

BHAKTI YOGA - PART 25

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 ||

Last week, we had discussed the manifestation of **Prema**, the supreme devotion to God. It manifests in the form of reverence, reverence for everything. Now, many of us might mistake reverence for a sentiment, and it is very dangerous. True reverence comes out of some kind of knowledge. Sentiments come out of emotion. This is the biggest difference.

You know, Indians, they go to hyperboles in whatever – good or bad. There is no comparison to the heavens that Indians can imagine nor to the hells that they can also describe.

You know, the politicians – the worst lot of humanity. And there are, you know, in Tamil Nadu, I will not mention the name. There was a woman who became the chief minister, and something happened to her, and there were people who burnt themselves in a frenzy of what they used to call reverence. If that lady walked in the street, they will prostrate themselves on the road, dirty road. Now, it may appear,

‘what devotion’? But it has nothing to do with devotion. It is pure sentiment because, you see, they are as headless as their head.

True reverence, on the other hand, it enhances. It comes out of love.

Even from the very utilitarian point of view. You know, supposing, we want to enjoy something – the more reverence we have for something, we enjoy it all the more.

I will give you some examples. Supposing, you are fond of eating, let us say sweetmeat. You just buy the sweetmeat, procure the sweetmeat and eat. It gives you some amount of pleasure, joy. But offer the same thing to God and then eat – see the difference? Your joy is enhanced a thousand fold. What is the big deal of difference that happened? Previously you were looking upon the sweetmeat as an object of enjoyment, but now you are looking upon it with reverence, because it is associated with God Himself.

Similarly, supposing... we are all children in many ways, we are very fond of stories. Many of our devotees, you know, ‘Have you read the story of *Sri Rāmakrishna*?’ when I ask, they say, ‘Yes *Swāmiji*!’ And what did you read? ‘Illustrated story of *Sri Rāmakrishna*!’ You know, small children! They are truthful, they did read the life of *Sri Rāmakrishna*. And you know, we are all children, we enjoy anything that is presented in the form of, you know, a story or things like that. Then it is very much enjoyable to people like us.

So, you read something. You want to read a book. But if that book, even if it is a storybook, you just read – it will give you some amount of pleasure. But read a book which you revere, for example stories from *Bhāgavatam*. It is a story but you enjoy it. Your enjoyment is a thousand fold.

And, what happens? When you read a story, your nerves get exhausted. But when you read a *Bhāgavatam* story... It is a story, but it uplifts you, it purifies you, it generates devotion in you. Why? Because it is not a story, it is a revered story. It is not a mere story. You know we meditate upon *Krishna*, and *Devi*, and *Sri Rāmakrishna*, *Sri Rāma*, like that.

(05:05 mins)

I will give you one example. Many poet saints had extolled these incarnations in the form of various songs etc. One famous song is *Thumak chalat Rāmchandra bājat paijaniyā*. What is so great about it? Every child – that is what he does. You know, every householder who has children he knows, boy or girl, that it is what people do. They just crawl on their knees. And that is the most dangerous period, you know? That is what is called the twos, terrible twos! That is the time when they break everything. But from the mothers point of view – so sweet!

But look here *Sri Rāmchandra*, He was also a baby, He also grew up like any other children, but when you hear the song you are uplifted. Why are you so uplifted? Because He is not an ordinary child. He is God Himself. Whether He is God or not is not the point. But if you think He is God, then in your mind reverence comes.

So, as I mentioned last time, if we do not have love – love and reverence are opposite sides of the same coin. If you do not have love – then you revere something. As you go on revering, slowly love comes.

Where there is love, there is reverence.

Where there is reverence, there is love.

Where there is no reverence, but people claim we love each other, then that is terrible.

You know how couples address each other nowadays? You know, a lot of bad words, four letter words, are used nowadays. People do not understand what damage it is doing to their minds, to their brains, to their lives. They are wrecking their own lives. Because, when you have reverence you cannot use this kind of language. **Language has something to do with our behaviour, with our health, with our mental health, with of course, our spiritual progress.**

That is why the Sanskrit language is an unfortunate pronunciation. *Samskrita*! *Samskrita* means, the very meaning of the word *Samskrita* means, that which has been refined. *Sam kritaḥ* – *Samskrita*! Beautiful! There is no word which is so... very bad word is not there in Sanskrit language. But bad people are there, bad actions are there. How does Sanskrit language use it? Very mild language.

Even the great *Shankara*, He uses only one word for very stupid people. He says बालाः (*Bālāḥ*) *Bālāḥ* means children, ignorant, they do not know anything.

