

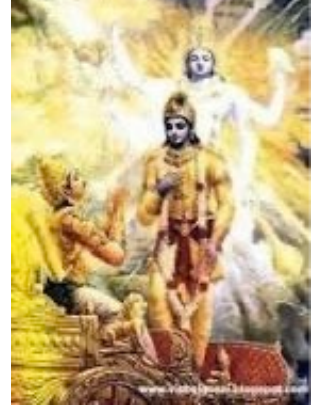
Bhagavad Gita Chapter 9 online Part 9 dated 09/08/2020 by Swami Dayatmanada (Lecture delivered online from Bangalore, India)

Subject: Chapter 9, Verses 22-26.

**Om Jananim Saaradam deviim, Raama-krishnam jagad-gurum
Paada-padme tayoh sriitvaa, prana-maami muhur-muhuh**

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।
पार्था वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता, दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥

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

All the Upanishads are like cows. The milker is Krishna, the son of Nanda. Partha (Arjuna) is like 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 dumb into eloquent speakers and enables the lame to cross mountains.

Recollection:

We will continue with the Ninth Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. Yesterday, we discussed one of the gems of the *sloka*s: This 22nd verse is enough to guide our entire life. Our goal is to be completely submerged in the Divine Lord.

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 9, Verse 22

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ 22॥

**ananyāśh chintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣhām nityābhiyuktānām yoga-kṣhemam vahāmyaham**

Meaning: Those devotees who worship Me, meditate on their identity with Me, and are ever devoted to Me. To them, I carry/provide whatever they lack and for them I preserve what they already possess.

ananyāḥ—not anything else but one thought; **chintayantaḥ**—thinking of only one object; **mām—Me; ye**—those; **janāḥ**—persons; **paryupāsate**—worship exclusively and devote the body, mind and speech to Me; **teṣhām**—such people.

A question may be asked, how are these devotees meant to carry on their livelihoods?

Not to worry, **nitya abhiyuktānām**— those who are completely identified with Me, meditating upon Me, worshipping Me, and are always absorbed in Me all the time; **yoga**— I bring things which are necessary for them; **kṣhemam**—I protect their assets; **vahāmi**—carry; **aham**—I carry them Myself.

Examples related to the 22nd Sloka of the Ninth Chapter – ananyāḥ chintayantaḥ:

1) Story of a Brahmin and the Twenty-Second sloka of the Ninth Chapter:

There is a beautiful story that I am going to narrate today. I do not know whether this story is real or not, however, it could be real because similar incidents have happened in the life of Shri Ramakrishna and other saints also. A person who is immersed in the thought of the Divine Lord does not need to worry.

Many centuries ago, a Brahmin lived in a small village. He was a devotee of Shri Krishna and dedicated his life to the divine feet of Shri Krishna. He was very passionate to transcribe the Bhagavad Gita all day long, and on completion of the book, he would delightfully gift the handwritten copy of the Bhagavad Gita to another sincere devotee. (Please note: In those days the printed copies were not available.) He made several handwritten copies of the Bhagavad Gita and distributed them.

Once it so happened, when he came to the last quarter of the 22nd sloka of the Ninth Chapter (**yoga kṣhemam vahāmi aham** - I bring/carry things which are necessary for the maintenance of My devotee and also protect them so that others cannot take the undue advantage), he got stuck on the word: **vahāmi**— I carry (on My back for My devotee). He must have copied the sloka several times in the past but this time a doubt arose in his mind: Why should My Lord need to carry on His back? He can employ other gods or goddesses to do the job, after all, He is the Master of the universe. The Brahmin kept thinking about it and eventually he concluded that Veda Vyas must have made a mistake here. So he decided to delete the word **vahāmi aham** (I carry for them.) and replaced it with **dadmya aham** (I grant them.)

In the afternoon, he went out begging to collect some food for his household. (I do not know whether he had any children but he was a householder and had a wife.) Suddenly, someone knocked at the door of his house, his wife heard it and opened the door. She saw two adorable boys of six or seven years old at the door. Both were carrying heavy loads on their backs.

She asked, "My children who are you? Why did you come?"

"Your husband is a very fortunate man. A rich man has donated many things to him today and employed us to carry them to you," the boys replied.

