

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

Subject: Chapter 7, Verses 19 -24

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.

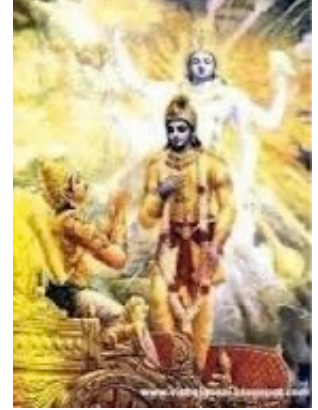
Recollection:

We will continue our discussion on the seventh chapter of the Bhagavat Gita called '**Jnana-Vijnana-Yoga ज्ञान - विज्ञान योग**'.

- **Jñānā** means to have the knowledge that God exists; He is pure consciousness; He is one and one only; He has become the entire Jagat or the universe; I am part of this universe; I am also a part of the pure consciousness. **Vijnana** means when a person realises this through direct experience. He becomes a *Vijnani* or *Vishesha-jnani*. This is called *Sakshatkara*.
- **Four types of devotees of God / सुकृतिनः Sukritinh:** In our last class, a very important topic was discussed. The Lord has divided all His devotees into four categories. (Please refer to Chapter 7, Part 6.)

1) **Artha-Bhakta** means distressed people.

2) **Artharthi-Bhakta** - they are not distressed people but they have many unfulfilled desires. They are meritorious people; they have performed so many meritorious actions in their previous lives and as a result of this, their minds are purified. They are convinced about the existence of God. Two points need to be



noted here - a) Such people are meritorious people. They will never do anything immoral or illegal etc. b) The second point is, they will rely only upon God and never depend on anybody else.

Both types of devotees (*Artha* and *Artharthi*) are great devotees of God. However, *Artharthi-Bhakta* is a greater devotee than *Artha-Bhakta*. He worships God and God fulfils his all desires called *dharma*, *artha*, and *kama*. (They are called प्रेयस *preyas* by Yama Dharmaraja in Katha-Upanishad.) They have great *asthika buddhi*, meaning they firmly believe that God exists; hell and heaven exist; if I will do something wrong then I will go to hell and suffer. However, if I will do something good then I will be rewarded with a tremendous amount of happiness. Only after enjoying worldly pleasures, they develop *viveka* (discrimination) and *vairagya* (renunciation).

3) Jijnasu-Bhaktas: Then comes the *jijnasu*. An enquiry starts in his mind - how can I attain permanent happiness without coming back to this transmigratory word? This is called *mumkshatavam*. He would pray to God with full sincerity and devotion. As a result of his sincere prayers, God grants him a *Sadguru* or a noble teacher. The teacher or Guru teaches him three steps - *tatva*, *purushartha* and *hitha*. [Please refer to Chapter 6, Part 12.] The devotee who is endowed with tremendous *shraddha* or intense faith starts to practice and follows the Guru's teachings. As he progresses in his spiritual life, his thirst for the vision of God increases.

4) Jnani-Bhakta: This *Jijnasu-Bhakta* becomes a *Jnani* through the process of *shravana*, *manana*, and *niddhidhsana*. He becomes a knower of Brahman.

- Everybody must go through these four stages and in this order. There is absolutely no short-cut.
- After this, a *jnani* feels that he is one with God and God is one with him - ***jñānī tvātmaiva me matam (C7, V18)*** there is no difference between God and him. In the 19th sloka the Lord is telling us that this realisation comes after many births. That is why Hindus accept eighty-four lakhs of births (It is not a mathematical calculation but it means many births.)
- Human beings have to go through the stages of *artha*, *artharthi*, *jijnasu* and *jnani*. Here, two points need to be noted - 1) Everyone must go through the same rigmarole. 2) It will take a long time for everyone to reach the goal. If we see that we are far from our goal but some people are higher on the ladder than us, then we must understand that it is not God who raised them higher via a fast track, but it is because they started their journey much earlier than us. We will also reach our goal at some time. The historians would describe this process as going from the state of survival to the state of expansion. This means controlling agricultural production, taming the land, and fulfilling our desires. Then civilisation progresses further. Eventually, we become true philosophers and all this takes a long time. This is what the Lord is telling us in verse 19.

