



VASUDATVA KUTUMBAKAM



HER HOLINESS SRI SATHGURU
SWAMI GNANANANDA SARASVATHI

When you come to the last stages, everywhere you will find only the power of God. This is Vasudaiva Kutumbakam. Whether it is animals or the trees – even the trees, they are absolutely responsive to such a person, you know. They respond with happiness. Even if it is a dog or cat or whatever, they don't like certain people. You will notice that they do like certain people. They have what you call the sixth sense. They are able to understand. Human beings don't have it and yet they are called the crest jewel of creation!



VASUDAIVA KUTUMBAKAM

Few words...

“O Devi, You are my Mother and Bhagagavan Vasudeva is my Father. Given away by my Acharyas to both of you as Your servant, I am the sole object of Your compassion. Your radiant, smiling face seems to ask me, “What other favour do you seek?”

Vedanta Desika, the Lion among poets and logicians (kavitararkika simham) addressing the Divine Mother Mahalakshmi in the Sri Stuti writes thus. To all devotees of Sri Sathguru this is something that they have seen and felt. Sri Sathguru's smile when a devotee enters the Darshan Hall and Her benevolent glances that can only be described by the world sataksam is something, which most devotees remember as their most cherished memories.

The Bhagavatham tells us that Hari possesses such wonderful qualities that even sages who are atmarama (delight in the self) feel unreasoning devotion for Him. One of His most endearing qualities is His Boundless compassion that allow Him to protect even His enemies. The example of Kaliya being given asylum and Jarasandha being repeatedly spared by Him spring to mind when one thinks of His compassion.

The striking effect, which Sri Bhagavan's compassion has on those who hear of it after so many thousands of years, is so great that one does not wonder that Kaliya, a fearsome serpent should have given up his wrathful, evil nature and turned a bhakta. Similarly the effect of the compassion of great saints is such that even evil persons turn into devotees as in the case of the drunkards, Jagai and Madhai.

This compassion is a true love of all beings quite different from the love, which human beings feel for each other or other creatures. Human love is based on the ego. The emphasis in the thought of love is always on the "I". When an ego-driven person says, "I love my father" the emphasis is not on love or father but on "I", therefore when the father does or says something, which causes the ego to feel threatened, the love dies. This is because the love is directed to the object via the ego of the subject. One's self-love is spread out to all those connected to oneself. All bipolar relationships are based on the subject-object difference and end in disappointment. This is because one's control can only be over oneself and not over others. When other people or being act in a manner, which displease one, the love disappears and dislike, and disappointment takes its place.

The ill feeling is proportionate to the disappointment felt. All bipolar relationships are therefore potential sources of disappointment and sorrow.

Sri Bhagavan says:

yehi samsparsaja bhoga dukhayonya
eva te
dyantavantah kaunteya na tesu ramate
buddhah

Since all experiences, which are contact-born, are the causes of sorrow as they have an end and a beginning the wise do not delight in them.

(Bhagavad Gita V.22)

All experiences which are born of contact between an object and subject brings out feelings of various types which disturb the mind and cause us to follow various courses of action

some of which are not beneficial to us in a worldly or spiritual sense. The scriptures tells us in Jivanmuktiviveka: “Anything which is not a means of liberation should not be thought of as it becomes a source of bondage as in the case of (Jada) Bharata.” While this is an instructions for the highest type of Sadhaka, it is also a plain fact, which can be seen every moment of our lives- our level of bondage is proportionate to our thought spent on worldly matters.

The love that a realised being feels is quite different. His is a love that expects nothing in return.

Sri Sankara says:

Santa mahanto nivasanti santho
vasantavallokahitam carantah
tirna svayam bhimabhavarnavam
jananahetunanyanapi tarayantah

Great and peaceful, saints move about the world helping people disinterestedly like the spring. Having themselves crossed the fearful ocean on transmigration: they, without any selfish motive, help higher value and divided among the children. Someone present said, "If you had accepted it then what a profit you could have made!" Sri Sathguru immediately replied, "But the others would have lost wouldn't they?" This sense of compassion has always permeated Sri Sathguru's thought from the earliest days and is very clearly seen in this discourse. If we think and believe that we are indeed Brahman (aham brahmasami) then we should feel another's pain and happiness as our own. Sri Sathguru also gives us the basis of the feeling of aham brahmasmi and how it can be developed. Simple and powerful, Sri Sathguru's words enter into the hearts of the listeners.

