

## 12. Man Becomes Blind By His Ego

**F**or one who is blinded by his ego and is unable to see anything around him, is life going to give him any sweetness at all? For one who never does any good, is it going to be easy at all? For one who is leading a sinful life, is any pleasure going to come his way? Who are our friends and who are our enemies? Who is God and who is the devotee? Who is the teacher and who is the disciple? Who is the writer and who is the actor? Is there a way of finding out who is what? If there is one who has not got the intelligence to understand, is there anything wrong in calling him a monkey?

For everyone, his own Self is his friend or his enemy. Truly, in one's daily life, man is establishing

connection with so many other persons. Amongst them, he thinks that some are his friends and some are his enemies. With some, he wants to talk more and more and spend time. With others, he does not like to continue conversation or spend any time. Because the world is full of such dualities and contradictions, man is unable to decide what really gives him pleasure and what really gives him pain.

When Krishna took birth, simultaneously Kamsa also took birth. When there was Rama, there was Ravana contemporaneously with him. When Buddha took birth, there was a Devadutta. When Prahlada appeared, there was a Hiranyakasyapu. In this way, when good and bad get mixed up in creation, a situation arises in which we cannot decide what is good and what is bad. What is the basis of all this? Who is the object and who is the subject? The basis or the reason for this is not something which is behind us and unseen.

The ideas that come up in our own mind are the cause for all these. Those who respect us and our ideals, and those who have a concern for our well-being are considered as our relations or friends. Those who hate us, and those who go contrary to our expectations, and those who cause pain and loss to us are regarded as enemies. Truly, in this context, it

becomes impossible for us to decide who our friends and who our enemies are. On one occasion, Kabir has said that we should keep the company of those who abuse us. The reason for this is that although we may commit several sins, the people who point out our sins are going to remove our sins by their abuse. It is in this context that we say that if someone ridicules us, then this will result in the removal of our sin.

In reality, those people who help us to get rid of our sins are our friends. Those people who promote sins in us are our enemies. Thus, it is those who abuse and ridicule us who are to be considered as our friends as they remove our sins. In this situation, Prahlada said that your own chitta is your enemy. He addressed his father, “You are such a capable warrior. You are able to conquer all the world but you are unable to conquer your own sensory organs.”

Therefore, in trying to control and conquer our organs, it is very necessary to have confidence in ourselves and faith in God. For one who has no confidence in one’s own self nor faith in God, it becomes impossible to conquer his organs. Before we undertake to control our senses and our organs, we should first promote faith in God and confidence in our own self. Without controlling our senses and organs, all the

attempts that we make in order to improve our lives will end in failure.

There is a small story for this. On one occasion, when Radha was travelling to Mathura in the evening, she was alone. All the other *gopikas* who saw this started following her. By the time she reached Yamuna, it became dark. The *gopikas* cautioned Radha and said that she should not go to Mathura in the darkness; but if she had to go, they would accompany her. With the feeling that Brindavan belongs to all and Govinda also belongs to all, she agreed to take them along with her. They all went to the banks of the Yamuna, and they took turns in rowing the boat so that no single individual got tired. It was dark and they did not pay any special attention to other things, and they were rowing in turns. Although they were rowing in this manner all night, yet they did not reach Mathura. As the day dawned, they found that people who were residents of Gokulam were coming to the river. The boat had been rowed all night but they found that they were still near Gokulam. They found that they had not removed the rope which tied the boat to the post at the bank. Without untying this rope, although they were rowing the boat the whole night they remained where they were. In spite of the fact that the boat was being rowed, and in spite of the fact that water was there, and they had the strength to

move the boat, the boat did not move at all. The reason for this is that the rope that was binding the boat was not untied at all, and the boat did not move at all.

In the same manner, without removing the bondage in regard to our senses and organs, we will not be able to move forward at all. Therefore, it is necessary to control our senses; but before we do this, we must first undertake to promote love, compassion, and sacrifice. When we can fill our heart with these three qualities, our heart will blossom into a *Nandanavana* (garden of many coloured flowers). On the other hand, if we fill our heart with qualities like hatred, jealousy, and anger then it will become a stinking pool.

We should ourselves go into this matter and decide whether we want to convert our heart into a *Nandanavana* or an unclean stinking pool. Every individual must make an attempt to fill his heart with these sacred qualities and turn his heart into a *Nandanavana*. Truly, when we look at happy people, we should feel happy at their happiness. When we look at suffering and trouble, we should also share their sufferings. If we are able to develop these qualities, we will be making our heart a *Nandanavana*. We must make all attempts to promote compassion and goodness. This is called *maitri* or good sense. If we develop these

good qualities, God also will appear to be close to us. Whether we are in pain or in pleasure, in sorrow or in trouble, at all times we must develop our heart in such a way that we will be able to get *Paramatma's Prema*.