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 jñānavān mām prapadyate - after many births of progressive sincere spiritual efforts, a *jijnasu* (the enquirer) at the end of so many births of spiritual travel, he transforms himself into a real sadhu or *siddha-purush* or a man of knowledge. (Just like a larva inside a cocoon transforms itself into a beautiful butterfly.) What would happen next? He is going to attain Me. He knows Me and himself. There is no difference between him and Me - *brahmavid brahmaiva bhavati* (A knower of Brahman becomes Brahman.) What does this yogi realise?

vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti - I am also Vasudeva (Brahman) and God is also Vasudeva. Whatever I see, taste, smell, hear are all God's manifestations. God is playing with God. This is called 'Divine Sport or ब्रह्म लीला Brahman-Lila'. Everything is God only - ईशा वास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किंच जगत्यां जगत् । *īśāvāsyamidam sarvaṁ yatkiñca jagatyām jagat* | (1st Mantra, *Isha-Upanishad*) Such a person is named here as Vasudeva. Vasudeva means He who pervades the entire cosmos. Such a realised soul sees himself as Brahman, Brahman as himself, everything as Brahman and for him, there is nothing called *Mithaya* or unreal. Now he is called a Mahatma / a great soul / a realised soul.

sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ - such a Mahatma is very rare. The Lord has said in the earlier verses - among thousands of people perhaps just a few strive for spiritual life and among thousands of people who strive for a spiritual life perhaps only a few attain Me. Let me explain - few does not mean that others will not attain God. Everyone without exception will attain God. This is a wonderful truth. Shri Ramakrishna in his inimitable language has said, "Everybody will get food. However, some people may get it in the morning; some people may get it at noon and some at night. Nobody will go hungry." None will go hungry means everybody will reach God because we are all potentially divine.

Such a knower of Brahman, for whom the world was *mithaya* मिथ्या or unreal in the beginning becomes Brahman / परम-सत्य *Parma-Satya*. For him, God is manifesting in various form, with various names and utilities. We all will get to the same state.

The Lord is elaborating the same idea in the next verse.

Bhagavat Gita: Chapter 7, Verse 20

कामैस्तैस्तैर्हृतज्ञानाः प्रपद्यन्तेऽन्यदेवताः ।
तं तं नियममास्थाय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया ॥ 20॥

***kāmais tais tair hṛita-jñānāḥ prapadyante nya-devatāḥ
taṁ taṁ niyamam āsthāya prakṛityā niyatāḥ svayā***

Meaning: But those whose discrimination has been led astray by various desires, resort to other deities following their rituals, constrained by their own natures.

Let's explore this verse:

kāmais tais tair hṛita-jñānāḥ - the Lord has categorised devotees into four types in the earlier verses and as I have explained - *jnanis* fall into one category called *shreyas* (highest category) and *artha*, *artharthi* and *jijnasu* fall into another category called *preyas*. However, *jijnasu* (enquirer) is halfway between this world (*preyas*) and God (*shreyas*). He has his legs in both boats. We must always keep in the mind that we all are progressing.

What is the meaning of involution and evolution?

We are standing on an escalator which is gradually taking us towards God only. Scientists know this escalator as evolution. However, these scientists are not clear about the endpoint of this evolution. As Swami Vivekananda has said, "We have come from God. This process of coming from God is called involution. Now we are going back to God. This process of going back to God is called evolution." The entire universe (organic as well as inorganic) is standing on this escalator. Good news is - we all will reach the endpoint which is God or self-realisation or realisation of our true nature.

Two types of spiritual aspirants:

Type 1 Preyas: Some people desire God for their own sake. Now, the Lord is describing why some people have faith in God, scriptures, Vedas etc. but they do not desire God. Some people worship God for their own sake and to fulfil their desires. They do not worship God for God's sake (this will come later in their life). This is not because of selfishness but because of Maya. *Preyas* is also a very noble thing.

A very important point which I would like to make is - people who believe in God are all very good people, whether they believe in God due to distress or due to fulfilment of their desires or because they want to realise God. We should never utter a single word of criticism or condemnation against these people. This divine play must continue.

In the beginning, we have incomplete knowledge and very little discrimination power just like a child. We do believe that God exists; He alone can grant us our desires; He loves us; so, He will bestow His grace upon us. This is a very

natural process of evolution. This is called *Preyas* (*desiring worldly pleasures*)

Type 2 Shreyas: A true jnani desires God for God sake only: This is called *Shreyas*. A *jnani* does not desire anything else except God. A *Jnani* is one who knows that God exists, God listens to our prayers; God grants our prayers like our parents; a *jnani* desires God only.

