

## Bhagavata Dharma.

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The Transcendental Realm, or the Kingdom of God as the Bible would put it, has nothing in common with this region of three dimensions; it is something which is categorically different from whatever comes within the purview of our mundane senses in this vast creation. Neither the charming beauty-spots of this world nor the spacious and fascinating cities built on the most modern lines of town-planning and equipped with all the comfort-giving contrivances which science could invent, can even dream of standing comparison to it. It is not reachable either by railways or airways. It is a sphere transcending the material world and as such entirely beyond the ken of the fleshy eye. Everyone of its planes is pure, eternal and spiritual. Both mind and speech spring back even from its approaches

*The Transcendental Realm.*

as they are utterly incompetent to comprehend its ultra-mundane situation. As stated in the Upaniṣad, "the brilliance of the sun, moon, stars and even the lightning pales into nothing before Its effulgence; what avails then the poor fire with its feeble flames? The light in every thing in creation is a borrowed ray of Its self-effulgence and everything in creation comes to light only by Its own revealing rays of Divine Light." Even the Bible says in reference to this sphere that "there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord giveth them Light." In such a transcendental and spiritual sphere rests eternally the Lord of the Universe, and if we could but love Him "with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength and with all our mind", the Lord gets mightily

pleased with our love, and when we have discarded our mortal coil, we are mercifully admitted into His realm to render direct and eternal service to Him in that blissful region.

What we call pleasure or happiness in this mortal world is but a fleeting phantom. It fades away the very moment of its appearance. This Universe is truly said to be a "vale of tears." "Man that is born of a woman is of few days; and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down; he fleeth also like a shadow, and continueth not." The human life is full of crosses and privations. Sage Patañjali declares that to the discriminating, pain appears to be ingrained in every mundane object for the reason that everything in creation brings on pain either as a consequence or by way of anticipating loss of comfort or as fresh craving arising from the impressions retained of happiness once enjoyed or even as a counteraction of qualities. We shall try to examine how this is true.

We all know that food is essential for the life of a human being. Our very existence is jeopardised in the absence of food. Besides, our body is ever a nestling place for all kinds of ailments that flesh is heir to. Even such opposites as heat, cold and the like count amongst them and are a source of eternal annoyance and distraction to us. Both the present and prospective experiences of this kind of the body and mind goad us on to work for avoiding

them and for this purpose we have to subject this very twofold tabernacle of ours to the hard and painful task of earning a livelihood. A house to live in appears then to be of utmost necessity for comfortable life. But this could not be had unless some money is found for it by our physical or mental labour. The comfort of our life, especially of domestic life, cannot be said to be fully ensured unless one marries and has offspring. When, by degrees, old age creeps in and takes charge of our body, we are practically lost to this world though appearing to be living in it. We will then have neither relish for anything, nor do we feel perseverant in any of our undertakings. Senility and imbecility gain supremacy over us and subject us to intolerable and hellish suffering as we can neither enjoy a thing heartily nor renounce it altogether with all our heart. Not content with that inevitable lot of ours which is but the natural result of the working of Time on our ephemeral bodies, we make frantic efforts at undoing its work perhaps by undergoing the ridiculous process of the so-called rejuvenation for getting a new lease of life wherewith to enjoy, like King Yayati of old, a repetition of the pleasures of youth, if not eternal youth, the *ignis fatuus* of earth bound lives.

In fact, there is no unmixed happiness in the mundane career of the fallen soul. The momentary absence of pain and the sense of relief felt when a particular want of ours is

*The Vale of  
Tears*

*Pure bliss in  
theistic life*

adequately supplied are appraised by us as positive pleasures, and we delude ourselves into actually enjoying them, relishing them and even feeling satisfied over them. We would have found ourselves perfectly lucky if we had been "fed up" with these evanescent pleasures even in the earliest period of our lives. But when such was not the case, they do persist in affecting and attracting us as long as we have not developed transcendental life when, of course, they melt away as mist before the sun. Enduring and unalloyed bliss is therefore found only in transcendental life; but the latter requires to be built on the bedrock of theism and love and service to the Godhead, if the former were to be eternal and reciprocative.

Service to the Godhead is best performed when commenced at an early age in human life. We may miss it altogether if the same is deferred to the closing years of our lives to finish in the meanwhile the manifold and variegated enjoyment of the sum-total of the fleeting pleasures as are obtained in this world. We should not fail to remember that a day lost in worldly pursuits is an opportunity missed in our precious life. So it behoves us to take to the pleasing and loving service to the Godhead the very moment when we have known and realized the duties and responsibilities of human life, which the Scriptures, Sages and Śāstras emphatically declare as a rare and priceless possession of the

*Early commencement of Lord's service.*

Jīva. But experience tells us that the same is of very short duration. None can divine when Death is going to snatch us away, having laid its relentless and icy hands on us.