This is not only because of the practical nature of Sri Sathguru's teachings but because it is filled with the force of a jivanmukta who has a command to teach.

As Yama says to Nachiketas,

naiva vaca na manasa praptam sakyō
na caksusa
astiti bruvatonyatra katham tad
upalabhyate

(Katha Upanishad VI:12)

That Atman can never be attained by speech, eyes or the mind. How can it be attained other than through one who can say "It is?"

There are many Gurus today who can say that the Atman exists and explain Vedanta with the help of quantum physics, management theories and medicine, but can they say that

they truly know from their own experience that Brahman exists? And unless they can say that what one uses is all their talk?

As the Buddha says,

yathapi ruciram puppham
vannavantam agandhakam
evam subhasita vaca aphala hoti
akkubato

(Dhammapada, Pushpphavaggo, 8)

Like a beautiful flower, full of colour but without scent, are the well-spoken but fruitless words of him who does not practice (as he preaches).

A listener after hearing Sri Sathguru's discourse said, "Sri Sathguru was explaining about Krishna, why He did what he did, but there was no need for Her to say anything by the time

She had finished the previous sentence I could understand when She was going to say.”

The subjects of Vasudaiva Kutumbakam is very clear to Sri Sathguru, this is only one of the many discourses Sri Sathguru has given on the famous Hitopadesa verse:

ayam nijah paro veti jananam laghu
cetasam
udara caritranam tu vasudaiva
Kutumbakam

In easy steps Sri Sathguru has explained how the ideal of Vasudaiva Kutumbakam can be attained and how the final realization of it is equal to Aham Brahmasmi. May we all climb those steps and attain the final Goal!

Swami Shrihariprasad
Sri Sathguru Jayanthi
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VASUDAIVA KUTUMBAKAM

The Hithopadesa is something like the Panchatantra, it is one of the Arthastras or the manuals for success in the world. It uses stories and fables to explain the points, which have to be understood, which is why we find animals talking to each other and saying stories to each other. But then, what they speak is this – “The one who says, “This family is mine, this person is mine – and that person is not mine. “Is a small minded person.” “That is a person whose thoughts go only as far as his interests, that “I” and mine. It does not go beyond that. “But for the noble minded person, the world is the family of God”. That is, Vasudaiva Kutumbakam – Vasudeva lives in the whole world. So it becomes Vasudeva Kutumbakam.

This is a small-minded person. Nowadays, you see, from the extended family, it is becoming a nuclear family. Everything is nuclear now! The nuclear family – now, what does that signify? How does that help? The minute the children grow up, they go away. They forget their roots. They have nothing to do with their parents or with other family members. They go away and just mind their own business. They forget that what they do to their parents is going to come back to them. The children grow up – their children grow up and do the same thing to them. Now, this creates a lot of trouble for society; and this culture is unknown in Hindu society. In other western countries, you will find that they do this and from there, the concept of “homes for the aged” has come here also. It was known in olden days for an aged person, an old person to be uncared for.

They were given the utmost respect. It was said that grey hair must be respected. Now, people just don't care. That type of attitude has disappeared now. It is each one for himself. The small minded person – he thinks, this is my family. I, and my family – that's all. He feels nothing else; and is not interested in anything else. The good-hearted person – the one whose soul has been elevated to the higher levels – such a person always thinks on the highest spiritual levels. They see God existing in every part of creation; whether it is in a human being or whether it is in animals or birds, insects or trees – God exists everywhere. Without Him, there is no creation. So one whose mind has come to that highest level – he is able to see and understand that God exists everywhere. He finds no difference. Otherwise, it is the most selfish existence that you live. There are good people even now.

A majority may be adharmik but those who remain are still dharmik. These people – not all of them could have come to this higher level I don't think even 0.0001 percent could have come on that level of realising that. But still, they are on the way and working hard to go higher; and as you pass every step – as you go above, higher and higher and you get elevated, you find that your spirituality is increased and your whole character changes. These things that in the world and maya once interested you so much, you'll find, interest you no more. You are able to see and understand – you have that Viveka to understand – you have that to understand that there is nothing in all these. To come to this level of Vasudaiva Kumtumbakam, actually it is some jacked which says to somebody else. But that animal had knowledge isn't ti so?