Touch the Granny: A parable of Shri Ramakrishna

Shri Ramakrishna says, "A granny (means God) likes to play a game. In this game, the players are blindfolded and are asked to touch the granny.

In the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, we find a very important conversation between Shri Ramakrishna and his young disciple Hari (Swami Turiyananda). Swami Turiyanandaji's question to Sri Ramakrishna was, "Why is there so much suffering in this world?" Here is the most beautiful answer given by Shri Ramakrishna.

Shri Ramakrishna said, "In the game of hide-and-seek, the players are blindfolded and asked to touch the 'granny'. One must touch the 'granny' to be free. But the 'granny' is never pleased if she is touched at the very outset. She wants to enjoy the game and would like to continue the game for a while. Similarly, this world is the 'Lila of God'. It is like a divine game. In this game, there is joy and sorrow, virtue and vice, knowledge and ignorance, good and evil. The divine game cannot continue if sin and suffering are altogether eliminated from creation."

Essence: In this parable, granny symbolises God / Brahman and it is God's wish that the divine play should continue for some time. Granny is Brahman; we are also Brahman, covering of our eyes is also Brahman and Brahman is playing with Brahman. Brahman is the spectator, the actor, the witness, the director and everything.

Shri Ranganatha श्री रंगनाथा:

In South India, one of the greatest adorable names of the Lord is 'Shri Raganatha'. Ragsthala रंगस्थला means drama stage and 'नाथा natha' means the director, the in-charge, the master, the CEO. The Divine Lord is the Director of this entire drama-stage / the universe. He wrote the entire script. He has taken all the forms. We do not have any individuality as such. The Lord makes everybody play their prescribed roles on this stage of cosmos. Shri Ranganath - Brahman is playing His own solitaire game according to His own sweet will.

A beautiful song by Dhananjaya Bhattacharya is - "*Ye maya prapanchamoye natvar hari, Jamo nachaya shey timpani nachey.*" The song means - this entire world is a stage; the stage Master is the Lord called *Natvara*; He is the greatest actor called Hari; He awards us our scripts and we have no choice but to perform. We are only 'निमित्त *Nimitta*'

[Dhananjay Bhattacharya (September 10, 1922 – December 27, 1992) was an Indian Bengali singer and composer. He was a versatile Shyama Sangeet singer.]

Coming back:

As has been discussed, some people want God but not for God's sake. These people have just a little knowledge and little bit of discrimination like a child. They believe that God exists; He alone can fulfil my desires.

This idea is beautifully expressed in this verse.

Bhagavat Gita: Chapter 7, Verse 20

कामैस्तैस्तैर्हृत्तज्ञानाः प्रपद्यन्तेऽन्यदेवताः ।
तं तं नियममास्थाय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया ॥ 20॥

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kamaihi taihi taihi - different people have different desires or *kama*. All the desires in the world are classified into three categories - *dharma*, *artha* and *kama*. These people desire different things - some people want good health; some people want wealth; some want sensory enjoyments; some want name and fame; others want power and position; some people want to be a great philanthropist; some want to harm other people. It is all a marvellous play of the divine. I can go into ecstasy if I have to describe this divine play - evildoers like Hitler and others are just mere pawns in the hands of God. In the Bhagavat Gita itself, the Divine Lord declares -

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

The Lord (the ruler of the entire universe) is sitting in the hearts of all beings like a driver sitting in a machine. He drives the machine according to His will. This is expressed beautifully in a Bengali song - *ami jantro tumi jantri, ja man chalao temni chali*. (I am an instrument in Your hands, I do whatever You command me to do.)

Some people have the lower types of desires and this is also God's will. How? God has created this world; God has created various objects and God has created various desires. It is as if God has divided Himself into several forms and departments and He became the in-charge of each department. If a devotee wants an object from a particular department then the devotee goes to that particular department; he makes his request to the head of that department and then out of great love, the Lord (in the form of the head of that department) grants him that particular desire. This is the idea expressed in the twentieth verse.

Examples:

Different people have different desires and these desires need to be fulfilled. For example:

- **Goddess Saraswati:** If a person wants to be a musician or a scientist or a mathematician or a statesman then he will worship Goddess Saraswati / Goddess of Knowledge.
- **Goddess Lakshmi:** If a person wants to earn a tremendous amount of wealth then he will worship Goddess Lakshmi / Goddess of wealth and prosperity.
- **Lord Ganesha:** If a person feels that he has got too many obstacles in his life then he will worship Lord Ganesha or Lord Vignesh (remover of obstacles) and by His grace, these obstacles will be completely removed. These are just a few examples.

