

BHAKTI YOGA - PART 18

SWĀMI DAYATMANANDA

Class begins with the chanting of the following Shanti mantra:

ॐ सह नावतु ।
सह नौ भुनक्तु ।
सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।
तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Om Saha Naav Avatu |
Saha Nau Bhunaktu |
Saha Viiryam Karavaavahai |
Tejasvi Naav Adhiitam Asthu Maa Vidvissaavahai: |
Om Shantih Shantih Shantih: ||

Meaning:-

Om May Brahman protect us both |
May Brahman bestow upon us both, the fruit of knowledge |
May we both obtain the energy to acquire knowledge |
May what we both study reveal the truth
May we cherish no ill-feeling toward each other |
Om Peace Peace Peace be unto all ||

So continuing the *Bhakti Yogā* of Swāmi Vivekānanda. Anybody who wants to be a devotee of God, anybody who wants to love God, even anyone who wants to love anybody else or anything else, have to develop certain characteristics. And unless we develop those characteristics, the expression called love becomes meaningless.

Let us take a small example. Suppose a mother loves her child. And it's so natural that... so I take that example. Now if the mother is untruthful, hypocrite, pretends, cruel, selfish, becomes jealous, do you think that mother will ever be able to love her child? But if she's truly loving her child, and most of the cases that is so, it is so natural, then all the qualities that which is called truthfulness, sincerity, straightforwardness, compassion, and wishing the welfare of the child, they become so very natural. If there is love these qualities will follow invariably.

What do the Scriptures say? They say that a person who acquires Self-knowledge, considers the whole world to be his own self. If the whole world is our own self, the question of practicing morality doesn't arise at all. It comes automatically.

So, every path, it prescribes certain rules, regulations. As I mentioned many times that the spiritual progress has 3 dimensions -

- Self regard.
- Other regard, means world regard.
- And God regard.

Like a triangle.

If one grows, the other 2 will also grow along with that. Until the point comes when there is absolutely no distinction between God, the soul, and the world. Whether he follows the path of devotion, path of knowledge, whatever path, ultimately, that would be the result.

So according to *Rāmānuja*, and which Swāmi *Vivekānanda* had taken, there are 6 such qualities to be acquired. This is part of the 7 stepped process and 6 qualities.

- सत्य (*Satya*)
- आर्जव (*Ārjava*)
- दया (*Dayā*)
- दान (*Dāna*)
- अहिंसा (*Ahimsa*)
- अनभिध्या (*Anabhidhyā*)

Satya means truthfulness.

Now this is a very interesting word. Because, you see, we use it in 3 senses. The root of this word is सत् *Sat*.

- *Sat* means existence.
- *Sat* means truthfulness.
- *Sat* means God.

Another name for God is *Sat*. सत् चित् आनन्द (*Sat Chit Ānanda*) we use the word.

Sri Rāmakrishna, as the devotees know very well, insisted so much on the practice of truthfulness. **Anybody who is not truthful, can never reach God! Why? God realization means realization of the truth. Truth is a better name for God than God himself.**

You know why? Because as soon as we hear the word God, an old man sitting up in the skies, comes to our mind. If we are very happy, we see a smiling God. If we are very unhappy, we see a frowning God, sitting there, frowning and looking very deeply at us. You see, these are our imaginations.

And in the name of God so much of cruelty has been practiced. In the name of God, bloodshed had taken place. In the name of God, unimaginable horrors have been inflicted upon humanity. But if we use the word truth, truthfulness, then that makes more sense.

(5:20 mins)

A person who wants truth, he must become truthful. So the first stage of this truth is that we must become good. *Sat* means good. That's why we call *Satsanga*, company of the good, good people.

Holy people, sometimes they make holes in you. You know who is the holy person? One who makes you holy is a holy person. The one who makes holes in you is also a holy person.

So the company of the *sat*, what does it do? It enhances in us the thirst for the quest of truth. Then comes truthfulness, practice of truthfulness. Practice of truthfulness, truth that will lead to the seeking of truth. A truth speaker becomes a truth seeker. And that ultimately leads to God!

These are the 3 stages – *Sat! Sat! Sat!*

- 1) First company of the holy.
- 2) Then practice of truthfulness.
- 3) And then, ultimately, the company of God Himself.

Satya, the word *satya* is derived from the root *sat*. So it has, so many stages are there. *Sri Rāmakrishna* used to say if anybody observes truthfulness, he will realize God who is truth. And He said that **those who seek God, for them truthfulness is the greatest austerity.**

What is an austerity? That which makes us sacrifice.

An austerity, you cannot sit in an air conditioned room and practice *Shīrshāsana*, and go on claiming that you're practicing austerities. There is a fridge, there is a freezer, there is a TV, it is an air-conditioned room, and what are you doing? You claim you are practicing austerities.