"Please come inside and put these goods in the corner," the lady said.

The lady noticed that one of the boy's with a bit darker in complexion and had a big bleeding slash on his back. She was a very pious person and a big devotee of Bhagwan Krishna. She said to the boy, "My child, how did you get this big slash on your back?" The boy replied, "It is by your husband." She was shocked because her husband was a very kind and tenderhearted person. She said, "Let me first clean your wound and dress it. I will cook for you both, please eat dinner first and then depart." The boy said, "No! No! We cannot stay any longer, your husband might beat us more. We do not wish to stay any longer," the boy smiled, looked at her and then departed. The wife went on to cook various delicious dishes, as she had lots of groceries in her home.

After a few hours, her husband returned home. He looked extremely tired, hungry and very thirsty. He exclaimed, "It has been a bad day for me. Unfortunately, I have not been able to bring anything home today." The wife contradicted him and said, "What are you saying? I know, someone has donated a large number of goods to you. But, how could you employ two small tender boys to carry the load? How could you beat one of the boys so cruelly?" The husband looked blank and asked, "What boys are you talking about? What boys? What's all this business of beating?"

Then she told him everything. Hearing all this, tears started flowing through the eyes of the devout Brahmin. He said, "I have been praying for the Divine Lord's *darshana*/vision, but never received it. However, you are the most fortunate lady; you got the *darshana*/vision of Lord Krishna."

Then he told her, "I was transcribing this particular verse (C9, V22) and I thought that Veda Vyas had made a mistake. So, I decided to cut the word **vahami aham**. Oh, what a great mistake I made! Do you know? The boy was no other than my Bhagwan Krishna. The slash which you saw on His back, was the cut that I made by mistake in the above verse. The Divine Lord wanted to teach me a great lesson that He does not only grant things but carries everything on His shoulders for His devotees. I learned a great lesson today." He realised his mistake and replaced the word **vahami aham** as it was.

2) Swami Vivekananda and his desire to eat Hot Khichudi:

There are many stories. It is a beautiful story from the life of Swami Vivekananda:

Swami Vivekananda lived the life of a wandering monk for many years. One afternoon, when he was in North India near Almorah, he felt very hungry; at that time, he was a young man. So we can imagine the intensity of his hunger and he

decided to test Shri Ramakrishna. He climbed a tree, looked up and said, "If You are there and looking after me, then fulfill my desire: I want to eat hot *Khichudi* [a preparation of rice and lentils]." He sat on the tree and meditated upon his chosen deity/Shri Ramakrishna.

Meanwhile, there lived a shopkeeper in the nearby village. He was a great devotee of Bhagwan Shri Rama. (In India, shopkeepers usually close their shops in the afternoon for an afternoon siesta.) He closed the shop in the afternoon, came home, and went to bed. Soon, Shri Rama appeared in his dream and said, "Get up, Get up." He thought, it was just a dream and continued his slumber. Shri Rama came again in his dream and commanded him to get up. Shri Rama further told him, "A devotee is sitting on a branch of a particular tree. You get up, quickly prepare a hot *Khichudi* for him and serve him. I will be very pleased." Now, the shopkeeper got up and thought - this is not a dream; Shri Rama is commanding me to cook *Khichudi*.

He cooked delicious hot *Khichudi* and went to the place that Shri Rama showed him in the dream. He saw a monk sitting up on the tree. Neither had he seen the Monk before, nor had the monk ever seen him before.

The devotee said, "Swamiji, please come down; I have got some hot *Khichudi* for you."

Swamiji was surprised and said, "You must be mistaking me for someone else."

"No, Swamiji, my Shri Rama has asked me to cook and bring hot *Khichudi* for you here. Please come down and bless me by accepting the *Khichudi*."

There are several incidents and stories like this. The entire life of Shri Ramakrishna is astonishing proof that if a person depends on the Divine Lord unconditionally then the Lord will always look after him - just as a mother looks after her baby or a cat looks after its kitten. A true devotee never cares what the Divine Lord is giving him; everything granted by the Divine Lord is Amrita/Divine nectar for him.

