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Affection & Sympathy – Not Blamingness

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Amidst all these activities related to the construction of Annakshetra, I have been thinking about the people here, especially these three youngsters and their interactions. To some extent, I have spoken to them, and also listened to them, trying to understand their minds. What I find is that they are not in the path of **affection for each other**. This is true not only of them, but of many others too. So, what I am saying is applicable to all.

In the field of devotion, one thing is absolutely essential. Devotees should learn to **accept everything** and all in the name of God. Especially, they must accept fellow devotees.

Generally, a thief is somebody whom we can never like or accept. But when you become a devotee, you **cannot dislike a thief**. His action is wrong, and therefore in a way, the actor is also wrong. Still, you cannot denounce a thief. You yourself need not be a thief. You need not invite a thief to your house. You need not encourage him to steal. You need not accept or store the stolen articles. But in the mind level, you must not hate him! Why? Because the God whom you love and adore is **present in everyone**; He is equally present in the thief. As He is present in the virtuous man, so also He is present in the vicious. When you recognize him thus everywhere, you will see the 'Oneness' of the universe.

Until the devotee reaches this wonderful realization of Oneness, I don't think the devotion has been fully accomplished. Without this, the devotion cannot fulfill the devotee. This proposition may create a conflict

and contradiction in the mind. It is natural. The buddhi will have to think repeatedly and rise above the conflicts and contradictions:

नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टानुपश्यति ।
गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेत्ति मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति ॥

Bhagavadgītā (14.19)

A man reaches the Supreme state when he sees nothing other than three guṇas of prakṛti as the 'doer'. He transcends the guṇas.

Prakṛti's guṇas alone operate everywhere. Nature alone causes the activities and interactions of people. The guṇas belong to Nature. So, you can never blame one or praise another. At the same time, understand that within every individual, every being, there is something beyond guṇas – that is the supreme Soul, unconditioned and unaffected. Have your **reliance on that**.

If you apply this principle, the thief is thieving because of the *tamas* and *rajas* prevailing in him. Neither the *rajo guṇa* nor the *tamo guṇa* is created by him. He was born with these and because of these he has taken to thieving. The guṇas do not belong to him – they belong to Nature. Why did Nature create these guṇas? And why was he born with these guṇas? Well, that is prakṛti; that is the system. Can you blame anybody for his birth? No. Can you blame the parents for their birth? No. Can you blame the prakṛti for what it is? No. Then where is the blame and who is to be blamed?

Do you want to have a mind that is peaceful, joyous, clear and expansive? Then you have to **get rid of blaminess**, and reach or strive for this wonderful state of love and oneness. This being so, why is it that you are not able to progress from this constricted state of non-acceptance? Why this lack of fondness for each other? The cause is that there is no readiness; there is no persistence in you. The **austerity** that keeps one in the path of expansion is **missing**.

Vāchaspati Mīśra was writing the *īkā* (commentary) on Śankarācārya's *bhāshyas* on *Brahmasūtras*. He was so absorbed in his

work that he forgot everything else. He did not even notice that his wife was beside him until he completed. The wife had been serving him for years. Her hair had become grey by then. After completing the work, when Vāchaspati Mīśra was relaxed, he found a lady sleeping in his room. When he enquired who the lady was, she replied: “Don’t you know? I am your wife!”

Can you imagine the patience and fondness with which she served and remained by his side, unseen and unnoticed? That is austerity!

My dear children, think well. You have come to this place not for playfulness. You have not come here for developing your academic or worldly career and pursuits. You have not come here to judge, to appreciate or blame others and to recount the stories of the household. You have come here to understand and **imbibe noble qualities** from the stories of great men. Read Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. Read Bhagavadgītā. Let all these verses ring in your ears. Let them start pouring out from your tongue.

At every opportunity develop fondness for each other. By loving anyone sincerely – not for using the person later, but genuinely – you will only be enriched. Love is a subjective personal affair. You may even have love for the thief! Poor boy is thieving – what can be done? The mind should extend only sympathy. That is what the Maharshis felt when they saw Ratnākara and the result was that the thief got transformed, to become later the famous Vālmiki. You may not be a Maharshi, but can you not have at least a small part of the Maharshi-element in you?

Recently, there was a lot of difficulty, grief and confusion. I want to make all of you understand that I am happy that these episodes have taken place here. All of you have inflated egos. I am talking in particular about these three youngsters; but this has relevance to everybody. By these episodes you will know what it is to become pure. Everybody thinks that spirituality is walking from the house into the garden of the Ashram. A transport will bring you here and if you enter the gates of the Ashram, you will become spiritual! My dear children, spirituality is far

from that! It is to **inculcate in you purity, fondness, sympathy and sacrifice.**

Do not say that because he or she is like that, all these problems are coming up. Instead tell yourself: "In spite of all the defects she has, I will help her." Why not take this point of view and try to prevail upon her? Try to be sympathetic and effective **without blaming**. The blaming tendency is the main culprit. Without blaming, make a fond appeal and this is such a beautiful opportunity for you to grow pure. Can you not do it? When will this attitude dawn on you?

You have compiled a list of complaints about others. And then you hate them too! I am correcting you, but I do not hate you! Not only that, I will not be sorry if you are unable to do what I say. Still, I will continue to make my appeal, give my inspiration and encouragement. Why don't you follow the same method?

And then this little girl comes up with the statement: "Unless I am given enough reason, I cannot accept all these instructions. I want to know the 'why' of it." I see! Can you tell me the reason behind the existence of the world? Can you tell me why the earth is round? Can you tell me why the earth should have gravity? We can study the 'how' of everything, not the 'why'. Why is the nose placed above your mouth? It can as well be the other way! Should we concentrate on **why** a method is helpful or **whether** it is helpful?