Austerity means some... It entails some kind of sacrifice, some kind of difficulty, some kind of suffering, truthfulness.

You see, when everything is convenient we are all very truthful. It is only when we are likely to suffer then truthfulness goes out of the window. **Truthfulness is the greatest austerity.**

But what is truthfulness? There's a very... You see, there are some people who think that they are very truthful people, but in fact, they are very cruel people. You see, a powerful person can afford to be very truthful.

Nowadays children are very truthful. In the past in our generation we used to tell so many lies. You know why? Because we were afraid of our parents, afraid of the society, afraid of our teachers. Nowadays these children don't fear. Not parents, not teachers, not even police!

So you see the point is if somebody is very powerful, and he knows nobody can harm that person, he can afford to be very truthful. He can tell whatever is there in his mind, he can do whatever he likes to do.

So one of the things, **truthfulness requires a tremendous amount of courage. Truthfulness requires a tremendous amount of sacrifice.**

You know, the father of *Sri Rāmakrishna*, in one day He lost all his wealth because of truthfulness. That's why He got God who is truth. *Sri Rāmakrishna's* life there are examples. I will give one or two illustrations.

Sri Rāmakrishna, He was completely devoted to truthfulness. That's why He had to fight, even with his Mother and brothers, when the time for the sacred thread investment ceremony had come. Because he promised a low caste woman that He will accept *Bhikshā* from her. For a boy of 10 years /11 years to rebel against the parents in those days... Nowadays, you see, if some child doesn't rebel you have to wonder. In those days, it is, it is a great... required a tremendous amount of courage. But He was not a quarrelsome person. He was doing it because He knows what is the truth. So He became a man of such truth.

(10:03 mins)

There are so many examples in His life. One example comes to my mind. You know, He was sick and doctors prescribed that He should eat one lemon. And there was a garden next to *Dakshineswar* from where they used to bring one-one Lemon, with the

permission of the owner. So one day, the attendant of *Sri Rāmakrishna* went there, brought the lemon and *Sri Rāmakrishna* could not touch it. He was wondering, 'There must be something wrong, why was I not able to touch this today?' So, everyday He was taking without any trouble. That day He couldn't touch.

Then He sent somebody to inquire. And they found out that garden was sold the previous day, and permission wasn't taken. Now, you know, nobody knew about it, and nobody would mind. After all, even today, lemons are very cheap commodities. In those days, you know, hundreds of lemons used to fall.

I remember *Sri Rāmakrishna*... No one of the direct disciples of *Sri Rāmakrishna* was wandering, and he was very hungry one day. And there was a big mango, and then he wanted to eat. But he looked all around to see whether anybody is there. Because somebody might have lost his mango. You see the mangoes don't fall from the sky. So it might belong to somebody.

So *Sri Rāmakrishna*'s very body had become so sensitive to untruth, that even without His conscious knowledge It refused to touch this piece, which belonged to other people.

That is why whenever any word used to come from His mouth, He had to fulfil it. One day He said to some devotee that He would visit him. But during the course of the day, somehow He forgot. At midnight, 12 o'clock, He remembered it. And immediately He took hold of, you know His, *Swāmi Brahmānanda* later on, *Rākhāl Mahārāj*, and He went to that man's house. Of course, midnight, the door was closed. But He put His foot inside and said 'I have come, I have come, I have come.'

Now there was a disciple of *Sri Rāmakrishna* called *Nāg Mahāshaya*. And *Nāg Mahāshaya* knew that *Sri Rāmakrishna* was a man of truth. And there is a saying in our scriptures that if anybody observes truthfulness for 12 years, then whatever comes out of that person's mouth will turn out to be true.

So, *Nāg Mahāshaya* one day visited *Sri Rāmakrishna* because He was very sick at *Kāshipur*. And *Sri Rāmakrishna* felt like eating a fruit called, you call it gooseberry, *āmlaki*. And that was not the season for that fruit. Because almost the season had passed by, long back. Everybody said, it's not possible to have this fruit, because the season is over. But *Nāg Mahāshaya* had faith, '*Sri Rāmakrishna* is a truthful man. And from His mouth this word has come that I want. There must be some fruit somewhere.'

Straight he went out. For 3 days without food he searched. And then at last he found one tree, one small *āmlaki* was hanging. He brought it, without eating for 3 days, and offered it to *Sri Rāmakrishna*.

So the power of truth! Truthfulness means that it is very powerful. It makes people prosperous, it makes people famous, it makes people realize God! But we also have to realize, **truthfulness is not merely speaking out the truth. Sometimes an untruth also can be more of a truth than truth itself.**

An example. Supposing a patient is there, maybe a child is there. And the child is not eating. What does the mother do? She says that if you don't eat, this spirit will come and catch you and eat you. Now what is the purpose of this kind of fib? It's a fib, it's not a lie exactly, it's a fib. What is the purpose of this? What is the motive? For the Child's welfare.

