

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE LORD AND HIS DEVOTEES

*Why the Lord is not seen- The Lord and His devotees Worldly position of devotees-How the Divine reveals Himself The Lord cares not for wealth-Divine grace and self-effort*

#### Why the Lord is not seen

639. The sun is many times larger than the earth, but distance makes it appear like a small disc. So the Lord is infinitely great, but being too far away from Him, we are incapable of comprehending His real greatness.

640. Because of the reeds and scum that cover the surface of a pond, one cannot see the fish playing in it; similarly because of the screen of **Maya** that shuts off God from human view, one cannot see Him playing in one's heart.

641. Why do we not see the Divine Mother? She is like a highborn lady transacting all her business from behind the latticed screen, seeing all but seen by none. Only Her devout sons see Her, going near Her behind the, screen of **Maya**.

642. The policeman with his lantern (bull's eye) can see everyone on whom he casts' "the light, but no one can see him so long as he does not turn the light on himself. So does God see everyone; but no man can see Him until He reveals Himself to him in His mercy.

#### The Lord and His Devotees

643. A landlord may be very rich, but when a poor tenant brings a humble present to him with a loving heart, he accepts it with the greatest pleasure. So the Almighty Lord, though so great and powerful, accepts the humble offerings of a sincere heart with the greatest pleasure and satisfaction. .

644. I am content if I have realised Him. What if I do not know Sanskrit. He bestows His mercy equally on all His children who yearn to know Him, be they learned or ignorant. Suppose a father has five children. Some of them can call him 'Papa'; others can perhaps say only 'Ba' or 'Pa' and cannot pronounce the whole word. But will the father love the latter less than the former.? He knows that they are mere infants and cannot correctly call him father. The father indeed loves them all in an equal measure.

645. It is the nature of a child to soil itself with dirt and mud, but the mother does not allow it to remain dirty always. She washes it from time to time. Similarly it is in the, nature of man to commit sin; but if man is sure to commit sin, doubly sure is it that the Lord devises methods for his redemption.

646. As the same fish is dressed into soup, curry, or cutlet, and each man has his own choice dish of it, so the Lord of the universe, though one, manifests Himself differently according to the different likings of His worshippers, and each one of them has his own view of God which he values most. To some He is a kind **master** or loving father\_ a sweet smiling mother or a devoted friend, and to others a faithful husband or a dutiful and obliging son.

647. The fish may be far away, yet when a sweet, savoury and attractive bait is thrown into the water, they hastily rise to it from all quarters. Similarly the Lord approaches quickly the holy **devotee** whose heart is full of devotion and faith.

648. The divine sages form, as it were, the inner circle of God's nearest relatives. They are like friends, companions and kinsmen of God. All ordinary persons form the outer circle, they are merely the creatures of God.

649. Sunlight is one and the same wherever it falls; but only a bright surface like that of water, or of a mirror or of polished metals, reflects it fully. So is the light Divine. It falls equally and impartially on all hearts but the pure and pious hearts of the good and holy Sadhus alone receive and reflect that light well.

650. It is the nature of a lamp to give light. With its help some may cook their food, some may forge deeds, and some others may read the sacred scriptures. So some with the help of the Lord's 'name' try to attain salvation, while others use it for accomplishing their evil purposes. His holy 'name', however, remains untainted in its purity.

651. **Bhagavan** (the Lord), **Bhagavata** (His word Or scripture) and **Bhakta** (**devotee**) are all one and the same.

652. How does a true **devotee** look upon God? He looks upon Him as the nearest and dearest relative, just as the shepherd women of **Brindavan** (Gopis) saw in **Sri Krishna** not Jagannatha (the Lord of the universe), but their own beloved Gopinatha (the Lord of the Gopis).

653. Why does the God-lover find such ecstatic delight in addressing the Deity as Mother? Because the child is more free with the mother than with anybody else, and consequently she is dearer to it than anybody else.

654. A patient in high fever and excessively thirsty imagines that he can drink a sea of water; but when the fever subsides and he regains his normal temperature, he can barely take a single cupful of water and his thirst is easily quenched with even a very small quantity of it. So a man, being under the feverish excitement of **Maya** and forgetful of his own littleness, imagines that he can receive the whole of the Infinite God within his heart, but when the illusion passes away, a single ray of Divine light becomes sufficient to flood him with the eternal bliss of God.

