

“To Love Man” (“Manush Bhajan”)
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(I)

All of you are seeking after the Divine. Very good, I have nothing to object about it. Rather I appreciate your effort and say: Bravo! Because, after all very few among the humanity think of the Divine, far from seeking after Him. But today another thing comes to my mind. Don't get startled as you hear the same, however strange it may appear to you. I suppose your movement is extremely one-sided – you have no time to see a little this way and that. You have become so intoxicated with the Divine that you are not giving any importance to man. It appears from your attitude that you want to drive man away from this world and install the Divine as a whole in its place. But the thing I am going to tell you is a bit more difficult.

I say, it is more difficult to love man than to love the Divine. Don't be so wise as to laugh it away, I am going to explain, listen carefully, then think it over. Well, why man seeks the Divine and when, that is to say, rightly, heart and soul? Why not tell me from your own personal experiences, when indeed you sought whole-heartedly for the Divine? Isn't it being vexed with man? It is quite natural for man to be in love with man. But what happens then to the man who seeks after true love? He finds that man knows not how to love. He does not get there his soul's satisfaction. Some sort of want, some incompleteness is always there in this human love. So he goes in search of another partner. Initially he thinks that the person with whom he is in love may not be the right choice – so he leaves one and tries with another. But as he goes on trying and fails with one after another – with how many that depends on his habit and nature – he realises that his idol of love within is not to be found in any man, his longing for love is not to be satiated in this world in mortal things. When the inner condition is like this, then only he seeks after the Divine, conceives some sort of an embodiment of Love in its fullness and his inner being rushes towards it. And herein lies the seed of whole-hearted love for the Divine. Many of you might say: Why so? It is not because we got disgusted with man that we sought after the Divine. We have loved man like a human, we know that to love the Divine is greater than to love man and so we have offered our true love at the feet of the Divine. Well, but what does it mean? Firstly when there is an uproar all around for the Divine, it is quite easily understandable that some of you, that is to say those who have not yet reached the proper age to be involved in love-affairs, will leave man aside and straightaway clasp the Divine. But that is simply a fashion and not the attraction of true love. Then again, when you affirm that to love the Divine is greater than to love man, your lips are repeating only a catchword – neither you know what it means to love humanly, nor you understand what it means to love the Divine, you have not realised what is this thing called love. Something real and concrete develops only on feeling, on experience, on realisation. You are a human being, whatever attraction, sweetness and

greatness are there in love you know by loving man only, at least it begins with man as the base. But instead of doing that, if you impose your love on some unknown and unfamiliar Divine, then it is mostly poetry, illusion and imagination, there is hardly anything genuine and real in it. So, it would be no wonder if one, who has attempted to love the Divine without trying to love man, is found to turn one's face away from the Divine after having tasted even a little of human love. But one who has turned to the Divine having failed to derive satisfaction from human love, has a very little possibility of downfall. For that I don't mean to say that there can be no appearance of an inborn God-lover. But such great souls are very rare. I doubt whether we have even a single such soul among you or among us - if not, no harm; rather it is better not to have one.

Therefore the gist is this: We turn to the Divine out of *abhiman* (ego) against man. If my love would have been fully satiated, if all the wants and hankerings of my soul, my entire being would have been gratified with man, then who would have taken the hell of a trouble to seek after the Divine? But who is to blame for this dissatisfaction, this lack of gratification of desires? Does the fault lie with man himself, ingrained in his nature? Is it the dharma of Nature, the eternal and infallible law of creation, that human receptacle can never hold love in its fullness? But nobody tries to dip into this matter. No sooner man fails us, we proclaim that human beings are good-for-nothing, we can't get anything out of them, they are simply full of filth and dirt and narrowness - let us see whether we can do something with the Divine.