There was a beautiful story in *Mahābhārata* illustrating this. There was a holy man living in a forest and practicing austerities. And one day some hunters entered into the forest to hunt wild animals, deers especially. And it so happened, that as they were hunting one deer happened to pass in front of the Sage, and disappeared into the forest. Shortly after the hunters came there, and seeing a holy man, they prostrated before him. And asked, 'Sir, have you seen a deer?' He said, 'Yes'. 'And can you tell us which direction it went?' He pointed out, 'This is the direction it went.' But actually he pointed out the opposite direction to which the deer had gone. And these people saluted him, thanked him and went after the deer as indicated by the Sage.

(15:14 mins)

Now the question is did the Sage tell a lie? From our point of view, of course he told a lie. He misdirected the people. But the *Mahābhārata* says that actually this man is the greatest Sage. He had spoken the truth. In what way?

- 1) You see, he first of all saved the life of the deer.
- 2) Then he saved these people from falling into hell because of this cruel act of killing the animal.
- 3) Thirdly, if he had been very truthful, and if he had told the people this way it went, he would also have been an instrument in the killing of the deer. He saved himself also.

Now, you see, he became a better person and he also made these hunters free from sin, and he saved the life of the deer. And he is the most truthful man.

The purpose of the truth is always for doing good to others.

So what is the real purpose of truthfulness?

- It should be sweet.
- It should bring the welfare of the other people.

सत्यं प्रियहितं च (*satyam priya-hitam cha*)

That is true truth, real practice of truth. Nothing else. Otherwise when it suits us, you know, we tell the truth against the other person. And this kind of stupidity, it doesn't advance us in spiritual life.

According to *Sri Rāmakrishna*, He has given a beautiful definition of truthfulness. What is it? *মন মুখ এক করা* (*Mon mukh aik kora*) **To make the thought and the speech and the deed completely into one. That is called truth, practice of truthfulness!**

Of course you can tell a fib if it is for the welfare of the greater good. Not for selfish purposes, but for the welfare of anybody else other than ourself. Truthfulness is the most important quality.

Then the next *Ārjava*.

***Ārjava* means sincerity. *Ārjava* means straightforwardness.**

Now this modern world in which we are living is anything but practicing the quality of *ārjava*.

Let me ask you a question. A person who is looking ugly goes to a cosmetic surgeon and makes some changes in the body. Say a person who is 60 years old, wants to appear 40 years old. Is it straightforwardness or is it straight deception?

You know if you tell the truth in this world, then the whole economic condition will come down. The whole economic situation will become a failure. Is it right? Why? Because, you see, suppose somebody comes and tells you, 'I am a salesman. I want to sell a car.' You have already a car and you ask, 'I have a car'. 'O, In that case, you don't need. Your car is running alright?' 'Yes it's running alright.' 'Then you don't need a new car.' Do you think that person will retain his job? If every salesman is so truthful, what do you think will happen to all the business? If the business fails, then what will happen to your jobs. And if your jobs fail, what will happen to your situation? The whole, you see, purpose of this government, and government promises. They say so you just vote for us...

You know, I went to South Africa, 7 years back. The mayor of the country came for the reception party. And we were having a chat. I was just joking with him. I said, 'If we just hear the politician's speech, we say why do we need God? Here is a living God who

promises to give us heaven on Earth. All that we have to do is only just give vote, that's all. He's not asking for anything else'.

You know if the politician is truthful then very soon he will be assassinated. All the great statesmen, this Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, or Mahatma Gandhi, they would not be kept. Because truthfulness is against politics. That's why Politics is the worst. Politicians are the worst scoundrels in the world. Power mongers.

Then you see straight business, you come to the business. Do we need anything, that the business wants to sell us. Most of the time we do not need it. Because for our purpose what we have is much more than sufficient. But if that is the condition, if the business people are straightforward, if the salesmen are straightforward, and they are truthful, then the whole business situation will come...

(20:18 mins)

Not only that. This is an age when pretence is actually forced upon us. You cultivate, If you can't pretend we will give you courses. How? We will make you experts in how to pretend to the people. You see, the whole deception is going on, and on, and on, because of this competition, because of the, what is called, scientific advancement. This is a very regrettable situation but that is the world in which we are living.

Even in married life also. Suppose the husband doesn't feel like saying I love you. Just imagine what will happen to that family life? Every time they say I love you, I love you. Have you heard this? Even from a long distance also, I love you, I love you. Actually, they're very truthful. From a long distance it's very easy to say I love you. It's only when we have to live together, nearby, the problems come.