You know, words have a lot of effect upon us.

- **From words actions are produced.**
- **And actions again produce the language.**

What is language? First we think in our minds. And when you are thinking, then your actions – if you do something wrong you cannot think rightly. There is an intimate connection between. That's why *Tulasidās* says,

वागर्थाविव सम्प्रुक्तौ पार्वतीपरमेश्वरौ ॥
vāgarthāviva sampruktau pārvatīparameśvarau ॥

Pārvati and *Parameshwara*. Lord *Shiva* and *Pārvati* are inseparable that's why it's called अर्धनारीश्वर (*Ardhanārīshvara*) – half man and half woman. It has dangers also you know? In a good way, in a sweet way. Once *Ardhanārīshvara* were sitting and a devotee – he was in trouble. So, he approached them and prostrated and said, 'May I be saved

by Thy Grace.’ Now both *Pārvati* and *Shiva* started quarrelling. *Shiva* said, ‘This devotee is bowing down to me, I am going to protect him.’ *Pārvati* said, No, he is bowing down to me. He is my devotee. I am going to protect him.’ You know, by the time they settled down, the man had died already. Funny stories are told, you know. They are inseparable.

So, if someone is loved, then that lover and the beloved become inseparable! That is the meaning of love. That is why it is called *bhakti*. In Sanskrit language devotion is called *bhakti*. Whereas what we call in English language love is translated as *Kāma*. *Kāma* and *Prema*! Very important distinction is there between these two. Anyway, the point is reverence is very necessary.
(10:18 mins)

In modern man’s life as Scott Peck very beautifully brings it out in his book, ‘The road less travelled.’ He says, you know, so many young people claim they are falling in love. Unfortunately if they fall in love, it is definite sooner or later they fall out of love. Because, you know, suppose you have fallen down, do you think you are going to stay there? You are going to get out of there. This is what happens invariably.

Because it is an emotional, what is called, impact. That’s not love at all. Because **love is intense activity**. Love cannot be acquired by just sitting in an easy chair and, you know, reading some romantic novels. So, reverence is the very first sign *Swāmi Vivekānanda* says, “The manifestation of true love.”

Then comes, there are many other things, only very briefly we will discuss. And *Swāmiji* had discussed only still more briefly. *Prīti*! There is a word *Prīti*. ***Prīti* means the mind becomes pleased when certain things happen.**

Just to give an example, you know, it is gloomy, cloudy, rainy, and suddenly the Sun comes out. Does it not please you? So wonderful it is! You know, the sun hasn’t done anything special for you; He just came out. By his very presence the whole world becomes pleased.

So when a devotee acquires that supreme devotion, we are talking about supreme devotion. One important distinction we have to make in order to understand this is, what is the big deal of difference between *Vaidhi Bhakti* – means preparatory devotion and *Para Bhakti* or supreme devotion? What is the big deal of difference? The difference is...

Two differences are there -

- 1) Once a person attains supreme devotion there is nothing more for him to attain. For the simple reason - that which he is striving to attain he had become one with it. After that there is nothing more the person has anything to do.

- 2) The 2nd important difference is as long as we are in this stage of preparatory devotion, our devotions undergo ebb and flow. Sometimes it is going down, sometimes it is going up.

Like my audience in the talks, you know, sometimes they come, sometimes they don't come. Depends upon, you know, mood, cricket match and what is called sickness, well-beingness and even the weather. They were planning to come and suddenly it became cloudy so they stopped coming.

So, this preparatory devotion means exactly that. We have to put forth tremendous amount of effort to maintain it.

It is like maintaining, you know, marriage. The whole point is this, to keep up marriage in the right conditions both of them have to work very very hard. It is not something given. One has to work very hard. First of all one has to adjust oneself. Then one has constantly – both are separate individuals. We should never forget that. Just because marriage has taken place they become one in every respect – they don't become one at all. That's why they have to recognise the differences. They have to have reverence.

Many marriages fail because they don't have reverence for each other. They are attracted because of sexual desire, physical attraction in the beginning. That's not going to last long at all. So, that is why marriages fail. Where there is reverence, marriages last forever, in Indian language, you know.

Holy Mother used to say, '*Sri Rāmakrishna* never hurt me even with a flower.' He did not even address Her in inferior language. Just imagine how much respect He used to give to *Holy Mother*. Of course, you know, the story, how *Sri Rāmakrishna* worshiped *Holy Mother*, prostrated before Her and offered all His, the results of His austerities, at Her feet. That's a unique phenomena in the annals of spiritual struggles.