The final stage of Evolution

The last stage is what he has said – Vasudaiva Kutumbakam. That is knowledge of seeing – knowledge of God and seeing God as Brahman in all creation. In all creation, you see only God; and the whole creation reacts to such a person also. Even if it is an animal or an insect, it understands. When such a person comes and has anything to do with them, they are able to understand that language. In olden days, the Rishis used to sit in the forest and pray – their minds were totally absorbed in God and once of them came and told the others, “Listen There is going to be some disturbance in the capital city.” You must remember that they are in the forest, “There is going to be a lot of trouble there.” “How did you know?” The ants were speaking about it.” Ants move in a line, you know.

They have their own language – and they talk; but we are not able to hear it. But the Rishi was able to hear it. That sound we can't hear; and if we do hear, we can make nothing of it. Because we don't know anything – were not tuned to it, you know. The mind and the soul must be turned to the others languages – of animals or birds or even insects. They talk to themselves – between themselves, they talk. See one bird sits and crows here – after some time, you hear another answering it. So you wonder what it is saying that the other one is answering. For this, you know, you must be able to think about nature – about God existing everywhere. If you think only about this world and its pleasures you will not be able to do it. I had told you about the lady from Italy who had come to interview me- she is translating this Hithopadesa into Italian.

Whereas, we Indians ourselves know nothing about our scriptures – the great wealth that we have – the priceless heritage that we have.

The process of evolution

You follow that ideal of Vasudaiva Kutumbakam; keep it as your deal. As you go on the path, and you find knowledge, you change. If you are really and truly sincere about it, you” get results. You must be sincere about it. Once you do that, you will find that you get experiences – gradually your life changes and your outlook changes. Whatever happens in the world – however much you suffer in this world, inside you, you just don’t change, you are not affected. Even if you have to die tomorrow, you understand that, “Well, it is time for me to go” – that’s all. You don’t take it badly. You don’t take in a wrong manner. You don’t get upset about it.

Well, it is time for me to go – that’s all. We are not Chiranjeevis here. You must remember that. It is a question of accepting the things that you cannot change. So your mind settles down. Your senses are controlled. This is one of the main steps. The mind becomes calm – then the senses are controlled, and then there is no fear, you do away with any type of fear.

When you surrender, the ego is in the beginning placed at His feet. It does not surrender so easily and merge with Him, Merging with Him is the last stage. But at the early stages, the ego must be kept at His feet – so there is humility – because, it is very rare to find nowadays. You find only arrogance – the opposite of it. Arrogance comes out of Rajas and Tams. The feeling that “I am so great and there is none to equal me” – Hiranyakashipu had this. That is why he went straight for a war with Sriman Narayana. .

As you know in maya, you get all the possessions in maya. You just get everything that maya can give you. And then what happens is that the mind gets totally changed. You get arrogant. You lose all humility. In the early states, the fight is between this – between Sattva Guna on one side and Rajas and Tamas on the other – between the higher nature and the lower nature. Everyone has got these two natures. So in case you have a strong lower nature, and you feel that you are not making any progress, there is no need for you to feel sorry about it. Because, it is there in everybody – in all human beings. It is what and how much of effort you put into your efforts to change that matters. How much of feeling that you have, slowly, as your faith and belief in God increases, you get more and more strength, you surrender more and more and immediately, you get more and more experiences.

The more you surrender, the more He looks after you. But, if you can look after yourself, and you can do things yourself. He doesn't interfere. He lets you have your way and you get your own experiences through it. It is not very easy. It is not all at all easy your ego absolutely purified and cleaned so that God can accept it, finally to merge with Him.