Ārjava means straightforwardness, no hypocrisy, no pretending, no trying to mislead. If anybody wants to love God, then that is the quality.

Do you know why? Because suppose there is a devotee, and he wants to love God.

- 1) Can you pretend to anybody that you are loving? That's the 1st point. Is pretending love?
- 2) The 2nd point is, you cannot divide love into two categories. I sincerely love God, but I pretend to love the world. If we pretend love for the world, the same mental attitude will be directed towards God also.

That is why it's very important to be straightforward. *Sri Rāmakrishna* could never stand a person who is... a pretending person, a hypocrite. He can stand people who are

drunkards, who are lecherous people, who are so called, you know, degraded people in the eyes of the Society.

Example, take the example of *Girish Chandra Ghosh*. In the eyes of the world he was the most degraded person, But in the eyes of *Sri Rāmakrishna*, he was very highly advanced.

Do you know why? He has two qualities.

- 1) One, he was highly truthful. He was not afraid of anybody.
- 2) And 2nd, he was all tremendous faith, that 125% *Girish Chandra Ghosh's* faith.

And **truthfulness and faith always go together**. This is another point we have to understand. Supposing you love somebody, or you love somebody. Can you be unfaithful to that person? Can you be both loving and unfaithful at the same time? Is it possible? It is an impossibility. Therefore love and faith always go together. This is the 2nd quality that *Rāmānuja*, and every religion advocates it. But specially *Rāmānuja* specifies it.

The 3rd is, Dayā. Dayā means compassion.

Now there is a word of difference between compassion, and looking down upon people and doing something for them. Compassion usually means I am in a higher position, you are in a lower position. That's not compassion. Compassion is always looking upon the other person as equivalent to myself. I don't like to suffer. So, by the same coin, I would not like to see other people also suffer.

There was a very famous *rabbi*, and once he was asked, can you teach Judaism? Judaism is a very, very complex religion from one point of view. So somebody asked him, 'Can you teach me Judaism?' He said, 'How much time do you have? You see, if you have got 25 years, I can teach you. Even that's not sufficient. If you have one minute then also I can teach. It is simple in one way, very complex in another way.' The man said, 'I don't have that much time. Teach me quickly.' Then He said, '**Do unto others what you would like others to do to you**'. This is the whole essence of Judaism or any other religion. The rest is a commentary.

So *dayā* is that kind of behavior, what we expect from other people to do to us, it is the same kind of thing we have to do towards other people. That is called *dayā*.

Even *Sri Rāmakrishna* goes even further. Do you know what He says?

'To serve man looking upon Him as God'. शिव ज्ञाने जीव सेवा (*Shiva jnāne jiva sevā*)

(25:01 mins)

Who are you to show compassion? Compassion means you know, I am in a superior position, and you are in an inferior position, and I do something for you. It only goes to enhance the ego. And **the whole purpose of spiritual practice is to purify the ego and to merge it in God, not to enhance it.** That is why it's very important.

Those who do not have compassion, they can never become devotees of God. Why? See, a devotee of God becomes like God. Now can you imagine a God without compassion? Suppose God tells you, I love you, but I won't help you. Now, how many of us are ready to have this kind of God, can you tell?

So *Dayā*. Not *dayā*. ***Dayā* – not compassion, but Service**, looking upon everybody as a manifestation of God.

***Dāna*.**

***Dāna* means philanthropy. Sacrifice, giving what we have to others.** That is one of the most important spiritual qualities.

Suppose somebody wants to be a devotee, but very miserly. And do you think such a person will ever retain love of God? Can you love somebody and say I won't do anything to you, I won't give anything to you, is it possible?

But you see, this *Dāna* means giving something, helping the poor people, serving the poor people, but it must be preceded by *Dayā*. *Dayā* means respect. That is why it is said, any kind of philanthropy it has certain conditions –

अदेशकाले यद्दानमपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते।

adesa-kale yad danam apatrebhyas ca diyate |

In *Gītā* there is – that kind of philanthropy which is given to undeserving people, at undeserving time with a mixed motive, or with an evil motive that is not considered as *Dāna*.

- There must be proper time.
- There must be a proper person, recipient.
- And it must be given with a proper mental attitude.

That's what is most important. That's why ***Dayā* must precede any kind of *Dāna*.**

Then comes *Ahimsā*.

Ahimsā means... you know what is *ahimsā*? Non-injury! And *Swāmi Vivekānanda* has something to say about it. Usually **by *ahimsā* we mean that you don't injure anybody.** You don't, either physically or mentally, you should not cause any kind of pain or suffering or anything to the other people.

