

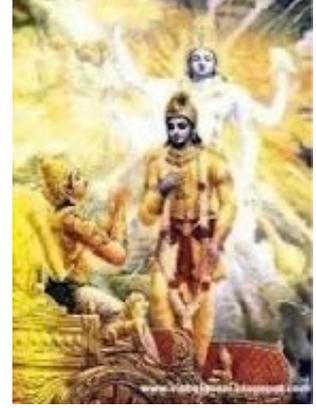
Bhagavad Gita Chapter 7 online Part 4 dated 24/05/2020 by Swami Dayatmanada (Lecture delivered online from Bangalore, India)

Subject: Chapter 7, Verses 11- 13

ॐ वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम्
देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ॥

**Vasudeva sutham devam, Kamsa Chanura mardanam,
Devaki paramanandam, Krishnam vande jagat gurum**

I worship Lord Krishna, who is the spiritual master of the universe, who is the son of Vasudeva, who is the Lord, who killed Kamsa and Chanura, and who is the bliss of Devaki.



सर्वोपनिषदो गावो, दोग्धा गोपाल नन्दनः।
पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता, दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥

**Sarvopanishado gaavo, dogdha gopala nandanah।
parthovatsa: sudheerbhoktaa, dugdham gitamrutam mahat ।**

All the Upanishads are likened to cows. The milker is Krishna, the son of Gopala. Partha is likened to a calf, while the drinkers are the wise ones. The nectar of Gita is the milk.

मूकं करोति वाचालं पङ्गुं लङ्घयते गिरिं ।
यत्कृपा तमहं वन्दे परमानन्द माधवम् ॥

**Mookam karoti vachalam pangum langhayate girim ।
Yat-krupa tamaham vande paramananda madhavam ॥**

I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, the deliverer of the fallen souls. His mercy turns the dumb into eloquent speakers and enables the lame to cross mountains.

Recollection:

We are studying the seventh chapter of the Bhagavat Gita called '**Jnana-Vijnana-Yoga** ज्ञान - विज्ञान योग'.

The Lord has promised to reveal everything about Himself - the right knowledge and along with that, the appropriate realisation.

- What is that knowledge? Nothing else exists except God.
- What is Vijnana? We should do spiritual practice. We must stop finding faults in others, meaning we must start to see godliness and goodness in everybody. We must find out our faults and get rid of them. This is also a beautiful teaching of Holy Mother. Our greatest mistake is when we look for other people's faults. This is called gossip, criticism, backbiting etc. Another very important teaching of Holy Mother is - no one is a stranger.
- The Lord is telling us in this chapter - (Chapter 7, V 8 and 9) whatever we experience throughout our life in the waking and also in the dream state - all this is nothing else, but God only. When we are seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting or touching, then we are experiencing nothing else except God. When we hear a

melodious song then we hear God in the form of sound or *shabda*; when we taste delicious food then we taste '*rasa*' रसोऽहमप्सु *raso 'ham apsu* God only; when we smell a beautiful fragrance पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्यां *punya gandhaḥ pṛithivyām* then we smell God in the form of earth; when we touch something hot or cold; whenever we perceive sunlight or moonlight from the sun and the moon then it is nothing else but God only.

- The Lord has specifically pointed out in this chapter - whenever we see greatness in anybody in the form of either extraordinary intelligence or special power / *tejas* then we must understand that it is God's intelligence and God's power only which is manifesting.
- As has been discussed in our previous classes - according to Sankhya Philosophy and Vedanta, our bodies are made up of five gross cosmic elements called *pancha-bhutas* and our minds are made up of five subtle elements. All these elements have originated from God only.
- Brahman with names and forms is our *samsara* or the universe. The universe without names and forms is Brahman only.

Bhagavat Gita: Chapter 7, Verse 11

बलं बलवतां चाहं कामरागविवर्जितम् ।

धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ ॥ 11॥

balam balavatām chāham kāma-rāga-vivarjitam

dharmāviruddho bhūteṣhu kāmō 'smi bharatarṣhabha

Meaning: O, *Bharatarshabha* (mighty among the lineage of *Bharatas*) when you see tremendous strength (physical, mental, intellectual, moral, spiritual etc.) then recognise it as My manifestation in that particular form, but free from longings and attachments.