These devotees are called ***ananyāḥ chintayantaḥ***—thinking of the Divine Lord only. ***ye***—those; ***janāḥ***—people; ***paryupāsate***—worship exclusively and devote the body, mind and speech to Me. These devotees chant God's name, sing bhajans, go on pilgrimages. They have one central idea of God only and are absorbed in their Chosen Deity/*Ishta-Devata* - it could be *Krishnakar-Vryti* or *Naranakar-Vryti* or *Shivakara-Vryti* or *Buddhakara-Vryti* and so on. It is the highest ideal and one should try to acquire it gradually. Everyone will reach there, maybe after many lives. (Come to Varanasi, if you would leave your body in Varanasi, then no next birth - get *Moksha*.)

I will tell you another famous story related to our subject. Some of you might have heard it already.

Ramaprasad and his daughter Katyayani:

Ramprasad was a householder and a great devotee of Maa Kali. He lived in a small hut and had an eight-year-old daughter named Katyayani. He used to do 'Sava-Sadhana' in the crematoriums. He was an accountant in the Jamindar's office. Instead of doing his accounts, he used to fill the account books with Kali-Kirtans (devotional songs of Kali Maa). He was a great writer and had composed many beautiful devotional songs on Maa Kali. The Manager did not like it and took him to the Jamindar.

The Manager complained, "Ramprasad is not performing his duties properly and is completely useless. You should consider throwing him out."

"Well, let me see what he has written," said the Jamindar.

When he read the compositions of Ramprasad, tears started flowing from his eyes. The Jamindar was also a devotee of Mother Kali. The Jamindar said, "Ramprasad, you do not need to do work in the office; you go home and meditate on your Mother Kali; I will provide you all that is necessary for you".

He returned home and started living the life of a great saint. He was a natural poet, and *kirtans*/devotional songs used to flow automatically from his mouth like Ganga. As I mentioned, he lived in a small hut. The hut was not in good condition and needed repairs almost every year. Once it so happened, while he was repairing the wall of his cottage, he called his daughter and asked her to help him mend it. He gave her instructions on how to pass the threaded needle inside in a particular way through the thatched wall to him.

He was about to complete this job when his daughter rushed inside and said, "Father, how did you manage to complete this repair?"

"With your help, as you were passing the needle inside through the thatched wall," Ramaprasad replied.

"No! Father, I did not do it. I got bored after a few minutes and went out to play with my friends," said Katyayani. Ramprasad was surprised as he saw his daughter Katyayani passing the needle through the thatched wall for several hours. After a few minutes, he smiled and understood the divine mystery: as soon as his biological daughter ran away, the compassionate Divine Mother took the form of his daughter and helped him to mend the hut.

Recording time 15 minutes.

If we study (not just read) the life of great saints then we will find these types of many incidents in their lives. God serves us in every way as we have read in C9, V19.

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 9, Verse 19

तपाम्यहमहं वर्षं निगृह्णम्युत्सृजामि च ।
अमृतं चैव मृत्युश्च सदसच्चाहमर्जुन ॥ C9, V19॥
*tapāmyaham ahaṁ varṣhaṁ nigriḥṇāmyutsṛijāmi cha
amṛitaṁ chaiva mṛityuśh cha sad asach chāham arjuna*

[**Meaning:** I radiate heat in the form of the sun, and I also withhold the heat. I send forth rain and also hold back the rain. I am immortality, O Arjuna, I am also death. I am both manifested and also un-manifested beings.]

We have also seen in the previous verses - the Divine Lord is Mother, Father, Grandsir and everything else. If we can get absorbed in this thought that everything is my Divine Lord: Whatever we can do, is only by the Grace of the Divine Lord. The fact is, He is getting His work done through our bodies and minds. This is known as *ananyāḥ chintayantah* - the Divine Lord will look after His true devotees in every way.

Bhakta Prahlāda:

We all know the story of Bhakta Prahlāda. It is the most graphic description - his father Hiranyakashipu tried to kill him in so many ways but failed every time.

