

BHAKTI YOGA - PART 22

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 ||

Swāmiji next discusses the Bhaktās renunciation results from love. The word renunciation frightens many of us. Though what does it really mean? It means give up things, run away from the place. Many times, you know, attachment brings a lot of pain. That is one reason why people don't want to love. It is not that we do not derive joy in love, but unfortunately we want no responsibility, no troubles. Just pure happiness.

But even a devotee, the highest devotee of God, has to work very hard. And if there is love it comes so naturally. So if somebody says I want to derive joy but I do not want to have any suffering, then there is a grave misunderstanding of what love really is. Just look around and see how much trouble parents undergo to bring up their children.

Just watch nature movies. Have you seen The march of the penguins? How many miles they just go. The male doesn't eat food for several months. It will be looking after the

baby, and the mother goes out. And many of them die on the way. Of course, you may say that it is instinct, we are not like animals. We think, we do so many things. But it is the same impulse.

How much trouble parents undergo. When we become parents we understand a little bit of it. But then, do you think the parents really mind? They are so happy. It is suffering, it is troublesome, but they are so happy. They are so happy because there is that love behind it.

So, two types of or two expressions of love - One, the *Jnāni* - the man who treads the path of knowledge, what do you think he will do? Unfortunately he has very little emotion. He has knowledge, but very little emotion. Which is very hard in the beginning, but later on he will be immersed in bliss. There is no doubt about it. He doesn't call it joy. In a way, he thinks of it as more of a peace.

One example that comes to my mind is *Ramana Maharshi*, so peaceful, good. Some people bring nice food, they look at Him for His expression. He says 'Good, good.' And something is not good, He says, 'Good, good, that is also good.' Very little expression is there.

But you go to *Sri Rāmakrishna*, He will be dancing. So that is one way of expression. This is another way of expression.

But a *bhaktās* renunciation is a very natural renunciation.

In this particular chapter, *Swāmiji* turns out to be a great poet in the form of a prose. "We see love everywhere in nature. Whatever in society is good and great and sublime is the working out of that love; whatever in society is very bad, nay diabolical, is also the ill-directed working out of the same emotion of love."

"The emotion is the same, but its manifestation is different in different cases."

"The same fire that cooks a meal for us may burn a child, and it is no fault of the fire if it does so; the difference lies in the way in which it is used."

So you see, a *Bhaktā*, a devotee, doesn't see any difference. He doesn't see good and evil.

Why doesn't he see? Because he loves God.

And what is loving God? This whole universe is a manifestation of God.

This next chapter, in the future chapters, we will see how He says the *Bhaktā* surrenders himself to the universal. Universal here means God. We will come to that when that topic comes.

(05:24 mins)

But what *Swāmiji* means here, for a true devotee of God he doesn't see what is good and what is evil. For him everything is only good. A dog is *Rāma*; a scorpion – that is also *Rāma*; a snake bite – that is also *Rāma*. Everything is *Rāma*. We cannot imagine at our level of experience now.

“Therefore, love, the intense longing of association, the strong desire on the part of two to become one, and, it may be after all, of all to become merged in one, is being manifested everywhere in higher or lower forms as the case maybe.”

Swāmiji is striking at the very root of the psychology of love.

What is love? We usually associate love with emotion. I have a kind of feeling and it's a very agreeable feeling. No, that is not love.

What is love? That which makes two to become one – unity! That is true love.

Why does a mother love the baby? Because she doesn't want any separation from the baby. She wants to become one.

Why does a man and a woman get attracted towards each other? They want to become one!

The individual soul always feels that I am separate. That is why it is called an individual soul. I am an individual. I am different from everything else. I am just a small atom. I am a small thing. But there is a tremendous desire. How much? Infinite desire to become one with the infinity. That is what is really called love.

I love *rasogollā*. What happens after that? I become one with *rasogollā*. Or I make *rasogollā* one with me. The impulse is the same, whether it is seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching – the impulse is the same.

So, we see two types of behaviour in this world. One we call good, another we call evil. Now just sit back for a moment and say what do I mean by good? What do I mean by evil? If you think deeply, you will understand that – **that which doesn't disturb your mind is good. That which unifies, harmonises your mind, that's good. And that which disturbs the mind is evil.** In anything.

Suppose food. 'Is a good food', we say. What does it mean? It means even if my mind is scattered, if it is good food, for the time being it makes my mind peaceful, harmonious. And if it is music, by hearing it my scattered mind becomes unified. It becomes peaceful. So any experience that makes our mind one, united, harmonised, unagitated – that is what we call good. And the opposite we call evil.