(15:11 mins)

So *Prīti*, the second characteristic is, *Prīti* means pleasure! The very thought that here is my beloved gives the greatest pleasure. Not because the beloved is giving something, not because the beloved has certain qualities. That's because I love my beloved. And for me it is enough.

Funnily we have a saying in our language, native language, you know, 'The young one of a crow is very dear to its mother.' You know, a crow is supposed to be one of the ugliest birds in the world. So, they also have young ones and how do you think that a baby crow – does it become very lovable? There are many other birds which are very lovable but not one of a crow, not at least an Indian crow. But, in the eyes of its mother it's the most beloved one.

So, if a person loves anything – in his or her eyes the beloved becomes the most wonderful.

You see, take children you know, babies! You know, when babies are born they look like old men, I heard, like that. Just born babies, they look like old men. You know, there is hardly any hair, face is wrinkled and all those things. Almost like our ancestors. You know the monkey, baby monkeys, like that. Even an animal, even a calf, and like that a puppy, a kitten – they are much much more beautiful than a baby which is just born. Of course after drinking, you know, all the buttered milk and other things it's cheeks start puffing up. And then it looks a little better later on.

But in the eyes of the mother – it is the very life. Because – 'Belongs to me', 'This is Mine!' You know, mine means – 'It's my life', my extension, my life. That is why the very presence of the baby gives such great joy to the mother. And the baby also is only assured when it is with its mother. Throughout nature this is what we see.

But, just imagine, if a person has attained to that supreme devotion how much joy he will get? Not only will he get joy thinking about God, the person gets tremendous joy by seeing anything associated with his Beloved.

So in the Gospel we get an example, *Chaitanya Mahāprabhu*, He was the supreme example of supreme devotion. Nobody loved *Krishna* as much as *Chaitanya Mahāprabhu*. He was considered as a reincarnation of *Rādhā*.

He was once going, walking, and He was passing through a village. Somebody mentioned to Him casually, this is the village, the clay of this village is used in making this, you know a kind of drum. They use a special kind of drum. It's a longish drum, you know? The *tablā* you know, the *mridangam*, it is like that. *Khol* it is called. On the *khol* they put this mud to give a peculiar type of sound.

So the clay from that village is specially suited for that purpose. As soon as *Chaitanya Mahāprabhu* heard this He fell down unconscious. Because He thought this is the clay which is used on the drum, and with the help of that drum the names of My Beloved are sung. And He was immediately reminded.

So *Sri Ramakrishna* also says, you know *Rādhā* used to go into an ecstatic state standing under a blue flowered tree. You know, there are some trees which give blue flowers. And the colour of the body of *Sri Krishna* is supposed to be blue. By just seeing this flower She was not... You know, immediately the association has come. We are all creatures that live on association, you know?

That is why **the deepest desires of every human being are called *Vāsanās*. *Vāsanā* means smell.**

You are walking in the street, suddenly the smell of frying, onions being fried, *pakodas*, you know? Immediately from here the effect started. Have you noticed it? Immediately you feel like you must... and if you are hungry your imagination just leaps in bounds.

You know this is called *Vāsanā*. The subtlest anything associated, immediately brings back – that is the nature of human behaviour.

(20:38 mins)

So, if somebody loves God then anything associated with God – that brings the greatest joy. Just see how wonderful it is!

So, *Swāmi Vivekānanda* says, “Then comes *Priti*— pleasure in God. What an immense pleasure men take in the objects of the senses! They go anywhere, run through any danger, to get the thing which they love, the thing which the senses like. What is wanted of the *Bhakta*” (or devotee) “is this very kind of intense love which has, however, to be directed to God.”

It is so true that human beings do anything to get what they love. They are even ready to give up their lives. To give an example, you know, there is something dangerous, called jumping, bungee jumping. It’s very dangerous. Even if the person doesn’t die, there is always a risk of getting injured, you know, the spinal cord could be very much injured. But you know they cannot help. They have to go and do that.

You know, how these stuntmen, some of the people, it is in their blood as it were, they say. Unless they are participating in some kind of dangerous feat, either sports car or this or that, they won’t get any satisfaction. And people go to any length to spend their hard earned money in just getting what they want. Even if they cannot use it they sacrifice their time, their energy and their everything, attention, everything! But it doesn’t matter what they love, it could be even the most insignificant thing. But what you call insignificant, is the most significant thing in their lives.