But *Swāmi Vivekānanda* gives what is the test of *ahimsā*. I will read out, it will be wonderful. These are taken from *Swāmi Vivekānanda* -

“In this list, this one idea that deserves special notice is *Ahimsā*, non-injury to others. This duty of non-injury is, so to speak, obligatory on us in relation to all beings. As with some, it doesn't simply mean the non injuring of human beings and mercilessness towards the lower animals;”

Swāmi Vivekānanda used to make fun of certain types of people in India. They are business people, I won't name them, because you will recognize them. And these people go to any lengths to cheat people, human beings, but they are highly aware that we have cheated so many people. Now, you know, they believe in the law of *karmā*. So they will also be cheated. So they must do something to counteract that. So supposing during the day of business they cheated hundred human beings. So at night they will go to a tree where there are a lot of ants. And they will take up, you know, one half a kilogram of sugar and spread there. Now at least 10,000 ants are being served. After all, what is cheating 100 people, whereas, 10,000 people, beings, are being served?

And there are people who maintain, kind of, cots full of bedbugs. So during the day they go on cheating people. At night, they employ somebody, paying five rupees a night, that you take off your dress and lie down on that bed. This is called blood transfusion. So, the bed bugs, you know, are very happy and they thrive. So this is countered, whatever bad things they were doing during the daytime, is absolutely countered by this donation of somebody else's blood. Not their blood. You know, what a stupid type of ideas they have?

This is one type of *ahimsā*, non injury. The other type is towards human beings, people are very compassionate, very kind, very loving, but when it comes to animals... animals, after all they don't have any souls. After all God has created these, all these lower non human things for the enjoyment of human beings.

(30:24 mins)

There is a philosophy like that, especially in the Bible, God created the whole world for the enjoyment of man. He told man, ‘Now, the whole world I have created for your sake, now go and enjoy it’. Means you can do whatever you like. How many animals we kill, all in the name of our enjoyment.

We don't consider it as a great sin, but for a lover of God, the love is the same. After all it is proved conclusively, without any difficulty, without any least bit of doubt that even, not to speak of animals, but even the plants are sensitive. If you love them they

will also give back their love in the form of beautiful flowers, fruits. And if you are harsh to them, they will shy away. Their sensitivity can be measured. And there are wonderful, what is called incidents in the life of animals, where animals actually saved human lives.

So this *Dayā* must accompany the *dāna* that is there . If we do that, then we cannot injure anybody. This is one idea. You treat human beings alright because they are human beings but treat the rest of them...

But the trouble with this idea is, do you know what it is? You see, supposing there are no animals left, then what do these people do? They will turn all their cruelty upon... in the name of this – this is UK people okay people, but the other people are not okay. Every country thinks it is superior to the other countries. Superiority complex comes. That's why wars, bloodshed, the whole thing comes there.

Then, if that is not the motivation, religion is a motivation. They do not belong to our religion. You know, there was an Inca civilisation and the Spaniards went there and butchered thousands of Inca, and brought the whole civilisation to a close. And how could they do that? Because after all these were human beings. But they said 'No, they don't belong, they are not white, they don't belong to our race, to our religion, to our language. So they cannot have any soul. If they don't have any soul it's alright to butcher them.

And then some excuse and then butchered them. The whole Inca civilisation has come to an end.

And like that, you know, in America when the first people went there, How many, what is called wild animals, buffaloes? What is that? Bison! In millions, they just butchered them, for no purpose at all.

Everywhere human beings, he invents excuses for showing his cruelty. This is another type of injury.

But *Swāmi Vivekānanda* says we are very not not free from it. The subtlest expression of injury, do you know what it is? Jealousy! That's what *Swāmi Vivekānanda* tells, "**The test of *Ahimsā* is absence of jealousy.**"

The Jealousy is so pervasive. And it is so subtle. How marvellously it works. And, you see, the most wonderful thing about this jealousy is, we are not jealous of somebody else in some other Country. First of all we are jealous of the people who are very near, our friends.

Suppose we are a group of friends and unfortunately one of the friends acquires a BMW car. What would be my lookout? I say, 'O wonderful! Congratulations! You have this and that'. Like that. But inside we are crying out, 'What right this fellow has got a BMW?' We can't say, after all we are friends. We are supposed to express joy at this. Supposing he brings his shining BMW and we are all admiring him outwardly but feeling very bad inside. After sometime somebody comes and smashes the glass doors of this BMW. How happy we feel. What does it show? It shows that, you know, 'what I should have done thank God somebody else has done it'.

You know, this is the most pervasive thing, even among highly advanced spiritual people - This jealousy. One *Guru* cannot tolerate another *Guru*. One monk cannot tolerate another monk.

