

## 9. The Head and The Heart

*If the thoughts in the mind are good*

*The sequel will be equally beneficial*

*If the thoughts in the mind are impure*

*The resulting actions will be likewise.*

*Yad Bhaavam Thadbhavathi* (As one feels, that he becomes). As are the thoughts, so are the results. As is the seed, so is the plant. As is the flour, so is the bread.

In the human body, there are two important organs. One is the heart and the other is the head. All the actions in the world, all their consequences, originate in the head. The Vedas have declared that all things that originate in the head relate to the *Pravritthi Marga* (the External Path) and those that arise from the heart relate to the *Nivritthi Marga* (the Inward Path). All that you think, all that you do, all your achievements, gains and losses, are all related to the head (to thoughts). All that comes out of the head relates to *Prakruthi* (the phenomenal world), grows from it and ultimately merges in it. Hence, all thoughts are associated with the *Prakruthi* (external world). But, feelings like peace, kindness, compassion, forbearance and love emanate from the heart. These transcend *Prakruthi* (external phenomena). Consequently, what should be cherished in the heart should be pure and sacred, and nothing that is sullied.

The human heart that should be like *ksheera* (milk) in its purity is today unfortunately polluted and *kshara* (saline) like sea water. The Lord resides wherever there is purity of the milky ocean. It is for this reason that the Lord was described by the devotees as *Ksheerasaagara Sayana* (the One who reclines on the Ocean of Milk).

### **Lord dwells only in pure Sathwik heart**

*Ksheera* or milk represents that which is *Sathwik*, pure and sacred. The heart should be pure and untainted like milk. It is only in such a pure *Sathwik* heart that the Lord will choose to dwell.

Alas! Man's heart today, instead of being a *Ksheerasaagara* (ocean of milk), is *Kshaarasaagara* (filled with brine). In the Ocean of Milk, dreadful aquatic creatures like whales and crocodiles will not flourish. These creatures can only survive and grow in an ocean of brine. In the saltish ocean (of the heart) what are the creatures that flourish? They are bad qualities like lust, hatred, greed, envy and pride. If man is filled today with all these bad qualities, what does it signify? It shows that man's heart is bereft of the milk (of good qualities). If it had been pure as milk, there would have been no place for any qualities other than the godly virtues.

### **Fill your heads with sacred thoughts**

Today there seems to be no limit to man's desires. The entire human life is spent in the pursuit of these desires. Every moment is filled with insatiable wants. Man's head is filled with these desires. If only the head is filled with sacred thoughts, it will get sanctified.

How is this change to be effected? Food is an important factor. When pure, sacred and wholesome food is taken in moderation, that food itself will transform the head. The head will be turned towards God. Thus, Food, Head and God are the three whose unity will divinise man.

Even *Sathwik* food (food, which is conducive to the promotion of good qualities) should be consumed in moderation. If there is no purity, wholesomeness and moderation in the food, the man turns *Thamasik* (evil minded). In due course, this leads to the development of *Rajasik* qualities (anger, etc).

What, then, is the proper food for man? Man possesses five organs of perception: the mouth, the ears, the eyes, the nose and the skin. What is regarded as *Sathwik* food is taken through the mouth. But what kind of food are the other senses consuming? The eyes are "consuming" *Rajasik* food (seeing ugly and undesirable things). Looking here and there like crows, the eyes are taking in impure "food" of all kinds. The eyes thus do not receive proper food. See no evil, see what is good.

Now, what is it that the ears hear? They are listening all the time to scandal, idle gossip, bad stories about others. They do not listen to the name of God or anything that is sacred and good. Why should anyone listen to such gossip? He should be concerned only about his affairs. Transforming himself, he should share his good thoughts with others. It is totally wrong to interest oneself in bad things about others. Hear no evil; hear what is good.

### **Multiple role of the tongue**

Now we come to speech. The tongue is a very powerful organ. The eyes can only see. The ears can only hear. But the tongue has a double function: speech and taste. Hence, the tongue has to be kept under rigorous control. Only then the food that is consumed through the mouth will be pure and sacred.