You know, there are people who collect matchboxes. I was astonished when I heard about it. You know, matchbox? There are thousands and thousands of types of matchboxes. He is not interested in the matches, he is interested in collecting the match boxes. Some people collect postage stamps. And like this so many varieties of things people go... It is a hobby, because they love. Whether it is useful or not, don't ask. It gives them pleasure. And they spend any amount of money.

You know, postage stamps, people spend thousands and thousands of pounds to get some which has, you know, some letter has not come out, or is upside down, or something wrong like that. 'But what will you do with this?' If you say. 'It is just my pleasure.' That's all. They could very well use that money for some other purpose. What they love, they are prepared to spend any amount of money. Don't you know, you see, people go on holidays. There are some people, rich Americans, who have put half a million dollars for preserving their genes, thinking that science will one day bring them back to life. You know, they keep in the coldest type of chemicals like that.

What Swāmiji is telling is to what lengths people go, for good or bad, spending their time, they will give up their life. If somebody loves their country he is ready to give up his life. A loving parent is ready to give up his... or a mother, to give up her life for protecting the child. And a person who loves God, do you think his sacrifice will be any less? Absolutely no!

This idea that a person happily will sacrifice anything for what he loves is so beautifully illustrated in the life of *Sri Rāmakrishna*. And there is a mythological story – The golden mongoose. You remember? A mongoose was there. Very briefly I will tell you.

You know this *Yudhisthira*, *Pāndavās*, they were performing a great sacrifice. They spent millions of pounds for that. And everybody is being feted, fed, clothed. Gifts were being given, *diyatām bhujatām*, as they say, you know.

And Sacrifice was over.

(25:07 mins)

This *Dharmarāja Yudhisthira* was very happy that he had done his best. And when everybody was sitting, suddenly a mongoose entered into the court. And people were observing, 'What is this fellow doing?' Just before that many people were fed on that spot. So this mongoose, they observed, was only golden 50% of its body – one side of the body. Another side was normal.

So it started rolling on the place where people were fed. And then after rolling it looked, nothing happened to it. Then it addressed *Yudhisthira* and said, 'Look, you are very proud, but this is no sacrifice at all.' Everybody was surprised. *Yudhisthira* said, 'Tell me why you are making such a statement?'

Then it said, you know, 'Many years back there was a famine, I was not getting food, I was very hungry and what happened – there was a *Brāhmin* family consisting of husband, wife, son and daughter-in-law. And they were starving because they could not get any food. One day with great difficulty they procured a little bit of food and they cooked, and they offered it to God, and they sat down to eat.'

‘At that time a *Brāhmin*, a hungry *Brāhmin*, entered into that hut. He said, ‘I am starving, give me a little food.’ So the husband said, ‘Here is my portion. Eat it.’ And the guest ate it and said, ‘O Sir, you have killed me. Before eating I was not this miserable. Now after eating..’ (it’s appetiser you know?) ‘My hunger had increased a thousand fold.’ Then the wife of that *Brāhmin* had given her portion. And then the son had given his portion, then the daughter-in-law had given her portion. And the guest said, ‘I am satisfied.’ And he departed. And by that time there was no food left out. All the four people died.’

‘After that I entered into the hut, and there were a few leftovers on the floor where the *Brāhmin* guest had eaten, and I just ate a little bit of what I could get, and I rolled. And unfortunately there was only a little bit of food, and wherever that food touched my body, it turned into gold. Ever since that time I have been searching that how I could make my other half also golden. So whenever I hear some great sacrifice was being done I go there and try to roll there. But even your sacrifice is no sacrifice at all.’

Why? I will give you in a very brief form. Suppose there is a billionaire and he gives, billionaire, he gives many many many millions of dollars in charity to somebody. Genuinely. And there is a poor person who has only 1\$ or 1£ and that person gives 1£. This person has given only 1£. The other person has given many many millions. Whose gift is greater? Because this person has given everything that belonged to him. There is nothing, He did not withhold anything. Whereas the other person he has got many many millions, he could live even if he reincarnates.. According to Hinduism, you know – he is going to reincarnate. So he is going to, without doing any work for many many many rebirths, he can eat, live comfortably. That’s no sacrifice at all. There is no hardship involved there.

Whereas these four people who gave their part of the food to this guest, they died! What is greater sacrifice than giving up life. And giving up life with some force? No! They gave it up voluntarily. They need not have given up their life at all. They could have said okay, we’ll give, we’ll divide it into five parts. We will all eat. No! You are a guest and you are God Himself. And it is our *dharma*.