(35:05 mins)

You know I told you this story. I will repeat It anyway. I heard it from *Swāmi Bhāskarānandaji*. Two wandering monks met, and they got introduced to each other. And to their great surprise they found out they were brother disciples. They were initiated by the same *Guru*. One was a senior man, another was a junior man. But the senior man was not ready to concede that we are equal. So he went, 'O, I am very happy to know that both of us are brother disciples. But you know when we first used to go to this holy man he used to test us very rigorously. And then only initiate us. Later on he started initiating everybody and anybody.' You know, showing that, how can it be possible that both of us are the same category. They were brother disciples.

I see these expressions of jealousy every day in my life here. One devotee cannot tolerate another devotee. One day I was working with *Swāmi Bhavyānandaji* here in the garden. There was a...One of the Dutch ladies used to serve. And there was another lady, a German devotee called Christine. And then Christine came. I was new. So, during the course of work I was telling this Dutch lady, 'Why don't you go with Christine and then do something there.' Immediately the *Swāmi* pulled me back and said, 'Shh, Don't say anything like that. Don't you know this lady cannot tolerate the other lady.' I did not know. I thought, you know, both of them, they are talking, laughing and all those things so nicely. How could I know that this is what was happening? That lady could never tolerate...

You know, it happened with me also. You know, I tell sometimes jokes. So one day I told a story and everybody enjoyed it, laughing at it. Then I went out after the talk. The Dutch lady was there unfortunately. The first thing she said was, 'Swāmi you can't tell stories like my *Swāmi* used to tell.'

I said that he was really a very good storyteller. But the whole point is, see every time we can enjoy this thing. Anybody can tell the story. Why do you bring on this comparison? If the *Swāmi* happens to talk to one devotee longer than the other devotee, let God help the *Swāmi*.

I heard like that, that even among the direct disciples of *Sri Rāmakrishna* the same thing happened. There are lighter incidents. There are, also very serious incidents were there.

Lighter incident was that you know once a devotee was there. *Sri Rāmakrishna* loved *Narendranath*, later on *Swāmi Vivekānanda*, so much that always He was telling, 'Naren, Naren Naren'. And when *Narendra* was present *Sri Rāmakrishna*'s eyes seemed to be blind to everyone else.

So one day *Sri Rāmakrishna* went to Calcutta and *Narendranath* came. And *Sri Rāmakrishna* carried some nice sweet meats and He was, 'Narendra you eat'. And the other devotee could not tolerate. He went and said, 'Sir, you are treating us as though we have fallen from the sky'. And *Sri Rāmakrishna* understood immediately and said, 'Okay, okay you come to *Dakshineswar*. I will feed you.' He never said I will feed you here. You know, there is a kind of jealousy is there.

Bindu te sindhu dekhā. Look at an ocean in a drop. If you find some good thing in some people then you see as though he has an ocean of goodness. But what we do is the other thing. If we see an ocean of, you know, goodness we see it as a small drop. And a small drop of something bad, we see an ocean of badness.

So *ahimsā* means absence of jealousy! And none of us are free from this jealousy. As I mentioned in my last class even such an advanced spiritual guide like *Bhairavi Brāhmani* became jealous of her own disciple who was *Sri Rāmakrishna*. We have to be extremely careful about it.

Then, you know, these parents, they become jealous. Suppose there are two neighbours and both families are very friendly. And the children of one family gets a better seat in a college. And what do you think the parents of the other family would do? Outwardly they say it is wonderful. But inside they have become contracted. We have to be careful.

In the heart of a devotee there should be no feeling of jealousy. But when we see that others are also trying to go towards God, we should be all the more happy. Because we are all going towards God only, like a huge family. That should be the idea.

(40:09 mins)

Swāmi Vivekānanda says, “The so-called great men of the world may all be seen to become jealous of each other for a small name, for a little fame and for a few bits of gold.” “The man who will mercilessly cheat widows and orphans, and do the vilest deed for money is worse than any brute, even if he lives entirely on grass.”

This reference is in a context. And that context is for many Hindus. He can do the vilest deed, but if he is a vegetarian, whom Bengalis call, you know grass eaters, then he considers himself as a greatest non-injurer.

But *Swāmi Vivekānanda* says, you know, that if a man even eats grass but his deeds are vilest deeds then he is the worst specimen of humanity on this earth.

“The man whose heart whose heart never cherishes even the thought of injury to anyone, who rejoices at the prosperity of even his greatest enemy, that man is the *Bhakta*, he is the *Yogi*, he is the *Guru* of all, even though he lives every day of his life on the flesh of swine.”

What a marvellous statement.

There was a great *Sufi* saint called *Rābiya*. One day she was walking in a forest, and behind her another *Sufi* saint was also following her. And as soon as this lady entered into the forest, so many birds from the trees, they were just competing with one another to get a place on her shoulder. They were circling her, they were trying to sit on her, they wanted to be touched by her, they wanted to be caressed by her.

