

9. From Annam To Ananda

In the study of the scriptures we come across the terms *Sama* and *Dama*. *Sama* is generally regarded as meaning control of the inner senses and *Dama* as referring to control of the external senses. This is not correct. *Sama* means control of both the inner and outer sense organs.

Among these sense organs, three are most important: the eyes, the ears and the tongue. Each of them tries to follow the other. When the eye sees something, the ear tries to listen to what is happening. Immediately thereafter the eye seeks to explore something new on the basis of what the ear has heard.

These sense organs, however, do not function by themselves. They are called *Upakaranas*, that is, subsidiary instruments. For all of them, the mind is the base. It is the mind that creates within itself its conception of the Universe. It gives form to the perceptions got from the senses.

The mind is the basis for the actions of the eye, the ear and the tongue. In the waking state, the eye sees, the ear hears and the tongue speaks. In the dream state, the eyes, the ears and the tongue are inoperative. In the dream state, the mind alone sees, hears and does the talking. The mind does all the functions of the senses. It is the inner operator of all the sense organs.

Without control of the mind, man cannot have peace even for a moment. One who wishes to lead a happy and peaceful life, must exercise control over his senses. Man today has lost peace of mind because he has no control over his senses.

The senses and the elements

There are five kinds of senses in man: Hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell. These five senses are based on the five elements: *Akasa* (ether), *Vayu* (air), *Agni* (fire), *Aapa* (water), and *Prithvi* (earth).

The earth is the grossest of the elements; water is subtler and more pervasive than earth. Fire is subtler and more pervasive than water. Air is even more subtle than fire and is extremely pervasive. Ether is the subtlest and pervades everything. In this ascending order of subtlety, each element exhibits a wider pervasiveness than the preceding element. With increasing subtlety, pervasiveness also expands. In the reverse process, when subtlety diminishes, the density increases and the pervasiveness contracts. Thus air is less subtle and grosser than ether. Fire is grosser and less pervasive than air. Earth is the grossest and least pervasive.

***Akasa* is the basis of all the other elements**

It may be seen from this that ether is the basis of all the other elements. *Akasa* (ether or space) is the basis from which the other elements have emerged. *Akasa* may be compared to an infinite pot. All the other four elements are evolved from it. From the *Gatha* (movement) of ether, air came into existence. Out of air, fire emerged in course of time. Without air, there could be no fire. Out of the heat generated by fire, water was formed. For instance, in the human body, after a bout of fever, there is sweating. When we move in the hot sun, we perspire. This shows how water results from heat. From water all multifarious forms in Nature are evolved.

The relationship between grossness and pervasiveness can be illustrated by an example. Suppose, for instance, a jasmine flower is placed on a table in a room. The flower, which is gross, is small in size. But its fragrance, which is subtle, pervades the whole room. Likewise, steam which is

generated from water, occupies a much larger space than the volume of water from which it is produced.

The mind of man, because of its extreme subtlety, is capable of immense expansion. But because of the senses, the mind has attraction for a variety of objects and persons. When these objects fill the mind, its expansiveness gets reduced. It is only when the attraction from these objects is reduced that the mind can achieve expansion.

If today man is filled with worries and has no peace of mind, it is because his mind is filled with innumerable desires. The world cannot be blamed for man's mental state. Nor can *samsara* (family life) be held responsible for man's bondage. You bind yourself to Nature and the family, by your attachments and desires. To withdraw yourselves from these attachments and to reduce your subjection to the external world, you have to practice control over your eyes, ears and tongue.

Three qualities of each sheath

In this context you have to consider three factors: the gross, the subtle and the causal. Taking the examples of the tamarind fruit, you find that it has the outer rind, the fruit inside it and the seed within the fruit. All these are associated with one another. Our body is like the outer rind of the tamarind fruit. Our mind can be compared to the fruit within. Our causal body is comparable to the seed in the fruit. The human entity is the combination of these three. And in this entity, there are five *Kosas* (sheaths)--the *Annamaya* (the food sheath), the *Pranamaya* (the vital air sheath), the *Manomaya* (the mental), *Vijnanamaya* (the intelligence) and the *Anandamaya* (the Blissful) *Kosas*.