The steps to God

So, the steps are taken one by one. You can't fly up. Of course, it happens in the lives of great souls who have done a lot of Punyam in their past birth and they have done something equally bad also. So they come here, suffer and work it out. All of a sudden, you'll find they have left everything and turned to God. That's because their Karma is over. Once that Karma is over, you can't tie a person up. It is not possible. Stages in life

Stages in life

Suppose a person dies, his karma is over. You can't bring them back. It is in the same way. The person has a certain amount of time, effort to give to certain stages in life. When those stages are over, then he goes away without even looking back. You see, even in the life of Krishna. He was in Brindavan and Gokulam as a child. Then when He had to go to Mathura, He just went away. He had to go. There was no question of Him saying "No". The Gopis were totally upset. His mother was upset. But there was nothing He could do about it. He said, "I have to go away on My Divine Mission for which I was born here". So when one stage is over, the next stage starts. We can't change it. That is why we have Brahmacharya, Grahasthashrama and Vanaprastha and finally Sanyasa.

So when you come to your old age you really retire – but nowadays there is no question of any Vanaprastha – nobody goes away like that. But this Vanaprastha can be in your mind – when you can't go away. It can be in your mind. You can just leave everything as it is, without getting involved anymore, You finish with it. Your job is over and you should wash your hands clean of it You should be able to do that. It is not easy because, all these years, you have been attached and doing all these things. Suddenly , when you are asked to leave, it is not possible. So you must tune yourself and think about it. That vicaram must be there. Then you keep on understanding things a little by little.

From this early stage when you think that you and your family members are the only ones that matter in the world, that is the most selfish stage.

From there you go on rising higher and higher. Looking around, you'll find there are so many people who are suffering. You try to help them. There you are doing a good deed. When you help somebody who is suffering – you want to help the poor who have nothing to eat and you help them. So as you do this, you will be collecting Punyam. Now you should not do this, you will be collecting Punyam. Now you should not do this with the idea of collecting (Punyam). You should be doing it with nickamyā – you know, just because the person is suffering, you do it. It helps him – that's all that matters to you. And more than anything else, it please God. For God's sake we do it and it pleases Him and it helps that poor person, who is suffering in whichever way they can. We should not count pennies when we do that. Because wjhat we do comes back to us a hundred fold.

In the right way, for the right cause, if you do it, it comes back a hundred fold to you. In this way, we slowly rise out of this feeling of “I” and “mine”. It is a sort of poison. It is a poison. Nothing but that. If you allow your spirit also to be poisoned, then it is very sad. And poisoning of the soul and mind and body together that is very sad. The soul by itself is free. But nobody knows it. The mind and body together imprison the soul. There is no necessity for you to think in this manner : chained to this idea of “I” and “mine”. You can stay where you are, wherever God has placed you in the world today – stay there and practise this – till such time as you have the discriminative knowledge – Viveka, it is called. Knowing this difference between eternal and the passing. The ephemeral things of the world, which are just passing and God who is eternal.

Then you don't want them anymore because that attraction for it disappears. It was that which pulled you down and you ended up here in this world – that goes away. And yet, you can live in the world.

“When Mithila burns, nothing of mine is burning” There is no rule that you should leave everything and take, Sanyasa and go away. There is no rule like that. There are very great souls like King Janaka – he was a householder. He was a Maharaja, father of Sita. He was one of the greatest Gnanis; and he was Maharaja there. It is his detachment, which is always taken up and shown as an example of perfect detachment. When he went to the forest to learn under the Guru, there were a lot of others there, Sanyasis and Brahmacharis were also sitting down and learning together with him. One day, somebody from his court came

and told him that his capital – he was king already – was on fire. He said, “It is so! It is nothing to me” The Minister said, “It is burning” He said, “No, nothing of mine is burning”. And that time they learnt it. And the sanyasis there, who possessed only a kamandalu and a few vasthram (clothes) – they took all that and ran. Now, who was a Sannyasi? (Laughs) – was it Janaka or the others? The great capital was burning. He said, “No, nothing of mine is burning”. This only shows that if you have that Vairagya inside you, you can live anywhere – just anywhere. It doesn’t matter as long as you don’t tie yourself. Ask yourself, “Has this got something to do with me? No, it has got nothing to do with me.” Today you have it; tomorrow it is somebody else’s – wo knows? What does it matter?

The evil of attachment

Getting attached to things, that is the saddest mistake of all. Because, you know very well, when you go you can't take it with you. Even getting attached to people like that is bad. They are not going to come with you. When you die, you have to leave everything.

These are things, which you must think over. This thinking over with discrimination is called Viveka, when you think clearly between what is transitory and what is permanent.