Concept of देवता *Devatas*, Deities, Demigods and Goddesses

So, people with different types of unfulfilled desires worship God in various forms. These forms are called 'देवता *Devatas*'. The Lord is telling us that people who want Me alone worship 'Me' as God. However, those who want their desires to be fulfilled, worship 'Me only' but in different forms and these forms are called *Devatas*. Such as Indra, *Prajapati*, *Varuna*, *Brahspati*, *Lakshmi*, *Saraswati*, *Durga*, *Ganesha*, *Kartikeya*, *Nag- Raja* etc. This is a beautiful idea.

However, every form of *Devata* requires certain types of rituals to be performed. The related prayers will accomplish the particular purpose to some extent, but certain specific conditions and rituals need to be fulfilled. For example, a doctor should follow a certain code of conduct, a businessman should follow another code of conduct and similarly, a philanthropist or a teacher or a parent or whosoever, should follow certain codes of conduct which applies to that particular field of life. Similarly, there are certain specific rituals for each *Devata* and these rituals need to be accomplished by the devotee. This idea has been so beautifully expressed in verse 20.

To summarise: Those who have been laid astray by various desires, means those who do not want God directly but want things which God can give them. What do they do? They all resort to other Deities or *Devatas*. Every *Devata* is a manifestation of a particular power of God only because there is nobody else other than God. I will give you an example to explain this point.

Example of various roles of a Mother and a Child:

Suppose there is a child in a family. The mother of the child is not only a mother but a teacher for this child as well. So, her role as a teacher will be very different than her role as a mother. As a teacher, she would be very strict and she

would not allow the child to be distracted during study hours. However, when the child is hungry then her role will change. She will take the child in her lap and will give the most delicious food to him. If the child gets ill then the mother will become a nurse for her child. As a nurse, she will be very strict about his diet, medicine, exercises, sleep etc.

Moral of this example: This is an example to explain how one God assumes various forms so that He can cater to the desires of various people.

The Lord is telling us, “Everybody is worshipping Me only in different forms.” Why are there different forms? Because people’s desires are different. This is one of the most fundamental pillars of Hinduism. I have told you this before but would like to remind you again.

Four pillars of Hinduism are - (Please also refer to Chapter 6 Part 14.)

- 1) **Brahman** ब्रह्मन्.
- 2) साक्षात्कार **Sakshatkara**.
- 3) ईष्ट देवता सिद्धांत - **Istadevata- siddhanta** is the third pillar.
- 4) **Law of Karma** / कर्म सिद्धांत **Karma-Siddhanta**. We are responsible for our fate.

ईष्ट देवता सिद्धांत - **Istadevata- siddhanta**: This has got a special branch or type called “अवतार Avatara” - means our own *Istadevata* / Chosen deity incarnates now and then to establish dharma, to help sadhus (good people) and to destroy adharmic people or evildoers. God alone is worshipped by Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Buddhist, Sikhs, Jain and others, but in different forms and by different names. This is so beautifully explained in the next verse.

Bhagavat Gita: Chapter 7, Verse 21

यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितुमिच्छति ।
तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥ 21॥

***yo yo yām yām tanum bhaktaḥ śhraddhayārchitum ichchhati
tasya tasyāchalām śhraddhām tām eva vidadhāmyaham***

Meaning: The Lord is saying, “In whatever form a devotee chooses to worship Me; I will manifest to the devotee in that particular form. I alone manifest in that particular form. I will make the devotee’s faith even stronger and unwavering. And the devotee will never lose faith in Me.”

This is expressed by Shri Ramakrishna in his most imitable language - ‘*jato maat tato path*’ as many faiths, so many paths. People have different choices and may worship God as Vishnu, Shiva, Divine Mother, Rama, Krishna, Allah, Buddha or Christ or in any other form, it really doesn’t matter.

Various forms of animals are also worshipped as God:

So, let a person choose any form of God to meditate on.

