

12. Self-control and Detachment

All religions teach us only good. We should try to understand this and follow them in practice. Today our programme began with *Bharatha Natya*. We should know that our very life is a *Bharatha Natya*. The world is the platform for the *Bharatha Natya* of our life. Each individual is one of the many actors. *Maya* is the *thala*. *Maya* will prompt this life to dance on the platform of the world. This *Narthaki*, or the actress of *maya*, has got the capacity to attract certain scenes or *dhrisyas*. If *maya* has not exercised her charm and spell on the minds of the people, man would not have come to such a condition. God is inside our heart but *maya* distracts our attention with her play, and we miss the vision of God. To get over the spell cast on us by the actress *maya*, we have to do certain practices and put in some effort. Just as if there are no accompaniments, no dance will have that appeal and beauty, so also when *maya* is the actress, the song we have to sing as an accompaniment to her should be suitable to the actress. If both of them differ and do not match, there will be disharmony and the dance will not be attractive. This *maya* can be given the name *narthaki*, or actress. The word *narthaki* contains three letters, *na rtha ki*. If we read this word in the reverse manner—it becomes *ki rtha na*, so *kirthana* will be able to control this actress or *maya*. We have to ask what kind of *kirthana*? Whose wealth is this *narthaki*? She is the property of God. Because *maya* or *narthaki* is the property of God, the *kirthana* or the song about God will be very pleasant to her. *Bhagawat kirthana* or the song about God will certainly give great pleasure to this *narthaki*.

The hearing of God's name alone is *satkruthi* or good tune, and nothing else is *satkruthi*. So, our sages and seers based their life and activities on *satkruthi* and oriented it toward union with the Supreme soul. The stage thus reached can be called *nivruthi*. In order to reach that stage of *nivruthi*, we have to put in much effort. Water

does not have any necessity for fish. But fish cannot live without water. In the same way, there is no necessity of a disciple for a *guru*. But if a disciple does not have an *acharya* or a preceptor, he will find it very difficult. We are doing all these preparations of providing you with the right type of teachers to make you understand what the *Upanishads* have said, what the epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharatha* have taught, so that you may be able to get to the state of *nivruthi* and also obtain peace and tranquility of mind and heart.

You are having much of *sravana*, hearing or listening to. You have to consider well and try to know what you have heard and how much of it you are going to put into practice. By merely hearing, your heart cannot attain a state of sanctity. You must think and contemplate over it. This is called *manana*, and after *manana* comes *nididhyasa*. Only after *nididhyasa* is completed will you be able to have the fruit and benefit of *sravana* or listening. Today, 99 percent of the people think that they have done their business by hearing, and they do not try to do *manana* and *nididhyasa*.

Sravana or listening can be compared with the cooking that is done in a kitchen. If we bring what is cooked to the dining room and eat it, that can be compared to *manana* or contemplation. After eating, if we try to digest what we have eaten, that can be compared to *nididhyasa*. Only when all these three actions are done will what we eat give strength and nourishment to our body. Nowadays, everything is ready in the kitchen; but we are not able to bring it to the dining room, eat it and digest it. Without these, how can we get the strength that is required? Knowledge of every kind is ever available in the form of *Vedas* and *Puranas*. We are not trying to bring out what is said in those texts to our experience. The sole reason for this is that we do not have a sincere desire for doing so.

We must try to strengthen our mental capacity. The mind has immense potency and there is no other power that is equal to it. The mind itself is the sole cause for everything, either for bondage or for freedom, for happiness as well as for misery, and for so many other