So, why do some people, some certain things, why do they create so much of disturbance? Because they are also trying to make their minds peaceful. They are also

trying to make their minds in harmony. But the only way they could do it is by killing, by doing some harm to other people.

So, there are two expressions here.

- We, I am the individual?
- And everything else other than me. And it is infinite.

So, I am longing to become one with the infinite. The infinite is also longing to become one with me.

How is it possible then to become one? Either I must join the infinity. Or the infinity must join me.

If there is a drop of water, it wants to join the ocean. The ocean also wants to join the drop. Do you know that? It is always attracting. Do you see the expression? All the water, where is it going? It becomes... small drops of water become a small stream. The streams become bigger streams. Bigger streams become rivers. And the rivers ultimately are joining the ocean.

(10:00 mins)

So what is attracting them? The ocean is constantly attracting them, 'You come to me.' So, to attract the ocean towards ourselves, some people attempt to do it. Some drops of water, powerful drops of water do that. And they are called *Jnānis*. Most of us, most of the other people, we try to go towards the ocean and become merged into one.

So, the bad people, the evil people, the so-called evil people, why they also are becoming selfish? They want to attract everything into themselves. Whereas the unselfish people – just the opposite. I want to become one with you. Selfish people – I want you to become one with me. Either by enslaving them or whatever means, by killing them, remove the obstructions. Then they feel peaceful, okay. This is the play that is going on all the time. It is very difficult for us to understand this *Līlā*. Anyway...

So, "Bhakti-yoga is the science of higher love. It shows us how to direct it; it shows us how to control it, how to manage it, how to use it, how to give it a new aim, as it were, and from it obtain the highest and most glorious results, that is, how to make it lead us to spiritual blessedness. Bhakti-yoga doesn't say, "Give up"; it only says "Love; love the highest!" —and everything low naturally falls off from him, the object of whose love is the highest.

"I cannot tell anything about Thee, except that Thou art my love. Thou art beautiful, Oh, Thou art beautiful! Thou art beauty itself." What is after all really required of us in this Yoga is that our thirst after the beautiful should be directed to God."

There are two expressions of the values, human values –

- In the east, the expression is always *Dharma, Artha, Kāma, Moksha*.
- Whereas in the West, That is goodness, truth and beauty.

That's why so much of expression of beauty you see. There has been a lot of criticism about Indian art. Now when you look at the images of gods and goddesses and all that... Here, you look, for example, either *Mary* or *Jesus Christ*, you know, beautiful sculptures, beautiful paintings. Everything they want to express in terms of beauty.

Mona Lisa, have you heard about the painting Mona Lisa? It's a, I don't know I didn't find too much beauty in it, you know. Some people find it is so smiling, and some people say it is a very sickly type of smile. Whatever, I don't know about it.

But the point is somehow they want to, even an ugly person, they want to make beautiful. Express in the form of art.

But you go, our *Ganesha* you see, and what is His vehicle? And what is the condition of the vehicle if *Ganesha* really sits on it? It is symbolic. It is symbolic because they feel when there is knowledge, and that knowledge of Oneness is the real beauty. And knowledge brings love. Because knowledge annihilates the separation, the distinction, the individuality goes. The more knowledgeable we become the closer we come.

Though people are hoping that the whole world will become one. Yes, technologically the whole world has become one. But morally it has become splintered. There is so much of division. The closer we are coming, the further we are drifting off. Why? What is the reason? The reason is there is no true love.

Swāmi Vivekānanda had expressed, 100 years back, too much working with machines makes us machine-like. We become machines. And have you ever seen any machine saying to the man, 'I love you'. Yes, there are some machines that do that, do you know? Lift a telephone to any company, 'Good morning, how can we help you today?' It is all mechanised voice, that's all. Do you think the telephone knows what it is talking about? Neither the person who recorded it nor the telephone knows what is called love.

(15:00 mins)

It is only knowledge that can bring us closer together. The knowledge of God. Means the knowledge that we are all one! **Knowledge of God means knowledge that we are all one!** Everything is one, nothing but God! Nothing but *Brahman* in *Vedāntic* language. That is the only thing which can really bring us nearer.

Anyway, according to Indian concept of values, the goodness is there, the truth is there, but beauty for some reason has been relegated to a secondary place.

Dharma, have you ever heard anybody explaining to you *Dharma* means beauty? ***Dharma* means goodness, *dharma* means truth, righteous way of life**, even if it be a life of suffering.