There is no equivalent word for that in English. It’s our duty, you can say. It’s not duty. It is something which they have to do from inside. And they did it with greatest joy. They didn’t mind dying. That is the great sacrifice.

You know, people all do it. What is the difference between worldly people and spiritual people? Worldly people also sacrifice their lives; spiritual people also sacrifice their lives. Yes, don’t make any mistake about it.

You know, there was a village and one monk was sitting under a tree. A villager was passing by. Seeing a monk, it is our Hindus custom, he folded his hands in reverence. And seeing that the monk got up and prostrated himself at the feet of this villager. (30:15 mins)

So, the villager was surprised. He said, ‘Why did you do that? We are householders, we are supposed to bow down before the monks. But you bowed down. I only folded my hands, but you did *shāstāṅg prāṇāma*. Why?’ He said, you know, ‘See, why did you bow down to me?’ He said, ‘Because you have renounced that’s why I bowed down, I saluted you.’ Then the monk said, ‘You see, your renunciation is far far superior then my renunciation. You know, I gave up the world which is worth a penny in hope of getting a billion pounds. Whereas you fellow, you gave up God who is worth a billion pounds in hope of getting this worldly joy which is only one penny worth. Whose sacrifice is greater?’

Anyway fun aside, but the fact is that householders, they have to work very very hard. In fact they have to work harder than even monks in many ways. But the only difference is the aim, the goal is not a noble goal. That’s why they suffer a lot. Whereas a monk’s life, many times it’s far easier. In some ways it is far easier.

Anyway, the point I am trying to make is that whether we are monks or householders it doesn’t matter. **If we love something, then we go to any lengths to spend our time, our energy, even give up our lives, so that we can be happier people.**

So, *Swāmiji* says, The *Bhakta*, “What is wanted of the *Bhakta* is this very kind of intense love which has, however, to be directed to God.”

Then there is another expression of *para-bhakti*, supreme devotion. You know what it is? It is called *Viraha*. In *Vaishnava* literature, this word *Viraha*, *Viraha* means separation from the beloved. This has been given the greatest importance in the devotional literature of *Vaishnavas*, Hindu devotional Scriptures.

“The intense misery due to the absence of the beloved. When a man feels intense misery because he has not attained to God, has not known that which is the only thing worthy to be known, and becomes in consequence very dissatisfied and almost mad — then there is *Viraha*; and the state of the mind makes him feel disturbed in the presence of anything other than the beloved (*Ekarativichikitsā*).” This is the Sanskrit terminology, *Ekarativichikitsā*.

I will give you some examples also. You know *Sri Rāmakrishna*’s mind is absolutely one pointed, in every way, at all times. So it is said when He takes, after His taking bath, bathing, then He would go to visit the temple of the *Divine Mother* in *Dakshineswar*. At that time when He starts from His room, from His room to the temple it is only just a

few yards, few metres. His mind, His eyes are focused on the temple of the *Divine Mother*.

Now the thing is on the way to the *Divine Mother's* temple there are other temples, on one side there is the temple of *Vishnu*; on the other side there are temples of *Shiva*. But His eyes will not stray this side or that side. He will just follow the path which will take him to the temple of *Mother Kālī*. And many times people observed, people would say, 'Sir, there is a lot of crowd there. Let us first finish saluting the Gods here.' He used to get annoyed. Because His mind is not there – here and there. After first going to the *Mother's Temple*, after saluting *Mother*, then He is free, He can go to other temples.

Because He trained his mind in such a way whatever He decides to do there is no way to divert His mind from that. Nobody can divert. That's why He succeeded in spiritual practises, in every type of spiritual practice, so quickly and so easily. Because He was absolutely concentrated, focused. What we call a focused mind.

(35:02 mins)

Now, this *Viraha* has these two characteristics. What is that?

- 1) One – Intense misery. Because the person is separated from his beloved, his or her beloved.
- 2) And intense annoyance in the presence of anything else other than the beloved.

Now, you see, we don't feel like that. Sometimes we become very annoyed in the presence of our beloved. You know we want space. This is the word they use. Sometimes it is alright, I will tolerate you. After that, you know, you have to go your own way. That is why this husband and wife are never advised to work in the same place. And many marriages last longer because the husband comes late from the office and departs early to the office.

There is a lot of psychology involved there. Yeah, what I am saying is absolutely true. Because if by any misfortune the husband retires and starts staying at home the intense misery they feel in each other's presence is indescribable. So enjoy as long as things are going on alright.