The *Annamaya Kosa* has three qualities: hunger, thirst and sleep. The *Pranamaya Kosa* (the vital sheath) has also three qualities: inhaling, exhaling and motion. The *Manomaya Kosa* has these three qualities: *Sankalpa* (thought), *Vikalpa* (absence of thought) and *Manana* (introspection). *Vijnanamaya Kosa* has three qualities: *Medha Shakthi* (intelligence), *Viveka Shakthi* (power of discrimination) and *Vijnana Shakthi* (wisdom). The three qualities of *Anandamaya Kosa* are *Priyam* (fondness), *Modam* (delight) and the *Pramodam* (Supreme delight or ecstasy). Everyone aspires to have these three experiences. When a person sees something and has liking for it, the feeling is *Priyananda*. When he enjoys an object or an idea or the company of a person dear to him, that experience is called *Modam*. The experience one has when he identifies himself with an idea of a person or an object that he likes is called *Pramodam*. For example, one learns that mangoes have come into the market. He derives a pleasure immediately on seeing the mangoes. This is *Priyam*. He then buys the mango and takes it home. The joy he derives from possessing the mango is *Modam*. Then he eats the fruit with relish. The joy derived from this is *Pramodam*.

The Devotee's delight in experiencing Divinity

The devotee, yearning constantly for a vision of the Lord, derives a similar kind of delight, which has been described as "*Nithyanandam Parama Sukhadam*," (Ever-blissful and conferring Supreme happiness). Or he may wish to see the physical form of someone who is eminently estimable and dear to him. The moment he sees such a person he experiences delight. This is *Priyam*. He goes near the person and delights in the nearness to him. This is described as *Modam*. When they experience joy together, it is called *Pramodam*.

There are three levels in the experiencing of this *Ananda* (joy). Many kinds of spiritual practices are resorted to for realising God. During these exercises, one day God appears in a dream. The devotee rejoices in it. When the Lord seen in the dream appears before him, the devotee derives even greater delight. When he is able to move and sport with the Lord, he becomes ecstatic. That is described as *Brahmanandam* or *Yogananandam* or *Advaitanandam* (the bliss of oneself with the Divine). It is also called *Paramanandam* (Supreme Bliss). Of all forms of delight, the bliss that is experienced in oneness with the Divine is unexcelled.

Develop a keen sense of discrimination

To achieve this state of bliss a start has to be made with the control of the senses. The senses have to be directed along right lines. The mind is the basis for all these sense organs. Without mental consciousness, the sense organs will not be able to function at all. From time to time the senses are likely to go astray. If a brass vessel is struck with a stick, it will send out vibrations. Likewise, when someone criticises you, your mind waves will get excited by the sound waves reaching a certain nerve centre in the brain. Immediately an angry reaction occurs. The stage is set for a quarrel. Then there is no control over the mind. On the other hand, someone else may come and praise you. You forget yourself and get immersed in joy. The sense of discrimination may be lost through excessive elation or through deep distress. When the discriminating power is weak, the mind is prone to pursue wrong courses.

You have, therefore to find out the true role of the mind. Below the mind is the vital principle. Above the mind is the *Buddhi* (Intelligence). *Buddhi* is associated with the *Agni* (fire) principle. *Prana* (the vital force) is also associated with the fire principle. The mind is situated between these two. "*Chandramaa Manaso Jaatah*" says the *Veda* (The moon is the presiding deity of the mind). The moon is considered a watery planet. Caught between the two "fires" above and below it, the mind is unstable.

The *Atma* and the senses

You must understand how the mind functions. It is the underlying current in all sense organs. Supposing you are asleep and are experiencing a dream. You see in the dream your parents and friends. Was it your eyes that saw them in your dream? No. In the dream state the eyes are closed. In the dream state you are talking to your parents and friends. But compared to the waking state, the mouth is silent in the dream state. You feel in the dream you are listening to what your parents and friends are saying, but it is not your ears that are hearing. All that you see, hear or say in the dream are all the processes of the mind alone. Hence it is obvious that sense organs are only subsidiary organs and not self-acting instruments.