Our *Puranās*, *Mahabharata*, *Rāmāyana* and other *Puranās*. *Satya Harishchandra*, for the sake of truth he had to suffer a lot. He had to sell his wife. He had to even, you know, sell his son. He became, *Satya Harishchandra* became, *Rājā Harishchandra* became a keeper of a crematorium. Even though his own wife came for the funeral of his own son, he would not allow her to do it. Because it's not right, without taking, extracting the fee, it's not right. He was a slave.

Such were the examples. *Rāma* suffered, *Pāndavas* suffered, all good people seem to be suffering. But why do they suffer? Because they are leading a life of truth, life of goodness, morality. Where is the beauty there? Beauty will come later. When knowledge comes then beauty will come.

Swāmiji will quote from the *Upanishads* how it is happening.

- So, one expression of love is, or rather **the most important expression of love is not emotion but knowledge**. Knowledge that we are one.
- **The second characteristic of love is wherever there is love there must be joy.** There must be happiness. There must be even pleasure.

Different types of expressions - pleasure, joy, happiness. But the highest type of this happiness is bliss. It is called bliss, *Ānandam*.

So *Swāmiji* is telling here that "Thou art beauty itself. What is after all really required of us in this Yoga is" we should thirst after the beautiful, because when we love, everything, anything that we love becomes beautiful. We have an expression in our language, that the young one of a crow is very beautiful for its mother. Have you ever seen a crow? Of all the birds it is supposed to be one of the ugliest. And yet in the eyes of its mother it is so pure.

That is why never say when you go to see some newborn baby, don't say how ugly it is. Say how cute. Actually it looks like an old monkey to me. Until, you know, they start drinking milk and then the cheeks will fluff, blow out and then there is some kind of beauty.

Have you ever seen the young one of a monkey when it is born? Like an old man. But ask the mother, the mother of the monkey, that baby's mother, 'It is the most beautiful child'. Why? Because it loves its own offspring. It's a natural tendency.

So, what is that love? This is mine. This is my child. My! I and mine. This belongs to me. I am not separate from it. It is that knowledge. Ask the same mother about the

beauty of the neighbour's baby, you will see what happens. It is that knowledge that is important.

So, "What is the beauty in the human face, in the sky, in the stars, and in the moon? It is only the partial apprehension of the real all-embracing divine being. "He shining, everything shines. It is through His light that all things shine." Take this high position of Bhakti which makes you forget at once all your little personalities."

Sri Rāmakrishna when He was practising *Tantra*, and He was worshipping a particular form of the Divine Mother. And He said that the beauty of this particular form, it dwarfs everything on this earth. Do you know what is that particular expression of the Divine Mother? He called it *Rājarājeshwari*. And yes, I have never seen such beauty in the whole universe. In the eyes of *Sri Rāmakrishna Mother Kālī* is the most beautiful form of God in the whole world.

Of course, He had seen, He had worshiped God in every form – *Krishna, Rāma, Allāh, Jesus* – in all forms. But of all the forms, what is the most beloved to His heart? It was *Mother Kālī*!
(20:36 mins)

How do others look at the image of *Mother Kālī*? Can you just imagine? You know, 4 hands with a sword and all these, a garland of skulls. People get frightened.

Even I used to get frightened in the villages. Only after studying *Sri Rāmakrishna*, I started loving *Mother Kālī*. Otherwise I would not go anywhere near, you know, the temple of *Mother Kālī*. You know, somebody may catch hold of me and then cut off my head. There was fear, you know?

In our villages we used to worship different forms of the Divine mother. One of the forms is called *Chandi*. And these low caste people, they used to sacrifice buffaloes, you know, huge buffaloes? And there is a rule, when they sacrifice, with one stroke they should cut off the neck. Just imagine that huge buffalo, how strong the fellow will be? If he cannot succeed in cutting it off, they say it has not been accepted by the Mother. Some kind of superstition is there. So they put a lot of butter on the neck, go on massaging. That is the only time the poor buffalo ever gets a massage from a human being.

So how is *Sri Rāmakrishna* looking at *Mother Kālī*? Not with our eyes. Because His love transformed. His love means his knowledge. That's why Indian beauty is symbolic.

The best painter of Indian Gods and Goddesses, you know, Ravi Verma? *Swāmi Vivekānanda* used to say, 'What is this? You come to the west and see the expression of beauty here.' What kind of paintings are there? They are trash, almost. But *Swāmiji*

had accepted that it is more symbolic rather than real representation. Whereas if you go to Greece or Rome, Italy, the expressions of the beauty you know.. every part of the body is as though it is a photographic. Because they have paid attention to the details, to the external natural details.