When you get the answer to it – the knowledge, which results in vairagya.

This vairagya can come to you when you are a householder. As I told you, there is no necessity for you to, run to the forest or somewhere in the Himalayas. There is no necessity at all. It is inside you. I told you – there was a story about Vivekananda, when he was in the United States. Somebody had given him a beautiful tobacco pouch and He had it with Him.

A devotee came and told him, “What a beautiful pouch. It is looking so nice”. He said, “You like it, my friend; please take it”. On the spot, he gave it away. You see, he had no attachment towards it. You have everything in this world. At the drop of a hat, you should be able to walk out taking nothing with you. There should not even be a tinge of regret. You have everything. You do what you can with it – you are here as a servant of God. You are doing work for Him. Just think like that. Help as many people as much you can. When you do these things, your mind get purified. That Sattva Guna becomes stronger and stronger in you. Sattva Guna is symbolised by White while Rajas is symbolised by Red – because all activity, passion, anger, jealousy – all these things come from it; whereas Tamas is symbolised by Black – it is inertia, irresponsibility, ignorance, darkness. These three strains of Maya are there in all people.

In some people, some gunas are extremely strong – sometimes Tamas, sometimes Rajas, sometimes Sattva. You'll find the difference between people. With one look, you can tell them what type they are. The tamasik types the rajasik types and the sattvik types. The sattvik people are always ruled over by the others; or others try to rule over them. But they are established in truth; otherwise, they cannot be sattvik established in truth and in Dharma. Once you are established in that, you can live where you want. You can have as many possessions as you need as long as you don't feel, "this is mine"; and you don't get attached to it. As I said, if somebody comes and asks you for anything, you should be able to take it and give it – that's all. You are not attached. This is a test. As you go into this, you can live where you are and yet you see the whole world as it is. You will find that God is not only in human beings, but also in the whole creation.

Human beings are supposed to be the crest jewel of creation, and see what level the crest jewel has come to now. If these are like that, can you imagine, what the lower levels must be? No wonder, all the animals are getting mad now. The human beings are getting mad and if that is the condition at the top of creation then all things must be getting mad. See how many elephants are getting mad now. It is so changed. I am not joking now. Have you seen the cows? The cows used to be so gentle. But they have become so ferocious. They knock down people, you know. So this great change is there in nature. But does not mean that you as you are, as a human being should follow them. What you have to do is, stand firm by your own principles – It doesn't matter who says anything. Let them say what they like. You gave them freedom. You take your freedom. That is all. You shouldn't impinge on somebody else's freedom.

You should not be interfering in other people's affairs. Leave them alone. But there is no question of anybody interfering in your also. Fair enough – isn't it?

Otherwise, you would not be able to do anything. If you want to bow down to every Tom, Dick and Harry that goes on the road and give him a salaam it means that's the end of your peace of mind. You will be a slave all your life. You are not going to reach anywhere.

Your principles must be strong – as you grow stronger and stronger in this attachment to dharma, you will find your surrender has grown. Your duty is only to work; not to be attached to the fruits thereof.

God's Grace and the Growth of the Soul

Don't try to get any results from that. Karma Phalam – you should not try to

get it. So, because, if you have your eye on that, then all this work that you did was all poisoned with your desire. Try to do it free for God's sake! When you do something for God, you don't ask Him to give you money for it, do you? You don't go and tell Him, "I am doing this – so pay me for it", do you? So it is free. You must remember if He takes notice of you, it is the greatest thing that can happen. He opens His eyes and gives you one look – that is more than enough. You must understand that. That kind look, that compassionate glance, is a blessing – a Divine Blessing.

You must be worthy of it. Otherwise, you can't get it. So, when you become totally purified, last stages, you become like the great saints of God. You find so many saints in the history of our country. Like Chaitanya Mahaprabhu or Mira or you find Sadasiva Brahmendra. When Sadasiva Brahmendra was walking along the

road; (in those days India was under alien rule;) some sepoys came and asked him who he was. He was lost in God and he did not answer. So they got very angry with him. They just chopped off his hand. He looked at them; looked down – he found his hand on the ground. He took his hand from there, fixed it back and went off.

