

17. At The Time Of One's Death, It Is The Body That Is Discarded

Foolish people always have their thoughts in attachment to things around them. A narrow mind can never understand what liberation or detachment means.

A person with a broad mind will never undertake to do anything bad. A human being with an animal mind will always think only of bad acts.

Pavitratma Swarupas:

If one wants to understand the aspect of divinity or to teach this aspect to others, he must have a clean mind. Any person who has not cleansed his mind will not be able to teach the aspect of divinity to others nor will he be able to understand it. You may ask if all the people who are preaching have clean minds. The reason for human beings having degraded to such depths is that people who do not have clean minds preach to others. In a dark and unclean room, scorpions, snakes and other insects can come in. If the room is clean and well lighted, there is no chance for such bad insects to come. In the same manner, in an individual who has a good and clean mind, there is no chance for qualities like lust, ego, jealousy and anger to enter or flourish. When we can compare ourselves with a standard that we may set, and accept it as a measure, we will realise how many bad qualities we have. If ignorance has to go, man must get the knowledge of *Atma*. Even if milk and soap are used to clean charcoal, it is not going to turn white. On the other hand, the milk and soap might turn black. We may ask a question, is there any chance of the charcoal becoming white and bright? It is not as if there is no chance at all of turning the

charcoal bright and white. The charcoal, when in contact with fire, will appear bright. Here we can notice the blemish that comes out of bad company, even to good people. In the same manner, if good people with good qualities like peace of mind and equanimity come into contact with bad people with bad ideas, not only can they not change the bad people, but they may also become bad and acquire bad qualities. Once your mind is not sacred enough, whatever effort you put in, it may become very difficult for you to take a good path. Truly, if man, from moment to moment, continuously goes on recognising the sacredness which is present in human nature, it will be possible for him to recognise the divinity that is present in him. As a result of good work the *gopikas* had done in their earlier lives, and as a result of the love and grace of God they had earned, they could develop such a sacred attitude. The place where they were born was a small village called Gokulam. At that time there were no comforts at all. In those days, things were such that life was very difficult. There was neither a college nor even an elementary school, and the *gopikas* were totally illiterate. Although they were not literate, they had very good knowledge about the aspects of *Atma*. Today's education is such that it all relates to the external world. It only enables you to eke out your livelihood but it does not teach you the sacred aspects of *Atma*. Fortunately, such learning and education as we have today did not exist in those days. If we examine whether the learning of today is at least enabling us to have good conduct, we will easily see the answer is no. Their life was totally along the path of truth. They pursued divinity through the path of love. Purity was the aim of their life. To understand *Atma* was the destination of their life. Such were the qualities of the *gopikas*.

For a student of today, is there any chance of acquiring at least one of these sacred qualities? The main feature of to-

day's education seems to be to acquire degrees which merely become a head load. Having acquired these degrees, you simply become a burden to the society. Does one have to undergo this education just to eke out a living? Are not the birds and animals finding ways and means to feed themselves? If we have education, it should enable us to get rid of the cycle of birth and death and enable us to understand our destination. After having acquired all types of education, a foolish person does not know who he is, and has also not given up the mean qualities that he has in him. By acquiring all this education, we only become argumentative, but not wise. By getting education, we should learn such things by which we will escape death and repeated births. The *gopikas* had that kind of good education that relieved them of this cycle of death and birth. It might appear from their conduct that they had some worldly desire, but this is not true. They were only interested in the spiritual aspects; and whatever actions they had actually indulged in, were only *leelas*. The coming together of *gopikas* and Krishna became exemplary to the world and represented the coming together of *Prakruthi* and *Purusha*. Whatever has been said or done by them appears as of a low level because of our own low thoughts, but actually, whatever they had done or said was of great significance. Students: If we stand by the side of the ocean, it will appear as if it is very big and unending, and we cannot see its boundaries. If we can go high up in a place or a suitable contrivance and look at the ocean, it will appear as if it is one big lake. In the same manner, if we elevate ourselves and see things in the proper perspective, then we will understand the true meaning of these events. However, our life is taking a peculiar turn. A life that is full of bad ideas and bad actions appears to be a false drama. In fact, all our life appears to be a false and pretentious drama. The life of the *gopikas* was indeed exemplary. In none of their actions, can one detect untruth, unjustness or unfairness. They led perfect

lives. The coming together of Krishna and the *gopikas* is regarded as one of bodily attachment because of the cinemas and dramas that we see today. The confluence of the *gopikas* and Krishna is truly divine. All actions of Krishna are truly to be treated as ideal examples. Whatever he did was intended to destroy and remove the little attachment they had to their body and life. The aspect of love in Krishna got imprinted in their minds and they got immersed in that ecstasy.

There is a small example to show this when Krishna went to visit a *gopika*. Recognising that the *gopika* was not at home, he broke the pot of milk that was hanging from the roof and spilt the milk all over the place. He also put his feet in the milk and went out of the house leaving footprints on the ground. The *gopika* came back and found the footprints of Krishna. She followed the footprints of Krishna and found where he was. Then Krishna said "If you desire to reach me, you must follow my footprints and this is the only way in which you can reach me." Thus Krishna was showing the method or path by which the devotees can reach him. Krishna was one who showed the path of truth. On another occasion, the *gopikas* tried to go close to Krishna and they tried to find some excuse to do so. They joined together and came to Mother Yasoda with a long list of complaints. When Yasoda asked them for the cause of their visit, they all said, "Krishna came up to the terrace at midnight and tied up the hair of one *gopika* with that of another." The inner meaning of this has to be carefully understood. The *gopikas* said that Krishna came at midnight. Here midnight means neither day nor night. The *gopikas* are in a state of half-knowledge. That is, they are neither divine nor human. To such *gopikas*, Krishna came and tied up their ignorance. On another occasion, the *gopikas* tried to make Krishna speak untruth. They complained that when the cowherd women were carrying pots of milk and curd, Krishna