Whereas Indians never bothered about it. That's why you go to any temple of, Indian temple, especially in South India, old temples - hundreds and thousands of images - small, big and grotesque etc. The whole point is that are Indians so inferior? Did they not know what beauty is? They know! But they know the true beauty comes out of love. Love means having knowledge. And It is this knowledge which is the goal of all human beings.

Bhakti-yogā is also actually- try to know who you are. Try to know who is God. That knowledge will automatically bring all the joy, all the beauty, everything. In the eyes of The child also, do you know who is the most beautiful creature? It is the mother. Because of that knowledge, 'This is my mother. I belong to her'.

““Wherever there is any bliss, even though in the most sensual of things, there is a spark of that Eternal Bliss which is the Lord himself.” Even in the lowest kinds of attraction there is the germ of divine love. One of the names of the Lord in Sanskrit is Hari, and this means that He attracts all things to Himself. His is in fact the only attraction worthy of human hearts.”

You know, *Hari*? We call it *Hari Nāma sankirtana*. What is the meaning of *Hari*? He who steals. He who annihilates. *Hari* means annihilation. Annihilation means what? He doesn't allow you to remain yourself. He attracts you like a powerful magnet. And then you will not become, you will not remain yourself. You are lost completely in Him.

Just observe how *Swāmiji* is expressing here -

“ Who can attract a soul really? Only He! Do you think dead matter can truly attract the soul? It never did, and never will. When you see a man going after a beautiful face, do you think that it is the handful of arranged material molecules which really attracts the man? Not at all. Behind those material particles there must be and is the play of divine influence and divine love. The ignorant man does not know it, but yet, consciously or unconsciously, he is attracted by it and it alone. So even the lowest forms of attraction derive their power from God Himself.”

(25:29 mins)

I mentioned in one of my classes, the incident of one man who was attracted by a public woman in South India. In the life of *Rāmānuja* this incident comes. So there was this man who was mad in love with a prostitute. Once, one day there was a big religious festival. The chariot of the God is being drawn in the streets. And literally

hundreds of thousands of people gathered in the streets. And this man, this woman also wanted to have, to see the Lord in the chariot.

She went out and it was very hot. So this man who was in love with her, he was holding an umbrella above her. That was a very odd type of scene. When everybody is looking, including the prostitute, looking at the Lord in the chariot. This man unceasingly, unblinkingly, he was looking at the face of the woman.

Someone drew the attention of *Rāmānujācharya* and He understood the depth of this man's love. He went near him and tapped his shoulder. The man was startled. So, *Rāmānuja* asked, 'Are you not ashamed? That when everyone is looking at the Lord you are looking at this woman's face. What do you find so beautiful there?' The man said, 'I have never seen more beautiful eyes than the eyes of this woman.'

Rāmānuja asked him, 'Suppose I show you even more beautiful eyes?' He said, 'Show me.' And *Rāmānuja* pointed to the Lord and said, 'look!' By the grace of *Rāmānuja* this man saw the Divine Lord. It is not the image, it is the Divine Lord! And immediately he left this woman. Next second he left this woman. And because he could see the Divine Lord, he considered *Rāmānuja* as his *Guru* and became his disciple.

But the point is, what is it that is attracting this man? There was a tremendous longing to love. We are all born to love. We are all born lovers. Whether you know it or not we are all born lovers. Only we don't call it love, we call it attachment. We have so many attachments.

You know, there was a joke. A Zen master. They always talk about non-attachment. So there was a joke. A zen master has a Hoover. But he can't Hoover the corners of the room. Do you know why? Because he has no attachments. He has no attachments to the machine.

See, whenever we are attached to something, it may be an MP3 player, it may be a television, it may be a book, it may be a car. You know, people are, they are in love with their cars. And all these innumerable types of attachments, even people have attachments to particular seats in an auditorium. Yeah! If somebody by mistake occupies, you know, they won't say anything but their look says everything. They will be glaring at the people, 'What right have you got to sit there?'

We have all our special types of attachments. What is it? It is our love. But what is this love? Do you think when a man looks at the face of a woman; or a woman looks at the face of a man, do you think it is the atoms, it is the body cells or it is the arrangement of molecules as *Swāmiji* puts it so sarcastically.

Why does this, why are they attracted towards each other? There is something inside which attracts them. There is something inside which automatically attracts. Because of past life or whatever there is some connection.

But the point is only a soul can love a soul. The body cannot love another body. Because the body does not have the consciousness. Only the soul, the intelligence, the knowledge behind – this is my beloved. But who is that beloved? Behind that curtain, behind that mask? It is none other than God is sporting everywhere. It is that which attracts us.