So, what is this *Viraha*? There are books and books written on this. You know, in this *Rādhā Krishna* – some *Milana*, *milana* and *viraha* – wonderful songs are there.

There is a book called *Ujjwala Nīlamani*. It is a devotional literature in Bengali language. So, it is here – the 10 symptoms of separation are given in this book.
चिंतात्र जातरोग उद्देगौ तनवम् मलिङ्गता प्रलापो व्याधिः उन्माधो मोहो मृत्युः दशः दशा ।
*chintā atra jātārog udvegao tanavam malingāngta pralāpo vyādhihi unmādhō mōhō
mrityuhu dashaha dashā.*

There are 10 characteristics of lamentation due to separation from the beloved.

- 1) Anxiety.
- 2) Wakefulness.
- 3) Mental agitation.
- 4) Thinness.
- 5) Uncleanliness.
- 6) Talking like a mad man.
- 7) Disease.
- 8) Madness.
- 9) Illusion.
- 10) And even death.

I won't go into the details because many of them go over our heads. But those who have read the life of *Sri Rāmakrishna*, just read the first four months after He started His spiritual practice. Everyday evening when the sun sets, what was He doing? He used to roll on the ground, rubbing His face in the mud, 'O Mother, another day has passed and I have not seen you.' And such intense pain He used to undergo, it is almost like death.

And it is said, not only that, the intense separation, that intense yearning to see His beloved God produced the symptoms of intense burning sensation in His body. We cannot imagine that kind of thing. Intense burning in the body. It is not a mental feeling, it is physical – anybody can witness it, anybody can test it.

Bhairavi Brāhmani, His guru, is unable to hold Him, His body. She used to put blankets, cover *Sri Rāmakrishna*'s body with blankets; then take Him to the *Ganges*. And *Sri Rāmakrishna* said, for several hours at a time, He used to stand immersed in the *Ganges*, putting a wet blanket on His head to get slight relief from this terrible burning sensation. It happened 2/3 times in His life. I think 3 times at least – in His life.

And then *Bhairavi Brāhmani* understood. *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu*, because there are instances of such similar states, which previous great incarnations had gone through. So, she was an expert in *Vaishnava* literature, devotional literature, so she found-out a method.

What she did was, she put sandal paste all over His body, and brought various types of garlands, and put on His body. And then she told Him that you stay in the room decorated with various flowers and other things. And slowly that intense burning sensation has come to an end.

This is, we only read as a story, as an incident in the life of *Sri Rāmakrishna*. But we cannot imagine what type of mental state is capable of producing such intense

burning, that even outside people, they could not hold His body. Even *Hriday*, His nephew could not hold His body, could not touch the body. It was like touching a hot metal. It is beyond our capacity to imagine what *Sri Rāmakrishna* had gone through.
(40:20 mins)

But the point is when a person attains supreme devotion then if... There are stages. It is also a kind of spiritual drama that we think that when a person attains supreme devotion then all his troubles are over. Yes, troubles are over, but the drama is not over. Because it's a drama. Sometimes he is united with the Lord. Sometimes he is separated with the Lord. This separation is not due to lack of devotion, it is part of the *Līlā*, supreme devotion.

Like *Rādhā* and *Krishna*, they are always in one point of view, mystical point of view, they are always united. But from a human point of view, sometimes they are united, sometimes they are separated.

When they are separated these are the symptoms that are manifest there.

- This *Viraha* or intense misery because one has not attained God, because one is separated from God.
- An intense annoyance in the presence of other people is one of the sure signs of one attaining spiritual devotion.

In fact, we can say – how do we measure we are progressing in spiritual life? It doesn't matter which deity you meditate upon. Which deity, which form of God you are praying to.

Most of the time you know we pray to God – we prey on God. Sometimes we pray to God, sometimes we prey on God – PREY! You know, 'If you don't give me this, if you don't give me that, If you don't do this – Khabardar!'

So whatever form you do, it doesn't matter.

How do we know that we are progressing in spiritual life?

Are you feeling terrible because you are separated from your beloved? *Nārada*, one of the greatest devotees, Supreme devotees of God, He says, you know, '**Even one moment of forgetfulness of God brings such intense pain in the mind.**' That's one of the signs of progress in spiritual life.

But many times we seem to be very happy in forgetting God, and very miserable when we are forced to think about God. It's a painful duty that we have, somehow or the other you get over, you know. How much time do people waste chit-chatting with friends and others? But if somebody is told, 'You go to the shrine room, you bow down'. He says, you know, 'How many minutes?' 'In two minutes *Ārti* is over, and come back.'

