

44. Pursue the path of good and Godliness

Can a donkey carrying perfume become an elephant? Can an ass change into an elephant simply by carrying a bundle of sandalwood? It can appreciate the weight but not the scent! But the elephant pays no regard to the weight; it inhales the sweet scent, right? So too, the spiritual aspirant, renunciant, or devotee will take in only the pure truth, the pure essence of good activities, of Godliness, and of the scriptures, *Vedas*, and *Upanishads*. On the other hand, one who goes on arguing for the sake of mere scholarship, learning, and disputation will know only the weight of logic and missing the scent of truth! Onlookers may praise one as the embodiments of the scriptures and *Vedas*, but where even the essentials are lacking, how can there be an embodiment? For those in search of the essence, the burden is no consideration. If mere reason is employed, nothing worthwhile is gained. Love (*prema*) is the one big instrument for the constant remembrance of the Lord. Keeping that instrument safe and strong needs no other appliance than the scabbard of discrimination (*viveka*).

Many in the world utilise their vast learning in disputations and believe they are superior; this is a great mistake. If they really were so learned, there would not be so much disputation at all. They would assume silence as the honourable course, because those exalted in learning will have experienced the essence of the *Vedas*, scriptures, and *Upanishads*. They will see that the nature of that essence, its core, the purity of the Godhead it proclaims, are all One, however one may realise It. They know that God appears in whatever form He is taken to have and that He manifests in action to anyone the feelings that that person associates with Him.

45. Practise single-minded devotion and equanimity

What is important is not the acquisition of argumentativeness but the acquisition of single-mindedness, equanimity, and freedom from likes and dislikes. Why have all these spiritual disciplines, this chanting, meditation, devotional singing, etc.? Isn't it for acquiring single-mindedness, one-pointedness? Once that one-pointedness has been earned, human effort becomes unnecessary, its inner significance will then be revealed.

So, those eager to become spiritual aspirants, to attain salvation, should not yield to arguments and counter-arguments. They should not be enticed by the wiles of bad feeling. They should see their own faults and not repeat them again. They should guard and protect the one-pointedness they have acquired, with their eyes fixed on the goal they are after, dismissing as trash whatever difficulties, defeats, and disturbances they encounter on their path. They must dwell on subjects that would give enthusiasm and joy and not waste valuable time building up doubts regarding all things, big and small.