

“They take milk but also eat pickles after that.”

Sri K.C.Narayana garu

1. This sentence of the Master expressed in one of his letters to Dr.K.C.Varadachari on 26th July 1968 is of great spiritual significance. I shall quote the context in which this was made. “I also frankly express today that I have been transmitting South India every time for the last ten years. The results are good but not according to my labour. The case may be that they are mostly dogmatic instead of Godmatic. To be more plain I should say that they have in mind the value of the grosser type of worship and one link is attached to God and the other to the devil. Thus they take milk but also take pickle after it.”
2. It is our common observation that after a good meditation there are some who would like to hear their voices having already exhausted hearing the voice of Master in the heart. The time to dwell

on the thoughts that arose during meditation and ones' orientation to Master is swiftly given up to the meaningless chatter of their mind. Though the Masters words of God and Devil in this context may appear odd, if we take the words in a broader sense it would mean the replacement of the opposites.

3. I was accustomed to the custom of eating food followed by some good delicious sweet dish and in the end eat some thing that is peppery and hot. That is the way the majority of South Indian festival eating is. A Muslim senior officer came to visit us when I was working at Vizag. As usual the practice of eating sweet dish was completed. Then when we were about to serve him something peppery, he exclaimed why we are taking away the sweetness in his mouth. That is the first time I started reflecting on this practice and ever since I have the habit of ending the dinner or lunch with the sweet dish only. We

need to retain the sweetness instead of losing it too soon.

4. But sweetness also is repulsive when it is beyond the limits. Perhaps that is the problem. Master however says it differently. We seem to have developed a taste for the peppery that we prefer to mix it with sweet. The adherence to the rituals and idols some how is of the form of addiction and the concepts of infinity and immortality get confused in our minds. We can experience infinity during meditation but immortality which some crave for however is not a product of meditation. It is to be noted that Infinity is the continuity of existence and immortality is the continuity of consciousness. Instead of realizing that the immortality sought after can only be in the realm of consciousness when our idea of body-self and its boundary is crossed we tend to think that somehow the body-self will continue to exist immortally. It is here the

crux of belief in the idols and gods and goddesses lie.

5. The great holy traditions try to teach and inspire this illusion as if it is truth through images of omniscience, eternity and immortality. These images do inspire us to elevate our consciousness from the finite physical world to all that is everlasting and present in creation. But it only inspires and unless we perspire in the path the elevation of consciousness does not occur. Without any such perspiration even when we do have such moments of elevation of consciousness the habituated mind seeks solace in the rites and rituals of the gods and goddesses. That is why many who pursue the path also tend to continue their old practices of prayer. And this is what Master was lamenting about in the quotation that we are discussing.
6. While the oneness of being is imperienced by us, we have been hearing our traditional thinkers tending to explain away the physical plane of

manyness as an illusion. The illusion it is explained is in the seeming separation between one another. However it is undeniable that both the experience of the many and the oneness that is imperienced are there.

7. It is necessary to understand the infinity in terms of polarity with a beginning and an end, it is everywhere and nowhere, it is all and simultaneously nothing. We should realise that duality is integral to infinity because aggressive and receptive principles are part of all Creation. Energy moves because of these principles. That is why Master says that Krodha and Kama cannot be totally eradicated.

8. Obstacles, in the context of spiritual growth, are a person's intellectual, emotional, or physical veils or Kosas that keep him away from evolving to a higher state of consciousness. Our purpose is to try and see ourselves as we are and remove the obstacles that keep us locked in self-centredness. We need to understand that

Prapanna gati is an improvement over the Para Brahmand where we are still serving the individual self as an infinite self in glory and happiness. That needs to be sacrificed at the feet of the Lord so that we get dedicated in the real service of the Divine. Resignation is not the word here. It is dedication to the service of the Divine and realising that it is something only He can fulfil, we relegate our capacities totally and leave ourselves at His disposal.

9. Real surrender or Prapanna demands that we surrender to all existence even as Master stated. Oneness perceived should lead to serving the many perceived as one. Real Surrender is surrender to all and surrender to all means service to all. Oneness is perceived even at the first knot but the meaning is gained only when we cross the para Brahmand and enter Prapanna gati where we start serving all with a feeling of not just fraternity but because of a perception of divinity every where. There are then no

deliberations about whom to serve or when to serve or where to serve. Service is the mode of living then.

10. We may feel that there is no scope to serve unless we are qualified in a particular profession to serve. But we can serve people in a much more subtle way than providing medical aid, food and shelter for the sick, hungry and homeless. By the grace of the Master we have gained a perspective on life that has eased and enlightened our way, which we could pass on to others. The help we have to give may be sharing our spiritual understanding. We also serve when we are alone. In meditation we serve the whole creation by dedicating ourselves to expanding our consciousness. Whether alone or in a group, wherever we are and whatever we are doing, we are being of service when we meditate. The Prapanna is always in a state similar to meditation and is a natural servant of the divine and His creation.