But it will come. You know if we are sincere and go on sincerely striving, slowly what we call detachment from the things of the world, and intense attachment to God – both will come.

But again I have to warn you here. Sometimes emotional anxiety is taken for granted as love. You know, suppose we don't meet somebody, we are separated for a long time, how we feel anxious. This is an emotional response. And that is not true love at all. Emotion can be there, but first there must be *the one*.

Sri Rāmakrishna used to say, 'What is the value of zero?' You add one after another zero, zero, zero, what is the value of it? You put one before the zero, then you see every zero increases, multiplies, the value of ten, hundred, thousand, like that. What is that one? That is God. Not God, it's true knowledge about God. Knowledge is what we are talking about here.

What are the zeros? Emotion. You can have Joy, you can have intense misery, You can dance in the name of God, or you can roll down with tears in the name of God. These are all emotional expressions – zeros.

But one thing is there, have you noticed? Suppose you are weeping for God, it's another form of joy! If you are weeping for something which you don't like then it is something different. But if you are weeping, even though it is weeping, there is a tremendous joy in weeping for God. There is a tremendous satisfaction there, have you noticed that?

(45:05 mins)

Someday very sincerely you really feel, 'O lord, I am not worthy of you, I don't think of you, I know I should think of you.' And you realise your condition and tears come to your eyes. That gives you the greatest satisfaction later on. So that is one thing different.

But some days you come to the celebrations where nice songs are being sung, and tears come to your eyes. Tears can come to your eyes in many ways you know. If there is fog, tears can come. If there is some, you know, somebody is preparing hot Indian curry and the smell comes into the shrine room also, then that also can bring tears to the eyes. And some people, they are experts in producing tears – occasion or no occasion tears will come to their eyes. These are all nothing! These are all rather dangerous things.

What is important is that if a person is really progressing in spiritual life there is a constant pain. But the opposite is also true. **If a person is really wanting God then his desire for other things proportionately becomes less and less and less.** That is a sure

sign. Otherwise, Okay sometimes I really long for God, and after that I really long for worldly things also. That is no good at all.

“Exactly the same state of impatience in regard to things that are not loved comes to the mind when supreme devotion holds sway over it; even to talk about things other than God becomes distasteful then. “Think of Him, think of Him alone, and give up all other vain words”. This is a beautiful *Upanishadic* statement. *Swāmi Vivekānanda* quotes it. “अन्य वाचो विमुंचथ” (*anya vācho vimunchatha*) Give up all other types of vain talk.

But talk doesn't mean only what comes out of the mouth. You see, somebody is not talking at all, but inside furiously the mind is working, all sorts of things. Is he talking, or is he not talking? He is talking to himself. It is even more dangerous.

If a person is really loving God then he cannot bear the talk about anything else. *Sri Rāmakrishna's* life, many times it has been demonstrated. One instance I will tell you. You know, *Sri Rāmakrishna* was taken to *Vārānasi*, a place of pilgrimage, by *Māthur Bābu*. And because he was a rich person he arranged a beautiful place. And because he was a rich man he had friends. And when two rich men come together, what do you think they will be talking about? All Worldly things.

And here, *Sri Rāmakrishna*, He was like a bird in a cage, because He can't go anywhere. If He were in *Dakshineswar* He could simply say 'I am going to *Jhautala*', that means I am going to toilet. It's a big toilet. Here where will He go? So He was forced to listen to all those fellows chattering chattering. Then He prayed, 'O Mother, at *Dakshineswar* I was very well. If somebody is talking about worldly things I could go away. Here where will I go? Why did you bring me to this place?'

You know, *Sri Rāmakrishna* had a high regard for *Vārānasi*. He had wonderful visions. But He found He had a misconception about people of *Vārānasi*. He thought everybody in *Vārānasi* will be a great *yogi* sitting under a tree.

You go to *Vārānasi*... Have you gone to *Vārānasi*? What do you see? All the shopkeeping, shops, you know, before going to Temple. It's like our airport here. Before entering the airplane you are taken through so many shops. If you escape one shop, you will be forced to buy something from the other shop, you know? Hundreds and thousands of shops. Shops, cows, it's a wonderful place.

So, *Sri Rāmakrishna* was disillusioned. But of course there are two aspects to holy places. There is an external aspect which, however, may appear to be very bad for critical people. But there is an internal real spiritual aspect. He had a vision of a golden *Vārānasi*.