655. Some get tipsy with even a small peg of wine, while others require two or three bottles to make them intoxicated. But both feel equally the pleasure of intoxication. Similarly, some devotees become filled with ecstasy even by a ray of Divine glory while some others get intoxicated with the Divine bliss only on coming into the direct presence of the Lord. But both are equally fortunate, since both are deluged with the bliss of God.

656. God is like a hill of sugar. A small ant fetches from it a tiny grain of sugar, and a bigger one takes from it another grain considerably larger in size. But in spite of this the hill practically remains as large as ever. So are the devotees of God. They become ecstatic even with a little of a single Divine attribute. No one can contain within him the realisation of all His glories and excellences.

657. The breeze that comes from the ocean of **Brahman** affects every heart on which it blows. The ancient sages **Sanaka**, **Sanatana** and others were softened by this breeze. The God-intoxicated **Narada** obviously got a glimpse of the Divine ocean from a distance; and so, forgetting his own, self, he had been wandering over the world like a mad man, always singing the praise of Lord **Hari**. **Sukadeva**, a born ascetic, only touched the water of that ocean thrice with his hand, and ever since he had been rolling about like a child through the fullness of his ecstasy. And the great teacher of the universe, **Mahadeva**, drank three handfuls of the water thereof, and has since been lying motionless like a corpse, intoxicated with Divine bliss. Who can fathom the depth, or measure the mysterious power, of this ocean?

658. The **Master** said to **Keshab Chandra Sen**: "Why do they, the members of the **Brahmo Samaj**, dwell so much upon the glories of God's works and say, 'O Lord, Thou hast made the sun, the **moon** and the stars'? Many are they that are charmed with the beauty of the garden, its glorious flowers and sweet odours. But few seek the Lord of the garden! Which is the greater of the two-the garden or its Lord? Verily the garden is unreal as long as death stalks in our midst; but the Lord of the garden is the one reality."

"After having taken a few glasses at the bar of a tavern, who cares to inquire how many tons the liquor in the barrels there weighs? A single bottle suffices for one.

"At the sight of Narendra I get inebriated with joy. Never have I asked him, 'Who is your father?' or 'How many houses have you got for your own'?"

"Men value their own possessions; they value money, houses, furniture; hence they think that the Lord will view His own works-the sun, the **moon**, and the stars-just in the same light! Men think He would be glad if they speak highly of His works."

659. How sweet is the simplicity of the child! He prefers a doll to all the wealth and riches of the world. So is the faithful **devotee**. No one else can reject all wealth and honour, and be taken up with God alone.

660. The truly pious man gives three-fourths of his mind to God; only the remaining one fourth he gives to the world. He is more alert in matters godly, like the snake which grows furious when its tail is trampled upon, as if its feelings are located more in its tail than anywhere else.

661. Referring to the **Master**, a well-known **Brahmo** missionary once said that the **Paramahamsa** was a mad man, and that too much cogitation over one and the same subject had unsettled his mind, as it had happened with many European thinkers. The **Master** afterwards said, addressing this missionary, "You say that even in Europe learned men become mad by continuously thinking of one subject. But is the subject of their thought matter or spirit? Hit is matter, what wonder that a man should become mad by constantly thinking of it? But how can a man lose his intelligence by thinking on that Intelligence whose light enlightens the whole universe? Is this what your scriptures teach you?"

662. Dive deep into the sea of Divine love. Fear not. It is the sea of Immortality. I once said to Narendra, "God is like a sea of sweetness. Would you not dive deep into the sea? Suppose, my boy, there is a vessel with a wide mouth containing syrup of sugar, and you are a fly anxious to drink of it. Where would you sit and drink?" Narendra replied that he would like to drink *from* the edge, for if he happened to fall into it, he was sure to be drowned. Thereupon I said to him, "You forget, my boy, that if you dive deep into the sea Divine, you need not fear danger or death. Remember that the sea of Sachchidananda is the sea of Immortality, having everlasting life for its waters. Be not afraid, like some foolish' people, that you may 'run to excess' in your love of God."