Now the power was there to fix it back. Understand that it came from the power to keep calm, not to answer them back in the same way that they had done. To regard it as nothing. Not to get angry. He did what was most sensible. Took his hand and fixed it back. Now, how many would have been able to fix it like that. Doctors have to work so hard if they have to fix a hand now. In a split second, he fixed it.

So, you see, these are the great powers that come to one who is totally lost in God.

But, he doesn't want these powers. He is not doing it for the sake of these powers and it is incidental to his progress.

Nowadays, you find that when they do a little sadhana and get a little bit of Siddhis, they make such a show of it. The greatest Siddhis showered on a true servant of God, means nothing to him – means absolutely nothing to him. These are some of the tests that you have to go through to find out. As you go through these, you find that you are untouched by these. What has happened? It means, your mind has grown larger, purer and stronger. You are able to understand it, and implement the lessons that you have learnt through your experiences in the world.

When you come to the last stages, everywhere you will find only the power of God. This is Vasudaiva Kutumbakam.

Whether it is animals or the trees – even the trees, they are absolutely responsive to such a person, you know. They respond with happiness. Even if it is a dog or cat or whatever, they don't like certain people. You will notice that they do like certain people. They have what you call the sixth sense. They are able to understand. Human beings don't have it and yet they are called the crest jewel of creation! In the last stages, the final realisation comes, that is what is called Vasudaiva Kutumbakam. That is much quoted by everybody nowadays and the most amusing part of it is, all the politicians quote it also.

There is no difference between me and another person. All have God in them. That is why Hinduism is much higher than all other religions. And, it is in the interest of all humanity that Hinduism survives and continues to live with great strength and power.

Because there is so much of tolerance and understanding. They say, “oh! We have tolerance”, but it is not really that. Hinduism understands and accepts all others because of this concept of Vasudaiva Kutumbakam, the knowledge that comes to all the great saints and Rishis who have lived all these years in ages past. It is not the case with other religions, you see. For them, their own religion is right and the others wrong. We don't have this dogmatic attitude.

So it is for you to purify yourself. Understand that these small things lead to the highest levels of knowledge. Once you understand that – you will find it is very easy for you to climb. By the Divine Grace of God, you know, He holds the hand of anybody who wants Him to. If you don't want it, He won't come. You can be very sure about it. When you really want Him, He is there.

Those who really think, calmly and with discrimination, do not get lost in this world. If people were to think a little they would understand, that this life and its pleasures is very transitory and doesn't last.

Learning from life

We must look for that which is eternal in our lives. When we go from here, we go somewhere, don't we? Here itself, in this world we see so many people die, so much suffering. These things should teach you so many lessons. Right in front of your eyes, so many things happen. And still, if you won't learn, then when you will ever learn?

Or like Vivekananda said this will happen. "The thunderbolts will fall and fall till you learn your lesson". We don't want the thunderbolts to fall like that we do we? But that's how generally people learn. There are two ways of learning.

You learn by observation. When things happen to other people, then you learn by observation. Another way is what you call learning by the hard way. When the blows fall on you, then your eyes are opened.

You don't have to get these blows. You see somebody putting his or her fingers into the fire. The person screams with pain and you see the blisters come. This is the result of fire burning. Now do you want to go and put your finger in that? No. Because you observed and found out - it is not that. Because you found that this had happened to someone else.

In the same way, extend the same attitude to all aspects of your life. Somebody did wrong and the sad part of it is a lot of people say nowadays, "They did all the wrong things in the world and they go scot-free". Or "They were not punished for it". Who said so? I can't understand that.

That person must come to the very end of life to become eligible for the last stage of punishment.

I told you the story of Ravana. Rama – Sri Rama had to wait for Ravana's good times to end. Agasthya told him to wait and pray. So you shouldn't think that anybody could go scot-free. The law of karma is inexorable and will not change for anybody's sake. What you do comes right back to you – whether it is good or bad. In our daily lives, keep self-control leading to self-conquest as your goal. You know, what self-conquest is? Absolute control of the lower nature. It doesn't trouble you anymore. But in the initial stages, it is a struggle. If you want to build a house, you have to take such a lot of trouble. You have to get the labourers to come; you have to get the materials to build. So nothing is gained in the world without trouble.