came and pierced holes in those pots. They accosted mother Yasoda by saying, "Ask your son if he had not done this." Here, also, we must understand the significance when Krishna explained by saying, "Perhaps God came and pierced the pots—I do not know." He is indirectly saying that the one who had pierced the pots was indeed himself. Another complaint they made was, "When we were all bathing in the river, he gathered all our saris and went and sat on the top of a tree and would not come down even if we called him." To this Krishna said, "When they were bathing, there was a big whirlwind which gathered all these saris and put them on the tree." Here, the whirlwind has to be identified as a form of God. The basic elements of creation are earth, fire, water, air and sky; and air is one form of the divine. In truth, the *gopikas* had a very sacred heart and were always immersed in the thoughts of Krishna. Even while they were carrying pots of curd, milk or butter, they totally forgot themselves in their ecstasy, and they used to say, "Govinda, *Madhava* and Damodara." On one occasion, Krishna stole butter. He was not available to his mother that day. Yasoda knew very well that if Krishna saw the big stick, he would not come and so she held the stick with one hand behind her back and held butter in the other hand and tried to attract Krishna by showing him the butter. Here, we must notice that Yasoda realised that Krishna will come only if he sees a pure *Chitta* or mind as exemplified by butter in this analogy. God is one who is attracted only by pure minds. The meaning of saying that he took away all the clothes is that he took away all your bodily attachments. The clothes are a cover to the body and, in reality, the body is an attachment or a cover for the *Atma* that is residing inside the same. The body is, therefore, only a dress for this life. When we say that one is dead, we mean that the body is dead and discarded. This act of Krishna's is thus to be interpreted as saying that so long as you have attachment to your body, you cannot find the real aspect

of *Atma*. We should not be under an illusion about the importance of the body.

In the aspect of *Purusha*, there are two kinds—the individual *Purusha* and the group *Purusha*. If there is one individual, he is called *Purusha* but when there is a group of individuals, it should be described as *Prajnanam Brahma*. As an example to illustrate this, if there is one tree, we call it a tree; but if there are a large number of trees, we call the combination a forest. If there is only one tree, we do not call it a forest. In the same manner, if God is present in one human form, he is called divinity or an *Avatar*; and if he is present in the totality, he is referred to as Creation. The individual is born because of God's wanting to be so born. On the other hand, the nameless, formless aspect of God is referred to as *Purushottama*. We should see here that if the formless aspect of *Purushottama* takes a human form, we call him *Purusha*. Having taken the form of a human being, the *Purushottama* sets an example to other living things and establishes the oneness of all creation. We should also recognise the truth that the aspect of the *Atma* can be realised only if you have a clean mind.

On another occasion, the *gopikas* went to Yasoda and told her that the kind of mischief that Krishna was doing was indescribable, and so they asked her to call him in their presence and take steps to see that he never entered their houses again. They complained by saying, "Krishna is creating trouble between husbands and wives. He comes in the night and bangs the doors; and if we open the doors, our husbands get angry; and if we do not open the doors, Krishna gets angry; and we are put to constant trouble because of such situations. It is not possible to describe all our troubles to you. A situation has arisen where we have to either forget Krishna or abandon our husbands." Faced with these allegations, Krishna replied,

"Mother, you are a very innocent lady and so you are believing all these stories. I will give you a simple answer and you judge for yourself the truth of these stories. I have been sleeping silently in your bed, how can I go out in the nights without disturbing you? Now you can yourself see the truth." Yasoda felt that all the complaints were false and she sent away all the *gopikas*. The meaning of this is that in order to set right the husbands of the *gopikas*, he had played all this drama. There is one small fact that we have to notice here. Krishna was actually a seven-year-old boy at that time while the *gopikas* were all much older. Under these conditions, there cannot be any chance for misunderstanding by the husbands. Such misunderstandings are simply because of the bad qualities and bad ideas which men have. Even if a wife is playing and spending too much time with their own small son, the selfish husband does not like it and attempts to stop it. This can be recognised as unsacred behaviour of men. If he gets selfish ideas and doubts, even if a mother played with her own son, will he not get doubts when she plays with other children? It is the bad quality of men to doubt everything that comes in the way of their own selfish interests. Krishna said that he was undertaking all these tasks only to purify the husbands and create a pure mind in them. The *gopikas* had very sacred minds and to doubt them is a great sin; and Krishna was a seven-year-old-boy and to have any misunderstandings about his actions with regard to the *gopikas* is an even greater sin. There is no room whatsoever for any bad interpretation here. Because the husbands didn't fully recognise the aspect of divinity, they were having all kinds of doubts. The *gopikas* who were subjected to this kind of unnecessary blame and blemish were being protected by Krishna. In this way, Krishna propagated the aspects of an *Avathar*. We should not try to understand and interpret all actions of divinity at a human level. It is our primary duty to do such things that will make it possible for us to receive his grace. If only we can

earn his grace, everything will be sweet, in life. The Lord is full of sweetness—his vision is sweet, his speech is sweet, his actions are sweet and he himself is only an embodiment of sweetness. In a vessel filled with sweet sugar cane juice, if we put a large number of holes, we will get sweet juice only through all the holes, and it is not possible to get anything sour or bitter. In that context, *Paramatma* is full of sacred bliss and in his creation it is not possible to get anything different. We will make an effort to learn more about the devotion of the *gopikas* and the sacred aspects of Krishna in the days to follow.