In *Vedantā* Gold is a manifestation of a particular type of higher stage of mind called *Sattva*. It's a spiritual *Vārānasi*! Full of holiness. But only those who have the appropriate pure mind, they can access it.
(50:06 mins)

So, *Swāmi Brahmānanda*, many times He could not tolerate people talking. Not only talking, even thinking. Because for us blissfully we don't know what each of us are thinking. But for these great souls we are like open glass-cases – our minds can be seen by them.

That is why *Sri Rāmakrishna*, many times, He couldn't tolerate the very presence of people. They were not talking anything. In fact they are appearing like very devoted people, humble with folded hands, and all that. But *Sri Rāmakrishna* could see what is inside them. Very gently He used to say, 'There are beautiful buildings outside, go and see them.' Very polite way of saying, get the hell out of here. Because He is living in that state of vibration where He could not tolerate the other type of vibration.

Was He weak? No! Because He had to protect Himself, so that His energy could be distributed well to other deserving people. It's difficult for people to... He was such a great soul. Suppose a worldly person comes what harm could he do to Him?

Like, you know, a bull or a bullock, you know, a mosquito came and sat on one of the cracks of the horns of a bull. It lived there for some days and after that he shifted his, he wanted to shift his residence. So, it went, 'Mr Bull, I'm so sorry I have given you so much trouble. I hope you don't mind.' The bull said, 'When did you come here?' You know, the bull is so strong, do you think if a mosquito sits there it will even notice?

People like *Sri Rāmakrishna*, if worldly people come to them, do you think they are not strong enough to put up?

The point is, even incarnations' energy, power is limited. However, it is so great in comparison to us. But it cannot be wasted. It is like a leaky tap. You know, however much water is there if there is a leak so much water will go waste. It would have been used for better purposes. That is the idea.

So, this is called *Viraha*.

Then there is the fourth characteristic. It is called तदर्थप्राणसंस्थानं
(*Tadarthprāṇasamsthānam*).

“Life is sweet because it thinks of the Beloved. *Tadiyatā* (*His-ness*) comes when a man becomes perfect according to *Bhakti* – when he has become blessed, when he has attained God, when he has touched the feet of God, as it were. Then his whole nature is purified and completely changed.”

You know, what is the idea that comes? **What is the characteristic of this supreme devotion? God belongs to me! I belong to God!**

Like a baby. It doesn't need to say a hundred times, 'I am the baby of you. You know mother? I hope you have not forgotten that I am your baby?' No! The baby knows and the mother also knows. That *tadiyatā*.

I belong to Him. He belongs to me. This idea can never be forgotten by a supreme devotee. But what happens in our case? Striving to attain devotion sometimes we do remember, even that is not intense. Why, you know?

Suppose there is a baby, do you think the baby is worried, that where-from it is going to get its next breakfast, food? Where it is going to sleep? When it is going to sleep? Who is going to look after it when it is asleep? Have you seen any baby getting worried about it? It doesn't worry because it knows my mother is here. But separate it from the mother instantaneously tremendous anxiety comes, have you noticed?

A devotee who has attained this state of supreme devotion, it becomes so natural for him to think I belong to God; God belongs to me. He need not go on reminding himself that I belong to You, You belong to me. You know, noticeboard - I belong to You. You belong to me. No! It is so natural. When a devotee attains that state is there any room for worry, for anxiety, do you think? **If any devotee is getting worried it's a sure sign that he doesn't really trust in God.**

So that's why you know, many devotees come, I jokingly ask them, 'Do you believe in God?' They say, 'Yes!' 'Do you pay insurance policy?' Really they don't go together. Yes!

Sri Rāmakrishna, He refused to put His signature for taking His salary. He said, 'It doesn't belong to me. My mother is there. I am not going to put a signature.' Suppose they don't give him? 'Let them not give me, I don't care. My mother is there. She will look after me after me.' That's of course a supreme ideal.

But even we pay an insurance policy, you know? That is because this is a public institute. There are certain things we have to do, which you also have to do. If you don't pay car insurance, your car is not allowed to travel. Certain things!

But certain things which are our own choice. Because we don't have that much of trust yet in God. We will attain to it one day or the other. We will realise one day that really speaking there is nobody, no power which can save us excepting God. When we understand that then we come to this feeling – God belongs to me; I belong to God.

ॐ शान्ति शान्ति शान्ति: ॥
Om Shānti Shānti Shāntihi ॥
(56:11 mins)