

18. Concentration During Meditation Can Lead You To The Lord's Vision

Belief and faith are like two eyes. If one has not got them, he will be counted as blind. Does God not exist, simply because you cannot see him? God may not exist so far as that person is concerned. But, does he not exist for us who can see him?

Pavitratma Swarupas:

Amongst the most important things which man has to acquire and experience, the first one is the grace of God. By such grace, he can acquire valuable wisdom. By acquiring such wisdom, he is also able to lead his life in a very peaceful manner. Every living individual must make an effort to recognise the performance of the divinity that he experiences. There is also a need for him to recognise the correct aspects of God. In the initial stages, it is impossible for man to pray and know the unmanifested form of God. Therefore, it is very necessary for man to begin with a form as the basis and worship. With the help of such prayers, he should go on to acquire divine strength and with such strength, he should move on to the next stage. We should make an attempt to recognise the existence of God, not only in a name, but also in the context of *sabda* or sound. We keep saying *Bhagavan*, *Bhagavan* repeatedly. It is necessary for us to understand the meaning of this word *Bhagavan*. We have been taught by our scriptures that the main significance of the word *Bhagavan* comes from the aspect of *Paramatma*. What is contained in *Brahman* and *Paramatma* is contained in this word *Bhagavan*. One meaning of the word

Bhagavan is that he is filled with all kinds of prosperity. Further, it also describes one who can and should be worshipped.

There are two other meanings for this letter “*bha*”. The two meanings are *sambharta* and *bharta*. The word “*sambharta*” means that through it, we should try and understand the origin of creation. The word “*bharta*” means that he is bearing the burden of creation and so, is called *bharta*. The letter “*ga*” refers to the fact that he is responsible for the beginning, maintenance and dissolution of creation. Hence, the letter “*ga*” comes in. There is a third meaning for the letter “*bha*.” It signifies brilliance or illumination. The letter “*ga*” in the context means the spread of this brightness or illumination. The word “*vanta*,” means that he has the capacity and ability to do such a thing. Thus the full meaning of “*Bhagavanta*” is that it refers to an aspect by which God has the capacity to spread his brightness or illumination. The sacred word *Bhagavan* has a lot of inner and significant meaning, but unfortunately we are forgetting this and using the word only as an honour or title. For us to understand this sacred meaning and the sacred aspect of divinity, an amount of introspection on our part is necessary. Then only, can we understand the nature of our mind. Mind has the characteristic feature of thinking continuously and repeatedly, over and over again.

Our mind is such that it is always thinking about things coming together and separating from each other. This is a natural quality of the mind. Without bringing thoughts together and the dissolution of such thoughts, the mind cannot exist at all. When these thoughts come in quick succession, the mind sometimes takes the wrong path. In such situations, the mind becomes very confused and unsteady. If man wants to overcome this confusion, some amount of mental rest is necessary for the mind. If man wants peace of mind, he must give rest to

his mind. Such occasional rest is necessary, not only for human beings, but also for animals, birds and even lifeless machines. If one does not get such rest, it becomes very difficult for life to exist and for man to live. If man can get this kind of rest, it will give some peace and happiness.

Mind has the quality by which it can run faster than the wind. If we want to stop a fast moving train or a car, we use a gadget called a brake. In the same manner, if we want to stop a mind that is moving freely and in an uncontrolled manner, we must use a brake in the form of concentration or *dhyana*. If man has no control over his mind, he will become a demon. If he has no control over his mind, he will become an animal. In this context, control over man's mind and sense organs are very necessary. To obtain such controls, there are three states that may work as obstacles. The first one is a state of nothingness. The second one is a state of diverse thinking. The third one, which can help, is the state of concentration. By its very nature, the mind has these three different aspects.

If we want to read a sacred text, then sleep may overtake us. On the other hand, if we want to go and participate in a sacred gathering, the mind will not permit it and even if the body goes, the Goddess of sleep, will bother you there also. This may be described as a state of nothingness. If we are reconciled to this and want to go to sleep and take rest, all kinds of disturbing ideas and thoughts keep agitating your mind and these will pull your mind into the street. This has been described as a state of diverse thinking. The more important state is the state of concentration. Only when man takes to this state and concentrates on things and forgets the other two aspects, can he be happy. It is enough, if man can learn how to live like a man. He need not become a *Madhava* and rise to the level of divinity. The aspect of concentration is particularly important for students.

