

In the inmost recesses of the Heart

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I was meditating on Sri Krishna. It was a charming vision. All around me was an unlimited and unfathomable expanse of blue water. The waves were rising high. In the midst of the water appeared a small banyan tree. On one of its leaves was a small babe. The child was laughing merrily, Its teeth shone like flashes of lightning. Beautiful ruddy lips, flowing locks of hair holding the foremost toe of one of its feet in the mouth with the help of its pretty little hands, smiling yet—and myself looking at the charming figure with unwinking eyes while struggling through the waters. A joyous sight, indeed, and I forgot everything else, including myself. So many Shri Krishnas !

One day, I began to ponder over this. Thoughts of all kinds began to pour in quite

unwittingly. I thought, the Lord is present every where, why should I try to visualise Him at one particular place ? This thought let loose an unlimited flow of atoms of all types in front of me. All the atoms had some peculiar properties of their own, but I had little concern with those atoms. My hungry eyes sought for my most beloved Sri Krishna in them and so, He came, with the same smiling face. The very same face, I must say, with no difference whatsoever. The only difference, if any, was that this time He came in untold numbers, whereas on previous occasions He always came singly. I found the charming face, the same beautiful vision in each one of those atoms. There was no ocean and no banyan tree. The sky and the ethereal region had also vanished. There was an unlimited and unending flow of

Sri Krishna. I looked at the sight in a state of wonder, suspense and complete forgetfulness of self.

Unity in diversity :

Then another question arose in my mind. In this flow of innumerable Sri Krishnas what is that which divides one Sri Krishna from another? Is it that peculiar quality termed as Vishesa in Vaisesika Philosophy which distinguishes one atom from another? No, that too is full of Sri Krishnas. Is it, then, the primal Energy or Nature (Prakriti) which divides one Sri Krishna from another? No, how can nature divide Sri Krishna, the Divine? This time I saw there were no separate Sri Krishnas. There was one undifferentiated effulgent mass of unlimited, infinite, blissful Consciousness, in which there was no distinction of atoms, not any material property of Nature. I myself was not there, how, then could I see anything?

How long I remained in that state of absorption I can not say. At last I woke up from that day-dream and

found myself surrounded once more by the same limitless expanse of water with the same banyan tree and the same little babe by my side, myself struggling in the ocean even as before. I thought, when everything is Sri Krishna what then is this ocean, this banyan tree, this sky and what am I? He Himself is everything. All these forms are His. In whatever colour we may see him, blue, yellow, white or red, this much is certain that all are His colours. The various forms and that which differentiates them, all are one—the same Sri Krishna, my beloved Sri Krishna.

Everything is He :

Well, then, He alone exists in all these forms. He alone has adopted all these forms. Nay, He is all these forms. What does, then, this variety of forms mean—this ocean, the banyan tree, the sky and all that? When the Reality is one, why this variety of names? Do these various names signify various objects, or do they denote the same object? Are the generic properties of the

ocean, the banyan tree and the sky different, or is the Reality behind all these phenomena the same? In the abstract all are one, Not only their underlying meaning but their obvious significance is Unity. This thought at once filled me with delight. I arrived at the conclusion that all names are God's names, all words denote Him alone. All sound, audible or inaudible, meaningless, differentiated or undifferentiated sing in dulcet tunes the praises of the Lord, and the song itself, the words of which it is composed, and their meaning, everything is He.

He is Omni-Present :

All forms are Divine, all names are Divine, and if there is anything beyond these name and forms, it is also Divine. To forget this truth is the root cause of all evil and to correct this error is the highest endeavour. The Divine is always by our side. We are safe and secure in His arms. We are ever sporting with Him and we live in His protecting care. We float in the boundless ocean of His mercy, we breath in the atmosphere of His grace. This,

Chintamani]

too, is a truism that whenever we think of Him as something far away from us and run to catch hold of Him, we really forget that He is present everywhere, that the point from which we have started, the destination we are aiming at and the whole intervening space are covered by the same Lord after whom we are running. We should, therefore, give up the idea of seeking God elsewhere and dispel the mistaken notion here and now that He is not with us, The Lord is already by our side. He is ever, everywhere and in every way present with us. This is the barest Truth, and indisputable and established fact.

His game of hide and seek :

But I forget this fact. It appears as if He plays the game of hide and seek with me. Bnt I forget this fact too. I am unable to see Him. All names and forms are His, but of what use are they to me? This body, its relations, wealth, honour, prestige and so many other things come in my way and so much entangle in them that I forget my own soul, Sri Krishna,

and am debarred from obtaining His blessed vision. I weep and cry, stumble and fall, and knock about here and there in search of these frail things of the world: O the misery of it? The same substance, the same Krishna everywhere, there has never been nor could there be any change in the Reality, but the change has occurred in my mind, in my outlook, and due to this change the Reality appears to have changed and I have to suffer for this mistake of mine. From this very day, therefore, let me choose and adopt any of the multitudinous forms of the Lord, any of His countless names. Instead of changing the object of my love, let me try to change my outlook. It is no doubt true that all names, all forms are His. What a wonder that we postulate a name where there is no possibility of a name and a form where there is no room for a form. That is the mystery of it. But the mystery is there. O my Lord Sri Krishna: my beloved Sri Krishna!

