

Power, Knowledge, Love

Dr. Gautam Chatterjee

"While faith makes all things possible,
it is love that makes all things easy."

Remember the old saying, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown?" It was because of the enormous responsibilities rulers had for a whole country. Today's humans cannot sleep not because of their responsibilities but because of the cry of the heart which they refuse to listen to. They try to stifle their feelings with drugs and sleeping pills. *Bhakti yoga* says, "Do not wait till that desperate moment...He who has god has everything...Seek God and not the lesser things of his creation.

If you study the life of the *rishis* of India they are supposed to have meditated on various points or *chakras* for thousands of years. Their meditation was so successful that they could bring the god on whom they meditated in their presence. They could ask for anything, the highest being the power of that divinity. And they got it. And tradition says they destroyed themselves with those powers. There is the famous story of an *asura* who meditated for thousands of years upon Shiva. Shiva eventually came and said "I must reward your *tapas*". The *asura* asked that anybody on whose head he placed his hand be turned to ashes. And the *asura* wanted to test his powers on Shiva himself! Shiva had to run! Eventually he had to approach Vishnu the Preserver for help. Vishnu turned himself into a beautiful maiden and diverted the *asura's* attention from Shiva. When the *asura* expressed his desire for the maiden she said, "First you must undergo a purification ritual and then I will be yours". In the purification ritual one has to place one's hand over one's head and recite a *mantra*. When the *asura* put his hand over his head he destroyed himself. Powers are very dangerous. "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

So *bhakti yogis* gave up the powers of the body and the mind and came to the only pure thing in the whole

universe—the heart. In all mystic traditions divine presence is put in the heart. All other systems can only give you powers.

In India we pay very special attention to the purification of the mind. It is recognized that education gives fantastic powers, but if there is no purity to back those powers, we end up with criminal tendencies, criminal minds.

In the hands of a pure person, power, whether of the body or the mind or of science, they are all safe. They are safe and can be used for human development and happiness.

In Hindu ecclesiastical perspective the path of knowledge (*gyana marga*) and the path of divine love (*bhakti marga*) remain complementary and not

contradictory. Narada explains the context of love and knowledge as: "Love without the knowledge of His true nature (is) like the illicit love for the paramour." (*Sutra* 23). Swami Chinmayananda explained this further: "Love of God without the precise knowledge of the Supreme nature of truth is only a passion love and as base as the love of a woman for her secret lover. Such a love can never bring to the lover the true joy of pure love."

However, Narada declares in *sutra* 25, "That Supreme devotion (*para bhakti*) is indeed, as a technique, even superior to the path of action (*karma*) and the path of knowledge (*gyana*) and the path of disciplined contemplation (*yoga*)."

Narada further explains that *bhakti* or divine love is the method and goal as well. Furthermore, for a devout, the state of attainment is when "he cares for nothing, never grieves, never hates, never delights in anything and he finds no urge or enthusiasm for sense enjoyment." Thus, according to Narada, *bhakti* means that there is no element of desire in divine love. That is the form of renunciation.

Swami Chinmayananda explains, "...continuing the description of renunciation (*nirodha*), Narada emphasizes what exactly *nirodha* is: to have single-minded, complete identification with the Lord-of-the-Heart and, consequently, to have nothing but an attitude of utter indifference to everything else that snatches away the mind from this sense of oneness with the Lord—this is real renunciation." (Sutra 9).

Swami Chinmayananda, while discussing *Narada Bhakti Sutra*, wrote in 1968 that "In true love (*prema*) there are no desires to be satisfied, no demands to be met, no vulgar expectations to be fulfilled. It is pure *prema* which is its own fulfillment, its own reward. To love thus with all our heart is the privilege of our grown up human stature, our achieved evolutionary growth. Narada describes such an all-inspiring, self-expanding love as *anu-raga*."

In defining divine love, Ved Vyas pronounced that it is "the worship of the Lord with deep love and firm attachment." Even listening to stories of glory is devotion as Maharishi Garga proclaims. But Narada defines love as "Total dedication of all actions at the altar of the Lord and, at all moments forgetfulness of the Lord, excruciating pangs." (Sutra 19).

To kindle knowledge and *bhakti* are the prerequisites.

For a devout to attain pure devotion one has to receive grace of the great souls. Narada says, "To come into contact with great souls is indeed extremely difficult; it is impossible to know them fully. Yet, it is infallible in its effects." (Sutra 38). Nevertheless, by

the grace of God alone great souls are attained "because," Narada explains, "between God and His devotees, there is no sense of difference." (Sutra 41).

Explaining the different kinds of devotion, Swami Chinmayananda elaborates that there are three kinds of devotion: *aarta*, *jijnasu* and *artharthi*. *Aarta* is one in whom there is discontentment with all that material life can give and demands an immediate sure remedy. *Jijnasu* is one who feels the presence of the Ultimate. But, intellectually, he is discontented because he cannot understand this great truth. The *Artharthi* is also discontented and seeks fulfillment among his worldly objects of pleasure. (Sutra 48).

Furthermore, *Narada Bhakti Sutra* explains that *gyana* belongs to the highest category where one sees or hears nothing but the Supreme. In this context the *Bhagwad Gita* declares, "Noble indeed are all these (*aarta-jijnasu-artharthi*) but the wise man I deem as

my own self; for steadfast in mind he is established in me alone as the Supreme God."

In the 84th *sutra* Narada concludes: "Whoever believes and reveres this, /Told by Narada, at Siva's command/He obtains the beloved./Verily does he gain his beloved."

Thus Narada proclaims that in the path of *bhakti* a passionate complete submission to the Supreme Being remains the dormant factor. Yoga means union and this is the greatest union we have to achieve.

It is not *my* heart. I *am* my heart and my heart is me. And because divinity is there, he and I are one too. ■

It is recognized that education gives fantastic powers, but if there is no purity to back those powers, we end up with criminal tendencies, criminal minds

The author has two decades of experience in the print and electronic media. He has authored eleven books

I wonder at those who seek His temple in this world. Why do they not seek contemplation of Him in their hearts? The temple they sometimes attain and sometimes miss but contemplation they might enjoy always.

(Muhammed B. Al-Fadi)

Civilization is just a slow process of learning to be kind.

(Charles A. Beard)