

12. All Our Sorrow Is Our Own Creation

A knowledge of Atma will be available only to those who have very pure minds. Even a saint cannot acquire this. This word of Sai is a statement of the path of truth.

Pavitratma Swarupas!

In this world, man gets happiness out of a thing of beauty. When we look at a beautiful flower, happiness is generated in us. When we look at a beautiful bird or a nice house, we feel happy. We have to carefully consider whether such happiness is permanent or transient. A nice rose flower makes us feel very happy; but by the evening, the rose will fade away; and by the next morning the petals will fall and then it does not generate as much happiness. In the same way, every object of beauty can only generate temporary happiness in us. We have to understand carefully where one can find permanent and lasting happiness. This can only be found in the aspect of *Atma* and in the thought of God. We can get permanent happiness only from things that are permanent. Out of things that are transient, we can never get happiness which is permanent. It is only after experiencing such permanent happiness will we get true bliss. We cannot go on searching for such a bliss at all places. If we do this, it will be like going to a fish market in search of diamonds. We can find only fish in a fish market and not diamonds. Since this world is temporary and all life in it is uncertain, we cannot find permanent happiness in this world.

One student went to an astrologer and asked him about his future. The astrologer said that the line of education in the

boy's hand was quite big and strong. The student felt very exhilarated and lost himself in that happiness. After some time, the astrologer said that the student will acquire a very high reputation in his life. The student was even more happy at this. The astrologer later said that he would earn a lot of money and become very rich. After some time, the astrologer said that everything was fine but that he would have a very short span of life. The student was very worried because there was no meaning in having everything but only a short life span. We may have a lot of wealth, a lot of influence and power; but if we do not have the awareness of *Atma* close to us, it is as good as having a short span of life. The *gopikas* recognised this need for getting permanent happiness. We must also recognise that we can get permanent happiness only from permanent things.

The *gopikas* undertook to perform a special *Katyayani Vratam*, on a particular Monday in the Month of *Kartika*. We should recognise the significance of performing this sacred *Vrata*. They said, "We are not aspiring for an impermanent and illusory form. We are aspiring for attaining sacred Krishna who is the embodiment of permanent unchanging truth. Just because he is in a physical form, we will not be deceived into believing that he is impermanent. Just like the clothes that we are now wearing, God has decided to take that particular human form in this *Yuga*. The *Yugas* may change but our God will not change." The *gopikas* clearly recognised the divinity in Krishna. Depending on the age of the individual, he is described as being in his childhood, youth, adolescence, or old age. However, for Krishna it is always childhood or youth. This was beyond all human comprehension. He is immortal, and he is always full of peace, and in this way he represents eternal beauty. Although he used to be dark in complexion, his appearance was very attractive. The divinity that was present in him was responsible for this. This is not so in all human be-

ings. It is a distinctive divine quality. The *gopikas* realised that they can find true beauty in this aspect only, and so they undertook to perform this sacred *Vrata*. They wanted to get him as their *Natha* or husband. By passage of time, men by their way and nature, have forgotten the true meanings of words and accepted false meanings. We generally think that the word husband (or *Natha*) means one in the position of a husband to a wife. But, in actual fact a husband in this context means one who takes care of the person. Their feeling was that Krishna alone can bear the burden of taking care of all of them, and hence they desired him as their husband. The sixteen thousand and one hundred and eight *gopikas* treated Krishna in this manner. To think of all these *gopikas* as the wives of Krishna is not correct. For God, who is present in all living beings, who is the husband and who is the wife? All such bodily relationships cannot be ascribed to God. *Gopikas* are pure divine reflections of the *Atma*. They were people who surrendered themselves to Krishna. Sixteen thousand and one hundred eight *gopikas* were living in Dwaraka with such a feeling. Here, we should enquire whether their happiness has arisen from worldly feelings or from the permanent aspect of Krishna. In their concept, there cannot be anything in this world that is beautiful unless it is permanent and associated with the divine. They were experiencing both these aspects only in Krishna. If there is no oil in a lamp with a wick, there will not be any light. If there is no current inside the bulb, there will be no light. When there is a *pralaya* or a doom, even the sun and moon will be lost. The one *jyothi* that will never be extinguished is the *Atma Jyothi*. They believed Krishna to be the *Atma Jyothi* and through such complete faith, they prayed to Krishna.