- His father decided to commit filicide and poison Prahlāda, but he survived.
- He then trampled the boy with elephants, but the boy still lived.
- Then he put Prahlāda in a room with venomous snakes, and the snakes made a bed for him with their bodies.
- Prahlāda was then thrown from a valley into a river but saved by Lord Vishnu.
- Holika, the sister of Hiranyakashipu, was blessed that she could not get hurt by fire. Hiranyakashipu put Prahlāda on the lap of Holika as she sat on a pyre. Prahlāda prayed to Lord Vishnu to keep him safe. Holika burned to death, but Prahlāda was left unscathed. (Hindus celebrate this event as the festival of Holi.)
- How was Prahlāda saved every single time? Because Lord Narayana was protecting him.

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥ C2, V23॥
*nainaṁ chhindanti śhastrāṇi nainaṁ dahati pāvakaḥ
na chainaṁ kledayantyāpo na śhoṣhayati mārutaḥ*

Prahlāda was under the protection of the Divine Lord, therefore, nobody could harm him.

We may ask a question - Is the Lord only looking after His devotees? Or, is he looking after millions of ignorant people as well, who do not even acknowledge the existence of God?

They are all being looked after by the Divine Lord only. Just think - who is carrying food to them? Who is nourishing them? Who is helping them grow up? The Divine Lord is helping them in the form of mother, father, teacher, doctor, medication, food, job, money, and much more.

We do not need to study any other scripture if we can understand the following two *slokas*/verses. However, to understand these verses properly, you need to attend these classes regularly. These two *slokas* are:

No.1

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ C9, V22॥
ananyāśh chintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣhām nityābhiyuktānām yoga-kṣhemam vahāmyaham
[Please see above.]

No. 2

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वां सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ C18, V66॥
sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śharaṇam vraja
aham tvām sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣhayiṣhyāmi mā śhuchah
[This verse has been discussed in the previous classes.]

We have discussed this in the previous verses. The Lord has said, “In the universe, I am the only Lord; I am *the goal*; I am the *bharta*; I am the eternal witness; I am the sustainer; I am the creator; I am the generator and I am everything. Nothing exists other than Me.” Just like, the entire dream is sustained by one waker only. Similarly, this entire ‘*Jagrat-Prapancha/Waking State*’ is sustained by One Divine Lord with different names and forms.

What is the implication?

Everyone is trading on My path only and is behaving according to the understanding I have given them. A foolish person who thinks that it is his knowledge and he can copyright it, is an ignorant person. What is the truth? It is Divine Mother’s will that all Her children must carry on in this play. She assigns different types of roles to us and assumes all our forms. Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Muslims believe in their doctrines. People worship Ganesha, Kartikeya, Parvati, Gauri, Saraswati, Lakshmi, Shiva, Vishnu, Krishna, Rama, spirits, ghosts, demons etc. However, for a devotee, his own “Chosen Deity” or his Guru is most important for him. For example, for Ramakrishnananda (Shashi Maharaj, who was a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna.) Shri Ramakrishna was his mother, father, teacher and everything.

Jato Mat Tato Path - as many believe, so many paths'.

So, the Lord is saying, “My devotees are coming to Me only, in whatever way and form they choose to worship Me.” This universal idea has been expressed beautifully by Shri Ramakrishna as ‘*Jato Mat Tato Path - as many believe, so many paths'.* The devotees need to have a correct understanding of their chosen path. What is the implication? Do not become a fanatic; do not insist everyone travels on your chosen path; do not say that your path is superior to other paths. Many so-called awakened people can deliver talks on their chosen path for hours without getting tired. They constantly emphasise the fanatical idea that their path is superior to other paths, and each one has to follow their path, whether it is Bhakti or Karma or Raj or Jnana-Yoga. Shri Ramakrishna destroyed this idea by his beautiful teaching - ‘*Jato Mat Tato Path - as many believe, so many paths'.*

To Summarise:

1. My devotees are coming nearer and nearer to Me only, in whatever way and form they choose to worship Me.
2. The devotees who worship Me; meditate upon their identity with Me and are ever devoted to Me. I carry/provide whatever they lack, and I preserve what they already possess.
3. I strengthen their faith in their particular chosen path.
4. I fulfil all their desires. Their hearts get purified by My grace; they understand that their inheritance is infinity. Everybody at the end has to come to Me.