things. A small example to illustrate this is in the story about Prahlada and Hiranyakasipu. Prahlada is the son and Hiranyakasipu is the father. We must try to know the distinction between the father and the son. Because Lord Narayana killed his brother, Hiranyakasipu was very angry with him and he tried to search for Narayana; and when he could not see him anywhere, he told his son that Narayana or God is nowhere in this world. But Prahlada argued with his father and asserted that God Narayana is everywhere. He said, "Do not doubt, God is not only here but He is everywhere. Wherever you search for Him, He will be present there." Then Hiranyakasipu told his son, "Mad boy, I have searched every place, there is no place which I have not searched, I have searched even the ocean, but I could not find Him." But Prahlada had complete faith and confidence in God and he told his father, "It is only a defect of your vision and the malady of your mind if you could not find Him. Search for Him sincerely and with faith, you will be able to find Him." Then the father asked, "Is he present in this pillar?" "Yes, He is there without fail," said the son. Then Hiranyakasipu broke the pillar. Instantaneously, God appeared in the form of "Nara-Hari", half-lion and half-man. God was not found by Hiranyakasipu when he searched for Him everywhere, but He made Himself visible in the pillar when Prahlada told his father that God is everywhere. The reason is this: Hiranyakasipu never believed in his heart that there is God, but Prahlada believed with great faith that God is there and that He is omnipresent. Therefore, according to the idea Hiranyakasipu had, he could not find God; and according to the idea Prahlada had, he could find God everywhere.

If we try to make our mind pure, then we shall be able to discover anything and everything. In our *sadhana*, the first thing we have to do is to deepen and steady our faith. God is all-pervading and He is every-where, and so the *Atma Thathwa* that flows out of our mind will be very near to God. Because God comes out of our heart in the form of speech, we must try to make our speech as pure and as clean as possible. God is also in the form of Truth. So, what-

ever we will be telling through our speech, God will be saying, “Let it be so!”

There is a small story to illustrate this. A traveler was going on his way. After going some distance, he was tired on account of the summer heat. By the side of the path, there was a big tree, and he went there to take rest under the shade of that tree. When he went into that cool shade, he was overjoyed. Then he said to himself, “I am able to find a very cool place; how fortunate will I be if I am able to get a glass of cool water also here?” Instantaneously, a tumbler of water came down. After he drank that water he thought, “Now I have quenched my thirst, but how happy will I be if there is a good bed here because this floor is hard and rough.” At once a big soft bed came down. He then thought, “Even in my house I do not possess such a bed and such a pillow. If my wife comes here and sees, how happy will she feel?” Immediately the wife also came. He saw her and he thought, “Is she my wife or is she a demon? Will she eat me?” No sooner had he said this when she ate him. The tree under the shade of which he sat was *kalpa vriksha*. *Kalpa vriksha* is a tree that fulfils all desires. When the traveler sat under the *kalpa vriksha*, whatever good things he thought of, he got them instantly. But when he thought about bad things, bad things also came to him.

This world is a part of *kalpa vriksha*. We are sitting under the shade of this *kalpa vriksha*. If we think badly, bad happens to us; and if we think in a good manner, good happens to us. So when our thoughts, when our contemplation, and when our deeds are pure, the *kalpa vriksha* of the world will be giving the good things desired by us. Both good and bad come only from our hearts. They never come from outside. That is why, at the outset, we have to make our hearts as pure as possible.

All these sacred stories and texts will be preaching to us an inner meaning. When we read the story of Prahlada, we will be thinking that Prahlada is good and that Hiranyakasipu is an atheist. But we must also think about what happened to them. If we go deep into the story, it will teach us that when we think in a good way, good

things will happen to us; and if we think in a bad way, bad things will happen to us. So in this way for everything, the mind or our *sankalpa*, the desire, is the cause.