As a result of our attachment to the body and its organs, we go on praising the beauty in the world. There was one dis-

ciple of Ramanuja. His wife had very beautiful eyes. He was constantly protecting her beautiful eyes and even when she was going to fetch water from the river, he was accompanying her with an umbrella in order to protect her eyes. This strange behaviour of the disciple was noticed by Ramanuja and he asked the disciple why he was behaving in that way. This man replied very quietly and shyly, that because his wife's eyes were very beautiful, he was protecting those eyes from the rays of the sun. Then Ramanuja asked if he were to see eyes which were more beautiful than his wife's eyes, whether he would protect those eyes with the same care. The disciple assured that he would. After Ramanuja completed his meditation, he and his disciples went to the temple of Sri Ranga. When Ramanuja started describing the eyes of the Lord, the eyes of the Lord shone beautifully and appeared exquisite and bright. The disciple saw those beautiful eyes and from that day he was enjoying their beauty. In the same manner, the *gopikas* after experiencing all the beauty in different names and forms, started experiencing the divine beauty of Krishna. Ever since then, they did not seek anything else. As things were going on like this in the year 3102 B.C. between the dates 17-18 February; at midnight Krishna gave up his mortal body. Before that, in the year 3138 B.C., Krishna crowned Dharmaraja. Between these two periods and for a total duration of 36 years Krishna enabled the *gopikas* to experience the divinity in Krishna. This was the good fortune of many other people in Dwaraka also. In our sacred texts, it has been described that the *gopikas* were very sorry and worried after the *nirvana* of Krishna, but this is not correct. It is true that the Pandavas felt Krishna's loss, but the *gopikas* considered Krishna to be eternal and immortal and never felt his absence.

Before the battle of Mahabharatha, there were several bad omens. One year before the departure of the Pandavas to

the forest, Abhimanyu was born. Together with this one year, the twelve years in the forest and the additional year during which they lived incognito, makes up fourteen years. Thus, at the time of the Mahabharatha war, Abhimanyu was fifteen years old and was playing like a child in front of Dharmaraja. When Dharmaraja was challenged to the battle, he felt somewhat hesitant because Arjuna was not with him. Then, Abhimanyu asked Dharmaraja what the problem was. Dharmaraja explained to him that a great person like Bhishma challenged him to battle. When Dharmaraja was thus worried, Abhimanyu immediately said that it is not right for them to withdraw from the battle and insisted that he will go into the fight. I am narrating this incident to you to show you how really great and courageous were those who were born in the Pandava family. Dharma-rajah said that as Arjuna was not there, Abhimanya should get his mother's approval before going to battle. Even here, Dharmaraja was showing that it is very necessary to ask for and accept the instructions of the parents. Abhimanyu went to his mother and asked for permission to go to battle. His mother addressing him said, "May blessings of the great Lord be showered on you, and may He enable you to maintain the noble family traditions. May you, by the grace of the Lord, bring victory and glory to the family." In some texts on the subject, a view has been expressed that Abhimanyu's mother felt that he was too young and was not too happy about his going to battle. This is not correct. Indeed, she was overjoyed to find the courageous son wanting to go to battle.