The tongue is prone to indulge in several undesirable activities: talking ill of others, talking excessively, idle gossip and the like. Of the four kinds of misbehaviour by the tongue, the first is excessive talking with others. Talking endlessly with all kinds of persons is an evil. The second evil tendency is abusing others. The third evil is making fun of others. The fourth is indulging in falsehood. By indulging in these four forms of abuse of the tongue, man's life is rendered unholy.

Recognising the greatness of the tongue, Saint Jayadeva declared: "Oh tongue! You know what is sweet and relish what delights the heart. You must utter what is true and beneficial. Therefore, rejoice in uttering the names of the Lord and in nothing else." The tongue is the cause of greatness in a man or his downfall. There must be harmony between speech and action. If your actions do not correspond to your words, your life will be mined. Therefore the tongue should be "fed" properly. It should be "fed" with good thoughts, good words and good actions so that it may behave properly.

### **The importance of sense of touch**

Then, there is the *sparsa* (sense of touch). Avoid touching others. The meaning of this rule will not be apparent on the surface. But it is highly significant from a deeper sense. The ancient sages used to seek secluded spots and engage themselves in meditation. The reason is there is a divine energy within the body, a kind of current flowing in it. This divine energy is in everyone.

When a house is electrified, an earth wire is also fixed to protect people from electric shocks. When a person is meditating, a divine energy is generated in him. The earth also has an energy (gravitational energy) which attracts objects towards itself. That is the reason why when a person sits in meditation, he uses a wooden plank one inch above the ground, spreads a deer-skin on it and covers it with a cloth. The cloth serves as a cushion protecting the meditator from any pricks

from the deerskin. This kind of meditation is called *Sukhadhyana* (meditation in comfort). The wooden plank acts as an insulator, preventing the energy from passing down.

It should be recognised that there is a divine energy in the human body. When this divine energy comes into contact with the body of another person, it is likely to receive the bad thoughts in the latter. If the other person is a good man, you may receive good thoughts from the contact. But you cannot decide who is good and who is bad. Hence, if you sit apart during meditation, you may experience highly elevating thoughts. Some persons say: "Swami! I do not entertain any bad thoughts in my mind. But somehow bad thoughts infiltrate into the mind. How does this happen?" The reason is: Other people's bad thoughts enter your mind. It is by close association with bad persons that bad ideas enter the head.

### **Significance of *Paadanamaskar***

The idea behind bowing one's head at the feet of Bhagavan is that thereby sacred thoughts enter the devotee's mind. This means that when one comes in contact with Bhagavan's feet, the sacred impulses from them flow to the devotee. When the devotee's head touches the Lord's feet, the Lord's divine energy flows towards him. This implies that you should keep contact with only pure objects and keep away from impure objects.

You are affected by whatever you touch. For instance, if you touch fire, it scalds. Fire can burn even iron. It is so potent. But when the fire is extinguished, the residue is mere charcoal. When you touch charcoal, your hand becomes black. Thus, in either case, the contact is not beneficial.

But, what happens when you come into contact with divine fire? All your bad thoughts and bad actions are reduced to ashes. This is the sanctity attaching to the performance of *Paadanamaskar* (prostrating at the Feet of the Lord). When you associate with anyone, you are affected by the qualities of the other person. That is why, it has been said: "Through association with the good, develop detachment and solitude. Through seclusion, steady the mind. Through steadiness of the mind, get rid of all delusions. Freedom from delusions is Liberation." (Bhagavan recited the relevant stanza from Bhaja Govindam).

### **Choose to become dear and near to God**

Good company is thus most essential. Take for instance, a piece of charcoal. If it is to bum, it has to be brought close to a piece of burning charcoal. It will bum better if a fan is turned towards both. This is the result of being both "near and dear" (to the source of fire). This applies to devotees as well. There are many who are "near" to Bhagavan. But they are like frogs in a lotus pond. The frogs are near to the lotus, but do not taste its honey. But bees come from remote distances to taste the honey in the lotus. If the frogs were aware of the sweetness of the honey, they would not have let the bees come near. It is, therefore not enough if you are near. You have also to become dear to the Lord.