And, you must remember, you don't know when your call will come. You must remember that life is like walking on a bridge. You walk along till the end of the bridge and that's finished. So, don't waste even one single moment. Your outlook must be optimistic and cheerful. Show kindness to everybody. Help as many as you can. Whether it is the rich or poor, it doesn't matter. One good turn, you know, must be done to everybody at – if you can't do it more than that at least, once a day. It gives you a certain satisfaction and happiness.

To come to the very last stages – whether it is in the bhakti marga or whether it is in the jnana marga – whichever it is, all leave to the same. In the last stage, there is no ego. There is no “I”. The “I” doesn't get worried. It doesn't identify itself with the body – not with the body – not with the world – not with the relations. It identifies itself with God.

It has been taking many, many births for all people – so many births. But, generally, people learn some lesson at the end of one birth. Some people don't. They make more and more mistakes. They come back. To the whole cycle again of birth and death. How long will they go through this? Some day, it has to end, isn't it so? Some day we must look for Moksha – liberation from all this.

In the middle stages, when they come to have some knowledge of God, they have no connection with the world. They have left the world and they have no interest in the world. And yet, they have not fully attained God. In that intermediate period, he will be a sort of mad person. "Pithan" they call him he is not interested. If you give him food, he will eat. If you don't give him, he won't eat. He sleeps anywhere, wears anything and walks along the road.

If somebody calls him “You want some food, eat this” and gives to him he will eat it. Otherwise, he will not ask anybody for anything. He is not interested. He is not interested in his body. That’s the main thing. His mind is fixed on God. And yet, poor fellow, he has not reached God.

This is difference from ordinary madness. That is a lower state. I feel so sad when I went to The Banyan and saw the inmates there. You see, we can have any disease – any disease. But because the mad functions, even if it is the worst disease, the mind still functions there and you can call God. You can pray to him. But when you are made, that is the worst thing, because, you can’t call Him. You have no concept of God. Or you don’t want to call Him. So the worst thing that can happen to a person is madness.

Somewhere, wherever we can, we must help someone. Each time offering whatever you did at God's Feet – Samarpanam to Him.

It is because of His Divine Grace and blessings and guidance that we are able to do it. Otherwise, we would not have been able to do any good acts. So, with His blessings as we continue like that we go step by step. And finally when you reach a stage when you don't have to look back to see if you have taken a wrong step. You become strong and well established in Him – and then, you have only very little to go when your ego is totally merged in him.

Life exists in trees and animals

I want to tell you something. I told you about these squirrels, didn't I? What happened was – for the past one week, you know, lot of these squirrels used to come here.

I used to tell the sevarthis also to give them something to eat. You know, some fruits or some biscuits or something to eat, you know. When Nalini came from Trivandrum, she had brought me a big box of cakes and all that. I said, take it upstairs – there are lots of squirrels are there. Go and give it to them, I said. So, poor thing, she went and left it here and all squirrels ate it. So they were so happy, they found something here. But they never thought of coming downstairs. They never thought of it. So what happened was, you know, yesterday morning they were coming and pushing at the plastic mesh, you know. There were fast squirrels they had come here, and were scratching and pushing it with their noses and trying to coming in. Last evening when I came out from the bathroom and I saw the curtains were moving very fast; there was no breeze and I wondered how does it move so fast – and I looked and I found a bushy tail going down.

Then I called the sevarthi and said,
There are squirrels in the bedroom.
And he said,” You called these squirrels;
you loved the squirrels so much – now
they come here to you”, he said. Even
you can make the squirrels also
understand, you know. You can make
them understand. It is very strange;
but they do react and do answer, you
know. It’s just that we don’t know the
language of the squirrels. They have
their lives. But they do answer – that’s
what I said. You have a look around.
You’ll find even the trees, you know. In
the olden days, they never used to cut
a tree the way they do now. If they had
to cut a branch of a tree, they never
went and hacked it like they do now.
At first they went and did a puja to the
being that exists in the tree – for, you
see, they recognised that the life in the
tree was the same that was inside
them. “aham brahmasmi” – is easy to
say it; but can you practise it? The life
in the tree or the insect is the same life
that is inside me.

