

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya



(1) What is bhakti?

Just as the *ankola* fruit falling from the tree rejoins it or a piece of iron is drawn to magnet, so also thoughts, after rising up, lose themselves in their original source. This is *bhakti*. The original source of thoughts is the feet of the Lord, *Isvara*. Love of His Feet forms *bhakti*. (Verse 61)

अङ्गोलं निजबीजसन्ततिरयस्कान्तोपलं सूचिका
साध्वी नैजविभुं लता क्षितिरुहं सिन्धुः सरिद्वल्लभम् ।
प्राप्नोतीह यथा तथा पशुपतेः पादारविन्दद्वयं
चेतोवृत्तिरुपेत्य तिष्ठति सदा सा भक्तिरित्युच्यते ॥ ६१ ॥

aṅkolam nijabījasantatirayaskāntopalam sūcikā
sādhvī najjavibhum̐ latā kṣitiruham̐ sindhuḥ saridvallabham |
prāpnotīha yathā tathā paśupateḥ pādāravindadvayam̐
cetovṛttirupetya tiṣṭhati sadā sā bhaktirityucyate || 61||

Like the real seed progeny reaches for the mother ankola tree,
Like the iron needle reaches for the load stone,
Like the chaste woman reaches for her lord,
Like the tender creeper reaches for near by trees,
Like the river reaches for the sea,
If the spirit of the mind,
Reaches for the lotus feet of Pasupathi,
And stays there always,
Then that state is called devotion.

(2) Fruit of bhakti:

The thick cloud of *bhakti*, formed in the transcendental sky of the Lord's Feet, pours down a rain of Bliss (*ananda*) and fills the lake of mind to overflowing. Only then the *jiva*, always transmigrating to no useful end, has his real purpose fulfilled. (Verse 76)

भक्तिर्महेशपदपुष्करमावसन्ती
कादम्बिनीव कुरुते परितोषवर्षम् ।
संपूरितो भवति यस्य मनस्तटाक-
स्तज्जन्मसस्यमखिलं सफलं च नाऽन्यत् ॥ ७६ ॥

bhaktirmaheśapadapuṣkaramāvasantī
kādambinīva kurute paritoṣavarṣam ।
sampūrito bhavati yasya manasttāka-
stajjanmasasyamakhilam saphalam ca nā'nyat ॥ 76॥

The devotion to the great lord,
Lives in the sky of the Lord's feet,
And like clusters of clouds gives out the sweet rain,
And those whose lake of the mind,
Gets filled up by this rain,
The crop of his whole life.

(3) Where to place bhakti?

Devotion to gods, who have themselves their origin and end, can similarly result in fruits with origin and end. In order to be in Bliss everlasting, our devotion must be directed to its source, namely the Feet of the ever blissful Lord. (Verse 83)

जननमृतियुतानां सेवया देवतानां
न भवति सुखलेशः संशयो नास्ति तत्र ।
अजनिममृतरूपं साम्बमीशं भजन्ते
य इह परमसौख्यं ते हि धन्या लभन्ते ॥ ८३ ॥

jananamṛtiyutānām sevayā devatānām
na bhavati sukhaleśaḥ saṁśayo nāsti tatra ।
ajanimamṛtarūpaṁ sāmhamīśaṁ bhajante
ya iha paramasukhyaṁ te hi dhanyā labhante ॥ 83॥

There is no doubt that worship of mortal gods,
Subject to birth and death, will even give little happiness,
Worship of birthless Lord with Amba, who has deathless body,
Leads to supreme pleasure and those who do are blessed.

