quite natural that every good thing is met with by some obstacles. As I state often, pleasure is only an interval between two pains. If there is no pain at all, there is no value for pleasure. Sita is the embodiment of wisdom and she had been taken away by Ravana, who symbolises selfishness and ego.

If one wants his little wisdom to disappear, all that one has to do is to promote his selfishness, jealousy and ego. Ravana symbolises selfishness, jealousy and ego. To make a search for Sita, who had been taken away by the bad qualities, selfishness, jealousy and ego, Rama, in the form of *dharma*, along with the other *Purusharthas*, i.e., *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*, makes a journey. Here Lakshmana is to be identified with the mind. We should notice that Rama, the embodiment of *dharma*, combines with Lakshmana, who is identified as mind, and goes to the forest, which signifies life. In that forest of life, Rama searches for wisdom in the form of Sita. In this

context, there is an argument between the two brothers Vali and Sugriva. Sugriva can be compared to the ability to distinguish between right and wrong. Here the inability or the weakness which is called *dhirathwa* has been destroyed in the form of Vali; and Sugriva, who symbolises the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, comes out victorious. Along with Sugriva, who symbolises *viveka*, or the ability to distinguish right from wrong, we have Hanuman. The combination of Sugriva and Hanuman is like the combination of *viveka* and courage. The *viveka* and courage went together in search of Sita, the wisdom. They meet with one obstacle in the form of an ocean of *moha*. Thus the ocean of *moha* had to be crossed and this crossing was effected with the help of courage in the form of Hanuman.

After crossing the ocean, they encounter the three *gunas*: the *rajas*, *thamas* and *sathwa* on the opposite bank of the ocean. They are Ravana, Kumbha-karna and Vibhishana representing the three *gunas* respectively. The *rajas* and the *thamas*, Ravana and Kumbhakarna, were removed from the scene and finally the *sathwa Guna* gets the upper hand in the form of Vibhishana. He has been crowned the king. After making Vibhishana the king of Lanka, Rama has the vision of wisdom, born out of experience in the person of Sita. Rama, prior to finding Sita, could be called a *Brahmajnani* but when he found Sita, symbolising the knowledge of experience, there is a reunion of the knowledge of experience with the pure *Brahma Jnana*, and the culmination was the coronation, the story which we called *Sahasrарtha Ramayana*. This description which has now been given can also be called *Adhyatma Ramayana*. It is only when we can understand this interpretation of *Adhyatma Ramayana*, there is some benefit for us and a possibility of the realisation of the nature of *Atma*. If we keep on thinking of *Ramayana* in the human form of a

king Dasaratha, a son Rama and look only superficially, how can we know the real significance?

Students:

Even Rama, who had established Rama Rajya on one historic occasion, had to leave this world and pass away. Everything has to pass away some day. Nothing is going to remain permanently in this world. Even the Rama Rajya had to disappear and change. Everything changes with time and nothing remains unchanged. Even Harischandra, who was an ardent adherent of truth at all times, had to pass away from this world. Nala who ruled over all the world had to pass away. Could he take even a small bit of land with him when he passed away?

Rama built a big bridge over the ocean. Do we see Rama alive now? Many people have ruled over this land, but could any one of them take away even a small portion of the land? The only thing which you can take and which you should take is the permanent grace of the Lord. A good name is all that you should aspire for during your life.

Although Rama gave up his mortal body, yet if we talk about Rama, so many years later in this *yuga*, obviously the good that Rama had done is responsible for this.

We should earn a good name and we should do good. We should lead a good life. We should do good to others. This is the ideal which we have to hand over to the rest of the world.