663. Though **Devaki** was blessed in the prison with the sight of the Divine form of **Krishna**, yet that could not free her from imprisonment.

664. Once a blind man bathed in the holy waters of the **Ganges** and had all his sins expiated by the bath, yet his physical blindness was not removed.

665. Once a devout woodcutter was blessed with the vision of the Divine Mother and became a recipient of Her grace yet his profession of a woodcutter never ceased. The

poor man had still to earn his scanty livelihood by the same hard profession of woodcutting.

666. As **Bhishma** lay dying on his bed of arrows, he was found shedding tears. **Sri Krishna** and the Pandavas were standing by. **Arjuna** exclaimed, "How strange, brother! Our grandfather **Bhishma** himself - so truthful and wise, the **master** of his self, and one amongst the eight **Vasus** (a class of deities)-even he is overcome by **Maya** in his dying hour and is shedding tears!" When this was communicated to **Bhishma** he replied: "O **Krishna**, you know full well that I am not crying for that. But when I think that even the Pandavas, whom the Lord Himself is serving as charioteer, have to pass through endless troubles and tribulations, I am overpowered with the thought that the ways of God cannot in the least be comprehended, and I cannot restrain my tears."

### **How the Divine Reveals Himself**

667. There is a dark room, and rays of light are coming into it from outside through a small chink. Now, the idea of light that a man inside will have, will be just commensurate to the rays of light. If there are a greater number of chinks in the doors and windows, the man within will see more of light; and if he flings open the doors and windows, he will get still more light. But then it is he who stands in the open field that receives the maximum degree of light. Just so the Lord reveals Himself to the devotees according to the varying capacities and natures of their minds.

668. The more a man approaches the Universal Being, the newer and greater become the revelations of His infinite nature, and in the end he merges in Him through the/consummation of knowledge.

### **The Lord Cares not for Wealth**

669. Does the Lord care for all the wealth that one may offer Him? Oh, no! His grace lights on him alone who offers Him love and devotion. What He values are only love and devotion, discrimination and renunciation for His sake.

670. **Sambhu** Mallick once said to me, "Sir, bless me that I may die leaving all my wealth at the hallowed feet of the Divine Mother." I replied, "What do you say? It is all wealth to you, but to the Divine Mother, it is no better than the dust you trample under your feet!"

671. There was once a theft committed in **Rani** Rasmani's temple at Dakshineswar. The jewels with which the images in the shrine of **Vishnu** were adorned were stolen. **Mathur** (the manager of the temple and son-in-law of the **Rani**) and the **Master** went there to see what the matter was. **Mathur** cried out, saying, "Thou, God, art worthless! They took away all Thy jewels, and Thou couldst not prevent it!" Upon this, the **Master** retorted sharply, "How foolish it is of you to talk thus! The jewels of which you speak are as good as a lump of clay to the Lord of the universe whom you worship in the image! Remember, it is from Him that the Goddess of fortune, **Lakshmi**, derives all Her splendour."

### **Divine Grace and Self-Effort**

672. We cannot say that God is gracious because He feeds us, for every father is bound to provide his children with food; but when He keeps us from going astray and holds us back from temptations, He is truly gracious.

673. Q. By what kind of work can God be attained? A. There is no difference in work. Do not think that this work will lead to God and that will not.

Everything depends upon His grace. To have His grace, whatever work you perform, do it with sincerity and earnest longing for Him. Through His grace the environment will become favourable and the conditions of realisation will become perfect. If you want to renounce the world, and if your family depends upon you, perhaps your brother will assume its responsibility for you. Perhaps your wife will not hinder you in your spiritual life, but will rather help you; or perhaps you will not marry at all and will not be attached to the world in any way.

674.. The darkness of centuries is dispersed as soon as a light is brought into a room. The accumulated sins of countless lives vanish by a single glance of God.

675. There are some fish which have many sets of bones" but others have only one set. Fish-eaters, however, remove all of them, whether many or few. In the same way some men have many sins and others have few, but the saving grace of God purifies them all alike in time.