In the morning, I told you about Gajendra Moksha and other stories. Who is this Gajendra or the Lord of Elephants? Our story tells us that Gajendra was a king in his previous birth, and he took the form of an elephant on account of a curse pronounced on him by a sage. While he was going with the female elephants in the forest, he saw a lake. He wanted to take water from it; he went into the lake and a crocodile caught his foot. This Gajendra in his previous birth was a great king. King signifies another form of *Atma*. *Atma* is the King and *Paramatma* is the kingmaker. So the individual, who is one with the state of *Atma*, has become an animal on account of the curse given to him by a sage. When a king changed into an elephant, what does it mean? He let go of his *Atma Drishti*, or oneness with the *Atma*, and degraded himself into the form of an animal. *Atma Drishti* is just like the gait of a lion. When the lion is walking, it will be always going straight, but will never try to look back. And *jiva drishti* is just like the gait of a sheep. The sheep will never go straight. It will be afraid, and it will be always going with some fear in its mind. If we go with *Atma Drishti*, we shall be able to go straight and get happiness. But if we fall from the *Atma Drishti* to *jiva drishti*, sometimes we may become like animals. Like the king who became an elephant, we may experience difficulties in life. In daily life, also, if we happen to do a thing that is very bad, the elders remark, "Why did you do this? Are you an animal?" It does not mean that we are real animals. But our behaviour in doing such an action is just like that of an animal. This elephant had forgotten the *Atma Thathwa* and was leading a life of attachment, of falsehood, conceit and arrogance. This elephant is entering the forest of life. When it is wandering in the forest of life, it becomes thirsty. What kind of thirst is it? It is related to the enjoyment of the senses. Immediately, it sees a lake. What is that lake? It is full of worldly desires and that is called the *samsara* or family. He wants to enjoy the

pleasures of that *samsara* and he goes into that lake. He is too much seized with desires, which never let one think over what he is doing. Therefore, he puts both his legs in the lake. At once a crocodile, which can be compared to *mamakara*, or attachment or *ahamkara* or ego, catches hold of its leg. When it caught its leg, the elephant was not able to escape from it. He tried all means. The elephant found that its body had become very weak. Then it wanted to depend upon its mental capacity. It found that even the mental strength was also insufficient and could not help. Then it thought only of divine strength.

Nowadays men are leading their lives just like that elephant. Man is depending entirely upon the strength of his body, upon the strength of his intellect, upon the strength of his relations and upon the strength of his learning. He is not counting and depending upon the divine strength. When the elephant found that it lost all its strength, it thought that it should pray to God. Why did not the elephant pray to God for such a long time, and why did it try to pray to God in the last moments only? We must try to find out the reason for both these. We are leading our lives entirely depending upon the strength of the body and the strength of the mind. If one depends entirely on these two strengths alone, he will not be able to get happiness. Even though he pretends to look happy outside, really speaking, he has no laughter or happiness in his heart. The reason is that the strength of the body and the strength of the mind are not capable of giving any happiness or peace to man. When we dedicate these two strengths to God, and if we think that everything depends upon the grace of God, then we may get peace and happiness with the grace and kindness of God.

We read in the *Bhagavatha* story that when the elephant prayed, God sent his *chakra* which is called *sudarshana chakra*. We must try to know the inner meaning of the *sudarshana*. *Sudarshana* is not merely a weapon or an instrument. When the elephant tried to turn his looks to God, the looks of God also were turned towards the elephant. *su-darshana* means good look. When the ele-

phant tried to look toward God, the good looks of God also fell upon the elephant. That is why it is called *sudarshana*. I used to say when I was in Shirdi, “You look to me and I shall certainly look to you.” When your looks fall on Me, My looks certainly will fall on you. When the good looks of the elephant were directed toward God, the kind looks of God were sent to save the elephant. When the kind look of God fell on the elephant, then it was able to get rid of the bondage.

We have to think about the crocodile also. If the crocodile is on the ground, it will not have any strength. When it is in the water, its natural habitation, it will be very strong. So also, *dharma* will hold with all its strength, not in words but in practice. *dharma* protects you when you practise it. *Bhagavan* said in the *Gita*, “*Dharma-samsthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge*”—in every *yuga* or age, I am taking birth for the sake of establishing *dharma*. In fact, *dharma* is eternal, and is present at all times, present, past and the future. What then is the necessity for establishing it? It simply means that people are not practising it, and Krishna wanted to restore or re-establish the practice of *dharma*.

There are many things that we do not know and about which we will be having doubts. With faith and confidence and thinking earnestly, we must try to clear those doubts and try to be happy. Our *Puranas* teach nothing but truth and things are explained so clearly that no doubts need be left. These doubts come on account of the distorted meanings we give to the words or sayings of the *Puranas*. I shall give you a small example to explain the relationship of *jiva* with other things in the world. A prince, son of a king, once went to the forest in his princely attire. There was a sage in a hermitage. He saw this prince and asked him, “You appear to be a prince, whose son are you?” The prince replied, “Our kingdom is Jitendriya Rajya, and I am the son of King Jitendriya.”