It is wrong to say that boyhood is not the proper period for serving the Godhead. We have instances in our epics and other ancient literature of our country of the astounding and unparalleled services rendered to the Absolute by Dhruva and Prahlāda as little children of very tender age which drew the admiration of even the saints of old and resulted in blessings to them of the shape of Darśan and mercy of God. When such things were possible even in the case of mere babes and sucklings, it would be ridiculous to say that man as an adult may fail in such attempts even in spite of his sincerity and constant application. We will however do well to remember that a thing once commenced to be done and practised with fixity of purpose during the early and impressionable age of a human being, gradually develops into a habit and ultimately gets ingrained in him as his second nature.

Service to the Godhead is actuated generally by the following motives consistent with the dispositions and predilections found in mankind. Fear, hope, duty and love are their fourfold classification. Fear is the prime cause or incentive for those who worship God in view to save themselves from hell and eternal damnation, wants and privations, disease and death and the like. Those who hanker after

*The fourfold incentive to Lord's service.*

worldly comforts, material advancement, sensual pleasures and the like worship God actuated by hope, but they little remember that "it is more blessed to give than to receive". But there are cases where although God-worship was at the outset actuated by fear or hope, the blissful experience derived even from such second-rate worship gradually enabled the votary to develop pure and unalloyed devotion to the lotus-feet of Bhagavān, which naturally eliminates both such fear and hope. Those who worship Him out of mere gratitude for being their Creator and Father and the Lord of the Universe as well, do so guided solely by a sense of duty. Those who have natural predilection for God-worship and are drawn to it as if goaded by a hidden power within and not by the above mentioned threefold influence, worship Him out of Love. It is they that are privileged to say. "In Him we live and move and have our being. \* \* \* \* For we are also His offsprings." Love is defined as the constitutional disposition of mind propelled by which the latter runs, as if helpless and heedless of consequence, after any object of its perception; and when the tide of such disposition begins to flow in one's mind the moment Bhagavān is thought of, that blessed soul instantly ceases to be of this world though appearing to be transacting with it, and he is said to worship God by the mere momentum of Love.

Service to God performed under the impelling force of fear, hope or duty can never be said to be a correct or

*Service through  
Love.*

perfect one. Those who worship Him out of pure and unmixed Love are the correct aspirants, as it is they that remember that God is Love. There is a secret tie of eternal kinship between Jīva and Īśvara and that kinship is revealed only when pure love for God appears in a Jīva. Although the kinship of Jīva and Īśvara is eternal, the former is not aware of the same in his fallen state. But this kinship cannot continue to be dormant when the Jīva becomes alive to the reciprocity of love that subsists between himself and Īśvara. It becomes fully manifest as the result of assiduous spiritual endeavours on the part of the Jīva just as the latent fire becomes manifest when a match is struck against the phosphorated surface of a match-box or when sufficient friction is brought about between a ball of iron and a piece of flint. There are again some cases in which this eternal kinship happened to be discovered by virtue of the uninterrupted constancy in the Bhajana of the practicant although the same was actually commenced to be performed at the outset being motivated by fear, hope or duty as stated already.

Let us take the instance of Dhruva. The Hindu scripture says that prince Dhruva worshipped the Lord for the sake of power and pelf. But during the period of his spiritual Sādhana there gleamed forth within his heart a mellow ray of Divine Love which revealed the hidden tie of his kinship with the Godhead and disillusioned him of the futility of boons for worldly comforts. When

the great Lord appeared before Dhruva in response to his earnest prayers, and was ready to confer the desired boon, he exclaimed thus in his ecstatic mood—"O my Lord ! True it is that I performed austerities for the sake of power and elevation; but now I have before me the very Lord who is inaccessible even to the saints and Shining Ones. I have indeed tumbled upon a priceless gem while groping for a mere piece of glass. In this, my Lord, I am more than recompensed, and I have no boon to ask of Thee !" This single instance should suffice to testify to the super-excellence of Bhāgavata Dharma which transforms the career of a godward-soul from its initial self-centred stage into one of utter selflessness and absolute and unqualified surrender which is verily the commencement and crowning glory of theistic life.

*Service through duty* Fear and hope are always considered by the adherents of Bhāgavata Dharma as worthless, if not despicable,

incentives for the service or worship of the Godhead. Both hold complete sway over the mind of the spiritual aspirant as long as the same is not purged of selfishness; but when once it gets pure and selfless, the Sādhaka discards both fear and hope and serves God guided mainly by a sense of duty. This sense of duty continues to be the sole incentive for the worship of God until Pure Love for the Lord appears in the heart of a Jīva. Worship motivated by duty naturally welcomes both rules of discipline and knowledge and observance of interdictions, and as such is in strict accordance with Śāstra. Śāstra is defined as the synthetic record of rules and interdictions devised by God-men for guidance in the day-to-day life of a Jīva in his transcendental march for the attainment of the All-Love, and the same needs be scrupulously and respectfully followed until spontaneity of love for God has come to stay as the constituent feature of the Jīva.

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