Indeed, as we go to love the Divine we see that a lot of botherations concomitant to love man has been cleared. We heave a sigh of relief saying, from what a danger we are saved. Because the demands with which we approach man is not applicable to the Divine. The feelings which spontaneously arise as we see a man or come into his contact, somehow disappears as we look at the Divine and try to develop a relation with Him. Human love has two dangers which are at the root of all dissatisfaction. First, attraction of the body, that is to say, sex. Second, the feeling of 'mine', domination. In fact love means only these two things for man. I love so and so, that means he or she is mine, exclusively mine and nobody else, nobody else has any right over him or her, he or she is my favourite and my property, so I shall do whatever I like with him or her. Moreover he or she is there to please me, for my enjoyment and to satisfy my desires, in a word he or she is the food for my sense-organs. Man can love man only with this attitude. But this attitude has only one consequence. As I proceed a bit with this attitude, I find that the person whom I love is not by any means becoming mine that way. Man is not a piece of coin that I shall keep confined in a box or play ducks and drakes with it! As I want to make him or her mine, he or she also wants to make me his or hers - it is as if we want to swallow each other like those two snakes of the fairy tales. I don't want to react rightly even when I perceive that everyone else is a living, conscious and dynamic being like myself having his or her own will, choice, attraction and demand. Who will or can sacrifice his or her everything to another? The result is jealousy, separation, despair, indifference. The same thing happens with bodily enjoyment. Either the desire becomes more and more intense like a fire conflagrating with addition of clarified butter - or there comes a feeling of something missing, some sort of insatiety else a disdain out of excessive satiety, an indifference out of exhaustion even after the satisfaction of all the bodily enjoyments.

But when I think of the Divine, then these two feelings get no support at all. The thing which appears in our mind as we remember the Divine is such that it seems too silly to cast an angry glance at it and call it 'mine', the demands of the body find no place to play in the mind. Because, the first and the simple thing about the Divine is this that He belongs not only to me but to all and that He has no physical body as I have, at least I cannot catch hold of Him saying '*tvam stri*' ('Thou art woman') or '*tvam puman*' ('Thou art man'). Therefore, when these two demands fall off, we are as if freed from the two main responsibilities of love, and our inner being, relieved from worries to a certain extent, searches for other ways of loving the Divine. That is why I say that it is easier to love the Divine than to love man. Of course in the beginning or at times the human feelings assail again, we want to impose human feelings even on the Divine and produce many poems, but after a short while we see that those things do not apply here properly. If we want to return again to man even after failing to satisfy all the expectations, then those expectations will again revive in us. But if we want to go to the Divine, we are to cut the roots of all those expectations. Isn't it easier to be sure of no expectation in hopelessness rather than await hopefully in expectation?

But is this expectation from man a mirage altogether? As I had raised the question beforehand, is it man's dharma a defect of his nature that love cannot be satiated there? I say that it is not so. It is not man's defect, but the defect of the way in which he loves. It is difficult to love man than to love the Divine, difficult indeed, but not impossible. And because it is difficult, that is why I say, to love man is superior than to love the Divine.

(II)

To love man and to love the Divine – I was comparing these two. I was saying that to love man is difficult than and superior to loving the Divine. Because, to love the Divine means to discard the body and life, and to unite with the bodiless, with the soul. To love man means to keep the body and life intact, to satisfy their demand, and in the process to effect union of two souls – not only of souls, but the unification of two bodies, two lives and two minds. It is easier to remain absorbed in the pure ananda of the soul after discarding completely or allowing only a little play of the external world and things. But it is very difficult to embody and live that pure ananda of the soul by body and life through enjoyment in this very world and things. Most of the sadhaks didn't even want to have a try at it, considering it to be extremely dangerous or impossible. But you want this life and the world, you dared to express godlike play in man, it does not befit you remain indifferent in this regard.