Lack of ability to concentrate is responsible for so many diseases in the world. Such a disease is very rampant among the students. In the Bombay University, when a doctor examined the students, he found 89% of the students suffering from one disease or the other. In the state of Bengal, 98% of the students are sick. If we look at the students, they look nice and appear as if they are swans, but their health is rapidly deteriorating. For external appearances, the students look quite healthy but, in fact, they are not at all healthy. In many ways, they let their minds go astray and day after day, they are ruining their health. This is the reason why the quality of *thamo guna* and thinking of diverse things at one time is becoming more and more common amongst them. Today, concentration on one chosen aspect is very necessary for the students. In order to show the value of concentration to the world, the *gopikas* may be cited as excellent examples. Whatever work they did, and wherever they went, their mind was fully concentrated on Krishna. They were never allowing their minds to run in different directions. They always had full control over their minds. Today, our mind is not under our control, our organs are not under our control, our likes and dislikes are not under our control, our hunger is not under our control. As is often the case, your body is in the presence of the Lord in the temple, but your mind is thinking of the shoes that have been left outside. Thus, we concentrate on things that are of no value to all. Today, people sit in meditation, but after they sit for a very short while, the mosquitoes start bothering them and their mind turns on the mosquitoes. Alternatively, it may be an ant that moves on the back that attracts your mind. Our actions are changing accordingly. The room in which we wish to meditate is located next to the kitchen. If in the kitchen, the wife is cooking some vegetables, your mind concentrates on the vegetables and you ask yourself whether the vegetables are

frying well. We are sitting in meditation only for external appearances, but our thoughts go in various directions and are attracted by trivial things. If we do not understand the manner of acquiring *Vidya* or *avidya*, we cannot do anything well. Just as *avidya* will give lack of peace, sometimes even *Vidya*, if not understood properly, will give lack of peace. There is an example for this. If there is a knife, it can be used for cutting vegetables or doing good things and also for harming and troubling others. Although the knife is one and the same, our thoughts determine whether it is used for good or bad. In the same manner, when we use our education along the right path, it becomes a friend and it gives good results. The same education will become our enemy when we put it to improper use. In that context, the students should realise how they can use their education in the right path. As it has been said: "Slow and steady wins the race." The students should make an attempt to undertake their work in a slow and steady manner.

Thus, there are many things that we can learn from the *gopikas*. The different paths they had adopted, the words they had used, and the work they did should all be learnt by us. We should learn the quality of forbearance that they had. We should also recognise the kind of sisterly relationship that existed between them. Truly, when so many *gopikas* were trying to reach Krishna, there are bound to be differences and quarrels amongst them. There was no place for jealousy in their minds. Absence of jealousy was their characteristic feature. Today, there is a lot of jealousy even with regard to a very small matter. If a student gets a first class or a first rank, the other students feel jealous. They do not work hard and get a rank but they feel jealous when others get it. This is why in the eighth chapter of *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna cautioned Arjuna saying, "Do not become a jealous person." If one always wants to find blemish in others, one starts with the quality of jeal-

ousy. The disease gradually spreads and you will try to find fault with your own *Guru* and even with God. The quality of jealousy, once it begins, will neither have a limit nor a direction. It will flow in all directions in an uncontrolled manner. In the *gopikas*, there was no feeling of jealousy at all. If one *gopika* was suffering from separation from Krishna, all the other *gopikas* would go and console her. They used to tell her that they were all sharing her concern and separation and they thus consoled her. Even while thus consoling, they were uttering the name of Govinda, Damodara, Madhava and so on. In this manner, they were always thinking of Lord Krishna. How can any ordinary human being acquire such qualities of equal-mindedness, forbearance and absence of jealousy? The *gopikas* were such that they had done a great deal of good in their earlier lives. If we look at their capacity for concentration, it was indeed exemplary. They would never think of anything else. Even if they had seen very fearful things, they maintained perfect equanimity. It was difficult to find people, in the Gokulam, who did not blame the *gopikas*. Generally, men talk very lightly about women. There are very few men who recognise the sacredness contained in women.

On one day, a new daughter-in-law had come to Gokulam. Her name was Suguna. As soon as they saw her, all the *gopikas* were telling her how lucky she was to have come to Gokulam as a daughter-in-law as that gave her an opportunity to be close to the Lord and sing his glory. They used to tell her about Krishna whenever they met at the water tank or in the market place. In Gokulam, there was an ancient practice. Such a practice continues even now in some villages. In the veranda of a wealthy person, a lamp would be lighted every evening and all the villagers would come and light their lamps from that lamp. Nanda was not only a wealthy person, but also God Himself was born in his house in the form of Krishna. The