- Worship of God as an elephant - Lord Ganesha has an elephant head.
- Worship of God as a 'horse's head' - some people worship a horse's head / *ashva-griva* अश्व ग्रीवा as God and this is called 'अश्व उपासना *Ashava-Upasana*'.
- Worship of God as the Sun: Many people worship God in the form of 'सूर्य Surya or Sun'. They do not consider the sun as just a burning star only but consider the 'Sun' as *devata* or divine. The sun gives us light; heat and our lives depend on the sun.
- Worship of God as a Monkey: Many people worship Lord Hanuman and He has the face of a monkey. What does it mean? Whosoever is associated with Shri Rama worships Hanuman. Lord Hanuman is a great *jnani*, a great devotee and a great karma-yogi. We are all animals without God, but when we get associated with God then we become divine. Everything is valueless without God.

Biblical Story - The story of Job:

This is a story from the Old Testament of the Bible.

The story of Job is a story of when bad things happen to good people.

(The name "Job", is "Eyob" in Hebrew and it means, "one who is tested and tried; one who is the subject of hostility".)

Job was a good guy who loved God, did all the right things, thought all the right things and said all the right things. Job had everything that one could wish for. He had family, friends, wealth and a good reputation. He loved and worshipped God. Yes, life was very good for Job!

But, Satan (the devil) appeared before God and said that the only reason for Job's love for God was because God had blessed him so richly.

God then allowed Satan to test Job.

Well, needless to say. Satan decided to test poor old Job! As a result, Job lost his family, wealth, and all but three friends deserted him. During this entire ordeal, Job remained steadfast in his love of God. Job suffered from bad health; his body was covered with sores. Every time he would say, "God has given and God has taken it away. I still depend on God only." His three friends took him to a garbage dump at his request where he retreated into his tent.

So, for seven days and nights Job remained in his tent, alone. He remained faithful in his love of God and then left the tent healthy and victorious! God then not only restored his wealth, family, health and friends, but He increased all that Job had before the testing.

The Lord is saying, “My child wants to worship Me in a particular form. He is endowed with some form of *shraddha*. I will strengthen his *shraddha* and I will bring him to Me.” What is God telling us? My grace comes in the form of strengthening *shraddha*. *Shraddha* means - intense faith in the scriptures, Guru and in the spiritual practices. Once a spiritual aspirant is endowed with *shraddha*, he will move very fast towards God.

The essence of Verse 21: We do not need to worry about our chosen form of God to worship Him. We need to choose a form which is most attractive to us, but we should not become fanatical and say that everybody has to worship God in this form only. Let everybody choose a form of God according to their own tendencies. We all are worshipping one God only. In other words, we are keeping different photographs of God - as *Baby Krishna or Kali or Saraswati or Lakshmi or Sharda Devi etc.* - *Sarva Dev Devi Swarupini*. If we are fortunate then we will get a Guru and our Sadguru will show us the way.

What will be the result of a tremendous amount of *shraddha*? Next verse -

Bhagavat Gita: Chapter 7, Verse 22

स तया श्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्याराधनमीहते ।
लभते च ततः कामान्मयैव विहितान् हि तान् ॥ 22॥

***sa tayā śhraddhayā yuktas tasyārāadhanam īhate
labhate cha tataḥ kāmān mayaiva vihitān hi tān***

Meaning: Possessed of that faith granted by Me, such a devotee worships that particular form, that particular Me, with that particular qualities, and from that worship attains all his desires, which are in reality granted by Me alone.

Again, one of the most powerful slokas, this is the very heart of the Bhagavat Gita. Once a person is possessed with *shraddha* then he will proceed with full conviction that he is on the right path as his Guru instructed; God is protecting him and he has full faith in scriptures. He proceeds joyfully with constantly repeating God's name.

saḥ tayā śhraddhayā yuktaḥ — endowed with *shraddha*. An important point needs to be noted: previously he had some amount of faith but now he has a hundred percent faith. He is just like a madcap who is possessed by a mad idea. (For example - Nachiketa (in Katha-Upanishad) was possessed by *shraddha*. His body and mind moved according to the *shraddha*. He was endowed with *shraddha*).

tasya ārāadhanam - he worships his chosen deity. He desires to worship God in a particular form, with a particular name and qualities. He is firm in his choice and follows one way only without any confusion. He goes on thinking about Me in that particular form. Then by My grace (not by that particular *devata* but by Me in the form of the particular *devata*) all his desires will be granted. We experience this on a very regular basis, some devotees go to Kashi and worship Lord Vishwanatha; some devotees go to Tirupati and worship lord Venketeshwara; some devotees go to Dakshineswar Kali Temple and worship Mother Kali; some devotees go to Belur math and worship Shri Ramakrishna. Every form of God or Goddess is just a mere instrument. The Lord puts on all these different types of dresses or appearances for the sake of His devotees. He is a great actor or नट *nata* and is called **Natvara Hari** नटवर हरि . If a devotee likes Him as Rama then He will put on Rama's form. If a devotee wishes to worship Him as Krishna then He will put on Krishna's dress and so on. Who is in Rama's dress? It is the Lord only. Who is in Jesus dress? Is the Lord only. I remember a beautiful story which I would like to share.