On the other hand, if we have bad qualities like wanting to commit sin, wanting to listen to things which we should not listen to, hurting and harming others, then justice, goodness, and honesty will never remain anywhere near us. Therefore, people should develop sacred qualities. The Pandavas were such people and by right they enjoyed the proximity of the Lord. For the Pandavas, the life-giving breath was Krishna; and to Krishna, His body was the Pandavas. So far as the Pandavas were concerned, there was not a single moment when Krishna was not present. Whatever they saw or did, it was by the prompting and by the strength which Krishna gave them.

There is a small incident which may be narrated in this context. Krishna gave up his mortal body after completing the task for which he had come to the earth. In this context, Arjuna was accompanying the *gopikas* and bringing them to Gokulam, and they were attacked by the tribals, and there was a lot of confusion. Arjuna lost all his strength and in that weakened state, he somehow managed to come to Hastinapura. Because of

the sacred, pure, and selfless name of Krishna which was present in the heart of the Pandavas, whatever they looked at appeared to them as sacred. Because of the fact that Krishna was no longer in this world, everything that the Pandavas saw appeared unsacred to them.

Unlike these days, if one had to send a message in those days, either to Mathura or Dwaraka, it took months to reach the destination. Even before this news of the death of Krishna reached Hastinapura, Dharmaraja was encountering many bad and inauspicious omens. On one evening, when he was walking out, he found one agriculturist returning home with a plough on his shoulder. Dharmaraja looked at this unusual sight and asked the man why he was carrying the plough on his shoulders. This man replied that the previous day, the plough that he left in the field had been stolen, and so he was carrying the plough with him back home that day. Dharmaraja was greatly surprised and agitated and began to doubt if Krishna was still alive, for he could not explain thefts in his kingdom.

On another day, when he was walking in the city, he found a big steel bolt on the door of a house. He met some people at the door and asked what this steel bolt was. They replied that the steel bolt was put there in order to secure the door against the possible theft by

other people. After listening, he was even more agitated and surprised, and he surmised that the *Yuga* must be changing; and for such events to take place *Kali* must be entering.

On another occasion, he found a woman talking to a man in the middle of a street. At this sight, Dharmaraja's head started to reel. He was astonished to find a woman, belonging to Bharath, talking so freely to a man on the street. He did not want to rule over such a kingdom at all. He quickly ordered his charioteer to take him back. When we look at these events and incidents, we can realise how *dharmic* Dharmaraja's rule was. How good and how kind he was can also be seen from these incidents.

As Dharmaraja was thinking of these inauspicious events, Arjuna arrived. As soon as Dharmaraja saw Arjuna's face, he realised that there must be very bad news. Arjuna was standing in a dumbfounded manner. He could not convey the bad news to Dharmaraja. Although Dharmaraja asked several questions of Arjuna, he could not get any replies because Arjuna was in great sorrow and he was just silent.

That Arjuna had come and that he was full of sorrow was quickly known to all the inhabitants in the royal mansion. The old mother, Kunthi, sent word that

Arjuna should immediately come and see her. Kunthi was over one hundred and eighty years of age and she was infirm. She was just sitting on a cot. As the Pandavas were such that they would implicitly obey the orders of their mother, they went to Kunthi immediately. The Pandavas knew very well the ancient custom according to which the father, mother, teacher, and guest were to be respected as God. In their life and conduct, they fully demonstrated this respect to their mother, their teachers, and their guests. They did not have a father to demonstrate their respect to a father. When the brothers touched her feet, Arjuna could not get up at all because he was so grief-stricken. Immediately, Kunthi began asking several questions about the welfare of Krishna, Vasudeva, and other relations in Dwaraka. Unable to answer her questions, Dharmaraja at once cried out that their Gopala was no more. Kunthi was a very shrewd person and she immediately guessed what had happened, and she started crying out for Gopala, and she gave up her life. In the very next moment, Dharmaraja ordered all preparations for the ritual after Kunthi's death. He summoned Nakula, Sahadeva, and Bheema. Nakula and Sahadeva were sent to do the last rites for their mother. Bheema was ordered to make all arrangements for their going away to the jungle.

Arjuna was called and told that arrangements must be made to crown Parikshith as the king of the land. While the dead body was on his lap, he was making arrangements for the coronation of Parikshith as the king, and he was also making arrangements for their sojourn to the forest. No human beings will be able to do such things at the time of such sorrow. The Pandavas are the only persons who could be cited as examples for such sacred behaviour and exemplary conduct. No one else had this courage and sacrifice. The last rites were performed and the pundits were sent for and told that the coronation must be gone through immediately. They all felt that the moment was not very auspicious and advised that the coronation be postponed, but Dharmaraja insisted that they would not be able to live in a world in which Krishna was not present and they wanted to leave for the forest immediately. The brothers—Arjuna, Bheema, Nakula, and Sahadeva—were also of the same view. They expressed that Krishna's death was in reality the death of the Pandavas. They said that Krishna could not die as he was an immortal person, and the Pandavas were the ones who had actually died. Arjuna was also arguing with the pundits that it was impossible for the Pandavas to remain in a world in which Krishna was not physically present.

In many ways, Dharmaraja asked the pundits to traditionally perform the coronation and insisted that if they did not do this, he would simply give his crown to Parikshith and move away to the forest. The last rites were completed and Parikshith was sent for.

