

**“One must become colourless while playing with colours.” – Rev. Babuji Maharaj.**

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The above sentence is taken from the article, ‘Holi’ by the Master occurring in Silence Speaks. The article is a very moving and fervent appeal of our Beloved Master to the fellow seeker for developing eager restless impatience, mad love and pain for the Base or destination and maintaining an unwavering orientation to it, the Supreme Goal of life and it can not fail to make an impact on the heart of a keen and sensitive seeker. He gives a hint later in the same article of His condition, a tint (fragrance) of His nature which is still present in what He calls as rural language:

‘Whether I be standing, sitting, lying down or in any pose whatsoever, I am always at the same point (the base).’

I feel that the Master is indicating here His condition of being permanently being established in the Root, the condition of at oneness with the super fine Consciousness prevailing therein, subtler than the subtlest, described by Him as Tam. We may also take it to be the description of the state of achieving oneness with the Absolute as stated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment.

Every discerning seeker would nay, ought to make the above sentence the motto or the governing

mantra of his life. When the above can be implemented by him in word, thought and deed, through all phases of his existence, waking, dreaming, sleep and in his spiritual endeavour assisted by the boundless and compassionate grace of the Master, known otherwise as Pranahuti, he is sure to arrive safely at the Destination not to mention that he will be liberated even while living. Contemplation over this thought would also help in developing constant remembrance of the Goal.

It is so typical of the Master to take up a mundane subject and develop it so beautifully in such a way that the hidden spiritual wisdom and the Divine fragrance are revealed through His divine intuitional insight. That also speaks of His passionately single minded orientation to the Divine which makes it so easy for Him to find the Essence of all Existence in every thing ordinary or extraordinary. His grasp of the Thing behind all appearances is so sure and unerring that it leaves ordinary souls like us in mute admiration and wonder when we contemplate His revealing messages creating a longing in us that we too shall emulate the great Master.

The Master had apparently been writing to a seeker on the occasion of Holi, the festival of colours having quite an enthusiastic following in the northern and western parts of the country. The festival has a hoary past and commemorates various events in Hindu mythology, chief amongst

them being the story of Prahlad, the great devotee of Lord Vishnu. As is well known Prahlad continued to utter the sacred name of Lord Hari and worship Him in defiance of his father's orders to the contrary. Hiranyakashipu subjected his son to several death-dealing ordeals and Prahlad came out unscathed from each of them by the saving grace of the Lord. One such ordeal was in which the *asura* asks his sister Holika to sit in a blazing fire with the child on her lap. Holika said to have immunity from fire perished in it and Prahlad escaped unhurt yet again, the caveat behind the immunity of Holika being that she should enter the fire by herself alone. Thus Holika lends her name to the festival, especially the bonfire lit by the revelers on the eve of Holi. All garbage and old worn out articles are consigned to the flames, the theme being discarding the old and ushering in the new. Another theme is the bad and evil in us are consigned to the flames so that we emerge purified.

There is another interesting story linked to this festival of colours, the story of the Divine Child Krishna. The Lord it appears was quite self-conscious about His rather dark complexion especially when contrasted with the very fair complexion of Radha who was so near and dear to Him. Child Krishna asks His mother Yashoda innocently enough the reason for Radha's fair complexion as against His own dark complexion as expressed in a popular Hindi song (*Radha kyon gori aur myn hun kala*). Yashoda replies that He

may apply colours of whatever hue to Radha's face for bringing about the desired change.

This is believed to be the basis for throwing colours in dry form as powder, *gulal* revelry as the Master calls it (though *gulal* signifies red, the principal colour, it is taken to represent the full variety of colours used in the festival) or squirting the same mixed with water through hand held squirters or *pitchkaris* in Hindi. The link to Lord Krishna has made the festival to be celebrated for a fortnight with great zest and devotion as well in Mathura and Brindavan, the holy sites associated with the youthful sports of the Lord.

Holi is celebrated on the day after the full moon in the month of Phalguna falling in mid-March. It signifies the passing on of the bleak and gloomy days of winter and the onset of colourful spring with its welcome bright sunshine. There is cheer joy and optimism all around; it is the time for renewal and rebirth from the state of slumber and hibernation in the winter. Nature clothes herself in a wonderful tapestry of colours and is at her brilliant alluring best. This fills all creation, humans being no exception, with joy and verve impelling and compelling them to give expression to the same.

Holi is a Hindu festival with a difference in which the religious or pious elements take a back seat and the merry making instinct becomes dominant. Social restrictions are relaxed, all sections of

society mingle together casting aside for the time being the distinctions that distinguish them, all playing colours at and with each other in an atmosphere of gaiety and boisterous celebration. The language can get ribald and the behaviour wild not allowed or even tolerated under ordinary circumstances. The carnival atmosphere of uninhibited revelry and indulgence even in the opiates can shock the serious and more sensitive amongst us. We find the Master quite critical, of course in His own unique courteous and gentlemanly way, the intemperate uninhibited revelry that is going on around Him as He is penning the letter.