However, beyond the senses, the mind and the *Buddhi* (Intellect) there is the *Atma* (the Indwelling Spirit). Each sense organ has only one function to perform and cannot perform any other function. The eye can only see but cannot hear. The ear can only hear but cannot see. The tongue can only speak but cannot hear. Each sense organ is confined to its specific function. But the *Atma* comprehends and transcends all of them. It can see, listen, speak and think, hence, it is said: "*Buddhi graahyam atheendriyam*" (*The Atma transcends all senses*).

Egoism cannot be cured by medicine

The sense organs are subject to various kinds of afflictions. With such disabilities, they cannot serve as reliable indicators of truth. Take, for instance the tongue. When a man is hungry the

laddu (made from sugar) tastes sweet to the tongue. But the same laddu tastes bitter to the tongue when a person suffers from Malaria. Thus, when there is disease, the tongue fails to serve as a truthful organ of taste. Consider the case of the eyes.

When one is healthy, the eye sees every colour in its true form as red, green or yellow. But when a man suffers from jaundice, the eye sees everything as yellow. Here, again the eye fails to serve as a reliable indicator of truth when it is subject to disease. All the organs in the body are prone to disease of one sort or another. But, of all the ills to which man is prone, there is one which cannot be cured by medicine, that is, *Ahamkara* (egoism). This ego aggravates the tendency of the senses to lead man astray.

In this context, there are seven factors which have to be considered: (1) *Deha* (the body); (2) *Karma* (action); (3) *Raga* (attachment); (4) *Dweshha* (hatred); (5) *Ahamkara* (egoism); (6) *Aviveka* (lack of discrimination) and (7) *Ajnana* (ignorance). These seven influence the human condition. Ignorance undermines the power of discrimination. Without discrimination *Ahamkara* (self-conceit) develops. *Ahamkara* breeds the twins: attachment and hatred. Attachment and hatred lead to the experience of *kartha* (the consequences of one's actions). *Raga* and *Dweshha* generate actions of various kinds. These actions, in their turn, are the cause of birth in a *deha* (body).

It follows that the root cause of *Janma* (human birth) is *Karma* (action). When your actions are good, you obtain a good birth. Your birth is the result of your actions. The nature of one's birth determines one's attachments and aversions. The attachments of a good person (by birth) are to God and the godly way of life. He yearns for God, adores God and worships God.

Six forms of devotion

Such a person develops one or the other of six forms of devotion such as *Saantham* (tranquillity), *Sakhyam* (friendship), *Daasyam* (service), *Vaatsalyam* (maternal love), *Anuraagam* (loving feeling) and *Madhuram* (ecstatic devotion). Bhishma, Arjuna, Hanuman, the Gopikas, Yasoda and Radha are examples of the different forms of *Bhakti*.

Bhishma manifested devotion in the *Saantha* form. Lying on a bed of arrows for 56 days, awaiting the advent of the auspicious moment for giving up the body, Bhishma devoted his thoughts to God with a serene sweetness and calm mind.

Arjuna is the exemplar of *Sakhya Bhakti*. All his life he was devoted to Krishna, enjoying the relationship as brother-in-law, but always adoring Krishna as his divine mentor. Arjuna's devotion was based on kinship. Krishna, for the same reason, protected Arjuna as a kinsman.

Hanuman's devotion to Rama exemplifies *Daasya Bhakti* (service as a form of devotion). Hanuman's only thought was to serve Rama always, be near to him and wait for his commands. Once Rama called Hanuman and asked him: "Hanuman! How do you love me?" Hanuman replied: "In terms of the physical, I look upon you as my Lord and regard myself as your servant. In terms of the mind, you are the object and I am only your image. Spiritually, You are I and I am You. I am experiencing you in these ways. As long as I have the body consciousness, you are the Lord and I am your servant." This is the attitude that prevails in *Daasya Bhakti*.

Anuraaga Bhakti (loving devotion) is exemplified by the Gopikas. Whatever work they might be doing, their thoughts were centred on Krishna and they were always yearning for Him. When work is done in this way, it is transformed into worship. Every action is dedicated to the Divine and is performed as an offering to the Divine. With this attitude, the Gopikas were prepared for

any kind of trials and tribulations from husbands and mothers-in-law. They worshipped Krishna without any feeling of rancour and bitterness against those who treated them harshly. Krishna was firmly implanted in their hearts. This is known as *Anuraaga Bhakti*--the form of devotion in which the devotee is inseparably bound to the Lord in his heart.

Yasoda exemplified *Vaatsalya Bhakti*--loving the Lord as a mother loves a child. Despite the numerous miracles performed by Krishna and in spite of witnessing manifestations of his divinity in various ways, Yasoda regarded Krishna as her son and loved Him with maternal feelings. Even when Krishna showed to her all the fourteen worlds in His open mouth, Yasoda imagined that it was only her own imagination and Krishna was just a child. Even when Krishna was performing wonders in Mathura, Yasoda was worried about Him as any mother would and made anxious enquiries about her Gopala, when Uddhava came to Repalle.

In worshipping Krishna, devotees have their own individual partiality for certain names. Meerabai always hailed Him as "Giridhara Gopala." Sakkubai always called Him "Ranga! Ranga!" Yasoda was attached to the name "Gopala."

Radha is an example of *Madhura Bhakti*. Radha completely identified herself with Krishna. Her devotion to Krishna was on an inseparable relationship. The Radha-Krishna relationship is that of *Prakruthi* and *Paramatma* (of Nature and God).

Control of eyes and the tongue

In the journey to the Divine, man has to reduce progressively his desires, which are the cause of all his difficulties. It is true that man cannot exist without desires. But, they should be within masonable limits. There can be no happiness without control of desires. Among the senses, two are most important: the eyes and the tongue. Because of their exceptional importance, the Lord has provided them with the means of restraining their activities. The Lord points out: "You silly man! Take note that I have provided natural means for closing the eyes and the mouth." If you do not want to see anything undesirable, you can close your eyes with the eyelids. The ears and the nose have no such devices for closing them. The mouth has lips which can seal the tongue. Observe, therefore, restraint in speech and control the tongue. Control your eyes. When you control your eyes and tongue, you can easily control all other senses.

When the eyes roam freely, the tongue begins to wag without restraint. When the tongue is engaged in endless talking, the eyes want to look at every conceivable thing. When both these organs combine without restraint, life can become a calamity. Therefore, direct your eyes on good things alone.

Students should realise that only when they have control over what they see, what they hear and what they speak will they be able to live happy and meaningful lives. Observe moderation and sweetness in speech. Do not engage in purposeless and evil talk or in scandalous gossip.

The triple purity that pleases the Lord

There are three things which are immensely pleasing to the Lord: A tongue that never indulges in falsehood. A body that is not minted by causing harm to others. And a mind that is free from attachment and hatred. These three constitute the *Thrikarana Suddhi* (Triple Purity). Refrain from uttering falsehood, inflicting pain on others and entertaining ill-will towards others. Practise silence as a means of preventing the tongue from straying away from truth. The ancient sages practised and preached silence for this purpose.

In the use of sense organs, there must be due regard for moderation and purity. This applies to food as well as to other things which you may take in.

Bliss is experienced in the desireless state

It is the mind that has to exercise control over the senses, which cannot function by themselves. The mind is present in three states of consciousness----the waking, the dreaming and the deep sleep states. But it is absent in the *Karana* (causal) state in which there is only experience of the Divine. This is the state of total desirelessness. It is only when desires cease that the mind stops functioning. Real bliss is experienced in that state.

As long as the mind is active, there can be no escape from sorrow. To the extent the mind is under control, you can experience happiness. One way to reduce desires is to get absorbed in activity. Idleness encourages the mind to indulge in all kinds of thoughts. If you are intensely engaged in reading, singing, playing or any other activity, the mind will have no chance to wander hither and thither.

Discourse at Trayee Brindavan, 13 Mar 1988

Detachment alone can give happiness. Thyaga is the real Yoga. Three evil qualities have to be renounced before man can rise to his real role. Anger which smothers Jnana (wisdom), lust which pollutes Karma (deed) and greed which destroys one's love for God and man. The touchstone which pronounces an act as meritorious is "renunciation." If an act is self-directed, if it helps to inflate the ego, it's a sin.

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