One more trap!

And again a trap. How thick, how tough, how unyi-

elding is the net of my desires. I may pick up any of the forms and adopt it (as an image of God): but in my heart of hearts] I am persuaded of its being something different from God. For a few seconds I, [try to think of it as God but immediately after, God is forgotten and the thing comes to the forefront. I begin to mutter any name with the idea that it is the name of God, but I soon forget this fact, for mind has identified that name with some other object. I have taken it into my head that the name in question does not directly connote the Lord but only the worldly object with which it is associated. That is the reason why with the adoration of the name I am unable to change my mind and direct it towards Him. It puts me in mind of the world and not of God. Is it, then, impossible for me to correct my error and reach God through these various names and forms and all kinds of thoughts? Is it not possible for me to attain the All-Formed and the All-Named through any of the forms, through any of the names? While I was

thus busy tackling this problem my dearest Sri Krishna was smiling at my mood of deep reflection. It was not necessary for me to bother about all these things in His presence. Yet I was busy with my speculation. This, too, was a sport of my dear Lord.

All roads lead to Rome :

The association of a particular object is the main thing. If a particular form or name is directly associated with the Lord, if it is the Lord whom is perceived in or through the name or form, then whatever the name or form and whatever the idea of the world with regard to it, to worship it and betake oneself to it is to worship Sri Krishna. But the word which does not bring in His remembrance, the form which is unable to awaken His idea, is not worthy of being adopted as an object of worship, however grand that name or form be. It cannot be divine. But that which is associated with God is a transcendental form and a spiritual name. Sri Krishna, Sri Krishna ! Sri Krishna's name is non-material, Sri Krishna's form is Divine.

Why to bother about ?

How are the names and forms of the Lord non-material and Divine I have no business to enter into the labyrinth of these knotty problems. What shall I gain by racking by brain with such questions ? My purpose will be served by taking recourse to any of the names or forms of the Lord, but what is the harm in pondering over these questions ? Let me therefore, tackle these problems. What is material and what is non-material ? The Lord alone is non-material, all other things are material. But is there anything besides the Lord ? Nothing. Therefore, everything is non-material. The distinction between material and non-material exists only in the worldly sphere, it is not the Ultimate Truth. It comes to this that all that is dissociated from the Lord is material, while that which is associated with Him is non-material. Our globe is shrouded in darkness only so long as it does not come face to face with the Sun. The moment it turns its face towards the Sun it gets illuminated. Even

so all the things of the world are transferred to the non-material plane as soon as they are brought face to face with the Lord, as soon as they are associated with the Lord. In reality they are all Divine. They are all moving towards the Lord, who is their ultimate resort. In this sense they are non-material too. They belong to Sri Krishna. O Sri Krishna, Sri Krishna !

All names are Divine :

Our ancient Scriptures as well as the testimony of saints and sages have infused the belief in our minds from ages past that the names and forms of Sri Krishna, Sri Rama, Sri Vishnu etc. are Divine. If through the muttering of their names and through meditation on their forms we are not able to realise the Divine to day, we are sure to do so in due course, because these names and forms automatically make us forget the gross worldly objects which are tainted by our desires and Reality. Therefore, they have a special significance which the other names and forms do not possess. Although one can derive spiritual benefit

even by muttering the word 'Water' or any other word as indicative of God and by meditating upon water or any other object as an image of God. The difficulty is that unless such God-Consciousness is always present, these other names and forms shall make one forget the Lord and throw him into the whirlpool of those very objects to which he has been attached from the very beginning. The names of the Lord mentioned in the Scriptures, on the contrary, are bound to lead one to God even if there is no such God-Consciousness there. For, there is a belief in our sub-conscious mind that these Scriptural names and forms are the names and forms of the Lord and this belief is not going to be eradicated soon. This same belief shall correct our error and then we shall see nothing else but the Lord Himself. We shall then understand and realise that all this is Sri Krishna, and nothing but Sri Krishna.

Let me utter thy name :

I had originally sat for meditation, but the intellect began to over-work and I

wonder in to what channels of thought I had digressed. What a charming vision it was that which I saw in the course of my meditation. I was busy looking at the smiling face of Shyam Sundara lying on the leaf of the banyan tree, while I was struggling through the waters of the deluge. Shall this vision remain steady eternally before my eyes? Ye my Lord, remain steady in this form. May I always utter thy names. In fact, the whole universe is doing so. All the four types of speech—Para, Pasyanti, Madhyama and Vaikhari—both of the

individual and the cosmic Soul are reciting your Name. The Sky, the Wind, the Fire, the Waters and the Earth all are echoing the same sound. I with my whole being am also doing the same thing. O, my Shyam Sundara let me take the following Vow :

अब लीं नसानी, अब न नसैहों ।
पायो राम नाम चिन्तामनि,
डर कर ते न खसैहों ॥

‘I have wasted all these years of my life, no more shall I waste it. Now that I have laid my hands upon the wish-yielding gem of Name, I shall never drop it from my hand; nor remove it from my heart.’ [Translated,