Story of a Christian Saint and Frogs:

There was a Christian saint. He wanted to contemplate on God in a nice quiet secluded place. He found a place which was pretty quiet and very suitable for his contemplation. He was very happy to find this place and started to pray very joyfully.

But, as soon as he started praying, to his great surprise, he heard millions of frogs croaking. He got very disturbed by the loud croaking sounds. He said to the Lord, "O, Lord You know that I came here to contemplate upon You. I thought that this place is noiseless and suitable for me to perform my prayers. But all these frogs are completely unnerving me."

As he was saying this, God granted him *medha* मेधा / wisdom - a power of real understanding dawned upon him. As soon as God gave him this understanding - he saw that all these frogs were created by God and God Himself was manifesting in the form of these frogs. These frogs were praying to God in their God-given croaking voices. It may sound like the croaking of a frog to us but they were doing their sincere prayers. The moment this understanding came - joyfully this Christian saint joined the prayer. He was given the company of millions of sincere frogs so that he could never forget God.

Every creature in this world is praying to the divine Lord as - a musical chirping sound of the crickets, beautiful singing sound of birds, babbling sound of a stream, murmuring sweet sound flowing through bamboo etc. Because every creature is a manifestation of God only.

This is what St Francis had experienced and made a statement that these millions of birds are sisters and brothers.

To Summarise: It is only one God. God is manifesting in myriads of forms. Every aspirant will have his own choice of God as his 'Chosen Deity' with a particular

form, shape and qualities. This is what makes Hinduism one of the greatest religions in the world.

Swami Vivekananda - at the Parliament of World's Religions:

The great 'Ishta-Devata-Siddhanta' was preached by Swami Vivekananda at the Parliament of World's Religions in America in 1893. He gave a mesmerising speech and a beautiful quotation, "As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee."

This is what the Lord is telling us in this verse.

Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti", एकम् सत विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति,

Hindus have so many photographs, pictures, images of many Gods and Goddesses but they know in their hearts that they are worshipping only One Mighty God.

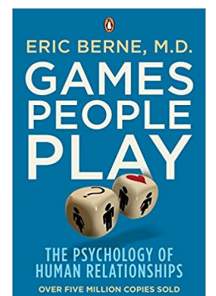
Next Verse 23:

There is nothing wrong with worshipping God with different names, forms and qualities. Such people have yet to evolve. They are endowed with small and limited understanding -अल्पमेधा *alpamedha*. The Lord is saying "These people do not understand that I am the giver of all desires even though they worship Me in various forms; they only desire smaller things."

Illustration of a Child, Chocolates and a Five Thousand Rupee Note:

The Lord is telling us that if only they had a little more understanding, then they could get much more. These people are like children with little understanding. If we ask a child to choose between ten chocolates and a 5000 Rupee note, invariably, the child will choose ten chocolates. Why? Because he does not know the value of five thousand Rupees. However, if he accepts the 5000 rupees note then he can get many more chocolates but his understanding is very limited. This is a very natural state of a child therefore we should never blame the child. Similarly, we should not blame people with limited understanding. Why does the Lord not give us the right understanding? Because God is playing a game with us.

There is a beautiful book called "Games People Play." How we all play games with each other - children with parents, brothers with brothers, friends with friends and so on. However, the greatest player of games is the Divine Lord and that is called 'दिव्य रासलीला **Divine Rasalila**'.



The Lord is explaining to us, “Many people desire what they can get from Me, but not Me. These people are of small understanding but ultimately they all come to Me only.” That is why people worship different God and Goddesses.