And the idea is slowly you love and then you come near and you discover. So it is said in a way of speaking, we discover, **ultimately our goal is to discover God. God means to discover ourselves.** We want to make others a mirror so that we can see our own faces. It is a metaphorical expression saying our soul wants to become one with the soul of everything else.

(30:28 mins)

You see, is this a good mirror? If it reflects myself it is a good mirror. You know what it is called? Somebody says you are a most wonderful *Swāmi*. I am so pleased. Even if it is flattering also, I am so pleased. Because he's talking about me.

Have you noticed who are the most boring people in the world? Those who only talk about themselves are the most boring people in the world.

Who are the most attractive people in the world? Those who are talking about ourselves. Is it not a fact? Somehow or other we want to discover ourselves in everything else. That is called unity.

So, here is *Swāmiji* telling that “the lowest forms of attraction derive their power from God Himself.”

Then he takes up this scheme, how to express this idea of love as a form of knowledge. He takes from *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*. The conversation between, dialogues between *Yājñavalkya* and *Maitreyi*. He's just quoting. *Swāmiji* had preached nothing but *Upanishads*.

There is a very interesting incident, you know? There was a direct disciple and some scriptural class is going on, some ordinary class. So, there was one novice who didn't like it very much. He said, ‘*Swāmi*, let us talk about *Upanishads*. Let us study *Upanishads*.’ Then the man, not *Swāmi*, I'm sorry, it was *M. M* laughed and said, ‘What do you think we are talking about? We are only talking about *Upanishads*.’

The life of *Sri Rāmakrishna*, the lives of direct disciples, the lives of any saint, what do you think they are? Nothing but expressions of the *Upanishadic* statements. What do

we understand *Upanishads*? Cryptic statements which we understand very little or nothing. But you just study the life of *Sri Rāmakrishna*.

Sri Rāmakrishna, take an instance as an example. *Sri Rāmakrishna* used to run to see *Narendra*, with food in hand, sweets in hand. He used to run to feed *Nārāyana*. He used to feed *Pūrna*. He used to literally run, cry.

Why do you think He was running with sweets? What is the attraction? You know, *Narendranāth* Himself didn't understand it, 'Sir will not your fate become like *Jada-Bharata*?' You know what reply *Sri Rāmakrishna* gave? He said, 'It is because I see God in you that I love you. The moment I do not see God in you, *Nārāyana* in you, I will refuse to look at your face.'

So what was He attracted to? Was it the face of *Narendra*? It was God who was expressing. Because *Narendra* was nothing. He was just the thinnest covering and God alone is expressing.

Let alone *Sri Ramakrishna*, even to understand *Swāmi Vivekānanda*, *Narendranath*, it is extremely difficult. At times He used to forget Himself. He used to say 'I'. *Sri Krishna* used the word 'I'. *Jesus Christ* used the word 'I'. But what do they mean by 'I'? When we use this word 'I', we mean our body, our mind. When They use the word 'I', what do They mean? The Self, the Divine Lord Himself.

There was that beautiful incident – *Swāmi Vivekānanda*, I'll tell you one more interesting incident also. *Swāmi Vivekānanda* was living in America with a lady whom He knew. And she was in the habit of entertaining great people in her house. She was a rich woman. And for her, *Swāmi Vivekānanda* was a magnetic personality, I don't know how much she understood *Swāmiji* as a spiritual person. But she invited Him and He also went. So, He was staying.

She had a theory that every great man, however great they are, has some defects, must be some kind of bad quality. So she was watching *Swāmi Vivekānanda*, couldn't find any bad quality. But she knows, 'I know better than the *Swāmi*. There must be some quality, it will come out sooner or later.'

(35:07 mins)

One day *Swāmiji* was moving up and down in a big hall. There was a life sized mirror, big mirror, and whenever *Swāmiji* used to come near the mirror, He used to look at His own reflection and smile. This lady observed it. 'Ah, now I know. This man thinks He is the most handsome man in the world.'

Actually to be frank, He was the most handsome man, one of the most handsome men on earth. Like Raphael's sculpture. Somebody compared His face, like a greek God.

Even physically. Attraction, I'm not talking about magnetism or attraction, I am talking about, purely physically, He was one of the most beautiful personalities – *Swāmi Vivekānanda*! Until He started eating a lot of chocolates, chocolate ice creams.

