

# Perception of God.

By Hanumanprasad Poddar.

A certain Gujerati getleman has asked the following questions. I have purposely omitted to give his name, since he has asked me not to publish it. I have, of course, changed the wordings of the questions here and there, while preserving the sense intact. The questions are as follows:—

1. Some saints allege that it is not possible to see God face to face in this age. Is it worth believing? If we believe it for a moment, is it a fiction that devotees like Goswami Tulasidas, Narasi Mehta and others were blessed with the sight of the soul-captivating form of the Lord?

2. Is it possible to get the beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa in front of us at close quarters and have a heart-to-heart talk with Him as you and I may meet and talk together? If so, what means should be adopted in order to be able to see that charming figure at the earliest possible date?

3. So long as these mortal eyes do not feast on that lovely form to their

satisfaction, they are of no avail. What is the surest way to make them attain their true worth?

4. A burning desire for the sight of Śrī Kṛṣṇa has been kindled in the heart; I am at a loss why it does not blaze forth and manifest itself vividly. This has made me all the more uneasy.

Along with these questions my friend has written many more things which lead one to believe that a desire to see the Lord has been kindled in his heart. Authoritative answers to these questions can be given by those exalted and revered souls who have had the rare fortune to witness that soul-enthraling divine form of the Lord. I shall also attempt to answer these questions in the light of whatever I have been able from time to time to gather from their inspired talks. Before proceeding to answer the questions, however, I should like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the questioner who has through these questions afforded me a splendid opportunity to talk of God and His

unbounded Mercy. Instead of discussing the questions individually I would prefer to treat them as one question and answer them as such in the form of an essay.

I have a strong conviction in my mind that we can certainly perceive God in this age; nay, we can do so more speedily and more easily, too, in this than in any other age. I have no doubt in my mind that that paragon of devotees, Goswami Tulasidas, Narasi Mehta, and other lovers of God actually perceived Him with their own eyes. It is open to a loving devotee to have a heart-to-heart talk with his beloved Lord, if he so desires, like two chummies. Of course, the devotee must have reached that stage where this sort of communion is possible and permissible. We have records of the lives of numerous devotees which bear testimony to this fact. A burning and intense desire to see the Lord is the best means of speedily obtaining His *darshan*. It is not very difficult to obtain His divine vision if we pine for His sight in the same way as a drowning person is impatient to come out of water. Of course, our pining should be real and not artificial. The Lord cannot help appearing in person before that blessed devotee who feels the same type of natural and genuine agony for the Lord as one feels when he is on the point of losing one's only son or when one's honour and prestige that he and his family have enjoyed for centuries past is at stake. Such agony is experienced only when the devotee comes to recognize God as above everything else in the world, when he returns his back on all sense-enjoyments

of this world and the next as altogether worthless and of no consequence and has surrendered his all—his life, property, power, honour, sense of decorum, worldly duties and religious obligations, at the feet of his beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The sage Nārada has defined Devotion ( भक्ति ) as surrendering all one's actions to God and feeling great uneasiness in forgetting Him—'तदपि तास्मिन् चारता तद्विस्मरणे परम-व्याकुलता' ( *Bhakti Sūtras*, 9 ). So long as the desire for worldly enjoyments persists, so long as the transitory things of the world appeal to us as attractive, delightful and gratifying to the senses, and so long as we relish them, it should be understood that we have not vacated the heart fully for the occupation of the Lord. Goswami Tulasidas has said in one of his songs:—

जो मोहि राम लागते मीठे ।

तौ नवरस षटरस रस अनरस हूँ जाते सब सीठे ॥

“Had I got the least attraction for the Lord, all other attractions would have disappeared.”

The response that we get from God is commensurate with the room we allot to Him in our heart. So long as we do not keep our whole heart open for His occupation, so long as the love of our heart does not flow in a ceaseless stream towards the Lord, we cannot experience a pang of separation from Him; so long as we do not pine for the Lord He, too, would not pine for us. For, the following is His watchword:—

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।

“However men approach Me, even so do I receive them.”