You must be able to understand that and realise it. So they took a yellow thread, they prayed and tied that yellow thread around the tree; and then they did arati to the tree, prayed to it and then only did they cut it. They say, 'I am going to cut off one of your branches. I hope it will not cause you pain. Please forgive me if it is causing you pain.' After it was only after saying that and doing arati that they cut it, and look at how they cut down trees now. Look at this lack of understanding. They knew that like God exists in them, He exists in the tree also. They knew that just as we experience pain when we are hurt, so other beings experience the same even if they are trees or animals. We may talk about aham brahmasmi or Sarvam Brahma Mayam but unless we realise this, feel this with every fibre of our being it is just a lot of words without any real substance. It is just an intellectual understanding and nothing more.

Realizing God

This can only be realized by constant effort. So, you must try – do what you can do – japa, the dhyanam, the parayanam of so many scriptures that we have. We can read the Bhagavad Gita, the Bhagavatham and the Narayaneeyam. Melpattur Narayanan Nambudri who went through his whole sadhana and realised God in Guruvayur wrote the Narayaneeyam. That is why there is so much of power in Guruvayur. There was Poontanam who wrote the Gnanapana. So many true bhaktas, powerful souls have been showering their Bhakti on Him. So the idol has become very powerful and you must remember that it was the idol that came from Dwaraka. So all these saints lived there gave it their power. That is why Guruvayur is so powerful. So when you go on a pilgrimage, you must go to these most important places.

When you do Bhajanam, (worship for a specified period in a temple) you must do it with all your heart and soul. There must be no other thought other than God. It is only by constant practice, Krishna tells Arjuna – “abhyasena tu kaunteya vairagyena ca grhyate.” It is only with that abhyasa or repeated effort that you can get it. If you want to appear for an examination, you have to study very hard, if you want to pass it and that is only just an examination. Then can you imagine about this. So when you do this, remember that always that if you surrender to him and call Him, He will be by your side to help you. But you are not aware of it. As you go on and have your own experiences, as you surrender more, you will become more aware of Him and to the extent that your ego is merged with Him, you will find that you have wonderful experiences; and once you have these experiences, there are no more problems for you.

That means, He has taken over; it may not be totally, but up to an extent. You know, it is very, very logical that – to the extent there is ego, to that extent God's Presence is reduced. When the ego is merged in Him, He lives in you totally. Then that person becomes qualified to say aham brahmasmi – I am Brahman. This is a step by which you reach God. This is what the writer of the Hithopadesa has called Vasudaiva Kutumbakam. So when you see a poor animal or an insect suffering, try to help it – because God is in it also. There is a story of – I think, it is Narada or Vyasa, one of the great saints, who were walking along the road. They found the worms were coming on the road. On the opposite direction, a cart was coming. The sound of the cart made these worms scramble to the other side in fear. So the sage asked them, "Why are you so afraid; after all you are a worm. You have to die, sometime, if the cart runs over you, what does it matter?"

Why are you so afraid?" They said, "You have your life; and we have ours. We have our interests and happiness that are different from yours, but we have them too. We are the creations of God, just like you – understand that".

Keep all these things in mind and never forget it. You will find the Divine Help is always there. You must pray for it. It will not come without that. If you close the door, then God will wait outside. He will wait patiently but He will not come in uninvited. Continue to read, pray and do dhyanam. More than anything else, remember that to control your lower nature. Pray to God for help. It is very difficult to control the lower nature, I understand. You pray to God for help "I must not hate anybody; I must not feel jealous of anybody, I must not get angry with anybody. I must not gossip about anybody." There is no need to feel attachment for any of these habits – they are not wonderful jewels!

What do you get out of it, except sins – nothing but sins? The papam will come to you. Learn to do punyam Look at Him and offer that punyam to Him. It is His Grace that you are able to do it. You should not think, “I did it”. If you think that you did it, then the effect is lost. The minutes you say that “I gave it to a poor man”, - then the effect is lost. Your action has become tainted, sullied by ego. So as you go higher and higher, you’ll find that God’s help is there. You don’t have to worry about anything at all. You will find that peace comes to your mind. That mind that is so filled with so much of sorrows and difficulties and all sorts of doubts will become calm, all sorrows and doubts will disappear, leaving you peaceful. Then, continue living your life with faith and trust in Him. As long as you live, He is there with you and you are happy. It is a cheerful life and a good life.

Narayana!



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