Master is giving His reason for the enthusiastic participation of the revelers in the festival as due to their temperament being inclined towards play. The metaphor of colours is used to signify the wonderfully attractive display of manifested nature, its beauty and endless diversity. This is the charm, glitter and dazzle of manifestation, the result of His craftsmanship as alluded to by the Master. It has been noted in our literature that the reason for our fall from the pristine condition enjoying the company of the Lord has been the irresistible urge felt towards jumping into the manifestation. It may be useful to recall here the soul's descent from the homeland as described in 'Goal of life' (DR p 15-6).

“From that primary state of existence of the soul in its most subtle form we marched on to grosser and

grosser forms of existence these may be expressed as coverings around the soul. The earliest coverings were of the finest nature and with them we existed in our homeland the realm of God. The additions of more and coverings of ego continued and subsequently manas, chit, buddhi and ahankar in cruder forms began to contribute to our grossness. In due course samskaras began to be formed which brought about their resultant effects. Virtue and vice made their appearances; slowly our existence assumed the densest form. The effect of samskaras is the commencement of feelings of comforts miseries joys and sorrows our liking for joys and comforts and dislike for sorrows and miseries have created further complications”.

The innumerable coverings over the soul acquired over its long history of myriads of lives and experiences undergone therein with feelings of attachment, doership, ownership and enjoyership, colour perceptions, notions, ideologies and understanding of the embodied human being. The Master has often used the metaphor of colours while referring to the cause of distortions arising in the apprehension of Reality. We may see an instance of the above in His comment on the commentaries written on the Gita ( SS 2004 p-419):

“The simple unassuming character of the mind has changed with the march of time and has assumed a colourful disposition and begun to shed its effect on everything in us both outer and inner. Whatever

therefore we take into our thought and action exhibits colourfulness in all its phases. Our excessive attachment to the environment and surroundings of a similar nature create in us heaviness and grossness. Subtleness is lost and everything that comes to our view is interpreted in the same light. This not only veils our understanding but the heart and brain also get affected by it. It was the same tendency of mind which displayed itself through all the writings of men of knowledge and learning. For thorough understanding of things one must have practically attained the state of mind required before one can come out to explain it to others”.

We see again His use of the colour metaphor in a striking manner on another occasion while commenting on the Six Darshanas (SS p-380-1):

“ The word study implies (of the Veda) a sense of practical realization of the reality at the bottom and that can be acquired neither by reading and believing nor by reasoning and discussing but only by superconscious perception. We go on and on through different conditions casting off our assumed colouring till finally we become quite colourless. Pains and pleasures of which we have ever been taking impressions are but the diversely coloured shades of our thoughts. They are not different from each other but only coloured as they are by the action of the imaginative faculties”.

As a result of the solidity and grossness settled on the heart the discriminatory intelligence or viveka as to which is real or unreal, right and wrong and the judgment of what constitutes the real goal of life is lost. The unwise man spends his valuable time and energy in the meaningless pursuit of sensory pleasures, name, fame, wealth and progeny leading to his entrapment in the endless cycle of birth and death.

Thus persons having the temperamental inclination to witness and go wild with the colourful revelries of the festival are those in whom viveka has not dawned and who have no cognizance of their real nature, which is in essence the colourless, plain, bare, stark and simple Reality. It also happens in the case of aspirants who have moved on the path that they fall a victim to the colourful displays in manifestation losing their orientation and commitment to the Goal as a result of their previous impressions and vasanas holding their sway yet.

The serious aspirant needs to gird up the loins, as exhorted by the Master, rectify his mistakes making a resolve not to repeat the same and move on following the instructions of the spiritual Guide and the teachings of the Master. Here we think of 'colour' as any type of distortion, aberration or covering over Reality.

When we use the word 'absolute Reality' we try to conceive, though it is beyond all conception,

Reality in its naked form, pure, simple, unalloyed and unadulterated and thus regarded 'colourless'.