Whereas this other man, he saw it and he was trying to catch the birds and put it on his shoulders. The moment he approaches any bird it is running away. So he could not understand it. So he was not killing any, he had no intention of killing any bird. Then he was very much hurt. And he came to *Rābiya* and asked, ‘Why is it that all the birds are coming to you? But even though I have no intention of doing any injury, they are not coming to me?’

Then she told him, ‘That’s because when you were a child in your earlier life, you had eaten the flesh of the birds so much, the taste even is lingering in your heart, and the birds know it.’

So, every living creature cherishes love. If there is love there would be no injury. Can you think that you can love and be also jealous at the same time? And where there is jealousy it is impossible to love. But of course we are human beings, we are weak.

There is another reason why we should not feel jealous, you know why? There is a law of *karmā*. If anybody gets anything better than what we have it is not because it has fallen from the sky or God is partial. That's because the person had deserved it and what we deserve, whether good or bad, it must come! So if we want to have the same things, then we must also do such actions which will bring the same thing to us also.

Nobody is going to be deprived. This infinite source is there, and even if we have the whole ocean then it won't become less. But there is no point in becoming jealous, it will only harm us, hurt us, it will hinder our progress. Because this **jealousy is so subtle, it is so difficult to recognise! That's why we have to be very aware of it.**

Just I will conclude this with one more example. Supposing 2 *Swāmis* have to give a talk on the same day, from the same platform. And as soon as one *Swāmi* starts speaking, lots of people come, sit near, eagerly listen. And as soon as the other *Swāmi* starts speaking many of them slowly get up and go. What do you think the second *Swāmi* will be thinking of the situation? You know, they won't say anything, on the platform *Hindu cheena*, India and China, *bhai bhai*.

So subtly this quality called jealousy, bad quality called jealousy, works. We have to be very very careful. Even, there is jealousy, not only among human beings, there is jealousy among the small ones of the birds. The elder, earlier born, one sometimes pecks the younger one, throws it out of the nest so that it can have all the food.

And sibling jealousy, you know that? When a mother gives birth to a second child, immediately the first one goes and puts its little finger into the eyes of the baby, sometimes.

(45:12 mins)

So, *Swāmi Vivekānanda* says, one who wants to be a devotee, he must mercilessly weed out this most injurious quality called jealousy. If we are not jealous it is impossible to injure anybody.

Of course, there is one thing we have to keep in mind, it is impossible to live in this world without injuring. With every breath, with every drink of water, with every morsel of food that we take in, millions of creatures have to die. South Indians pride themselves that they are, you know, vegetarians. But they eat a lot of yoghurt. You know what is yoghurt? 1 cup of yoghurt contains millions of bacteria. So we have to be very careful.

Then the fifth quality *Anavasāda*.

“The next means to the attainment of Bhakti-yoga is strength. This *Ātman* is not to be attained by the weak, says the *Shruti*.” – scripture. “both physical weakness and mental weakness are meant here. The strong, the hardy are the only fit students.” “He who wants to become a devotee must be strong, must be healthy.”

Now, *Anavasāda* also means **not getting depressed**. You see, there will be situations in life, life always will not be the same, it won't go in the same way. Sometimes happy circumstances, sometimes not so happy circumstances. So when circumstances are not favourable, then how are we going to react towards those circumstances? Should we get depressed? Some people commit even suicide, unable to bear these kinds of situations.

So *Anavasāda* means whatever be the situation, one who aspires to be a devotee, must never give in to this weakness. One must say it is okay, it is God's will. Maybe there is something good about it. Take it in a positive light all the time. That is cheerfulness.

***Anavasāda* means cheerfulness.** The definition is so beautiful

देश काल वैगुन्यात् शोक वस्तु आद्यनुस्मरेत्सशेच तद् ज दैनियम् ्भास्यवृत्तम् मनसो अनवसादः

Desha kāla Vaigunyat shok vastu aadya anusmaretshch tat ja abhāsyā vrittam manaso anavasāda

See according to time, according to place, according to circumstances. If there are causes for depression or remembering something that had happened in the long past. Remembering them when things were not happy. All these things remember and then feel very bad. That not to allow such negative thoughts to creep into the mind, that will be the most wonderful thing.

You know there are two types of people. They are called optimistic people, pessimistic people. *Vedānta* doesn't ask us to be – neither optimistic, nor pessimistic. What it advocates to us is to be realistic. Accept the reality.

You know there is a story. There was a fellow and so, what is called, pessimistic. Whatever you do to him he will find some fault in it. He was in a village. So the villagers decided that we will prepare the best food and feed him, see what he does. So, you know, some of the best cooks got together, prepared the best dishes, brought him when the food was piping hot and just very tasty. They fed him. They were waiting for a remark from him. Because being habituated to cause this negative remark he said, 'Now it is alright but if it had been one hour later it would have been very bad'.