Anyway, so you know, the moment this lady thought, 'Now I know what is the defect of this man. He thinks He is the most handsome man. Immediately out came, He could read human minds, Immediately He said, 'Look Helen, what a wonderful thing. When I come near the mirror, I suddenly come to, 'O, there is a body here. I have a body. When I go out, turn away from here, I don't remember the body, mind.' What was He doing and what are we thinking?

Anyway the incident was, you know, *Swāmi Vivekānanda* was at *Belur Math*, and there was, a bell was given for eating food. So, *Swāmiji* was absorbed in reading a book. You know, whenever He used to read, He used to forget the whole world. He didn't hear the ringing of the bell at all. So, they were all waiting. Without Him they wouldn't eat food. They were waiting, food was getting cold, but they were terribly frightened of *Swāmiji*. So, nobody was daring to go and say it is time for You to come, we are all waiting for You.

So they sent *Swāmi Subodhānanda*, and he went and he saw *Swāmiji* was absorbed. So he noted down the page which He was reading. He went and then *khat* like that closed the book. *Swāmiji* was startled and came back and said, 'You foolish boy, what have you done? Now how do I know where I am reading?' Because He was not keeping count of the pages. Then immediately *Swāmi Subodhānanda* opened the page, 'This is where you are reading.'

The point here, we have to take notice is that when we are absorbed in doing anything, listening to music, meditation of course, or reading a book, or whatever we are doing, then we forget our body and mind. This is called concentration. We go above body, body consciousness. Even, 'We are not aware of the mind', means there are no different thoughts, excepting awareness of whatever we are doing. At that point knowledge unfolds itself.

That is why *Swāmiji* used to say, 'First give training to boys and girls how to concentrate the mind. Then after that, with that mind, whatever they read, whatever they do, the knowledge just pours in.' Make room for knowledge to come. Or He used to, rather to say, 'Knowledge is already there inside but it is covered up. You just remove the veil.' Concentration is the best instrument to remove that veil.

So, here *Swāmiji* is quoting from these *Upanishads*. He preached nothing but the *Upanishads*. And He was an embodiment of *Upanishads*. So this, *Yājñavalkya* started teaching his wife *Maitreyi*. I had quoted it many times.

This is where *Swāmiji* takes and says -

“None, O beloved, ever loved the husband for the husband's sake; it is the Ātman, the Lord who is within, for whose sake the husband is loved.’ Loving wives may know this or they may not; it is true all the same. ‘None, O beloved, ever loved the wife for the wife’s sake, but it is the Self in the wife that is loved.’”

“The Lord is the great magnet, and we are all like iron filings; we are being constantly attracted by Him, and all of us are struggling to reach Him. All this struggling of ours in this world is surely not intended for selfish ends. Fools do not know what they are doing; the work of their life is, after all, to approach the great magnet. All the tremendous struggling and fighting in life is intended to make us go to Him ultimately and be one with Him.”

What a sublime statement of what is called love, true devotion.

(40:01 mins)

What is *Swāmiji* saying? That all the relationships that we can see in this world are nothing but struggles to love that one lover who is the Divine Lord. Even our enemies are also, they are helping us to grow in our love towards Him. Whatever we do it is all to reach Him. We love because it is to reach Him. We hate because we love to reach Him.

But then there is this *Māyā*. *Māyā* covers. That is why in one of the *Upanishads*, the aspirant, he had been struggling to reach that knowledge, that *Bhakti*. What is that? Union with the beloved. But he could not. Why? Because there is a tremendous obstacle. And that obstacle often doesn’t come in the form of an obstacle. It comes in the form of superglue - attraction! So, he prays, ‘O lord , I want to be one with you but your face is shining like a golden disk.’

हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम्।
तत् त्वं पूषन्नपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ॥

hiraṇmayena pātreṇa satyasyāpihitaṁ mukham |
tat tvam pūṣannapāvṛṇu satyadharmāya dṛṣṭaye ||

A most beautiful golden disk is covering your face. I am unable to get beyond it. You know, if it is ugly... you see, Supposing everything is unpleasant in this world, where is the difficulty in developing detachment? We will not have any difficulty at all. But because there are things which attract us so much. But we do not know what is attracting us.

What is it that is attracting? It is the Divine Mother behind who is attracting all of us, in the words of *Sri Rāmakrishna*. It is the Mother who is attracting us but we are not able to recognise Her, because we have fixed conceptions about it.

So Swamiji after quoting, He says, “Fools do not know what they are doing; the work of their life is, after all, to approach the great magnet. All the tremendous struggling and fighting in life is intended to make us go to Him ultimately”.