The sage was much astonished. He asked himself in disbelief: “Is there a kingdom like Jitendriya? Is there a king by name Jitendriya? Perhaps he is only using words like this. I don’t think

there is such a king living in this world.” Then the prince said, “Oh! sage, it is true, our kingdom is Jitendriya and all the people in our kingdom are Jitendriyas; they have full control and mastery over their *indriyas*. Not only the people but every living being in the kingdom is a Jitendriya. The king is *Jitendriya*, and the king’s son, myself, am also a *Jitendriya*.”

The sage was much astonished. He thought: “We sages are going through severe austerities and efforts for controlling our senses and even then, we are not able to succeed; how can the king, the prince and the people of this kingdom control their senses?” He wanted to test it. Then he said, “Oh! Prince, give me your princely dress and take my *sanyasi* dress yourself.” Because he was the prince of Jitendriya, he at once gave his dress to the sage. The sage then brought the blood of an animal, poured that blood on the dress given to him by the prince and with that dress, went to the kingdom of Jitendriya. He entered the kingdom, and at the main gate, told the gatekeepers, “Your prince came to our forest; he was hunting in the forest and was killed by a beast. Therefore, I have taken his dress and have come here to show it to you as proof of the death of your prince.” The gate keepers laughed at him and said, “So you have come for this purpose?” With cheer on their faces, they sent him in. He went to the king. As soon as he went to the king and showed those clothes to the king, he said, “Oh! King, your son was killed by a beast. I have brought his clothes.” The king also merely smiled and said, “Oh! He is not my son, nor am I his father. We are just like birds on a tree that will come and rest themselves on the tree in the evening and will fly away as soon as it is morning, each in its own way. Likewise, on the tree of this *samsara*, all of us have come to stay here for some time and the bird of my son has flown away. That is all to it.”

The sage thought that perhaps the king, for some reason, might not have sufficient love for the son, and he wanted to show the clothes to the queen. He thought that because she is the mother, she would certainly react with grief on seeing these clothes. He went to

the queen and showed the clothes to her and told her, “Oh! mother, your son has been killed and he will not be returning.” Then the queen also smiled and said, “All these *jivas* or living beings are pilgrims in the *kshetra* or *karma*. We have come on a pilgrimage to this *Karma Kshetra*, and we are taking our rest in this *choultry*. After taking rest for some time, everybody will leave the *choultry* and go his own way. In that way, we are all living in this *choultry*. There is, in fact, no relationship as father, mother, and son.”

Then the sage thought that if he went to the wife of that prince, she might certainly be stricken with grief because it is her husband that was dead. He took the clothes to the wife of that prince and wept, showing those clothes to her. She said: “Swami, you wear the dress of a *sanyasi* but the way of your weeping and crying appears to be like that of an ordinary man. Will you please tell me why you are weeping?” Then he told her that her husband has been killed. She also smiled and said, “There is a tree in a forest and one of its branches will be breaking and will fall in a stream. There is another tree in that forest and the branch of that tree also will be breaking and will fall in another stream. These two branches will go along these two streams and they will come together in a big stream, will move together for a while and after some time they will get separated and each will drift in its own way. In the same manner, I am the branch of a certain tree and my husband is the branch of another tree. We have for some time come together and now we are separated. There is nothing to be astonished in this. For these branches which are flowing in the stream of life, it is inevitable that they will have *samyoga*, union, and *viyoga* or separation as well.” Then the sage thought that what the prince told him was entirely true and returned to his hermitage. He wanted still to test the mind of the prince; and as soon as he went to him, began to weep very loudly. The prince told him, “Sage, your way of weeping astonishes me. Will you please tell me the reason for your weeping?” Then the sage told him, “Prince; I went to your kingdom. Your king was killed, your queen was killed, your wife was also killed; that is why I