When Abhimanya was sixteen, Parikshith was born as a son. He was born after Abhimanyu's death. He was also about to die in the womb of the mother but was saved by Krishna. Thus, he earned the grace of Krishna even when he was in the womb of his mother. Thus Parikshith became the most important character in *Bhagavatha*. Hence, the curse of

the elders was treated as a blessing. This was because Parikshith was always thinking of Krishna whose image was imprinted in his mind. Pandavas were also great devotees who sacrificed everything they had in the thought of Krishna. Pandavas recognised not only the great strength of Krishna but also the divine aspect of Krishna. *Gopikas* were a different kind. They had complete faith in the divine aspect of Krishna and they had unwavering faith in Krishna. Theirs was a sacred, pure and selfless devotion. The *gopis* and *gopalas* are ideal examples for those living in the *Kali Yuga*. We think that the *rasa krida*—or the play of Krishna and *gopikas*—was some kind of a game involving human enjoyment, but this is not so. Indeed this is symbolic of the sacred confluence between the *jivatma* (represented by the *gopikas*) and the *Paramatma* (represented by Krishna). They had converted their hearts into Brindavan and their thoughts into sacred streams. They were formless in the aspect of divinity. One gets attached to his sensory organs if one has attachment to his body. There was no illusion in them relating to their body. The reason for this is that in their previous births in *Kritha Yuga*, they were actually *rishis*. In the *Kritha Yuga*, when they were *Rishis*, they were able to get only the *darshan* of the Lord. In the *Thretha Yuga*, they became monkeys of Rama *Avatar*. In the *Kritha Yuga*, they thus had the *darshan* only of the Lord, and in the *Thretha Yuga* they had a chance to have *Sambhashana* or conversation with him. Thereafter they prayed to God to let them have a chance to get *Sparsana*, or the touch of the Lord, as well. In order that this may be achieved, the same *rishis* of *Kritha Yuga* became monkeys in the *Thretha Yuga* and *gopikas* in the *Dwapara Yuga*.

They are also the three forms of *gunas*—*rajas*, *thamas* and *Sathwa*. Those who have the *thamo guna* will only get *Darshan* while those with *rajasik* qualities will get *sambha-*

shana or conversation. Those who have *sathwik* qualities will also have *sparsana* or touch. I will give you one small example to show the divine aspect which one can get by *sparsana* or contact with the Lord. Charcoal is dark and signifies ignorance in the form of darkness. Fire throws light or brightness and signifies knowledge. So long as the fire and the charcoal are separated from each other, the charcoal can only look at the fire but cannot get any of its brightness. However, when the charcoal is put into the fire and brought into contact, it will also become bright and will become a part of fire. Therefore, when one comes into contact with the divine form, the ignorance in his body will be removed. If we also do a little fanning, the charcoal will become fire faster and *sadhana* constitutes such a fanning. By *sadhana*, even an ignorant person can become a wise person. Realising this truth, the *gopikas* were near to Krishna and they were also dear to him. All the actions of the *gopikas* were intended to attain immortality but were not performed with any selfish motive. All the events that we read in the *Bhagavatha* must be regarded as actions performed by the *gopikas* with a pure and sacred heart. They regarded themselves as part of the Lord. They experienced the unity in all creation. We should not take these actions in a superficial manner. Their desires were completely burnt out in the thought of the divine.

If we want to experience that state of bliss, we have to reach that high state of devotion. It is said that all that is visible to our eyes does not exist in truth and will disappear in due course. That which is bound to disappear cannot give us happiness. When we acquire the worldly things, we get momentary happiness and when we are separated from them, we also get sorrow. When money and wealth come to us, we feel happy, but when they go from us, we feel unhappy. All these things are such that they bring us happiness when they come

but bring us sorrow when they go. By association, we get happiness and by dissociation we get sorrow. We should attempt to seek only the divine aspect of love because it has neither association nor dissociation. This kind of divine love has no reason. This is the natural form of divinity in man. This is, indeed, man's real wealth. One is very fortunate to get a human birth; but because we are filling such a human life with various material desires, we are filling our life with sorrow. If we have no desires, we cannot get sorrow at all; and there can be no one more happy than one who has no desires. All this sorrow is our own creation. Worry has no form at all. It is simply your own creation. The form of worry is nothing. Our own desires are responsible for our sorrow. You should keep illusory troubles at a distance and lead a happy life.