Swāmi Brahmānanda makes a tremendous statement. He says, ‘Whether you believe it or not, understand it or not, take it from Me, everyone of you are only travelling towards God. Even a murderer, even a thief is also going towards God. Only he is taking a wrong path. He will take a longer time to reach, but his goal is nothing but go towards God only.’

What a beautiful statement!

“ The Bhakti-Yogi, however, knows the meaning of life struggles; he understands it. He has passed through a long series of these struggles, and knows what they mean, and earnestly desires to be free from the friction thereof; he wants to avoid the clash and go direct to the centre of all attraction, the great Hari. This is the renunciation of the Bhakta.”

So what is renunciation? That attempt to go directly to God.
And how does one go to God? One doesn't go to God. He's not sitting somewhere else. He is only right here, if we only love then we will see the same God.

There was a beautiful incident in the life of *Swāmi Sāradānanda*. Once he was at Vārānasi. And because everybody knew he was the author of this ‘Great Master.’ *Sri Rāmakrishna's* ‘The Great Master’. Everybody was discussing the book and he used to listen. If there were any doubts he would clear them.

So, for some days it went on, and he was leaving Vārānasi the next day for Calcutta. So, the previous night they all sat but they were not reading the book. They were discussing, just talking with him.

In the course of conversation one of the monks made sarcastic remarks about a disciple of *Holy Mother*. And said that how come that this man is so fortunate to have *Holy Mother* as his *Guru*? And he had done something which was very condemnable, you know. Something very immoral he must have done, we don't know who or what he has done.

So he passed sarcastic remarks, how could he do such things being a disciple of the *Holy Mother*? *Swāmi Sāradānanda* became grave and he said, ‘Do not talk because you don't know who *Holy Mother* is? Maybe after 10 years you will look at this very man and you will exclaim, ‘Oh, what is so surprising about it? After all *Holy Mother* was his *Guru*, and by Her grace he has become a saint now. How do you know he's not going to become a saint after 10 years, by the grace of God?’

And then he burst into a song, '*rongomoyir rong dekhe obāk hoyecchi.*'

I have no words to describe the divine sports of this Divine Mother. I have lived with her for so many years I have not understood the least bit about her. He was talking about *Holy Mother*.

(45:32 mins)

How do we look at *Holy Mother*? Do we understand anything of the *Holy Mother*? *Swāmi Apūrvānanda*, once he wanted to see *Holy Mother's* face. You know She used to cover. On one occasion She allowed him to sit by Her side. And then through the veil he was looking. He saw the eyes were burning red, like burning charcoal. He got so frightened he closed his eyes and ran away. So many incidents are there.

The point I am making is that good people, bad people - this is all His *Līlā*, His play. But why? He is playing with Himself. He is playing with us. Us means, we are all creations of Him; we are all manifestations of Him. We do not know, there is no good, there is no evil in this world. From our very limited human point of view there are good people, there are saints, there are demons, there are terrorists, they take a way of life, create endless suffering. But really, this is very difficult to understand. It is nothing but a play of God!

And all of them, all of us are going towards God. It is very difficult to get this teaching, especially so explicitly, in the teachings, in many other teachings excepting *Vedantā*. You Just ask.

You know, in the past these religions used to divide people into two categories. You know, when they die judgement day will be there and there will be two doors . One to the left and one to the right. And all those who have done something displeasing to the Lord, they will go through the left side door, means eternal hell. And all those who are beloved of the Lord enter to the right side. This was a very limited human concept.

But what is *Vedantā* teaching? Even the worst criminal, the most evil person in this world, he is also the divine Lord. It is a play! It is not you who has created this world. He has created. Why did he create?

In the Gospel someone asked *Sri Rāmakrishna*, yesterday we were reading, why did God create wicked people? So that you can become a saint. If everybody is a saint, do you recognise yourself as a saint? How do you know you are a good person? If everybody is good, everybody is loving, then what is your goodness, your greatness? There must be contrast. Then only you can be seen.

“This mighty infinite love of God which enters his heart leaves no place for any other love to live there. How can it be otherwise? Bhakti fills his heart with the divine waters of the ocean of love, which is God Himself;”

Most profound statement! **Love is God himself.** God is not a person. God is knowledge. God is love.

“there is no place there for a little loves. That is to say, the Bhakta’s renunciation is that Vairāgya or non-attachment for all things that are not God, which results from greater attachment to God.

This is the ideal preparation for the attainment of the supreme Bhakti.”

Remember we are talking about, discussing about, the supreme love – *Para-bhakti*. So why is *Swāmiji* speaking of renunciation? It is because renunciation is a preparation.