The topic of the seminar states, 'one must become colourless while playing with colours'. We may consider in passing the nature of colour sensation and perception under the constraints of physics and biology. All are familiar with the famous experiment conducted by Isacc Newton of passing 'white' light through a glass prism splitting into the rainbow spectrum of the seven colours. White light is perceived to be colourless as it is a mixture of all light wavelengths with equal energy. No two creatures, however see the external objects in the world in the same colour!; for instance the primates including us humans are called *trichromates* as their retinal systems contain the cones or photo receptors (pigment proteins) maximally sensitive to the three primary wavelengths, short (S), medium (M) and long (L) of the 'visible' spectrum, corresponding to the reported blue, green and red colour sensations in human subjects. The other vertebrates are *dichromates* and the majority of invertebrates are *monochromates* seeing the world only in black and white. Some birds, marsupials and fish are *tetrachromates* extending their 'visual' sensitivity to the near ultraviolet and there are a few creatures who are *pentachromates* with additional sensitivity to the infrared. It is also necessary to understand that colour is not in the eye of the beholder but in his brain or the ultimate perceptual and inference system which makes sense of the

retinal output. The only good thing about it all is that there is an overall consensus in deciding what colour an object is among the human observers (colour-blind, usually male of the species? excepted) though there are individual variations within the perceptual apparatus.

The idea behind the above digression is to draw attention to the fact that nature has given us human beings a faculty of vision capable of picking out and responding to only a tiny fraction of the really infinite set of light wavelengths (colours) forming part of the Whole, the 'colourless white light', which may be regarded as the Source of all the colours.

Master seems to make an interesting point in the beginning of the article when He says, "You will say that those who have eyes to see can very well distinguish between black, yellow, blue colours etc. I would say that as long as the eyes bear the power of distinction between black, yellow, blue colours etc, which is the real aspect of colour, it cannot be said to have discrimination (real knowledge) about colours.

So long as there is variety in inclination one does not give due respect to colour." The Master, in my opinion, is talking about perception of the unifying unity, namely colourlessness, lying beneath the veneer of the wonderful and aesthetically pleasing diversity of the splash of colours, which are forming part of and have emerged from the Whole.

That is being rooted in the Base of colourless ness in the absolute nakedness of Reality even while witnessing and also participating in the play of colours. In this context we may note that the practicants of the system of PAM are asked to meditate on light without luminosity. The Master says while describing the characteristic of the real light that it has the colour of dawn or a faint reflection of colourlessness (Sruti-536).

We had seen the reluctance on the Master's part to participate in the boisterous revelries going on outside and He even hints that persons like Him who are deeply rooted in the Supreme Reality or Base and serious sadhakas will not be even inclined to take part in the playing of colours. But He also says that we should become colourless while playing with colours implying thereby a participation in the celebrations. That seems to be a contradiction in terms. We can reconcile it by noting that the illumined and realized souls can not remain aloof from the world distancing themselves from their fellow beings leaving them to their own fate. Their complete compassion for their bretheren struggling in spiritual darkness and ignorance would impel them to go out and render assistance to them on the path of realization as a fraternal duty. This truth has been amply demonstrated in the lives of the Masters of the Order and other evolved souls of spiritual caliber who are guiding us on the path. Here it may be apt to ponder the observation of the Master on the subject of unity and diversity.

He says, 'As a rule we proceed from unity to diversity but at the end the course changes and we begin to march towards diversity.---In our march towards the Ultimate we must necessarily follow the same course whether it be in respect of worship or anything else. That is in fact the actual path of spirituality. But when by God's grace any one goes still beyond even the consciousness of the Base too may become difficult to maintain unless he happens to be one of the highest rank who remains in touch with both the states, unity and diversity' (Sruti 176-7). This in my opinion corresponds to the metaphor used in the topic of the seminar, becoming colourless signifying remaining in the state of 'unity' consciousness and playing with colours pointing to the engagement with diversity. It is also clear that being in touch with both states of unity and diversity does not fall to the lot of the ordinary but it is the blessing granted by God to one of highest rank and caliber like our own Master. However this need not mean that one should not aspire for it and work towards it for deserving the grace of Master.

We may say as a minimum that while thus associating with our fellow beings, one should take care to see that he is not contaminated by feelings of attachment and identification. One should remain cognizant of and be established in his real nature of colourlessness even while dealing with colours. One should engage himself in the various actions called for in a spirit of

discharging his duty towards the Master dedicating the results to Him, relinquishing the sense of doership, enjoyership and ownership. Every service done to a fellow being as a fraternal duty is to be regarded as the service to the Divine enshrined in his heart the whole act being taken as in obedience to the Master's orders. This will ensure that our inner state would not be contaminated by the formation of samskars consequent to our actions.