You know, it becomes a kind of habit. So it's important for us to remember why do we have this kind of... It is because of habit. So one of the things that a devotee should always look – whatever happens must be very good. Everything that happens has a positive side, something good.

I told you the story, you remember? The king and the minister who used to say, you know? Do you remember that? There was a king, he had a minister. This minister was a *Vedāntin*, and he used to say whatever happens is good. So one day the king was playing with his knife, and accidentally his thumb was cut off. And just then the minister came to, happened to come there, and he saw this bleeding hand of the king. He said, 'Very good, very good.' The king got so angry, 'You fellow, my thumb has gone...' (in those days there was no surgery to replace it, you see) 'And you say it is very good. Put this fellow in jail.' Immediately he was put in jail.
(50:05 mins)

After a few days he went out for hunting, he was caught by what we call human sacrificing religious sect. And he was taken as a prisoner. And they prepared the celebration where the king will be beheaded in front of their deity. And he was nicely decorated, and then he was taken. And then just before his being beheaded they noticed his thumb was missing. And so he was an unfit person to be sacrificed. They said 'You are unfit. You get out'. Then the king realised that what the minister said was very good. 'Had not I lost my thumb, then I would have been dead today.'

So he went back, immediately ordered the minister to be freed. And then, you see, when the minister was being taken into the jail he said, 'Very good, very good!' So the king heard it. And then when he was released, came back, he asked the minister, 'Okay, now I understand, my thumb was cut off, it was good, I was not dead. But how come when you were being taken to the jail you said it was very good very good?' This man said 'Don't you understand? If I had not been in the jail, I would have been with you. I would have been dead.'

So, you see, a devotee always accepts every situation. Whatever happens it's absolutely good.

There was, you know, in a restaurant, a man was sitting in a morose way. And, you see, his friend happened to enter the place, he saw this man and came to him and said, 'Why are you so morose?' The man said, 'Look we had, myself and my wife, had a quarrel and she became so angry. She told me that she's not going to talk with me for 30 days.' The friend said, 'What man, you should be very happy. Why are you so morose?' The man said, 'I know that. But this is the last day.'

So, whatever happens in the life of a devotee he should take it as good. Because, you see, there is a principle, psychological principle – Life is what we look at it! It is not the situation, it is how we look at it! We can be perfectly happy even if... There are people who are very poor, in a wretched condition but very happy. There are people very wealthy and everything but they are not in a happy condition.

So it is very important to develop that mental attitude.
Why? Because a devotee always believes that God is looking after him, and whatever he does is good for him.

That's why *Sri Rāmakrishna* used to say, 'Have the attitude of a kitten'. The kitten doesn't do anything. Whenever it is in trouble it mews. And then mother comes running. Sometimes it puts the kitten, young one, on the bed of the master. Sometimes it puts the kitten on the refuge heap. But under both circumstances the kitten only knows my mother is there to look after me. That attitude is called *anavasāda*. That means don't allow the mind to go depressed, become depressed, go deep down.

And the opposite also is there. Some people, even smallest thing, they become so excited, immediately they become excited. They start crying, laughing, or anything is enough to make them excited. That is also a waste of energy. If there is good news and happy news, don't become too much excited.

Because what happens? Whether it is depression of the mind or excitement, both are diseases.

What they do? They agitate the mind. Such a mind cannot be made to focus, to concentrate. Steadfastness is necessary.

That is why so much it is emphasised - *Stithaprajna* - balanced way of life. Whether in happiness or unhappiness; in victory, in defeat; in profit, in loss लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ (*lābhālābhau jayājayau*) You must keep a balanced, rational type of mind. Only such a mind is fit really to love. Otherwise we become slaves, dependent upon the conditions of the mind. That's not liberation.

So these are the six qualities which one, every devotee must acquire. And if we practise all these seven things... What is that?

- Viveka (discrimination)
- Vimoka (dispassion)
- Abhyāsa (repeated practice)

- Kriyā (that is panchmahāyajnās)
- Then all these six qualities.

If we go on practising these things, then we have just entered into the realm of devotion. But from this point onwards – all these are meant to achieve one particular thing. Which is called renunciation. And without renunciation nobody can become a lover.

Love means renunciation. One side is love, another side is renunciation. Why it so important, and why it is so easy for a devotee rather than for the followers of other paths, and how we can go to the next step which is called the *Para-Bhakti* – supreme devotion, when man transcends all rules and regulations, these are the things we will discuss in our next class.

ॐ शान्ति शान्ति शान्ति: ॥

Om Shānti Shānti Shāntihi ॥

(55:59 mins)