Why is the Lord saying this?

Because there are people with wicked and demonic tendencies and they are stronger than anybody else. Swami Yetishwaranandaji used to give the example of Hitler. Hitler had extraordinary power and was considered as God for decades by German people. German people lost their faith in God and substituted him in place of God. His ideas seemed to be the right ideas, but he was a very selfish, cruel and demonic person. (However, from the spiritual point of view, he was a toy in the hand of the Divine Mother, therefore it is not appropriate to blame him. It is all Bhagwan Shri Krishna's divine play for His beautiful purpose.) From a secular point of view, it is very important to note how a person uses his strength and whether he is a selfish or an unselfish person.

कामरागविवर्जितम् | **kāma-rāga-vivarjitam** – a person with tremendous power but has no desire; he only wants welfare of the people; he is also devoid of raga or attachments. I would like to give you a beautiful example to explain this subject.

A Divine Voice and a Divine Singer - MS Subbulakshmi.

There have been many great musicians. There was a great lady musician and she was adored by millions of people, her name was MS Subbulakshmi.

[Madurai Shanmukhavadiyu Subbulakshmi (16 September 1916 – 11 December 2004) was an Indian Carnatic singer from Madurai, Tamil Nadu. She was the first musician ever to be awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour.]

Swami Madavanandji used to say, “Her voice was divine. Goddess Saraswati was manifesting in her voice.” It was not only her melodious voice or her musical expertise, but the way her singing used to uplift people’s mind and used to bring about a transformation in the listener’s consciousness. This lady had the talent to earn crores of rupee in those days and live a luxurious lifestyle. However, she practically donated all her wealth for the welfare of people. As a result of this, she became very poor. Swami Ranganathanandji had a lot of respect for her. He made a financial support arrangement for her and a fixed amount of money used to be sent to her every month for her maintenance from the Ramakrishna Order. She was a marvellous lady.

Essence: The Lord is telling us that when we come across a person, who has an extraordinary strength (in any field of life) then we must understand that this strength does not belong to the person, but it belongs to the Lord. We must pay our respect to these special people. Why? Because actually we are paying respect to the Lord. This is the way to progress in spiritual life.

धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ **dharmāviruddho bhūteṣhu kāmo 'smi bharatarṣhabha-**

O, Arjuna - I am especially manifested in the form of *kama* or desire which is not opposed to dharma. This is the most marvellous word. There are so many people, who are unable to conquer *kama* कामा or *desire*. They must try to sublimate it in order to progress in spiritual life. Here, the Lord is categorically telling us that there are many saints who have lived a householder’s life. They have to fulfil their desires and if they fulfil their desires through a scriptural directed way then they will also attain Me. Because their *kama* or desire is surrounded, guided, protected, inspired and propelled forward by a *dharmic* (righteous) way, never by an *adharmic* (non-righteous) way. This type of कामा *kama* brings the person to Me.

Important point to understand is - it is absolutely impossible to overcome all the desires in one jump. Therefore, we should control them and direct them in the right direction. The most wonderful formulation of human goals by Hinduism is – *artha* (material achievements) and *kama* (desires). Shri Ramakrishna used to say, “The bondage of human life is due to कामिनी *kamini* and कांचना *kanchana*, means due to *kama* कामा and अर्था *artha*.”

What is Hinduism talking about? Hinduism or Vedanta is talking about - four *Purushartha* (धर्मा *dharma* righteousness, अर्था *Artha* or wealth and material things, कामा *kama* or desires, मोक्षा *moksha* or salvation). Here, it seems as if Shri Ramakrishna is in conflict with Vedanta. Not really, अर्था *artha* or wealth and कामा

kama or desires become our greatest friend and lead us towards God, when sandwiched between dharma / righteousness and moksha / salvation.

प्रेयस *preyas* and श्रेयस *sheyas*:

- As we have discussed in the *Katha-Upanishad*, two things approach human beings - *preyas* and श्रेयस *sheyas*.
- *Dharma, artha and kama* have been labelled as प्रेयस *preyas*.
- Many people have this misunderstanding that *preyas* is an enemy of *sheyas*. The Vedas have never propagated such a thing.
- Vedas give us a unified meaning - *preyas* means 'steps' to reach the highest goal which is the first part of Vedas; *sheyas* means the final state or supreme goal which is the end part of Vedas. *Preyas* is the only way to reach the highest goal called Brahman or Atman or *sheyas* or whatever name we want to give.

प्रेयस *preyas* means ***dharma, artha and kama***, are the steps to reach the **ultimate goal or God**.

श्रेयस *sheyas* means ***supreme goal***

Para-Vidhya and Apari- Vidhya:

- In the Mundaka-Upanishad, the disciple *Shaunaka* approached his guru and asked, "Please teach me that, by knowing which - everything can be known."
- Instead of giving a direct answer that by knowing Brahman - you would know everything, Guru said, "There are two types of knowledge - lower knowledge and higher knowledge." The lower knowledge is also called '*Apari-Vidhya*' and includes all vedas, vedangas, all scriptures, all knowledge available in the past, all knowledge available today and all knowledge which will be available in future.
- This *Avidhya* or *Apari Vidhya* when used properly, is a stepping-stone to reach to the highest knowledge called *Para-Vidhya*.
- This *Apari-Vidhya* is called by Swami Vivekananda as *karma-yoga*. As a matter of fact, all four yogas (*karma-yoga* or *bhakti-yoga* or *raj-yoga* or *janan-yoga*) have both parts, a lower part called *Apari-Vidhya* and the highest part called *Para-Vidhya*. For example, in *bhakti-yoga*, there are two parts - *apari-bhakti* and *para-bhakti*. No one can achieve *Para-bhakti* or supreme devotion without acquiring *Apari-Bhakti* or *Gauna-Bhakti*.

To summarise: The point which I am trying to make –

- These are not opposing ideals, actually one is the lower step leading to the higher state. This great understanding came to us through Shri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda. (There is a very good description of

prakruti in the fourteenth chapter of the Bhagavat Gita called Guna-Traya-Vibhag-Yoga.)

- The Lord is reiterating that *Prakruti* is My Maya or so called *Avidhya-Maya* according to Shri Ramakrishna.
- We should understand that both *Vidhya-Maya* and *Avidhya-Maya* are constituted by three *gunas* of *Prakruti*.
- Then what is the difference? *Avidhya-Maya* consists of more *tamas*, little bit of *rajas* and very little of *satva*. Whereas, *Vidhya-Maya* consists of more *satva*, less of *rajas* and very little *tamas*. The progress is always from *tamas* to *rajas* and from *rajas* to *satva*.
- The Lord is telling us - our bodies, our minds, our *pranas* (vital energy), all the *punch-koshas* (five sheaths), all three bodies (gross body, subtle body and causal body) are made of nothing else, but the three *gunas* of *Prakruti*. We should not forget that these three *gunas* of *Prakruti* are nothing else, but the so-called lower nature of the Lord Himself. This means that even the most *tamasic* person is enveloped by God Himself, in a *tamasic* state. If this is a fact that we all have come from God then there is no other goal of our life except to go back to God.

Evolution and Involution according to Swami Vivekananda:

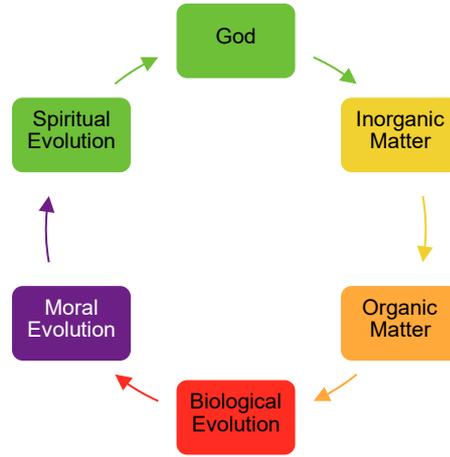
Evolution:

Swami Vivekananda has expressed these ideas with tremendous power and conviction at The Parliament of Religions in America and later to his devotees. He said, "You always talk about evolution. However, we probably do not know where this evolution is taking us, why it is taking us, how it is taking us and what we can do to move a bit faster. We cannot progress in our spiritual life unless we know the answers to these questions."

Of course, everyone is going to progress in time. As I have said in the past that this entire process of evolution is like an escalator. Once you step on this escalator, whether you stand or start walking or sit down - invariably, inevitably, helplessly you will be carried up and up by this escalator to the highest point which is God.

Involution:

Swami Vivekananda posited another idea which is opposite to the idea of evolution, called involution. What is involution? The process of coming from God is called involution. We have come from God and our home is God. The lowest point of evolution is called an inorganic state. From the inorganic state - slowly life or the organic state evolves. When the organic evolution starts then it progresses through various stages - first is the biological evolution; the biological evolution progresses to the moral evolution and ultimately the moral evolution progresses to the spiritual evolution. So, involution is coming from God and evolution is going back to God.



God → Inorganic state → Organic state → Biological evolution — Moral evolution — Spiritual evolution → Back to God.

Now, people have started to understand that there is something inherent in us which is carrying us towards God.

Next verse, very beautiful statement by the Lord Himself:

Bhagavat Gita: Chapter 7, Verse 12

ये चैव सात्त्विका भावा राजसास्तामसाश्च ये ।

मत्त एवेति तान्विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि ॥ 12॥

*ye chaiva sāttvikā bhāvā rājasās tāmasāśh cha ye
matta eveti tān viddhi na tvahaṁ teṣhu te mayi*

Meaning: Whatever things there be, of the nature of satva, rajas and tamas, know that they are all from Me alone.

Explanation: In Vedanta - the highest truth is called Brahman or Atman.

From the Vedantic point of view - (Please also refer to Chapter 7 Part 3.)

Pancha-Mahabhutas

- For some mysterious reasons, Atman evolved without changing Itself, became gross and manifested as आकाश *akasha* or space. This is the first evolution.
- Akasha आकाश or space has further evolved and became further grosser as वायु *vayu* or air.
- Air became furthermore evolved and became grosser as fire or अग्नि *agni*.
- अग्नि *agni* or fire became still grosser and it became as water or जल *jala*.
- Water or जल *jala* became even grosser and became पृथ्वी *prithvi* or earth.
- From these pancha-mahabhutas, the entire cosmos evolved including inorganic to organic, one cell creatures to many cell creatures such as

insects, plants, animals etc ultimately the highest manifestation of human beings.

- The entire universe, whether it is our galaxy or cosmos, or other galaxies are made up of these five cosmic elements or पंच-महाभूत panch-bhutas.

Now, if we proceed to trace back our origin - where did we all come from? The sequence will be -

- Our body and mind came from पृथ्वी *prithvi* or earth.
- Earth or पृथ्वी *prithvi* came from water or जल *jala*.
- Water or जल *jala* came from अग्नि *Agni* or fire.
- Fire or अग्नि *Agni* came from वायु *vayu* or air.
- Air or वायु *vayu* came from आकाश *akasha* or space and
- Space or आकाश *akasha* came from the Atman.
- Bodies of all living beings consist of earth, water, heat, air and space.

Earth is the grossest manifestation, we come from earth; we are sustained by earth and finally, we go back to earth. In a Christian burial ceremony, the priest takes a little bit of dust in his hands and says, "Dust unto dust." What does this mean? We come from dust or earth and we go back to dust or earth.

Essence: The whole gamut has come from the 'uncaused cause' which is called Atman or the pure consciousness.

Wholistic Attitude:

This above philosophy is extremely profound and practical. Modern scientists have understood it, that is why they are strongly recommending that we must develop a wholistic attitude. What does this mean? Everything is connected to each other. We cannot say that something is useless and get away with it. If we lose even a bit from nature then we have lost a lot. This beautiful unified view is called a 'Wholistic Attitude'. This is going to be a predominant approach for our physical, mental, moral and spiritual development in the future - the Lord is telling us, "आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन |ātmaupamyena sarvatra samam paśhyati yo 'rjuna (C6, V 32) - O, Arjuna you look up the whole universe like none other than yourself." If one single tiny object is injured or harmed or broken or made redundant in any way then it will break us.

Essence of the Verse No.12:

- The whole universe is made up of three *gunas* called *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. There is absolutely no English translation for *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.
- These three *gunas* are the constituent elements of this entire creation and these three *gunas* have originated from God only.

- God is *sat* or pure existence; God is *chit* or pure knowledge and God is *ananda* or pure bliss.
- This means, any object which has originated from God, must have sat-chit and ananda as its constituents. However, *sat-chit-ananda* may or may not be manifested in the object. I would like to give you few examples to clarify this point.
- **Example of a King and a Poor Man:** When a King is sleeping then he is neither a happy King nor an unhappy King; he is neither a rich King nor a poor King; he is just a helpless being only. Similarly, when a poor idiotic man is sleeping then he is neither a poor man nor an idiotic man. Both are exactly the same during their sleeping state. There is a type of equality in their state whether it is obvious or not.
- **Example of a Scientist:** When a great scientist (like Einstein) sleeps then also he is neither a scientist nor an ordinary person; he is just a being merged in his own-self.
- *Chit* or knowledge and *ananda* or bliss are not manifested in inert objects. Our great Rishis have discovered these truths long time ago - everything is nothing else, but the manifestation of God or Divinity. That is why in Hinduism, the whole of nature has been deified and worshipped - rivers are divine; mountains are divine; plants are divine; animals are divine and of course human beings are worshipped in the form of mother, father, teacher, *athithi* or guest etc.
- Guru is the highest manifestation of divinity. Shri Ramakrishna used to warn people and used to say, "If anybody considers one's Guru as an ordinary human being; if anybody thinks of a mantra as ordinary words; if anybody thinks of a devotee as an ordinary person; if anybody thinks of a scripture as an ordinary book, then this person has to drag (suffer) a lot in his life."
- All the five elements are divine and are called *Bhudevata*, *Jaldevata*, *Agnidevata*, *Vayudevata* and *Akashadevata*. There is a beautiful temple in South India, it has no image or anything except Akasha (space). The devotees are supposed to feel and meditate on Lord Shiva as - Akasha-Linga.

[**Pancha Bhoota Sthalam** refers to five temples dedicated to Shiva, each representing a manifestation of the five prime elements of nature: earth, water, fire, air, and space. *Pancha* indicates "five," *Bhoota* means "elements," and *Sthala* means "place." The temples are located in South India, four in Tamil Nadu and one in Andhra Pradesh. The five elements are believed to be enshrined in the five *lingams* of the temples, with each lingam named based on the element represented.]

So, the Lord is telling us, "Whatever objects there be, in the past, present or future - they all are of the nature of *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. They all came from Me." All objects of the universe are manifestations of *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas* in different proportions. We are all part of this universe, means we also come from God.

Conclusion: If A (universe) is B (*satva, rajas and tamas*); B (*satva, rajas and tamas*) is C (God); this means A (universe) and C (God) are indifferent. We are all nothing but God.

A (Universe) is B (Gunas), B (Gunas) is C (God) this means C is A.

This whole rigmarole of argument, debates and explanations has been beautifully expressed by the great Swami Vivekananda as a simple aphorism - **Each Soul is Potentially Divine.** Potentially divine means we are fully divine, but our divinity is covered, and it is manifesting slowly. This covering of ignorance or Maya is being removed slowly and gradually to manifest our divinity.

The Lord has said earlier, "This entire universe is constituted of these three *gunas* and these three *gunas* came from Me." Then He makes a very peculiar statement - न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि **na tvahaṁ teṣhu te mayi** - means they are all in Me, but I am not in them. This appears to be a sort of conflicting statement.

What does this mean?

When we see a small ray of sunlight then actually the sun is manifesting as the small ray of light which is illumining a small area around it. However, to mistake this ray of sunlight as the sun would be the greatest blunder.

- More *tamas* means less manifestation of divinity.
- More *rajas* and less *tamas* mean little bit more manifestation of divinity.
- More *satva* and less *rajas* and *tamas* mean higher manifestation of divinity.
- No *gunas* at all mean no obstruction at all, means the full manifestation of divinity.

Next Verse:

Bhagavat Gita: Chapter 7, Verse 13

त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत् ।

मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम् ॥ 13॥

**tribhir guṇa-mayair bhāvair ebhiḥ sarvam idaṁ jagat
mohitaṁ nābhijānāti māmebhyaḥ param avyayam**

Meaning: Deluded by these three-fold *gunas*, (*satva, rajas and tamas*) which constitutes nature, this whole world fails to recognise Me – 'Who am I' beyond these *gunas* and immutable (changeless).

Earlier, the Lord categorically said that everything comes from Me in the form of these three *gunas*. Just a short reminder -

- Space, air, fire, water and the earth (Pancha-mahabhutas) are nothing, but different forms of these three *gunas*.

- Akasha or Space manifests the highest satva-guna that is why it is intensely pervading, extremely subtle and very few people can really understand it. It is neither visible nor experienceable except in the form of vacuum called *Avakasha*.
- Air or *vayu* is little bit grosser than *akasha*. We can feel it but cannot really see it. In the Brahdarynaka-Upanishad it is called as "*amurta*" means not physically visible. Air or *vayu* has a little bit less *satvaguna* than *akasha*, therefore, it is a bit visible.
- Fire or *agni* is grosser than air. We can see fire; it gives both light and heat. This world cannot sustain without it. The Sun or *Surya-Devata* is called 'the *pratayksha devata*' because it is the greatest visible manifestation of this *agni-tatva*, giving both light and heat. As a matter of fact, the whole universe is nothing else, but a manifestation of the sun. A beautiful comment has been made by a great man - whenever we eat a piece of bread then we are eating nothing, but a small piece of the sun. This is the reason, every devout Hindu worships '*Surya-Devata* or Sun' - at every dawn and dusk, he will face the sun and offers his prayer, "*tawameva pratyakshum brahmansi त्वमेव प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मस्मि*" - you are the visible God. The sun is the most powerful visible God through whom this world is sustained. In a way of speaking - the creation, the sustenance and the dissolution are happening because of the manifestation of God in the form of the '*सूर्य देवता Surya-Devata* or Sun'.

Why are we unable to see God?

The Lord is categorically telling us that the whole universe is nothing but My manifestation through these three *gunas*. Then why do we not see God when we look at the world? We see akasha; we feel air; we see fire; we see water; we see the earth, but where is God? Because, our inside is completely covered as in Katha-Upanishad '*paranchikani yates gnat swayambhu*'. God has created all our sense organs only to see outward, not the inner truth. That is why, we see only the gross manifestation and fail to recognise God in it.

Shri Ramakrishna – 'My Mother Kali':

If we visit Dakshineswar Kali Temple, climb the steps and stand in front of the image of Mother Kali, what will we see? A cold image of stone. Do we see Divine Mother there? Not really! When Shri Ramakrishna used to enter the same temple; what did he see? There is no image of stone or metal, but a pure consciousness in the form of 'Divine Mother. He used to call 'My Divine Mother Kali'. So, the problem is not outside, the problem is actually within us. Our mind is covered up. What covers our mind?

The Lord is telling us - the whole world is deluded. There is a power which deludes us. This deluding power is called 'Maya'. What is Maya? That which covers our vision and makes us see God or Atman as Non-Atman.

No man steps into the same river twice:

There is a beautiful word in Sanskrit for this world called 'जगत Jagat'. Jagat means, that which is constantly moving. This world is in constant flux. There is a

Buddhist phrase “No man steps into the same river twice.” Yes, it appears to be the same river, same Ganga, same *Kaveri-river* however, the river water is constantly flowing, so we can never touch the same water again.

Now, let's analyse the above example of the river from a different angle. We are talking about a new body of water which is constantly replacing the old body of water, old drops of water have flowed away and replaced by new drops of water. What are we talking about? New water and old water, if we remove these two words i.e. old and new then what remains - water only. What touched us earlier - water and what is touching us now, is water only. If we look at the river from this point of view then it is the same river. However, if we look at the river as flowing water then it is something which is constantly changing.

This constantly changing factor, even though the reality is never changing is called Maya.

Another fact, which we have discussed in the past:

God has become the world. Or God appears to us as the world.

I hope you can catch my point. Once again we will take our most favourite illustration of '**rope and snake**'. When a person is seeing a snake in the semi-darkness then -

- Has the rope become the snake? Or
- Is the person unable to see the rope as a rope in the semi-darkness and has thus mistaken it as a snake?
- According to Advaita Vedanta, this is called “विवर्त-वादा **Vivart-Vada**”. This means, God appears as the world and there is absolutely no change in God.
- This is due to “**Maya**” - Maya is within our minds; the mind itself is Maya; the mind itself is the great screen; whatever is perceived through this mind is Maya. The mind is constituted of 'time or *kala*, space or *desha* and causation or *nimitta*.' The absolute appears as relative due to this Maya and infinite appears as finite.
- An important point to note is - Brahman or God is the same everywhere. However, because of our perception (this is **Dristi-Sristhi-Vada**) we see it in a particular way, or as the world, and that is called Maya. Maya is not in God, but Maya is within us. If we can remove this veil of Maya then we will see everything in its true form; we will see as it is; we will perceive as pure Brahman or as pure consciousness and nothing else.
- Another very useful illustration is of dreams. We can have a very enjoyable dream or a very scary dream. When we are in the dream state then we experience so many things which are happening in our dream and they all appear absolutely real. When we wake up, we find that we are on our bed and that we were dreaming - nothing has really happened, everything which we experienced in our dream was only a play of our mind.

- Now, if we apply these illustrations to the above verse: This entire cosmos (the process of creation, maintenance and dissolution) is really a dream in our minds. This is based on Advaita Vedanta.
- However, according to the '*Dvaita*-Philosophy or Dualism' (propagated by Madavacharya) and '*Vishishtadvaita*-Philosophy or Qualified-Non-Dualism' (propagated by Ramanujacharya) - God has created this cosmos; He did not change. He has a special power and by this power, He can create the cosmos without changing Himself; God remains the same and His creation (the world) also remains the same.
- Whatever the philosophical differences may be - all philosophies agree unconditionally that this world is very limited, it consists of both *sukha* or happiness and *dukkha* or unhappiness. What is the proportion of *sukha* and *dukkha*? The proportion is what Swami Yetishwaranandaji used to say 50/50, but 50/50 of what? The phrase "One horse vs one rabbi", means *dukkha* is 99% and *sukha* is 1% only. So certainly, it is not worth it. How do we know? Even the dualist devotees do not want to live in this world. They want to escape to *Vaikuntha* or to *Kailasha* or to *Goloka* or to *Ramakrishnaloka* as they hope to get a hundred per cent happiness in these *lokas* or celestial abodes and do not want to come back to this hell / the world. Swami Vivekananda wrote many poems - comparing this world to the hell.

To summarise:

There is an inescapable factor called Maya. Maya consists of three *gunas*. This Maya is nothing but of our own body and mind. Through this prism of body and mind, which functions only through the machinery of 'time, space and causation', even the infinite appears to be broken, gross and finite.

So, the Lord is saying, "People are unable to see me because of this Maya." Then what is the way? Get rid of this Maya, get rid of this mind, means get rid of three *gunas*.

Parable of Shri Ramakrishna - Three Robbers:

Sri Ramakrishna has dealt with this concept of the three *gunas* in his inimitable manner summarising the whole Gita chapter as a story of the three robbers which follows.

A merchant with some valuables travelling alone had to pass through a forest to his home in the city. He was waylaid by three robbers who took away all his possessions. The first robber said, "Let me kill him!". The second robber argued, "Why to incur the sin of killing him? Let us tie him up firmly to a tree". The second robber's advice was followed and they went away leaving him to his fate. After a while, the third robber returned, unbound him and took him to the edge of the forest along a road leading to the city which could be seen at a distance. The merchant thanked the third robber profusely for his kindness and earnestly requested him to accompany him so that he could suitably reward him on reaching home. However, the third robber said, "I cannot come with you to the city as I will be recognised as a robber by the police".

Sri Ramakrishna himself explains the story. The first robber was *tamas* showing the quality of प्रमाद *pramaada*, acting on impulse. The second robber was *rajas* exhibiting the quality of binding to the pleasures of the sensory world. The third robber was *sattva* who showed the qualities of kindness and compassion. Nevertheless, he was still a robber illustrating the main and central theme of the Gita chapter.

In order to achieve spiritual liberation or *Mukti*, one has to transcend the *sattva-guna* as well and becomes a गुणातीत *trai-guna-atita*, this means be established in *sattva* without ego (Ahankara). One must be constant in purity, virtue and goodness but not be conscious of one's *sattvic-nature*. The *sattva-guna* can take us to *jnana-chakra*, but this is also a barrier. The aspirant can see a divine light very clearly as though there is no barrier, but there is a barrier like a glass which is intervening between the aspirant and God.

What is meant by a 'ब्रह्माकार वृत्ति Brahmakar-Vyriti'?

This highest state of *sattva* is called 'Brahmakar-Vyriti'. This Brahmakar-Vyriti is bondage or a barrier. That is why, Totapuri Maharaj said to Shri Ramakrishna, "You should destroy this Brahmakar-Vyriti'. (We know the story) Shri Ramakrishna said, "I can remove every other thought except the thought of my Divine Mother." Totapuri helped Shri Ramakrishna in getting rid of this last thought. Shri Ramakrishna described this incident in his imitable language and said, "I took up a sword of discrimination; as soon as Divine-Mother appeared; I cut it into two and what happened after this; I don't know. My mind merged completely in Brahman."

We should understand that it is not possible to get rid of Brahmakar-Vyriti' by our efforts. The mind cannot destroy the mind – cannot destroy the highest thought called Brahmakar-Vyriti. God's grace will help the sadhaka / aspirant to destroy this last thought of Brahmakar-Vyriti'.

What is Maya? To summarise -

- There is a barrier called Maya.
- Maya is constituted of three *gunas*.
- What is the way? We must turn this *Avidhaya-Maya* into *Vidhaya- Maya*.
- How to do it? We should overcome *tamas* by *rajas* and *rajas* by *satva* and become a *sattvic* person / a pure person.
- When the last thought of Brahmakar-Vyriti' comes then surrender to God. *Sarv-dharman-paritaja* [सर्व धर्मान परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणम् ब्रज। अहम् त्वाम् सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामी मा शुचः ॥ C18, V 66] ultimately the Divine-Lord will remove the last thought. Then we will perceive *Sarvam-Braham-Mayam-Jagat* and *Sarvam-Khal-Idam-Brahm*.

Expression of Maya as in the Bhagavat Gita:

A most beautiful expression of Maya is given in the Bhagavat Gita. This is more akin to what Shri Ramakrishna's used to call as Maha-Maya – about which Lord Krishna is going to expound in this chapter. Here, we need to note that although the terminology is the same but meaning is different. Normally, we understand that Maya is a sort of enemy of man, but in the Bhagavat Gita it is not an enemy but is like a loving mother. Slowly and slowly, Maya takes the aspirant by holding his hands through this huge journey called evolution:

from inorganic -> to organic -> to human birth -> to a spiritually advanced aspirant -> to Brahmakar-Vyriti' -> ultimately to our real home called God:

Teachings of Upanishads (especially Katha-Upanishad) are vibrating through these verses of the Bhagavat Gita.

The Lord is telling us, "Nobody can overcome this Maya. What is the way? Take refuge in Me. It is My Maya and I will instruct My Maya / My Shakti / My Power. So, do not worry my child." Shri Ramakrishna's teachings are like a mirror image to Bhagwan Krishna's teachings.

We will discuss these beautiful ideas in our future classes. To be cont'd

Vasudeva sutham devam kamsa Chanoora mardhanam,

Devaki paramanandam Krishnam vande Jagat Gurum.

वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम् । देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ॥

May Shri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda bless us all.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti.

With kind regards

Mamta Misra