people of the village believed that if they lighted the lamp in that house, they will all get a share of Nanda's good fortune. Suguna, the new daughter-in-law took the wick from her house and went to Nanda's house to light the lamp. From the afternoon, she was anxiously waiting for the time to come when she could go and see the place where Krishna lived. In her mind, there were only sacred thoughts. In Suguna, such divine thoughts were unwavering. She reached Nanda's house with such thoughts. She went into the veranda and tried to light her lamp. She was looking at the interior of the house in the hope that she would see Krishna. In fact all her thoughts were focused on Krishna. When she was immersed in such thoughts, the flame spread to her hand but she knew nothing of it. She instantly saw Krishna's form in the lamp. She forgot all about herself when she was looking at Krishna's form. She became ecstatic and lost himself. Yasoda, the mother, saw this from inside and quickly dragged Suguna's hand from the flames and scolded her by saying that she should not forget herself in that manner. Although she was being scolded, Suguna's attention was directed only towards the lamp and Krishna's form. Although Yasoda was dragging Suguna away, she was going towards the lamp. Yasoda realised this situation and understood that Krishna was granting his divine vision to Suguna. She quickly came to the market place and asked several *gopikas* to come and see Suguna having Krishna's *darshan*. All the *gopikas* came running and saw this scene. For a moment, they forgot their own selves and sang ecstatically, "To our Suguna, Krishna has given his *darshan* and she lost herself in watching his form. She even burnt her own hand." Suguna's concentration was the cause for this *darshan* of the Lord. Whatever we concentrate on, it should get imprinted on our mind. The *gopikas* were experiencing such situations because of their concentration. The *gopikas* used to sleep outside the houses looking after their children; but whenever they heard the divine flute,

they used to forget everything and run in the direction of the sound. They were confident of their actions, they had the courage that whatever they did was sacred and so they did not care for what others might say. Because they had tremendous self-confidence, they were able to concentrate and think of God. We are always afraid of what the world would say and also afraid of the diversity of our own thoughts. When we do good things, there is no reason why we should be afraid of the world. Your thoughts are yours and your happiness should be yours. Many people go to a temple and put on *vibhuthi*, but they rub it off as soon as they come out, thinking that their friends will laugh at them. Why should they go to the temple when they have no courage to do it? Why is it that you are afraid to say that you have gone to a temple and that you have your own faith? Why can you not say that you have your faith and that you are not a slave to someone else's ideas? There is a great deal for us to learn from the actions of the *gopikas*. Their courage and self-confidence are indeed exemplary. It is also necessary for us to have a certain amount of self-confidence. For sorrow or for pleasure, for defeat or for victory, we should develop the courage to meet them with equanimity.

If an individual acquires some level of prosperity, so long as he lives, he keeps on feeling that the land belongs to him. After he dies, his son inherits the same land. The son feels that the land is his. If the son gets into economic difficulties and sells it away, the person who purchases it says that the land belongs to him. Here, the father claimed the land as his own; the son also claimed the land as his own, and the purchaser also claims the land as his. To whom does this land really belong? The land, looking at all this, feels that it does not belong to anyone. Individuals come and go and no one can acquire the land. The *gopikas* always felt that their thoughts were their own and that they would not follow the dictates of

others' thoughts. When we talk of women, we have the feeling that they are weak people, but this is not so. They are the embodiments of *Sakthi*. In *Bhagavad Gita* it is said that God resides in women with seven different types of strength while in a man he resides only with three such aspects. Thus, in women, divinity exists to a great extent. There is a small example for this—you should not misunderstand or misinterpret this example. For the entire country of Bharath there is a commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and under his control, there will be millions of soldiers. When the General walks in, all the soldiers will literally shiver. This General, who can be the cause of fear to so many people, when he comes home, he himself shivers in the presence of his wife. There is so much strength in a woman and the world is able to go on, because of this strength. A woman is like a field, while man is just like a seed. If we do not have a field, the seed cannot sprout. For all life on earth, woman is responsible. Great people, great saints and even great *Avatars* have come into this world because of the help given by a woman functioning as a mother. Thus, the strength of a woman is really very sacred. The *gopikas* were such that they provided lustre to the very womanhood. Whether in the matter of patience or forbearance or friendship, they showed exemplary conduct. It is wrong to regard this sacred path adopted by the *gopikas* as something trivial. This sacred devotion shown by the *gopikas* and by Radha should remain ideal examples for all time. The *Yugas* may have gone and the life styles may have changed, but the ideals of the *gopikas* and the *leelas* of Krishna have stood the test of time and they are always fresh. All these actions of *gopikas* were representative of the actions of the *jiva* with respect to *Brahman*. The inner significance of this is to say that our mind is the Brindavan and our ideas are the *gopikas*. The *Jiva* is Radha and *Atma* is Krishna. Thus, in the Brindavan of our heart, the *jiva* in the form of Radha, along with the ideas in the form of

gopikas are performing *leelas* with *Atma*. Do not be under the impression that Brindavan was somewhere and the *leelas* of Krishna were performed there. Regard your heart as Brindavan and yourself as Radha and surrender yourself to Krishna, the Lord. Your thoughts must be like the thoughts of the *gopikas*. Unsacred and impure ideas should not enter your minds. If the students shape themselves in this manner, they will be able to revive the ancient glory of this great country.