(4) Bhakti is a matter only for experience and not for words:

How can Logic or other polemics be of real use? Can the *ghatapatas* (favourite examples of the logicians, meaning the pot and the cloth) save you in a crisis? Why then waste yourself thinking of them and on discussion? Stop exercising the vocal organs and giving them pain. Think of the Feet of the Lord and drink the nectar! (Verse 6)

घटो वा मृत्पिण्डोऽप्यणुरपि च धूमोऽग्निरचलः
पटो वा तन्तुर्वा परिहरति किं घोरशमनम् ।
वृथा कण्ठक्षोभं वहसि तरसा तर्कवचसा
पदाम्भोजं शंभोर्भज परमसौख्यं ब्रज सुधीः ॥ ६ ॥

ghaṭo vā mṛtṭpīṇḍo'pyaṇurapi ca dhūmo'gniracalaḥ
paṭo vā tanturvā pariharati kiṁ ghoraśamanam ।
vṛthā kaṅṭhakṣobhaṁ vahasi tarasā tarkavacasā
padāmbhojaṁ śambhorbhaja paramasaukhyam vraja sudhīḥ ॥ 6॥

This is the pot, no, this is only mud,
This is the earth, no , it is only atom,
This is the smoke, no, it is only fire,
This is the cloth, no , it is only the thread,
Can all this debate ever cure the cruel God of death?
Vainly you give pain to your throat,
By these torrent of words,
Instead worship the lotus like feet of Shambu,
Oh , intelligent one, and attain supreme happiness.

(5) Immortality is the fruit of Devotion:

At the sight of him who in his heart has fixed the Lord's Feet, Death is reminded of his bygone disastrous encounter with Markandeya and flees away. All other gods worship only Siva, placing their crowned heads at His feet. Such involuntary worship is only natural to Siva. Goddess Liberation, His consort, always remains part of Him. (Verse 65)

वक्षस्ताडनशङ्कया विचलितो वैवस्वतो निर्जराः
कोटीरोज्ज्वलरत्नदीपकलिकानीराजनं कुर्वते ।
दृष्ट्वा मुक्तिवधूस्तनोति निभृताश्लेषं भवानीपते
यच्चैतस्तव पादपद्मभजनं तस्येह किं दुर्लभम् ॥ ६५ ॥

vakṣastāḍanaśaṅkayā vicalito vaivasvato nirjarāḥ
koṭīrojvalaratnadīpakalikānīrājanam kurvate ।
dr̥ṣṭvā muktivadhūstanoti nibhṛtāśleṣam bhavānīpate
yacchetastava pādapadmabhajanam tasyeha kiṁ durlabham ॥ 65॥

Nothing impossible is there to attain,
For him who sings about your holy feet,
Oh consort of Bhavani,
For the god of death runs away,
Afraid of the kick from the Lord's feet,
The lights shining in those jeweled tiara,
Of all the devas, shows the offering of the camphor light,
And the pretty bride called liberation,
Folds him in tight embrace,
As soon as she sees him.

(6) If only Devotion be there - the conditions of the jiva cannot affect him. However different the bodies, the mind alone is lost in the Lord's Feet. Bliss overflows! (Verse 10)

नरत्वं देवत्वं नगवनमृगतं मशकता
पशुत्वं कीटत्वं भवतु विहगत्वादि जननम् ।
सदा त्वत्पादाब्जस्मरणपरमानन्दलहरी-
विहारासक्तं चेद्धृदयमिह किं तेन वपुषा ॥ १० ॥

naratvam devatvam nagavanamṛgatvam maśakatā
paśutvam kīṭatvam bhavatu vihagatvādi jananam ।
sadā tvatpādābjasmaraṇaparamānandalaharī-
vihārāsaktam ceddhṛdayamiha kiṁ tena vapuṣā ॥ 10॥

Be it in a human form,
Be it in the form of Gods,
Be it in the form of animal,
That wanders the forests and hills,
Be it in the form of mosquito,

Be it in the form of a domestic animal,
Be it in the form of a worm,
Be it in the form of flying birds,
Or be it in any form whatsoever,
If always the mind is engaged in play,
Of meditation in thine lotus-like feet,
Which are the waves of supreme bliss,
Then what does it matter,
Whatever body we have.