What is this preparation? What is this renunciation? Do not love smaller things. What is smaller thing here? Is it people? No!

Suppose somebody loves a human body. It has its value but very soon because the bodies change, the love also comes to an end very soon.

Then there is a higher love. What is that love? Love of relationships. A mother loving the baby. The children loving the parents. Friends loving the friends. A little better understanding is there even though the bodies change, the love is more stable, more permanent.

And then there is what we call *Guna-Prema*. If we see some good qualities in somebody else. Somebody is a good singer, or a good writer, or unselfish person, loving person, or he has his mind in control, or he is a disciplined person. Some quality which is greater than we see in ourselves. Then we start loving it.
(50:07 mins)

Then there is higher, still higher love is there. Which is – the soul itself we love because, not because the person has got some qualities, not because he has a body, but there the soul itself is beloved.

So there are different stages of loving. And the higher is our love, the more stable, the more permanent, the more joyous, it would be. So this is the preparation for *Para-Bhakti*.

“Then it is that we begin to understand what supreme devotion is; and the man who has entered into the inner shrine of the Para-Bhakti alone has the right to say that all forms and symbols are useless to him as aids to religious realisation. He alone has attained that supreme state of love commonly called the brotherhood of man; the rest only talk. He sees no distinctions; the mighty ocean of love has entered into him, and he sees not man in man, but beholds his Beloved everywhere. Through every face

shines to him his Hari. The light in the sun or the moon is all His manifestation. Wherever there is beauty or sublimity, to him it is all His. Such” devotees, “Bhaktas are still living; the world is never without them. Such, though bitten by a serpent, only say that a messenger came to them from their Beloved.”

Do you know whose statement it is? *Pāvāhāri Bābā*. Once He was bitten by a serpent. You know what He said? ‘It is a message from the Beloved, Why did you forget Me?’

“Such men alone have the right to talk of universal brotherhood. They feel no resentment; their minds never react in the form of hatred or jealousy. The external, the sensuous, has vanished from them forever. How can they be angry, when, through their love, they are always able to see the Reality behind the scenes?”

There was an incident you know, *Pāvāhāri Bābā*’s life there was an incident. A dog once came, and it saw some dried bread, and it took it and was running away. What was *Pāvāhāri Bābā*’s reaction? He said, ‘O *Rāma*, the bread is too hard, it might break your teeth. Let me put a little butter on it.’ With a *ghee* pot He ran after the dog. I don’t know what happened after that. But, you know, how He was looking?

You remember that? I think one novel was there, you know, *Le Misérables*. A bishop who gave shelter to a thief, and the thief stole the silverware. And then he was caught by the police. Do you remember that? At the end the police contacted the Bishop and said that did this man steal? This Bishop said, ‘No, he has not stolen. I have gifted them to him.’ And because, you know, he was, the Bishop is telling that, they had to let him go. And the result was the thief became one of their... You know, joined the monastery.

Same thing happened to *Pāvāhāri Bābā*.

Ramana Mahārishi’s life there was... You know, He was such a great *Jnāni*, but one day, noon, He was taking rest. And some man came. He wanted, you know, some small fruits from some tree. So he started beating the tree. *Ramana Mahārishi* became so agitated. He came out and shouted at him, ‘You fellow, stop doing that. If I beat you don’t you feel pain? The same way the tree also will feel if you beat it.

You know, this Jagdish Chandrabose had proved conclusively, plants – they experience pain and pleasure. Because they cannot run away... You see, you don’t understand it. If an animal, if you take up a stick, in *Shankarā*’s words it will run away – the man is coming to beat me. But if you take some sweet or food it will run, wagging its tail, it will come running to you. The same way the plants, they are so sensitive, that if you love them they also know. They are so happy.

That is why it is said that when *Shakuntalā* used to touch the plants and then they used to bloom. And when she was going away, leaving them. How *Kālidāsa* describes, tears, as it were, running. They bent down because they were losing their beloved person.

It's literally true. Trees, plants, they are so sensitive, they understand. Even snakes understand who is loving and who is not loving.

So, in the eyes of such a saint everyone is his beloved only. There is no stranger, let alone there is a bad man. That is the highest expression of knowledge. The Knowledge that God is everywhere, *Brahman* is everywhere. And when a person reaches that is the highest expression of love. Let us not forget love is not mere emotion. First comes knowledge, then you can indulge in any amount of emotional love. But without that knowledge, only emotion drains away the energy and it leaves us dry.

ॐ शान्ति शान्ति शान्ति: ॥

Om Shānti Shānti Shāntihi ॥

(55:47 mins)