But it is written in the sacred texts that Parikshith was crowned when he was very young and was not mature enough. This in fact was not the case. Parikshith was thirty-five years of age. When the battle of Mahabharatha took place, it was 3138 B.C. It was then Dharmaraja's rule also commenced, and at that time, Parikshith was present in the womb of his mother Uttara. Dharmaraja ruled over the Kingdom for thirty-six years. After the battle was over, Krishna went to Dwaraka and stayed there for thirty-six years. While the battle started in 3138 B.C., Krishna gave up his mortal body in 3102 B.C. and there was a gap of thirty-six years; and so at that time Parikshith was of the age of thirty-six years. He was really fit to rule over the kingdom. But so long as his father and his father's brothers were present, he did not agree to take over the kingdom. Those were the sacred codes of conduct that were present in those days. Parikshith begged his father and uncles to take him with them to the forest as he would not be able to rule the kingdom well because of his inexperience.

In those days, the code of conduct was such that one could not disobey the orders of one's parents, elders, or grandfather. He touched the feet of Dharmaraja and said that when so many elders were present, it was not correct for him to be crowned as King. Parikshith was born in the ruling family and had every right to become the king, but he did not hesitate to say that other elders should be considered first. Dharmaraja did not agree to this but kept his chariot ready. He wanted to leave immediately after crowning Parikshith.

While this situation was developing, Droupadi came out of the house and said that Krishna had saved her on many occasions and she would not consider living even for a moment without Krishna, especially if her husbands were not there. "When my Lord and my husbands are both not here, I do not want to stay here." The Pandavas exhibited to the rest of the world what an ideal family should be. When we give attention to all these incidents, we see the kind of compassionate friendship that existed between Krishna and the Pandavas.

If we look at the condition of Arjuna after the passing away of Krishna, we find that he was like a lifeless body only following his brother as if a lifeless body was being dragged. He was not even thinking of

his dead mother, was always in constant thought of Krishna, and was behaving like a madman. For a hundred years, wherever there was Krishna and *Yogeswara*, there was Arjuna, the best of men. Wherever both of them were present, there was prosperity, victory, wealth, and morality. They lived like inseparable persons for all that time. They were different only in body; but the ideas, thoughts, and ideals were one. Whether it was in Hastinapura or in Dwaraka, whenever Krishna and Arjuna came together, Kunthi, the mother, always served them food in one big plate but never in two different plates. Rukmini also never hesitated to put their meal in one plate as if she was sharing the meal in one plate with Krishna. If Arjuna came to Dwaraka, Krishna and Arjuna kept constant company with one another. Krishna never spent any time with Rukmini or Satyabhama. The reason for this is that Arjuna was the best of men and Krishna was an *Avatar* of the highest level.

These two were typical representatives of *Nara*, the man, and Narayana, the God. In some circumstances, *Nara*, the man, can become Narayana; and Narayana can appear on the earth as man. When man lives in the ecstasy of the *prema* of the Lord, and when he is intoxicated with the thought of the Lord, he transforms himself into Narayana. But when there is injustice and

ill-will all over, then God will, himself, come down to the earth as an *Avatar*. So the relationship between man and God is such that when man gets the grace of God and changes himself into God, he rises to the knowledge of *Brahman*. When man acquires the knowledge of *Brahman*, he takes the form of *Brahman*. On the other hand, when Narayana takes the form of man and wants to help humanity, he will act like a man.

Suffering from the separation from Krishna, the Pandavas were moving, not noticing the presence of each other. All the time uttering the name of Krishna, each one dropped dead without noticing the presence of the other. While they were moving like that, Droupadi lost all her energy and realised that her end was also approaching, and she shouted out to the Lord. Dharmaraja said that each of them was worried because their Lord had left this earth and so they could not share Droupadi's grief. In that moment of great distress, the Pandavas were only thinking of Krishna and this teaches us a lesson about the intimate connection between the Pandavas and Krishna. The Pandavas were being protected by Krishna as eyelids protect the eyes because of the sacred *prema* which the Pandavas had towards Krishna. The Pandavas always had Krishna as their companion. He stood by them in times of difficulty as well as when good fortune was theirs. He stood by

them when they were living in the forest unrecognised for a whole year. He stood by them at all times. The meaning of the aspect of true companionship was demonstrated by this relationship between Krishna and the Pandavas.

On the other hand, if we look at the *maitri* or friendship of these days, we notice that one will become a friend only if one sees a ten rupee note through the transparent terrylene shirt pocket. If this is not found, there will not be any friendship. In the world today, there is no evidence of true friendship. There is no one whom we can call a true friend. When a lake is full of water, the frogs gather round; and when the lake is empty, all the frogs simply disappear. So also, when a person is prosperous and wealthy, everyone will be his friend; but when this wealth disappears, everyone will disappear and no one will be a friend.

All your relations will continue as relations only up to the entrance to the cremation ground. The only friend who will continue to be with you for all time is the divine friend—GOD. I bless you and hope that you will learn from these sacred ideals.