11. Sometimes when we begin to serve with involvement we get attached to how well the service goes. We do tend to worry about our service and this is a fall from the state of Prapanna where our being a 'doer' erases our performance. There is an ancient Sufi saying that states "Trust in Allah, but tie up your camels." It means to take responsibility for our part, and then leave it where it is. If the universe sees it fit to unleash the camels, well, who are we to think otherwise?

12. It is true that milk and pickles may be opposites. This is true also when we reach the condition of Prapanna we naturally start serving Him. But service brings in the capacity to serve and a mastery of its own. That is the origin of Prabhu gati. How can Prapanna and Prabhu co-exist? That is the point we realise when we come to the position of Prapanna Prabhu. Seers found it necessary to explore this duality, the pairs of

opposites. Our lives for millennia have been spent in understanding good and evil, hot and cold, light and dark, science and spirituality. The great masters throughout time have brought to themselves the awareness that Light is the perfect union of the Krodha and Kama and we know that the origins of life are there. Any student of elementary science knows that when positive and negative wires are brought together there is a light (spark). Our Master stresses the fact of our inter connectedness with infinite wisdom. Through his works and Pranahuti he leads us and inspires us to imperience and understand and enable us to grow infinitely.

13. The problem of worship of forms which hinders our progress is really tough to tackle. Master expressed his anguish that inspite of his labour not much progress to relieve sincere and devoted disciples from the gross forms of worship. But I think this problem is inherent in the nature of thought itself. Imperience of Infinity is

surely one that is formless. But we know every time there is a thought there is a form. As a matter of fact many of the educationalists believe that we should understand the thought from the form only and the whole primary school education starts with pictures and forms of various objects and things. Form it appears is a must because in understanding the finite we come to know the infinite. The thought of numbers and their sequence is one of the preliminary ways of understanding Infinity. Through Imperience during meditation we learn that Infinity is oneness with the Master and we have complete awareness in our entire mind His presence. The very nature of our mind as Master puts it leads us to this final condition and it is the form of our mind which gets transformed from its gross form to the subtle and original that serves as a means for our awareness of Infinity.

14. But if we get stuck with the attributes of the pure essence that the mind enables us to

imperience we get impeded in our progress. This is a real slippery zone and I had enough problems of crossing the attractive borders of the Formless. This leap from the form to formless is the crux of overcoming the limitations of the Manomaya Kosa. Infinity is formless. How then can we comprehend infinity? We can never do that. It can only be imperenced through expanded consciousness and expanded awareness. The surrender of our effort to comprehend or understand through intellect the nature of the Infinite is an essential requirement because knowing Infinity is not in the realm of reason but in the realm of imperience.

15. Imperience I make bold to say is not possible unless a person is initiated. Initiation is not just introduction to the methods of meditational practices. The aspirant who moves in the path and comes to the level of consciousness where he/she fully realizes the interdependence with the Master and accepts the Master in all respects

alone gets initiated. An uninitiated person can not see beyond his or her own vasanas or habits of mind and finds anything other than his habits as impossible. We may think that once people are initiated into the spiritual states of consciousness like the Para Brahmand there will be automatic awakening to the truth of their own Being as a matter of natural progression.

16. Unfortunately it is not so. These spiritual states and statuses themselves produce a peculiar grossness which forms a center of identity. A person who really takes the milk (as Master puts it) and is saturated with it may because of past habits or vasanas feel that he/she is awakened but when the experience fades into a memory, then the identity is in turmoil. This, the aspirant feels creates the need to go deeper into the technique or to have more faith. This is presumed to be the solution to the problem that caused the experience to fade. The aspirant then starts thinking constantly about

how he could maintain the imperience. Instead of total surrender to the Divine the aspirant resorts to taking steps (compared to taking pickles by the Master) to remedy the situation instead of growing into the states of consciousness offered by the Divine. With respects to all such victims who get attached to the forms of the Infinite I may say it is their inability to live upto the teaching of the Master constantly, and perfectly, that is the problem. This problem of the aspirant even Master found it difficult to solve.

17. The entire problem is our attachment to form. We imperience Silence but Silence is not a form. The mind takes Silence and starts converting it into an object and also starts evaluating it. Now we are not being silent, we started moving in our ideas about Silence. We then have our theories of Silence and while we know nothing of it we think we know. This inquiry is not into silence, it is into what we "think about" silence. When this is the case we have missed

and are lost in the mind. And this lapse into mind from Silence is the product of our unverified notions and beliefs.

18. When we are fed with milk by the Master our mind gets obsessed with all this new imperience of the silence. In fact the Silence has been with us from the beginning it is we who were not noticing it because of our fixations on how spiritual events should be and trying to find meaning for Silence in the language that we know. This is where the mind plays all its jokes and we remain away from the blessings of the Master though he confers it beyond measure. Silence does not limit us. Being is not an object to be grasped. It is what we cannot be without. If we put the question “what remains in one moment of Silence” and also give up the habit of self-enquiry and intellection we get at the base of what is behind Silence. That is Reality and that is the Essence.

19. I thank you all for providing me an opportunity to share my thoughts on one of the most enigmatic sentences of the Master.

Pranam.