am weeping.” Then the prince taught a lesson to the sage by asking: “Who is the king? Who is the queen? Who is the princess? They are not related to me. The only king is *Paramatma* Himself. It is He that gave the kingdom to us, and it is He that has taken it away from us. Therefore, I need not feel sorry for this. The only thing we should take care of is to do good deeds in this life and try to get salvation. Therefore, I do not weep or feel sorry on account of the news that is brought by you.” Then he taught him that there is no mother, there is no father, there is no brother, and there is no spouse. There is a verse to this effect and he taught that verse to that sage. “*Matha Nasthi, Pitha Nasthi Nasthi Bandhu Sahodaraha; Thubhyam Nasthi, Griham Nasthi, Thasmaat Jaagratha Jaagratha.*”

This life is just like a water bubble and we should not consider that this *jiva* has some relationship with other *jivas*. This body is a leather bag having nine holes—it is not a gem that has got great effulgence. It will be giving out foul smell every moment—there is no good fragrance in it. So we have to clean this body every day and also decorate it. In this body, there is God. If God goes out of this body, there is no body at all. This body is such that it will make even sacred things impious.

I shall give you a small example. Once Narada went to God Narayana. Narayana asked Narada, “You are always wandering in all the three worlds. Did you see any strange thing in this creation of mine? Please tell me if you have seen such a thing at any time.” Then Narada said, “Lord you think that there is no mean thing or an impious thing in this world, but I have seen many impious things and also many mean things in this world. There is no place at all in this world where they are not seen.” Then Narayana asked: “Is there something unholy and mean in the creation that was done by me?” Narada replied, “Every day, every person as soon as he wakes up, will be excreting *mala* or reject matter. Is there anything more unsacred than this?” Then Narayana said, “Oh! Narada, are you considering that as unsacred? No, it is not unsacred, it is good.” Then Narada said, “If I say that the excreta is sacred and also good,

people will certainly admit me in a mental hospital.” Then Narayana asked him, “You go and ask the excreta itself.” He had no other work and he was always wandering in the world and so uttering the name of Lord Narayana, he went to ask this question of that *mala* itself. When he was going near it, the excreta told him, “Oh! Narada, don’t come near me.” Then Narada thought that he should have asked that foul matter to be at a distance but instead the foul matter itself was asking him to keep away. He felt that he was the son of *Brahma* and was such a great sage that the foul matter treating him like that was strange. From a distance, he addressed the excreta and said, “You are very dirty, what is the meaning in asking me to get away from you?” Then he got the reply; “Last night I was in the shape of an apple, I was in the shape of a sweet, I was in the shape of good rice and I was in the shape of so many good things, but as soon as I entered the body of man, I got such a mean state. When I entered man’s body only once, my state has become like this; if I have some relationship with man again, how meaner will be my state?”

The nature of this human body is like that; it will make impure anything, however good it is. We know even a flour mill behaves better. If we put rice on the top of that, then rice flour will come. If we put wheat on the top, wheat flour will come. If we pour any other kind of grain, the flour of that grain will come. But in the mill of our body, if we put fruits, *mala* will be coming. If we put pickles in a jar, it will be preserved for at least one year, but if we put anything in this body, it will become dirty in less than twelve hours. Even in so dirty a body, there is a possibility of seeing pure *Atma*. If we try sincerely, we shall be able to see in the impure body, the pure *Atma* or the Supreme Being. If we want to keep our jewels safely, we put them in an iron safe. The jewels that are put inside are very valuable but the box is not as valuable as they are. If we put valuable jewels in a valuable box, thieves will take away the valuable box and the jewels, also, along with it. So it is natural and also safe that valuable jewels should be put in a box that is not very valuable. The

Atma is pure and very valuable. We are putting such a jewel in this box of a body, which is not very valuable. We must never forget that we have taken this box for the sake of protecting the jewel. We must always remember the main and only reason for which God gave us this body. If there are no good ideas in the body, what is the use of this body? Even the thieves will throw off the box, after taking the jewels. We must always remember that this box, the body, is for the sake of the jewels, namely God and all the good qualities, divine virtues, associated with Him.

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