

62. Consider the name of the Lord as the breath of life

Of the various types of devotion, remembrance of the name (*nama-smarana*) is best. In the *Kali* era (*yuga*), the name is the path for saving oneself. Jayadeva, Gouranga, Thyagara, Tukaram, Kabir, Ramdas—all these great devotees attained the Lord through just this one practice. Why speak of a thousand things? Even Prahlada and Druva were able to enjoy the sight, touch, and conversation (*darshan*, *sparshan*, and *sambhasana*) of the Lord through only repetition of the name, right?

There can be no better path to liberation (*mukhti*) than considering the name of the Lord as the very breath of life and, with complete faith in good deeds and thoughts, developing the spirit of service and equal love for all. Instead of this, if one sits in some solitary nook holding the breath, how can one master the innate qualities? How is one to know that one has mastered them? Devotion like Ambarisha's and activities like Durvasa's—the combination of these two will result in the fate of Durvasa himself; at least, in the end, Durvasa must fall at Ambarisha's feet. May you avoid becoming such Thrisankus; may you experience the eternal truth and achieve the genuine state.

63. Watch out for your own faults and cultivate the truthful and joyful

Every person is liable to commit mistakes without being aware of it. However bright the fire or light, some smoke will emanate from it. So also, whatever good deed a person might do, mixed with it will be a minute trace of evil. But efforts should be made to ensure that the evil is minimised, that the good is more and the bad is less. Naturally, in the present atmosphere, you may not succeed in the very first attempt. You must carefully think over the consequences of whatever you do, talk, or execute.

In whatever way you want others to honour you, or to love you, or to behave with you, in the same way you should first behave with others and love and honour them. Then only will those honour you. Instead, without yourself honouring and loving others, if you complain that they are not treating you properly, it is surely a wrong conclusion.

Besides, if those who advise others about “which principles are right, which are true and good, which conduct is best? etc.” would only follow the advice themselves, there would be no need to give the advice at all. Others would learn the lesson simply by example. Instead, *Vedanta* spoken parrot-like to others, without any attempt to put it into practice in one's own conduct, not only deceives others but is even worse; it deceives oneself. You must be as you want others to be.

It is not the nature of a spiritual aspirant to search for faults in others and hide their own. If your faults are pointed out to you by someone, don't argue and try to prove that you were right, and don't bear a grudge against them for it. Reason out within yourself how it is a fault and set right your own behaviour. Rationalising it for your own satisfaction or wreaking vengeance on the person who pointed it out—these are certainly not the traits of a spiritual aspirant or devotee.

The spiritual aspirant should always seek the truthful and joyful and must avoid all thoughts of the untrue, sad and depressing. Depression, doubt, conceit—these are as *Rahu* and *Kethu* to the spiritual aspirant. They will harm one's spiritual practice. When one's devotion is well established, they can be easily discarded if they appear.

Above all, it is best for the spiritual aspirant to be joyful, smiling, and enthusiastic under all circumstances.

Even more than devotion and spiritual wisdom, this pure attitude is desirable. Those who have acquired it deserve to reach the goal first. This quality of joy at all times is the fruit of the good done in past births. A person who is ever worried, depressed, and doubting can never attain bliss, whatever spiritual practice is done. The first task of a spiritual aspirant is the cultivation of enthusiasm. Through that enthusiasm, any variety of spiritual bliss (*ananda*) can be derived.

Never get inflated when praised or deflated when blamed. Be a spiritual lion, regardless of both. Analyse yourself and correct your faults; this is most important.