(7) Devotion always unimpaired:

Wherever or however it be, only let the mind lose itself in the Supreme. It is Yoga! It is Bliss! Or the Yogi or the Bliss incarnate! (Verse 12)

गुहायां गेहे वा बहिरपि वने वाऽद्रिशिखरे
जले वा वह्नौ वा वसतु वसतेः किं वद फलम् ।
सदा यस्यैवान्तःकरणमपि शंभो तव पदे
स्थितं चेद्योगोऽसौ स च परमयोगी स च सुखी ॥ १२ ॥

guhāyām gehe vā bahirapi vane vā'drīśikhare
jale vā vahnau vā vasatu vasateḥ kim vada phalam ।
sadā yasyaivāntaḥkaraṇamapi śambho tava pade
sthitam cedyogo'sau sa ca paramayogī sa ca sukhī ॥ 12॥

Be it in a cave, Be it in house,
Be it outside, Be it in a forest,
Be it in the top of a mountain,
Be it in water, Be it in fire,
Please tell, What does it matter,
Where he lives?
Always, if his inner mind,
Rests on the feet of Shambhu,
It is Yoga and He is the greatest Yogi
And he will be happy forever.

(8) Karma Yoga also is Bhakti:

To worship God with flowers and other external objects is troublesome. Only lay the single flower, the heart, at the feet of Siva and remain at Peace. Not to know this simple thing and to wander about! How foolish! What misery! (Verse 9)

गभीरे कासारे विशति विजने घोरविपिने
विशाले शैले च भ्रमति कुसुमार्थं जडमतिः ।
समर्प्यैकं चेतः सरसिजमुमानाथ भवते
सुखेनावस्थातुं जन इह न जानाति किमहो ॥ ९ ॥

gabhīre kāsāre viśati vijane ghoravipine
viśāle śaile ca bhramati kusumārtham jaḍamatih |
samarpyaikam cetaḥ sarasijamumānātha bhavate
sukhenāvasthātuṁ jana iha na jānāti kimaho || 9||

Searches and hunts, the dim witted one,
In the deep dark lake,
In the lonely dangerous forest,
And in the broad high mountains
For a flower to worship thee.
It is a wonder,
That these people do not know,
To offer to you the single lotus,
From the lake of ones own mind,
Oh God who is the consort of Uma,
And be happy at one's own place.

(9) This Karma Yoga puts an end to one's samsara:

Whatever the order of life (*asrama*) of the devotee, only once thought of, Siva relieves the devotee of his load of *samsara* and takes it on Himself. (Verse 11)

वटुर्वा गेही वा यतिरपि जटी वा तदितरो
नरो वा यः कश्चिद्भवतु भव किं तेन भवति ।
यदीयं हृत्पद्मं यदि भवदधीनं पशुपते
तदीयस्त्वं शंभो भवसि भवभारं च वहसि ॥ ११ ॥

vaṭurvā gehī vā yatirapi jaṭī vā taditaro
naro vā yaḥ kaścīdbhavatu bhava kiṁ tena bhavati |
yadīyaṁ hr̥tpadmam yadi bhavadadhīnam paśupate
tadīyastvaṁ śambho bhavasi bhavabhāraṁ ca vahasi || 11||

Be it a celibate seeker of truth,
Be it a man of the family,
Be it a shaven-headed seeker of truth,
Be it the matted haired householder in the forest,
Or be it one who is none of these,
Hey, Lord of all beings,
If his lotus heart is in your custody, Shambho,
You would wholly become his,
And help him to lift,
This heavy burden of life.

(10) Devotion is Jnana:

The mind losing itself in Siva's Feet is Devotion. Ignorance lost! Knowledge! Liberation!
(Verse 91)

आद्याऽविद्या हृद्गता निर्गतासी-
द्विद्या हृद्या हृद्गता त्वत्प्रसादात् ।
सेवे नित्यं श्रीकरं त्वत्पदाब्जं
भावे मुक्तेर्भाजनं राजमौले ॥ ९१ ॥

ādyā'vidyā hṛdgatā nirgatāsī-
dvidyā hṛdyā hṛdgatā tvatprasādāt ।
seve nityam śrīkaram tvatpadābjam
bhāve mukterbhājanam rājamaule ॥ 91 ॥

He who shines with the moon in his crown,
The primeval ignorance that used to live in my heart ,
From the beginning of time has disappeared by your grace.
And that knowledge which solves problems is living there.
And so I meditate on your lotus feet,
Which gives only good and grants salvation.
Becomes greatly profitable.
How else could it be?