676. When the **Malaya breeze** blows, all trees having stamina in them are said to be converted into sandal trees, while the papaw, the bamboo, the plantain and other trees devoid of stamina remain unchanged. So when Divine grace descends on men, those that have germs of piety and goodness in them are made holy and are filled with Divinity, while those that are worthless and worldly are unaltered.

677. A certain pious man used to tell the beads constantly, uttering the 'name' of the Deity silently. To him, the **Master** said, "Why do you stick to one place? Go forward." The pious man replied, "It cannot be done without His grace." The **Master** said, "The breeze of His grace is blowing day and night over your head. Unfurl the sails of your boat (mind), if you want to make rapid progress through the ocean of life."

678. The wind of God's grace is incessantly blowing. Lazy sailors on the sea of life do not take advantage of it. But the active and the strong always keep the sails of their minds unfurled to catch the favourable wind and thus reach their destination very soon.

679. *Q.* Does nothing take place all of a sudden?

A. As a general rule, one must go through a long preparation. before one can attain perfection. **Babu Dwaraka Nath Mitter** was not made a Judge of the High Court in one day. He had to work hard and spend years of arduous toil and study before he was raised to the Bench of the High Court. Those who are not willing to undergo the trouble and labour must be prepared to remain mere brief less pleaders: However, through the grace of God, sudden exaltation does take place now and then, as was . the case with **Kalidasa**, who from the state of an ignorant rustic, became at once, through the grace of Mother **Saraswati**, the greatest poet of India.

680. A householder **devotee**: Sir, we have heard that you have seen God. So please make us also see Him. How can one get intimate knowledge of the Lord?

The **Master**: Everything depends upon the will of the Lord. Perseverance is necessary for God-vision. If you merely sit on the shore of a lake and say, "There are fish in this lake," will you get any fish? Go and get the things necessary for fishing; get a rod and line and bait, and throw some food into the water to entice them. Then from the deep water the fish will rise and come near when you can see and hook them. You-wish me to show you God while you, sit quietly by without making the least effort! You want me to set the curd, to churn the butter and hold it to your mouth. You ask me to catch the fish and put it in your hands. How unreasonable is your demand!

681. A bird perching upon the masthead of a ship in mid-ocean, gets tired of its position and flies away to discover a new place of rest; but failing to find any other place, it returns at last to the old roost, weary and exhausted. In the same manner, an ordinary aspirant is disgusted with the monotony of the task and the discipline imposed upon him by his well-wishing and thoroughly experienced **Guru**. He loses all his hopes as well as confidence in the **Guru** and so goes out into the world with the belief that he can attain God with his self-effort alone-; but after much fruitless exertion he is sure to return to his old **master** for his blessing and grace at last.

682. So long as no breeze is blowing, we fan ourselves to alleviate heat; but when the breeze begins to blow giving relief to all men, rich and poor alike, we give up fanning. We should ourselves persevere to reach our final goal so long as there is no help from above; but when fortunately that help comes to one, one might stop toiling, otherwise not.

683. Fans are of no use when the wind blows. Prayers and penances may be given up when the grace of God descends.

684. "Though a soul has -received the grace of God, of a **Guru** and of a good **devotee**, yet it meets with destruction through the lack of the grace of (a fourth) one." One might have been fortunate enough to receive all the first three forms of grace, yet if one's own heart shows no grace to itself, *i.e.*, if it has no yearning to save itself, they are of no avail.

685. However much you may try, without God's grace nothing can be attained; He cannot be realised without Divine grace. But Divine grace descends not so easily. You shall have to banish your ego completely from the heart. If you have the egoistic feeling, "I am the doer," you can never see God. If there is somebody in the store-room, and if the owner of the house is asked to fetch a certain thing from the store, he at once says, "Well, there is someone already in the store; please ask him to get it. There is no need of my going there." God never appears in the heart of him who thinks himself to be the doer.

686. Through His grace He reveals Himself. He is the sun of Knowledge. One ray of His has brought the power of understanding in this world. On account of it we have the power to know each other and to acquire various forms of knowledge. We can see Him only if He turns His light on His own face.