One must love the Divine to know what love truly is and to acquire it. Impure man with his impure nature confines love within his body's desire, his life's hunger, his mind's egotism or sense of possession. This is where he errs. Man indeed is obliged to start with his impure nature – since this is his material, his base. But his love fails because he holds that impure nature as ultimate – and that brings insatiety, despair and indifference. There is sex and even a sort of egotism in man's love. But this sex and egotism become pure and true when it is supported from behind by true love. Man does not search for true love, he stops with the gratification of sex and egotism, makes of these two the main actors in love's play. The sadhak must transcend these two. The impure play of sex must be followed by the

sadhana of pure love. That means to love the Divine – where there is no possibility of the disturbance of sex. But then again one has to return to man, otherwise life becomes meaningless, because that divine love is nothing but a form of nirvana only. One has to return but with a new vision. No longer I hold this body and life, this enjoyment as superior. Then I see and feel first of all that this union between the lover and his beloved is in reality a union of the Divine with the Divine, one soul kissing another. When we are capable of embracing with this love without any taint of sex, then only this play of sex blossoms into perfection. Then I see that not only I am loving and am loved, not only she too is loving and is loved – both of us embody the union of Radha and Krishna.

All sadhanas have three stages. First, unrefined human; then just the opposite, the other extreme – divine. Then at the end where these two are in agreement – divinely human or realised soul. First man, then the Divine, at the end divine man. First only body, then only spirit, then spiritual body.

Then there is one thing to be noted here. There is no hard and fast rule that all sadhaks (yoga practitioners) have to rise step by step slowly like this, have to finish the play of each stage fully and then to begin another. There is no rigid rule as such that one has to fully meet all the demands of the unrefined stage, then one has to become fully a saint, then again one has to return to the human society and find a shelter. Remember, the twin play of enjoyment and indifference need not necessarily be expressed in external life. It is not a must that I am to adopt the style of a householder and assume the guise of a saint at one time or other. Sadhana is mainly an affair of inner life. One may renounce what is to be renounced in the inner world and may begin to acquire what is to be acquired there itself. Therefore remaining as we are ordinarily, we are to manifest within the extraordinary thing which is our aim.

Probably the statement became highly philosophical, so let me explain in simple language. It is not necessary to satisfy all the enjoyments of life and to swallow all its poison in order to realise the imperfection of the unrefined natural life. With the slightest taste of it a man, in whom the seed of sadhana has already been sown, can realise that it is not all, something else is required. But just because something else is required, it is not necessary to renounce it completely. One can search for the supernatural remaining within the natural. That is to say, one can awaken true love remaining in the world of sex, in company with sex. In my opinion this very path is better for the success of your endeavour. Because, though it may be necessary to become indifferent towards sex from time to time, but he who wants to uproot sex completely to grasp true love, wants to kill the body to realise the soul, he may realise true love, may realise the soul, but it becomes pretty difficult, rather almost impossible, for him to revive sex and body with love and soul. Because the very purpose is to purify sex and body, for that one needs to keep them alive, to satisfy their demand, to handle them. Otherwise, if excluded completely, when sex will return again, it will come back with its impure form, you will have to start afresh the sadhana of sex. That was why I forbade you beforehand to be a *janma-siddha* like Prahlad. If the fulfilment of the body could be attained by the sheer force of spiritual realisation, then why a great sannyasin like Shankara had to take a secret initiation from Ubhayabharati?

The gist of what I have said is this: don't seek after the Divine discarding man altogether, don't abandon your normal desires to rush towards heaven. Even if you are in love with a

human being, don't keep him or her at bay, keep company with him or her as a human being, and try to blossom therein godlike attitude, love divine. See the human but with the eyes of a god, love your beloved but with the heart of the Divine.

Many will say that I am advising people to play with fire. But what else can I do? The whole world is full of fire – the very meaning of life is fire. Today or tomorrow one must play with this fire. I don't ask man to walk with eyes closed, I don't believe that man is brittle enough to crumble with a tap. I want him to see and understand everything, to walk in broad daylight. This will do him a world of good without causing any harm. I have immense faith in the power and capacity of man.

At the end of it all, I would like to impress upon you that the thing I told you is not a theory of my own. This sadhana is very well in vogue in our country. The Vaishnavites elucidated on the greatness of this sadhana saying –

Man is superior to all, superior to all is to love man.

Man is superior to all, beyond the sanction of the Vedas.