We may also see in this context the Master's comment on the person who is in the state of negation. Such a person, 'should automatically become sorrowful when he sees the sorrow of others and delighted by seeing the delight of others; but this should be only superficial and afterwards he should revert again to his 'as he is condition.' (SS p-480) Again referring to the condition of mergence we find the Master stating, 'But in such a state having become absorbed in Reality one feels linked to the other side i.e., the world. It is Nature's plan for humanity, because humanity can not survive without it; it is also essential because we have to exist as human beings first till we close our eyes permanently. It is the secret of Nature'. (SS p-510)

The Master says further that if He too got somehow affected by the colours of Holi then it would be part pheasant and part partridge. It may be noted that pheasant is a bird with a colourful plumage (feathers) while partridge is a bird having

no coloured plumage. I feel that the Master is trying to convey the condition in which one is aware of the underlying Reality (partridge) and its colourful manifestation (pheasant) at the same time. He also says that His condition will be a mixture of coherence and incoherence like that of a drunkard.

I infer that coherence refers to being in tune with one's real nature and the incoherence occurs when one encounters the same Reality outside spread all around clothed in resplendent colours. It is the state of wonder arising from the realization of 'All is Brahman (Supreme Reality) and all from Brahman', the wonder making one speechless and incoherent. It is like the lover who has been used to seeing his beloved dressed only in ordinary clothes sees her all of a sudden dressed up in the finest of bridal attire wearing jewelry of sparkling diamond and shining gold. He will stammer, search for words and manage to merely blurt out, 'Is that you my dear?' The feeling of the presence of God-reality both within and without has driven seekers into a state of intoxication, drunk with the wine of mad love for the Supreme Beloved making their speech and action resembling those of a drunkard or a mad man.

There is another interesting play on the word 'whole' linking it to Holi, Holi imagined as '*Whol(e)i*', by the Master. Taking the word whole, meaning 'total', to signify the Ultimate, the Master says if one links himself to the ultimate then the

colour of the same ultimate, namely, colourlessness shall prevail in him and the same view will appear to his vision. The lover will see only his Beloved everywhere. Everything will appear coloured in the hue of the ultimate, one of colourlessness; it is colourless colour like the tasteless taste (of mergence). All the myriad colours would then have no impact on such a one and he can remain 'colourless' even while 'playing with colours'. He goes on to state that we can attain the state of mergence in the ultimate by the act of repeatedly maintaining it and thereby becoming 'unaware' of the link even. I remember a saying of the Master, 'we are aware to the extent we are unaware' in this context. This is the lesson we should draw from Holi according to the Master. Holi is drawing near now this being the second week of February. I am sure all of us would observe the festival of colours even as Master wants us to. Thinking about it we can see further that nothing is really preventing us from regarding every moment as the celebration of the Holi or '(w)hol(e)i' festival as mentioned above orienting ourselves to and dwelling in our revered Master's consciousness, the Base in practical terms.

We find the Master reiterating His main theme of the article when He states towards the end that the base or destination (for us the Master) must never go out of our mind. The only course for attaining the destination is to develop a crazy and mad love for the same and this very method has

been adopted by all those who have succeeded in the endeavour.

When one is mad after some one, his worthy Master, then the madness of the former would make the latter restless to shower his blessings upon the former (disciple). The Master urges us to create pain and restless craving in the heart for acquiring all the states He is restless to impart. He hopes that His restless craving for His Master would create a similar intensity in the heart of the seeker. The article ends with a proverb, 'when a widow touches the feet of a *Sumangali* the widow wishes the latter also to become widowed like her.' The Master poses the question 'what else you can expect to get from me except this?' If we pause to think on the simile referred to- the husband is everything for a woman of virtue. When he passes away there is nothing left for her in the world. Having lost everything she stares into a vacuum. Similarly the Master has lost everything of His own, including His 'self' or individuality'. He has nothing to give except the restless craving for His Master. The Master says further that all one has to do is to take that craving from Him and the rest would be bestowed by His Master (God).

I feel that it would be appropriate here to recall the Master's article 'A Faqir's wealth' (SS-258-9). He describes therein the state of the mind of the beggar with the begging bowl standing at his Master's door. The beggar is one who begs only at the door of the Great Divine Master. He has the

begging bowl in his hand but is unconscious of what he is begging for. He is so much lost that he does not even remember that he has approached the Master for having his bowl filled up. The bowl is presented forth without a word of begging so much so that he is not even aware of whom he stands before. The hands holding the bowl alone are held up, so much lost is he. If the Master offers him anything he is not even aware of what he gets nor is he conscious of his changed position now. Both the beggar and the Master are there; the only distinction that exists between them is that the beggar has the bowl in his hand. He maintains this position of his till the end. Both are lost the Master and the beggar. Nothing remains which has not reached unto him.

I am sure that all sincere seekers would take the Master's exhortations to heart and never let the base or destination out of their minds maintaining an unwavering orientation to That while sitting, sleeping, standing, walking or doing anything whatever. In addition the attitude of the seeker is to be the one so graphically described above of the beggar with the bowl outstretched before the Master being totally unaware of all else.

Pranams.