So, I think that reason of everything cannot be demanded. And corrections in your actions and behaviour cannot wait till you are completely satisfied. Then, the day of conviction may not come at all! I am giving you the last and final reason: every action cannot wait for reason! Everything in this world cannot wait for conviction! Sometimes you have to proceed even before being convinced. Conviction, if at all, may come later.

Yesterday she was telling me: "Swamiji, I know that these defects are there in me. But I am not able to remove them." My dear girl, you should stop saying that you are unable to remove them. That you are

not able to remove them is a fact. Now, what is the action to be taken? Have you ever asked me how to remove them and what are the steps to be taken?

We very well know that left to yourself, you will not be able to remove them. That is why we give you so many instructions. Why don't you simply follow them? Then, you will find that these defects will automatically fall off in the course of a few weeks or months. In fact, pursued diligently, you may even **enjoy the sight of these defects falling off** one by one! Self-effacement is a **path of joy**. The very pursuit is joyous!

Hariḥ Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru.

Generally, a thief is one whom you can never like or accept. But when you become a devotee, you cannot dislike a thief. His action is wrong, and therefore in a way, the actor is also wrong. Still, you cannot denounce a thief. You yourself need not thieve. You need not invite a thief to your house. You need not encourage him to thieve. You need not accept or store the stolen articles. But in the mind level, you must not hate him! Why? Because the God whom you love and adore is present in everyone; He is equally present in the thief. As He is present in the virtuous man, so also He is present in the vicious. When you recognize him thus everywhere, you will see the 'Oneness' of the universe.

Obstinacy

30 Aug 2001

Hariḥ Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru. Obstinacy is a common trait exhibited by people. I do not know much about animal psychology. Here, we are concerned with human behaviour – how obstinacy affects the character and behaviour of a human being.

When do we say that a person is obstinate? What does an obstinate person do, and how does he behave? How to identify whether you have an obstinate nature or not?

See, a person sticks to his position; he does not change it. He says: "I want this to be done like this only." Or: "I want to go to a certain place." In his decision to do or in his decision to go, he is not able to come to any terms. The flexibility is not there. Rigidity overtakes him. Any such rigid note associated with any aspect of behaviour or character goes by the name obstinacy.

What I want to say is that obstinacy is dangerous. It is even sinful. Whenever people have been obstinate they have paid for it dearly. We should generally have a flexible mind. We should have a mind that is prepared to accept and assimilate any situation. Suppose a person is sick and he says: "I will not go to the hospital. I will not like to take this type of treatment or that type of treatment and it is this and it is that." This kind of attitude is another example of obstinacy.

Sometimes, obstinacy can be in a subtler form. It can even be in the sphere of intelligence. Something strikes the intelligence and the person wrongly understands that to be right. Then he holds on to it adamantly.

Any other point of view he will not accept. Some may express their obstinacy verbally while some may not express it, but inwardly the feelings may be the same. Whether he expresses his feelings or not, **his inability to accept the others' point of view, his failure to make adjustments or his refusal to correct himself is indeed a subtle form of obstinacy** – no less dangerous than the other forms.

One may become obstinate when faced with certain events or accidents in life. Here too one's reaction may become rigid. Suppose a person's wife has died and he says: "I cannot accept her death! I cannot reconcile with her departure!" and goes on lamenting, magnifying the whole thing, clinging to the unfortunate incident. Then it becomes another form of obstinacy. The right attitude will be: "My most beloved wife has died. This should not have happened, but death has been a fact. What shall I do? Either I should die along with her or I should continue to live. In living, I have to reconcile with her departure." Then his attitude becomes proper and even beneficial.

Flexibility of the mind, assimilation of the external events and reconciliation with whatever comes from persons, places and events – these are the **qualities that relieve you of affliction**.

Any obstinate note is a killing factor! It takes away peace; it takes away the blessedness; it takes away health; it destroys inner wealth; **it destroys the person**.

Kind-heartedness, contentment, compassion, generosity, sacrifice etc. elevate and expand your personality. Pride, ostentation, intolerance, obstinacy on the other hand would make the mind constricted and heavy. **The aim of spiritual life is to make the mind free of trouble or torment**.

Sri Krishna tells Uddhava the story of a crane. A crane was flying with a piece of meat in its beak. Finding a large piece of flesh in its beak many other cranes swarmed around it and they started attacking it, wanting to seize a share of the flesh. The crane concluded that the flesh is the cause of its trouble and torment. It dropped the flesh. Immediately,

all the attackers also followed the flesh falling to the earth, leaving the crane alone. Relieved of all torment and fear, the crane went up flying high in the sky, happily and freely.

If anything causes torment in your mind, the minimum that you have to do is to drop it from your mind, keep it away from you. Let it be anything. It may be born out of attachment or concern. Let it be this or that. Even if your children bring you trouble, you can say very nicely: “You are my child. My sense of responsibility makes me suffer. Hereafter, my dear son, if you don’t listen to what I say, I am not going to suffer on this account. Be prepared for your own consequence. I wish you well.” Unless the parental heart strives to foster this attitude, there will be no redress for the distress.

So, look for obstinacy in your mind – either gross or subtle. In whichever form it is there, it will never allow you to be peaceful. Remember, the best is to harmonize oneself with whatever comes. God himself accords with the heterogeneous world, where so much of corruption, evil and treachery are going on. In spite of it, God does not lose heart. He accepts everything. In the same manner you too should not have any grudge, any adverse memory about anything or anybody in the world. Come what may. This should be your attitude.

Hariḥ Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru.