

Bhagavad Gita Chapter 7 online Part 6 date 31/05/2020 by Swami Dayatmanada (Lecture delivered online from Bangalore, India)

Subject: Chapter 7, Verses 13 - 19

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 ॥

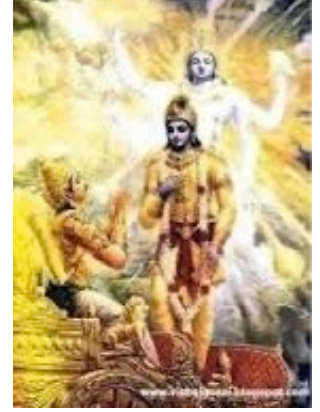
**Mookam karoti vachalam pangum langhayate girim |
Yat-krupa tamaham vande paramananda madhavam ||**

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'. We have been discussing the concept of Maya in our last class. Just to recollect, the Lord is telling us:

- The entire universe is made up of three *gunas* (satva, rajas and tamas.). These three *gunas* constitute Maya or the 'Deluding Power'. What is meant by delusion? Delusion is not something which is covering up something, but it makes us identify with the body and mind - I am this body and mind; this world is real; I am this 'ahamkara' (Ahamkara is related to body and mind; body and mind are the instruments and through these instruments the world is experienced.) So, a combination of I + body and mind + the world is called "Maya".
- This Maya is dependent upon Me (The Lord); it is My (Lord's) power; it is My play.
- This is a beautiful secret that the Lord has become the world. There is no you and me; there is no Swami Dayatmananda or any Swami - whosoever exists is none other than God. However, it is as if Swami Dayatmananda has forgotten his



true nature and is thinking that he is an individual; he is a person of a certain age; he is bound; he must become free; he thinks that if he will go to Varanasi then he will become free. All this is called Maya or to express this in simple language “I am not God or Divine, I am something else; I am incomplete or अपूर्णा *apurna*.” This is not a very satisfactory or happy state, therefore I am trying to achieve eternal happiness and trying to become ‘पूर्ण *purna*/complete’. All spiritual practices are meant to take an aspirant to a state where he feels ‘*purna*/complete’. Eventually, an aspirant finds that there is nothing which can be called as ‘अपूर्ण *apurna* or incomplete’, actually everything is ‘Brahman or पूर्ण *purna* or complete’.

- It is only our thinking which makes us feel that we are bound. Imagine a person is sleeping on his nice bed but suddenly has a horrible dream that he is in a dungeon or a jail. The scorpions and the insects in the jail are biting him, there is a foul smell and people are beating him black and blue! But when he wakes up, to his great relief he finds that he is sleeping on his comfy bed in his lovely home.
- When an aspirant achieves liberation, then he realises that anything before liberation was only a nightmarish dream and he feels that he was never bound. This process of waking up from a dream can only happen when a person is having a dream while sleeping. How? In a dream, a dream student (who is a bound person) ultimately realises that he requires some help. He obtains the help of a Guru in his dream. (A ‘dream disciple’ in his dream will have only a ‘dream guru’.) The ‘dream guru’ gives him a big blow and then he wakes up and understands that it was only a dream! I was the disciple; I was the guru; I gave myself a blow, but the blow did me good and I woke up from this nightmarish dream.

What is the Lord saying?

Bhagavat Gita: Chapter 7, Verse 14

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥ 14॥

***daivī hyeṣhā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te***

(Please also refer to Chapter 7, Class 5.)

The Lord is telling us three very important points:

- 1) **Maya**: Three *gunas* (satva, rajas and tamas) are springing up from Me. This is called Maya.
- 2) **This Maya is My divine power**. Nobody can cross over or destroy this Maya. Only I can remove it or destroy it.
- 3) **You surrender unto Me**. We should worship God and pray, “O Lord, You are very compassionate; You are very merciful; please shower Your grace upon Me; please wake me up from this dream of samsara transmigratory world.” By the

grace of God, a day will come when an enlightened Guru comes into our life; he will take pity upon us and he will give us some spiritual instructions. When we will practice the Guru's instructions then we will evolve further and further with the help of his instructions. One day we will become free.

Another important point: We should recognise the expression of divinity in others in the form of strength, intelligence, light, fragrance etc. (Fourteen such qualities have been named. However, fourteen qualities do not mean that there are only fourteen.)

This is where we stopped in our last class.

These divine teachings are meant for the entire world. Naturally, those who have faith will trust these words and will follow the instructions. However, some people do not seem to heed to these divine teachings at all; they do not put them into practice even to the slightest degree. What is the cause of such behaviour?

Why do most people not follow these divine teachings of the Lord?

The Lord will give us the answer to the above question in the next verse. Although Arjuna did not ask the question, the Lord can read Arjuna's mind and all our minds as well. The Lord anticipated Arjuna's doubt. What was the doubt? Everyone is suffering and everyone wants to put a stop to their sufferings; everyone wants to attain complete freedom or liberation. Then why do most people not follow the Lord's instructions? Such people, who do not follow these divine instructions from the Lord are called दुष्कृत **dushkrutis** (means the evildoer).

Meaning of 'Evil' in Vedantic Terminology:

In Vedantic terminology, the word 'evil' has a very special meaning. In our world, we use the word 'evil' for a person who steals, cheats, takes bribes, hurts others, creates pain for others or commits crimes and so on. But, in Vedantic terminology 'evil' means when even the most righteous people do not seek to know their real nature, do not turn their mind towards spirituality or do not develop devotion towards God. Such people are called 'evil' or 'demonic' people.

Verse 3 from Ishavashaya Upanishad

असूर्या नाम ते लोका अन्धेन तमसावृताः।
तांस्ते प्रेत्याभिगच्छन्ति ये के चात्महनो जनाः ॥

asuryā nāma te lokā andhena tamasāvṛtāḥ |
tāmste pretyābhigacchanti ye ke cātmahano janāḥ ||

Meaning: Those who do not seek to know who they are, those who neglect their true self welfare, such people are called असूरा *asura or demon*. People living in the darkness are called demons or *asuras*.

We get a beautiful description in the sixteenth chapter of the Bhagavat Gita called 'Daivasura-Sampad-Vibhag-Yoga' about who is an *asura* or a demon.

Here, the Lord is saying:

Bhagavat Gita: Chapter 7, Verse 15

न मां दुष्कृतिनो मूढाः प्रपद्यन्ते नराधमाः ।
माययापहतज्ञाना आसुरं भावमाश्रिताः ॥ 15॥

***na māṁ duṣhkṛitino mūḍhāḥ prapadyante narādhamāḥ
māyayāpahṛita-jñānā āsuram bhāvam āśritāḥ***

Meaning: The evildoers, the deluded and the wildest among men deprived of knowledge by My Maya and following the way of the *asuras* (demonic ways), they do not worship Me.

This is the simplest meaning of the above verse. However, there is great depth in these words. The Lord uses three epithets here.

1. ***nara-adhamāḥ*** - unspiritual or worldly people are the lowest among human beings.
2. ***mūḍhāḥ*** - means ignorant, unintelligent. ***mūḍhāḥ or idiot*** is a person who thinks right as wrong and wrong as right, truth as untruth and untruth as truth. I have said this before - spiritual life is not something special. All of us wish happiness and to obtain the highest happiness is called spirituality. Therefore, we should practice spirituality to attain the highest happiness.
3. ***duṣhkṛitinaḥ*** - this is the first epithet which the Lord has used. *Kṛit* means actions and *dush* means evil. *Dushkṛiti* दुष्कृति means evildoers. As we have discussed, from a Vedantic point of view, evil means those people who do not turn their minds towards God or spirituality.

What is dharma and adharmā?

Swami Vivekananda defined these two words 'dharma and adharmā' very beautifully. What is dharma and adharmā? The action which takes us nearer to God is called dharma and the action which takes us further and further away from God is called adharmā. Dharma and adharmā do not mean, what we are thinking or doing. For example, if all our philanthropies and services etc. are making us egotistic, then it is not dharma. Why? Because egotism means moving further and further away from God, which means covering up God or Atman with a thicker veil by our actions.

Why do people not turn towards spirituality?

Evil people do not have faith in the scriptures. Therefore, they perform those actions which have been forbidden by the scriptures and they do not do what is prescribed by the scriptures. These people do not worship or contemplate upon

God: but they are also God's children. Then why do they not turn towards spirituality? What is the reason?

Truly speaking, it is a 'Divine Lila'. We haven't got the choice or power to become a devotee or a non-devotee. This is a very strange concept. As a result of our egotism, we think that if we wish, then we can become a devotee and turn towards God. No Sir! We have got no power, it is only when God bestows His grace upon us and gives us the power of discrimination, only then can we turn towards spirituality or God. This is expressed so beautifully in the Bhagavat Gita (C18, V61)

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति।
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया॥ (Gita 18, V 61)

Ishwara (the ruler of the entire universe) is sitting in the heart of every living creature. Not only all the living creatures but also all the non-living objects too. Who gives the mountains existence? It is only the Divine Lord. Who makes the rivers flow? It is only the Divine Lord. Who makes the seed burst into a seedling, only to grow into a huge, towering tree? It is only the Divine Lord.

Similarly, nobody is either spiritual or non-spiritual by their own will, but by the will of the Lord or the Divine Mother. This is a profound truth - we need to understand it and accept it then pray to the Lord, "O, Lord please inspire me also to desire You and worship You."

Beautiful teaching of Shri Ramakrishna in 'The Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna'.

One day, a devotee came and said to Shri Ramakrishna, "Sir, if I would have experienced any joy from repeating God's name (without needing to be prompted) then I would have repeated God's name many more times." This devotee was not getting any delight in repeating God's name and that is why he was not interested in repeating God's name.

Shri Ramakrishna gave a piece of beautiful advice and said, "You should pray to God and request with full sincerity and devotion - 'Lord, may I get more and more joy in repeating Your name.'"

Important point: The point which I am trying to make is - the moment an understanding comes that everything is by God's grace - whether it is a desire for spiritual life or to make progress in spiritual life or to have a favourable environment or finally to attain moksha or liberation - from the beginning to the end (what they call in the West 'from A to Z') is all by divine grace. Only then will we automatically turn towards God.

Coming back to our verse:

न मां दुष्कृतिनो मूढाः प्रपद्यन्ते **na māṁ duṣkṛitino mūḍhāḥ prapadyante** - these people do not surrender unto Me. Their understanding is extremely limited. They

think that whatever we are experiencing in the waking, dream and deep sleep state is the only reality and there is no other reality.

माययापहृतज्ञाना **māyayāpahṛita-jñānā** - their knowledge has been stolen by Maya.
आसुरं भावमाश्रिता **āsuraṁ bhāvam āśhritāḥ** - they follow the way of asura (demonic attitude).

These are the stages in each person's evolution. Even a non-believer or a sceptic or agnostic or an atheist must turn towards the Divine Lord. There is no other way.

Those who are deluded by Maya do not worship God. A spiritual aspirant is very fortunate because he understands that Maya is My power and I should pray to God to overcome this Maya. He attends spiritual classes; studies scriptures; does japa and meditation and prays to God earnestly - "May I not get enchanted or mesmerised by Your world-witching Maya."

There is a beautiful story in the Chandogya Upanishad.

Story of Indra and Virochana:

From Chandogya Upanishad

One day Prajapati, the creator of the universe announced, "The Self is the sinless, ageless and deathless One; it has neither sorrow nor hunger nor thirst. It is this Self alone one should seek to know. And one who seeks after the Self and knows it, gains possessions of all the worlds and wins all that is desirable."

Both the gods and the demons heard this announcement and thought, "We must know this Atman or Self and seek this knowledge that promises possession of all worlds." Hence, Indra, the king of the gods and Virochana, the leader of the demons, approached Prajapati with all the humility of a disciple and requested that he impart this knowledge to them. Prajapati accepted them as his disciples and asked them to stay with him for thirty-two years.

Both, Indra and Virochana, stayed on living the life of a Brahmachari. At the end of that period, Prajapati called both of them and said, "Dear ones, go and look at yourself in a pan of water and then tell me what you saw."

The next day when Prajapati asked them both to narrate their experience they both said, "Lord, we saw ourselves entirely as we are, the very image even to the very hairs and nails." Prajapati said, "Go and adorn yourself and then look into the pan of water again and tell me about your experience." Happily, they went and adorned themselves, looked into the pan of water, came back and replied to Prajapati, "Revered Sir, we saw ourselves well-dressed, well-groomed and well-adorned."

Both Indra and Virochana, happily went back with much satisfaction in their hearts. Prajapati saw them leaving and exclaimed to himself, "Whether they are gods or demons they will inevitably perish if they are satisfied with the mere reflection of Reality."

Virochana went to the demons and taught them this knowledge by saying that this body is 'self' and this is all that we need to know.

Indra was different from Virochana. He realised that something is wrong with what he had just learnt about the Atman. He felt uneasy.

He went back to Prajapati and said, "Lord, I see nothing worthy in this body or in its reflection. Please give me the true knowledge about the Atman." Prajapati was happy with Indra and asked Indra to stay with him for another thirty-two years. At the end of that period, Prajapati called him and said, "That which moves about in dreams is Atman or Self."

Indra seemed to be satisfied and made his way to the abode of the gods. But as he went along, again doubt crept into his mind and he thought, "How can the dream-self be Atman? Even this time also something is wrong again with what I have learned." He came back and prostrated himself before Prajapati and requested him again to explain the truth of Atman.

As usual, Prajapati told him to stay with him for another period of thirty-two years. Indra was all prepared. At the end of this period, Prajapati called Indra and said: "The self who is fully pleased and is in a happy mood in deep sleep is the Atman."

Indra was satisfied and went home. But before he reached there, again doubt overwhelmed him. He returned to Prajapati again and reported his difficulties. This time Prajapati was more pleased with Indra and told him to spend five more years with him.

After the five years was over Prajapati called Indra beside him and said: "O Indra, you deserve the knowledge of the highest truth by your persistent effort and intense inquisitiveness." Prajapati revealed that part of the highest knowledge to Indra, for Indra was now also ready to receive this knowledge at that point of time.

"This time when Indra went back to impart this knowledge to the gods, he had no doubt. The gods received the true knowledge of the Self or Atman.

Essence: Virochana was fully convinced that the body is the Self or Atman or Brahman and this is the true knowledge. These people are called epicureans or materialist or non-believers. Such people are called *asuras* or demons - *asaria ramate eti asura*. He who delights extremely in the *indriyas* or sense pleasures. They are 'body worshippers'.

So, the Lord is telling Arjuna, “O, Arjuna, most people do not worship Me, but you have a special *buddhi* / intellect called the ‘discriminating knowledge’. You know that you have been caught by Maya and that need to get out of it. You also know that the only way to get out of this Maya is by the grace of God and by total surrender.” Surrender is called true worship.

Next verse: Now the Lord is telling us, “The world does not consist of only evil-doers or *dushkriti*, there are also many good people as well. These good people are called *shukriti* - they are all My devotees and very dear to Me. They are of four types.”

Four types of devotees of God / सुकृतिनः Sukritinh:

There are other types of people called सुकृतिनः **sukritinh (pious people)**. Two characteristics are mentioned here about these people - 1) All of them have done tremendous meritorious activities. 2) All of them are devotees of God. They believe in God and are totally dependent on God. They are soliciting the grace of God. These सुकृतिनः *sukritinh* fall into four categories.

Bhagavat Gita: Chapter 7, Verse 16

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।

आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥

chatur-vidhā bhajante mām janāḥ sukṛitino 'rjuna

ārto jijñāsur arthārthī jñānī cha bharatarṣhabha

O' Bharatarṣhabha—The best amongst the Bharatas (Arjuna).

ārto jijñāsur arthārthī jñānī cha - (devotees are of four types) *artha*, *artharthi*, *jijnasu* and *jnani* - and in this order.

chatur-vidhā - four categories of people.

sukṛitino - people with tremendous merits which they have acquired in their previous lives.

mam bhajante - they all worship Me.

Human beings can pray to God; they can choose either the path of *shreyas* or *preyas*. (Please refer to Chapter 7-part 4 page 4) Broadly speaking, people are divided into two categories - **dushkritas** and **sukritinas**. However, we should not think that an evildoer will not reach God. We all evolve from the state of *dushkriti* or evildoer to *sukriti* or meritorious doers through four stages and these stages are - from *artha* (the distressed) → *artharthi* (the seekers of material gain) → *jijnasu* (the seekers of knowledge) and ultimately → we become *jnani* (the realised souls). These are four different stages of growth. In the eyes of the Divine Lord there are no bad people. However, some people are ignorant and there are people who are wise and enlightened. These people with wisdom, an enlightened nature and discrimination fall into four categories. They try to practice the injunctions of the

scriptures and also refrain from the actions prohibited by the scriptures (निषिद्ध कर्मा *nishiddha karma*)

So, the Lord is saying, "O, Arjuna - all good people can be divided into four stages of development." What are these four stages?

Artha, Artharthi, Jijnasu and Jnani - and in this order.

1) आर्तः भक्ता **Artha Bhakta** - they are the lowest in this order. They believe in God and depend upon God. When they are in distress then they pray to God, examples are - गजेंद्र elephant King, Draupadi etc. (and all of us, as we are praying during this Covid 19 pandemic - O, Lord save us from this disease.)

2) अर्थाधी भक्ता **Artharthi Bhakta**: This is the second category. They are higher than *Artha-Bhaktas*. They are not in distress, but they have innumerable unfulfilled desires. It could be a desire for money or a desire for sense enjoyment or a desire for name and fame or a desire to be free from the fear of death and many more! They are called *Artharthi (Desirer of various material enjoyments)* Examples is - *Dhruva*, he wanted to have a great kingdom and he prayed to God. God granted him not only a great kingdom but because he turned towards God, he was also granted with pure self-knowledge.

Both Artha-Bhaktas and Artharthi-Bhaktas are called *sukriti* or devotees because they do not do anything illegal or immoral. They have tremendous faith in God and turn towards God. They pray with great devotion, "O, Lord please rescue me from this danger or please fulfil my desires because only You can do it."

Story of Dhruva and Pole-Star:

Dhruva was born as the son of the King Uttānapāda and his wife Suniti. The King also had another son Uttama, born to his second queen Suruchi, who was the preferred object of the King's affection. Once, when Dhruva was five years old, he was sitting on his father's lap at the King's throne. Suruchi was jealous of Dhruva (because Dhruva would be heir to the throne and not Suruchi's son). She forcefully removed Dhruva from his father's lap and insulted him. When Dhruva protested and asked, "Why can't I sit on my father's lap?" Suruchi berated him saying, "Only God can allow you that privilege."

Dhruva went to his mother Suniti who tried to console the distraught child and gave him some spiritual advice. Dhruva went to the forest to pray to Lord Narayan. He was extremely fortunate to meet the divine sage Narada in the forest. (Shri Ramakrishna used to call sage Narada as Nitya-Mukta or Ishwara-Koti or Ever-Free) Dhruva got initiated by sage Narada. Sage Narada taught him a mantra - 'Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya'. Dhruva started his meditation with tremendous faith and devotion. Lord Narayan soon appeared, blessed Dhruva with his wisdom and gave him liberation. Lord Narayana granted him a huge unparalleled kingdom called 'Dhruva-Rajya or Dhruva-Tara'. In the West, this 'Dhruva-Rajya' is called the 'Pole Star (also known as the North Star)'. As we know, this Pole Star is used by many navigators to move in different directions all over the world. This 'Pole-Star or Dhruva-Tara' can be seen all year round.

[Please also refer to Chapter 7 Part 1]

3) **जिज्ञासुः भक्ता *Jijnasu Bhakta*** - this is a higher category. These devotees have gone through severe distress and also through many unfulfilled desires (through the first and second stages) many times. Eventually, they come to develop *viveka* /discrimination. They understand that nothing in this world can give them complete satisfaction. God alone can give them eternal satisfaction. (They come to understand that there must be something else other than the material world which can give complete satisfaction and that is God alone.) Such a person becomes an enquirer - called जिज्ञासुः *Jijnasu*. He takes refuge in a *Sadh-Guru* **सद्गुरु** (Noble-Teacher) and surrenders himself to his Guru. He has complete faith in the scriptures. He follows his Guru's instructions with great sincerity and after several births, he attains self-realisation.

4) ***Jnani* ज्ञानी** - a person who attains the Divine Lord, the Lord calls him a *jnani*. The Lord says, "Out of all these categories, a *jnani* is like My Own-self. Because, a *jnani* is one, who has realised that - God and I are not separate."

Most of us fall into the first two categories. Sometimes we are distressed; sometimes we have some unfulfilled desires which we want to fulfil; sometimes we enquire into the nature of truth with faith and sometimes we get just a glimpse of God's knowledge. Our ultimate goal is to have unbreakable, undoubted knowledge of the truth that God exists, we belong to God and that we are going to attain liberation. Here, we are not talking about liberated people but those who are non-liberated. These non-liberated people can be categorised into these four types.

Now, the Lord is telling us, "All these people are great, but the devotee who has become a *jnani* is nearest to Me." What is meant by near to God or far away from God?

In a metaphorical sense just imagine four people are standing at different locations from the Lord.

- *Artha Bhakta* is at the furthest distance.
- *Artharthi Bhakta* is standing much nearer to the Lord than *Artha Bhakta*.
- *Jijnasu Bhakta* is even nearer to the Lord than the *Artharthi Bhakta*.
- However, the *Jnani Bhakta* is the nearest to the Lord; he is inseparable.

Distance from The Lord:

Divine Lord —Jnani —Jijnasu — Artharthi — Artha

The Lord is praising the greatness of a *jnani* with most wonderful words. The Lord is telling us, “A *jnani* is nearest and dearest to Me.” Why is he nearest? Because he is none other than Me.

Now, if we note carefully then we will find that we love only ourselves. How? Because when we think that we love a particular person or a particular object then it is because we get pleasure out of it. It is because of our selfishness - anything which brings us peace or pleasure or joy, we love that person or object. This world is lovable, only when it caters for our selfishness.

Next Verse:

Bhagavat Gita: Chapter 7, Verse 17

तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।
प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः

teṣhām jñānī nitya-yukta eka-bhaktir viśhiṣhyate
priyo hi jñānino tyartham ahaṁ sa cha mama priyaḥ

Meaning: O, Arjuna out of all these four types of meritorious doers / righteous doer / devotees, a *jnani* (man of knowledge) is ever steadfast and devoted to the ‘One’ alone is the best. I am near and dear to him and he is near and dear to Me.

teṣhām jñānī - amongst those who are situated in knowledge.

nitya-yukta - ever steadfast, whose knowledge is unmoving. He never falls from that knowledge. What is that knowledge? I am Thou and Thou is ME.

eka-bhaktir - he has no divided goals. He has no different ‘Chosen Deity’. Because sometimes we worship God as Rama; other times we worship God as Krishna and so on. This taste for variety is a very common feature among all the ordinary devotees. However, the *jnani* knows the essence of all ‘Chosen Deities’ which is the Supreme Brahman. He worships only One ‘Brahman’ and says “I and Brahman are One. I am my own greatest devotee. *Parmatman* is the nearest and dearest to me.” (Not in the sense of limited body and mind, but in the sense of Atman.) This has been expressed in this verse.

priyo hi jñāninah atyartham ahaṁ sa cha mama priyaḥ: out of these four categories a *jnani* who has *abheda- darsha* अभेद दर्शना (seeing one indivisible truth everywhere) is dearest to Me. *Jnani* is ever steadfast and devoted to God because nothing can draw his attention away from Me. There is no difference between him and Me. If there is any seeming difference, then it is from the point of upadhi उपाधि or body-mind complex.

I would like to give a few examples to explain this point.

Chaitanya-Mahaprabhu:

Shri Ramakrishna used to talk about Chaitanya-Mahaprabhu. Chaitanya-Mahaprabhu used to remain in three states of devotion all the time:

1. When his mind used to be slightly aware of the external world then he would sing like a mad elephant and would constantly pour the divine nectar of the divine name.
2. When his mind used to get withdrawn from the outside world then he would remain in an ecstatic state - remembering God only and shedding tears.
3. However, when he used to go beyond the mind then he used to feel oneness with God.

Shri Hanuman - a Great Devotee of Lord Ram:

Lord Ram asks Shri Hanuman "How do you perceive me?"

Ram-Bhakta Hanuman answers so beautifully:

***Deha Buddhya tu Dasoham Jiva Buddhya Tvadaamsakah |
Atma Buddhya Tvamevaham iti me nishchita matih ||***

"Oh Lord, while I identify myself with my body then I am your servant. When I consider myself as an individual soul then I am Your part. But when I look upon myself as the spirit then I am one with You."

The essence of the Seventh Chapter:

The only worthy goal of life is to become a jnani. The Lord is telling us in the next verse:

Bhagavat Gita: Chapter 7, Verse 18

उदाराः सर्व एवैते ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मे मतम् ।
आस्थितः स हि युक्तात्मा मामेवानुत्तमां गतिम् ॥ 18॥

***udārāḥ sarva evaite jñānī tvātmaiva me matam
āsthitaḥ sa hi yuktātmā mām evānuttamāṁ gatim***

All these four types of devotees are extremely fortunate and near to Me. However, they are different from each other. What does it mean? All the four types of devotees have started their journey and they are only moving towards the Divine Lord. They are at different distances from the Divine Lord - always remember here distance means, in the field of cognition, not physical or in any other way. As the devotee's understanding deepens about God, he feels that he is moving nearer to God.

The Divine Lord is saying, "All of them are most wonderful and noble people; all are very dear to Me; all of them are coming towards Me; but a jnani who is completely merged with Me is the best of My devotees. Why? Because manifestation of divinity is the greatest in him." Let's take the example of Shri Ramakrishna and Narendra Nath.

Shri Ramakrishna and Narendra Nath (Swami Vivekananda):

Shri Ramakrishna used to love Narendra Nath intensely. Once, even Narendra Nath objected and said, "Sir, you might become like Jad-Bharata जड़ भरता if you think too much about me." (Please refer to Chapter Six Part 9 for the story of Jad-Bharata.)

Shri Ramakrishna gave a beautiful answer and said, "When I heard Narendra's words, I got confused and ran to my Divine Mother. I asked Divine Mother - Mother, please tell me, why do I love Narendra so much? (It is interesting to note that Shri Ramakrishna was not aware of his intense love for Narendra. Then who knew it? It was Divine Mother in Shri Ramakrishna; Divine Mother was loving Narendra through the body and mind of Shri Ramakrishna.)

Divine Mother said, "You love Narendra, not because he is Narendra, but because you see a manifestation of divinity in him; you see more manifestation of Lord Narayana in him and this is the secret of your attraction for Narendra." Shri Ramakrishna became very happy after hearing Divine Mother's words.

He came back to Narendra and said, "Now onwards, I will not listen to you or believe what you say. My Mother has told me the secret of my attraction for you. I love you because intense divinity is manifested in you and I see Lord Narayana in you. However, if ever a moment comes when I stop seeing God in you and see only your talented mind and body, I will refuse to even look at you or glance at you."

To summarise:

- Four types of devotees mean four stages of the spiritual journey.
- Distance from the Lord relates to the quantity of ignorance or ajñānā or deluding power which is covering the devotee. When the deluding power becomes less and less, then the devotee feels that he is getting nearer and nearer to the lord.
- A *jnani* is one who is completely merged in the divinity. A *jnani* says, "I am Atman. Not only am I divine, but everything else is also divine." This means - all jivas or individual souls and all inorganic objects are Atman or *Paramatma*. I, all Jivas and Paramatma are three in one and one in three.
- A jnani feels as if - he has divided himself into everything - into righteous doers and also into evildoers. It is only he who is climbing these four steps of *artha* step, *artha-artha* step, *jijnasu* step and finally the *jnani* step. He sees God with open and closed eyes. When he ascended beyond the mind then he experiences

that only Brahman exists. This state is called the 'State of *Vijnana*'. Nothing is मिथ्या *mithya* or unreal for him; everything is God for him - *Brahm Satyam, Ahm Satyam and Jagat Satyam*.

When are we going to reach this state of *Jnani*?

A *jijnasu* has to progress through spiritual disciples to become a *jnani*. A teacher is sent to him by the Divine Lord and he follows the instruction of his teacher with full sincerity and devotion. Each one of us needs to get an individual teacher who knows our state and gives us the right direction to progress in our spiritual field. It may take several births. Why is man reborn again and again? So that he gets a new opportunity to progress in his spiritual journey. At the end of several lives, he will reach his goal which is Self-Realisation or God-Realisation. No life is a waste, we learn something new in our life to progress; our understanding gets better and joyfully we move towards God.

This fact, the Lord is so beautifully expressing in the next verse:

Bhagavat Gita: Chapter 7, Verse 19

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते ।
वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥ १९॥

*bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ*

Meaning: Extremely rare is such a *jnani*, at the end of many births a man of wisdom seeks refuge in realising that Vasudeva is all that exists. (Vasudeva is a name of Shri Krishna but here Vasudeva means - not an individual Krishna but Universal Soul called Brahman Himself)

bahūnām janmanām ante - at the end of so many births of spiritual travel, what happens? *jñānavān* - a person who starts his journey with wisdom that I am potentially divine; I am a part of the divinity; I am a small spark of the divinity called Brahman. His goal is to progress and attain complete unity with God.

mām prapadyate - he is going to attain Me. There is no doubt about it because "I am the goal; I am the path; I am also the spiritual aspirant; everything is nothing but Me only. (This is what Swami Vivekananda has said - to manifest the divinity within is the goal of life.)

vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti - the divine Lord is everything.

sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ - such a Mahatma (a great soul) is extremely rare in this world. He is not an ordinary soul, but a great person (Maha means great and Atma means soul). Why is he great? He feels that he and the entire manifested universe are one and same. (This is called a *Vijnana* or *Vishesha jnana*.) This is

the final goal for all of us. (As Swami Vivekananda has said - "Each soul is potentially divine.") We will reach this state of *Vijnana* sooner or later. (As a matter of fact, there is no sooner or later because when we attain to the state of timelessness or go beyond time then there is no past, present or future, there is no sooner or later.)

As has been mentioned earlier, Swami Vivekananda once said, "I have met only 15 or 16 *jivan-muktas* or realised souls in my life." At any given time, there are always some *jivan-muktas* in this world, however, their number may be very few. They may be just 15 - 16 in number, but this earth is never devoid of such great souls. They are here to maintain the balance of dharma or righteousness etc.

I will stop here, but would like to tell you about the subject of discussion for the next class.

Topic for our next class:

- We will discuss in our next class, ईष्ट देवता सिद्धांत - ***Istadevata- siddhanta*** which is the third pillar of Hinduism. Whether a person is a Christian or a Hindu or a Muslim or of any other religion, it does not matter. They may worship God in different forms and with different names, but they all are travelling towards only one goal. As Shri Ramakrishna has said, "*Jato matt tato path*" means as many believe, so there are as many paths.
- Shri Krishna is telling us that everybody is worshipping Me only. These worshipers fall into two categories. 1) Those who seek Me or liberation (This is called as *shreyas* श्रेयस by Yama Dharmaraja in Katha-Upanishad.) 2) Those who seek what is 'Mine' such as wealth, name and fame and worldly enjoyments. (This is called as प्रेयस *preyas* by Yama Dharmaraja in Katha-Upanishad.) However, *preyas* is not in conflict with *shreyas*. *Preyas* is the doorway through which we enter into *shreyas*.
- The goal of everybody is to obtain happiness and the Divine Lord is the embodiment of happiness. Therefore, everybody is travelling towards Him.
- The Lord is reassuring all of us. He is saying - I understand the sincerity of My devotees; I encourage them in their chosen path; I endow them with *shraddha* / intense faith; I help them to attain their goal; if they want worldly happiness then I quench their thirst for worldly happiness for a short period; I will purify their hearts. As a result of this, they become *jijnasu*. I manifest in their hearts as their chosen deity. I bless them and ultimately they all will join Me only. They are all part of My divinity.

This is what the Divine Lord is going to tell us - so beautiful and so reassuring.

Vasudeva sutham devam kamsa Chanoora mardhanam,

Devaki paramanandam Krishnam vande Jagat Gurum.

वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम् ।
देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वेन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ॥

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

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti

With kind regards

Mamta Misra