Bhagavat Gita: Chapter 7, Verse 23

अन्तवत्तु फलं तेषां तद्भवत्यल्पमेधसाम् ।
देवान्देवयजो यान्ति मद्भक्ता यान्ति मामपि ॥ 23॥

*antavat tu phalaṁ teṣhāṁ tad bhavatyalpa-medhasām
devān deva-yajo yānti mad-bhaktā yānti mām api*

All these devotees according to their understanding have been classified into two categories:

महामेधासाम **maha-medhasam** and अल्पमेधासाम **alpa-medhasam**:

Type 1) devotees are those devotees who desire Me. They are called Mahatmas or महामेधासाम **maha-medhasam**. They do not worship any god or goddess but Me alone. Those who worship Me, they come to Me.

Type 2) devotees are those who desire worldly objects, they do not desire Me. They are called अल्पमेधासाम **alpa-medhasam**. They are like small children. These people worship gods and goddesses so that they can get higher happiness and higher knowledge. Those who worship deities, they go to the deities.

This subject is further elaborated in the Sixteenth Chapter of the Bhagavat Gita.

The Lord is telling us - whatever these *devatas* or demigods grant to their devotees, lasts only for a short duration. For example, if someone wants to become a great musician then he will worship Mother Saraswati. What happens? In this life, he will become a good musician. In his next life, he will become a great musician. He gets appropriate results from his worship. Is he free from bondage? No! He will go through old age, unhappiness, disease, death etc. That is why, it is said that results of their worship are for a short duration. These devotees are capable of coming to Me if they worship those deities as Me (My manifestation) but they want to fulfil their particular desire only and worship these *devatas* in a particular name and form. However, this is a way of evolution. After many births of sufferings, the devotee becomes wiser and turn towards Me and wishes Me only.

Those who contemplate on smaller gods (demigods) and goddesses, they attain those gods and goddesses. For example, the positions of Indra, Chandra, Varuna, Brahaspati, Surya, Darma-rajā are all पदवी *padvees* or positions which these gods and goddesses have gained through their meritorious actions. They are in a particular position for a limited period of time - these positions are eternal but celestial beings who hold these positions are temporary. Just like in our system, the

position of a President or Prime Minister is permanent but people who hold these positions keep on changing based on their merits or demerits.

To summarise:

Various human desires are created by God's Maya through His three *gunas*. God has made provision so that we can attain those desires. After some time, we will be endowed with *viveka* (discrimination) and *vairagya* (renunciation) and will attain God or Self or Brahman. The Lord is saying, "People go through these experiences; become wiser; turn towards Me and attain Me."

Essence of Verse 23:

- God and Goddesses exist. They are endowed with specific powers to grant certain desires like knowledge, health, wealth, power, long life etc.
- These are only temporary things. People who desire these temporary privileges are in the process of evolution. They will evolve and ultimately come to Me.
- Some people are more advanced; they contemplate on Me; they will achieve Me.
- What do we need to understand here? Whosoever is worshipping and in whatever form they are worshipping - whether in the form of a snake or a tree or a river, they all are worshipping the Divine Lord only. Nobody has got right to criticise them or find faults with them (people who are busy in finding other's faults, detract themselves from their spiritual path.)
- God is telling us, "Whether it is a small stream or a big river, they all join the ocean. Similarly, eventually, everybody will be merged in Me."

In the next verse 24:

Bhagavat Gita: Chapter 7, Verse 24

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।
परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥ 24॥

***avyaktam vyaktim āpannam manyante mām abuddhayaḥ
param bhāvam ajānanto mamāvyayam anuttamam***

- The Lord is going to express a most beautiful idea, "Many people are unable to understand Me; they look down upon Me because they think that I am like any other human being and this is because they are unable to differentiate between Me and others." - very interesting observation.

- For example - apparently from the body point of view, there is no difference between Einstein and a tramp or a beggar, but from an intellectual point of view, there is an enormous difference between these two.
- When an *Avatara* / God's incarnation takes the form of a human being then the majority of people will look upon him as an ordinary human being or even lower than that. Why? Because people cannot see the intense divinity inside the *Avatara*.
- Shri Ramakrishna used to give a beautiful illustration to explain this point. There is a type of sweetmeat which has an outer covering made up of flour and has some stuffing inside. It can be made in a variety of ways - the outer covering remains the same but it can have various types of stuffing inside - like sweet cheese stuffing or dry fruits stuffing or many other types of stuffing. Similarly, an *Avatara* may look like an ordinary person from the outside but he is pure divinity inside.

We will discuss these ideas and verse in our next class.

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