When the devotee gets absorbed in thoughts of the Lord and, renouncing his house and property, wife and son, this world and the next, joy and sorrow, honour and ignominy, like one intoxicated, pines for the Lord, when he cannot bear even a moment's separation from Him as a fish taken out of water, when the pangs of separation make him restless like the blessed cow-maids of Brindaban, he can obtain a vision of the Lord in no time. But we do not generally experience that sort of agony for the Lord. That is why His *darshan* is being withheld from us. Have we ever in the whole span of our life striven for His *darshan* or pined for Him as much as we do for wealth and progeny, honour and fame. Almost all of us knock about from one place to another and clamour for wealth and honour which are so trifling. Have we ever shed a tear out of real agony for the Lord? Such being the case, how can we murmur against our inability to obtain His *darshan*. Do we ever long for His vision? No, we have given over full possession of our heart to dirty sense-enjoyments of the world. Is there any one who can maintain his equanimity when afflicted by a strong appetite or parching thirst? Our craving for sense-enjoyments and indifference towards God, however, shows that we are not yet athirst for His vision, our soul does not hunger for Him. The moment we feel athirst for Him we shall not be able to bear the sight of anything else than God. Our mind would then withdraw from everything else and would be absorbed in His thoughts. Just as, on our acquiring the sovereignty of a vast empire, our mind would naturally turn away from a

business which yields us a profit of a few farthings only, similarly, the biggest enjoyments of the world would then appear to us as trivial and dry. Then we shall have no attraction left in our mind for the world and will be reminded at every moment of the delightful and comely appearance of the Lord. The only reason why we do not feel fully drawn towards the Lord in spite of His being supremely delightful and lovely, is that we have not yet realized His true worth and real greatness. That is why we have turned our backs on His nectar-like form and are knocking about day and night for worldly enjoyments, which are like sweets mixed with poison, and, partaking of them, meet with repeated deaths. It is not so difficult to obtain His vision as to have a genuine and exclusive longing for the same. The Lord, who is eternal and omnipresent, is to be found everywhere at all times. How, then, can it be believed that He is not open to perception in a particular age. Those who say like that are either lacking in faith or they have never had an opportunity to understand the true nature of God.

There is no doubt about the fact that the true worth of the eyes can be realized only when they are enabled to have the ever-new world-captivating form of the Lord constantly before them and feast on the same with an insatiable passion. But, so long as these eyes do not get divinised through His grace they are precluded from obtaining a vision of that maddening beauty. The supreme mental agony that we have referred to above is the surest way to divinise them and make them

attain their true value. The blessed gentleman who has the fire of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa blazing in his heart deserves all praise. This fire does not generally manifest itself, and, whenever the agony of separation becomes altogether unbearable for the devotee and bursts forth into expression, it instantaneously burns away the whole stock of his sins and afflictions and makes him mad with love. At that moment the devotee forgets everything in his madness, like the cow-maids of Vraja, and, impatient to meet his beloved Lord, invokes Him with his whole strength and zeal. It is at this moment that he is blessed with the Divine vision of the Lord, and he sees Him in the same form in which he wishes to see Him and His communion and talk, too, is of the same nature as he may have desired before.

In order to reach this consummation, an aspirant should try to understand a bit of the incomparable greatness of God, through association with saints, and generate in his heart some love for God through constant meditation on Him and repetition of His name. In proportion as the heart gets filled with Divine love it will be emptied of sensual enjoyments; and, in this way, the moment he is able to vacate the whole of his heart for the enthronement of the Lord, he will feel great agony in his heart for the Lord and this agony, becoming very acute, will create an agony of equal intensity in the heart of the Lord and compel Him to appear before the devotee. And then the hour will not be far when the blessed union of the devotee and his Lord will take place, rendering the whole earth sacred thereby.

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## Prayer.

By Satyananda.

Now come my Love, and sit by me,  
The hungry soul so craveth Thee,  
The aching heart doth throb so low,  
That life can thus no further flow.

The founts have lost the inner stream,  
The jet is clos'd, the sparkling gleam,  
The humming note of falling spray,  
Enchant no more the swarming gay.

Thou art to me my all-in-all,  
My light and hope, inspiring call,  
My lute and flute, my earthly star,  
For without Thee I cannot stir.

Prayer and thought of this abode,  
The spirit of the clayey mould,  
The dazzling fire of wintry day,  
And Thou the subject of my lay.

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