You must be both near and dear. If you love the Lord, but are far from Him, you suffer the pangs of separation like a mother who is worried when she has no news from her son who is abroad. Thus both love and nearness are necessary. This is the value of having *darshan* of the Lord.

Vedanta has declared: "*Dharshanam paapa naashanam*" (Sight of the Lord destroys all sins). "*Sambhashanam Sankata naashanam*" (Conversing with the Lord destroys all grief). "*Sparshanam Karma vimochanam*" (The touch of the Divine liberates one from all *karmic*

bonds). What you should seek is *Karma vimochanam* (freedom from the bondage of one's actions).

*"Sambhashanam Sankatanaasanam."* You can recognise the truth of this declaration from your own experience. Some may have doubts whether the touch of the Lord will destroy all their *karmic* bonds or whether the *darshan* of the Lord will destroy all sins. But there can be no doubts regarding the effect of *Sambhashanam*.

When you are conversing with Swami you forget all your sorrows. You forget even your worries and anxieties. This is direct experiential proof of the truth of this dictum. As long as you are conversing with Swami you are in a blissful state. Whatever your worries, when you are conversing with Swami in the interview room you forget everything. From this, you should infer that the *darshan* of the Lord can destroy all sins, even though you may not know it. Many people don't recognise this fact. For all difficulties and sorrows, the mind is responsible. Most people are not conscious of their own feelings. If one's thoughts are good, they are bound to lead to good results.

### **The results of our past *karma* are born with us**

As you sow, so shall you reap. This is an inescapable fact. If your thoughts are of one kind, how can you expect the results to be different? When you are born, the Creator sends you with a necklace round your neck made up of the results of your good and bad deeds in the previous life reckoned most meticulously.

When anyone accuses you and if you do not respond to it in a like manner, but ignore it, the accusation returns to the accuser like a registered letter which the addressee declines to accept. An incident in the life of Buddha illustrates this truth.

### **How to react when you are accused**

There used to be a village-chief who did not like Buddha's way of life. He used to look upon him as a lazy person who was gathering round him young men and making them lead an idle life. Buddha who was aware of the man's attitude, went to his house one day with his disciples and begged for alms *"Bhavathi! Bhikshaam Dehi"* (Oh blessed one! offer me alms). The headman, who had espied Buddha approaching the house and begging for alms, shouted: "You lazy fellow! You don't deserve any alms. Get out! You have been wasting your time." The headman went on abusing Buddha, calling him all kinds of names. Buddha was amused and was smiling.

After exhausting his abuses, the headman calmed down and asked Buddha, "Sire! I have a doubt. Will you clear it?" Buddha said, "What is your doubt? Speak out." The headman asked how Buddha had remained unaffected by all the abuse he had levelled against the latter. Buddha said, "I came to you begging for food. Supposing you had brought the food and I had refused to take it, what would you have done with the food?" The man replied, "I would have taken it back." Buddha then said, "Now, instead of food, you gave me all your abuse. I refused to receive it. What happens to it? It goes back to you. I have no connection with it." The headman learnt a good lesson.

You should not be concerned with the goodness or badness of others. You have to entertain good thoughts and direct your mind towards God. Bliss is got by experiencing oneness with the Divine.

The Vedantic message of oneness has been perverted by exponents who promoted divisive tendencies. The supreme message of the Vedas is unity as proclaimed in the *manthra*: "*Sahanaa vavathu, Sahanau bhunakthu, Saha veeryam Karavaavahai*" (May we be protected together. May we be nourished together. May we work together with great energy.)

Let us all work together. Only then will there be peace. (Swami recited a Telugu poem conveying the purport of the Sanskrit stanza from the *Shvethaashvathara Upanishad*). What a great message is conveyed by this prayer! The pandits however, are interpreting the message in different ways and causing divisions. *Vedamaatha* (Mother Veda) sought to promote oneness and a universal vision by its all-embracing message. Fill the heart with love and Divine feeling

Man today receives all kinds of knowledge in his head in a distorted form and behaves like a demented being. Whatever he reads, whatever he hears, he fills his mind with all sorts of things about the world. When he wakes up in the morning he starts reading the newspaper to know what is happening in one country or another and stuffs his mind with a lot of junk. Does he fill his heart with any divine feeling? Instead of stuffing the head with a mass of rubbish, he should try to fill his heart with love. Without love in the heart, you are only another newspaper. From the time of waking to the time of going to bed, the day is punctuated by eating breakfast, lunch and dinner. What is the meaning in indulging in this repetitive routine day after day? What is the new thing that you should do? It is contemplation on God. Are you making any effort in this direction?

Science and technology are advancing apace. They are penetrating the depths of space. But is the slightest movement being made to explore the depths of the heart? Man has not moved even half an inch to understand his heart.

### **Scientists do not acquire any experience of life**

It is by exploring the internal that man will discover the truth and not by going far out into space. The entire preoccupation of science is with the study of matter.

What is it you find when you go far out into space? There is nothing there. If you need air, you have to carry it from the earth. Travel in space has thus become a kind of picnic! You carry everything you need from here. There is nothing there. The water you need and the food you require lie at your feet. All the metals, the diamonds or anything else you want are all underneath your feet. Above the head (in space) there is nothing. They spend crores to go out into space. But when they need food, they have to come back to the earth.

A proper understanding of how the senses function is a function of science. Without knowing how to control the senses, what is the use of all other scientific knowledge? Many scientists ultimately qualify themselves for places in the mental hospital. Burying themselves in a dark laboratory and performing experiments all their lives, they expire without acquiring any experience of life.

### **Follow the heart--not the head**

Students! Take care of your heart. Do not follow the head. Take into your head all that is useful. But transmit it to the heart. That will generate real energy. That is *Sath*. That is imperishable energy. What is received in the head comes and goes. The head seeks happiness. But this happiness is temporary. It is satisfaction of needs and desires as they arise from time to time. You are hungry, you take food and you feel happy. But this lasts only for a few hours till you

feel hungry again. This kind of happiness comes and goes. This process relates to the head. But the heart is concerned with securing lasting bliss.

You must understand the difference between the head and the heart. The head is content to carry out temporary obligations. The heart is concerned with what is permanent. Once bliss is secured, all that the head seeks will also be got.

Students! The story of Emperor Bali teaches you that in no circumstance should you go back on your plighted word. Bali was prepared to discard the advice and warning of the guru Sukracharya, in order to fulfil the promise he gave to Vamana, even if it cost him his kingdom or his life.

Truth is the food that sustains speech. Likewise, you should feed your senses with wholesome food by listening to sacred things, seeing what is holy and speaking what is true and good. Consuming wholesome food through the mouth is not enough. Everything that you take in through all your senses should be pure.

### **Dedicate the sweet period of your life to God**

Students! This is the most sacred stage in your life. It is a sweet period. It is a time that should be dedicated to the Divine. Does anyone offer an unripe or overripe fruit to the Divine? Only a ripe fruit, rich with sweet juice, is offered to God. You are neither an unripe fruit nor a spoiled fruit. You are good, ripe fruit. It is such a fruit that should be offered to God. That is the proper kind of sacrifice to be made in one's life.

The *Upanishad* has proclaimed that immortality can be attained only through sacrifice and not through good actions, progeny or wealth. You cannot take with you, when you pass away, even a handful of earth. So, make the best use of your years now by leading a selfless, dedicated life. Thereby you should earn God's grace and share it with others. This is the secret of a meaningful life.

*Kalyana Mandap, Brindavan, 15 Mar 1992*