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 9, Verse 23

येऽप्यन्यदेवता भक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।
तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम् ॥ 23॥

***ye pyanya-devatā-bhaktā yajante śhraddhayānvitāḥ
te pi mām eva kaunteya yajantyavidhi-pūrvakam***

Meaning: O son of Kunti/Arjuna, even those devotees who are endowed with faith and worship other gods, worship Me only.

ye—those who; **api**—although; **anya**—other; **devatā**—celestial gods; **bhaktāḥ**—devotees; **yajante**—worship.

There are many varieties of devotees, all endowed with devotion and that devotion is towards Me only. Some worship Me directly, and some worship other gods and goddesses. An important point is to be noted: in Hinduism, there are no superior or inferior manifestations of God. Even if a devotee worships just a tiny piece of stone or an icon or a drawing on a piece of paper, but with tremendous faith, the Lord will manifest in that particular form, and he will reach the Divine Lord.

Story of a Devotee who suffered from insomnia:

I would like to tell you a miraculous story that happened in Kolkata:

One day a Swami was travelling in a bus and soon after, another man got on the bus. The man saw the Swami and asked, "Swami, do you belong to the Ramakrishna order?" "Yes, I do," Swami replied. The man bowed down to the Swami and said, "I would like to tell you something - previously we were not followers of the Ramakrishna Order, but we happened to be devotees of Shri Ramakrishna now." Swami was curious to know the background of this incident. Swami asked, "How did this change happen?" The man further said, "My father was an office clerk. He believed in God but was not a very serious spiritual practitioner. He had been suffering from insomnia for years, and my sister or mother had to spend several hours with him at night to keep him entertained. Many years passed like this. There was a shopkeeper nearby, where my father used to go regularly. On a New Year's Day, when my father visited the shop, the shopkeeper gave him a calendar of Shri Ramakrishna. He bought the calendar home, hung it on the wall but did not pay much attention.

Several months passed when one day at night, he was very distressed due to his insomnia. He went near the calendar and started banging his head on the wall (unknowingly, he was banging his head at the feet of Shri Ramakrishna.) He started praying, "*Thakur* (Shri Ramakrishna), how long am I going to suffer like this? Please help me." He became almost semi-conscious, and in the meantime, a miracle happened: the picture came alive and Ramakrishna started talking to him in Bengali and asked, "Are you not getting any sleep?" And, he felt as if Shri Ramakrishna touched his head with compassion; he lost consciousness and could not remember what happened after this. After a while, he regained his consciousness and slept well that night. After a good night sleep, he got up in the morning at about eight o'clock, dressed, came out of his room and went to his office. His family members were surprised to see him because they had never seen him sleeping so well! He returned home in the evening, narrated the entire incident to his family, and said, "Shri Ramakrishna has blessed me; let's go to Belur Math and do prayers."

They all went to Belur Math and met Swami Vishudhanandaji Maharaj - the President of RK Mission. The man narrated the incident to Swami Vishudhanandaji, tears started flowing from Swami's eyes, and he said, "You are a blessed person. You must buy a copy of Ramakrishna Katha-Amrita, read a few pages every day with your family, and repeat the name of Shri Ramakrishna." They all took initiation from Vishudhanandaji and became lifelong devotees of Shri Ramakrishna.

It is a story, which a man narrated to a Swami on the bus. This story has been published in Udhbodan Magazine.

The recording time is 28 minutes.

To summarise:

1. Whether a devotee worships just a tiny piece of stone or an icon or a drawing on a piece of paper, but with tremendous faith, the Lord will manifest in that particular form, and he will reach the Divine Lord.
2. A devotee may worship the Divine Lord as Ganesha, Kartikeya, Parvati, Gauri, Saraswati, Lakshmi, Shiva, Vishnu, Krishna, Rama, and so on. However, we all are worshipping only One Divine Lord.
3. The devotee who prays for worldly pleasures is also going towards the Divine Lord only.
4. The Lord will fulfil all desires of His devotees, remove distress, and grant them understanding -*buddhi yogam dadmya aham*.

Coming back to Verse 23.

Some devotees worship Me only in the form of other deities. However, there is one condition. What is it?

śhraddhayā anvitāḥ—endowed with complete faith; **te**—they; **api**—also; **mām**—Me; **eva**—only; **kaunteya**—Arjun, the son of Kunti; **yajanti**—worship. O Arjuna, all these people are worshipping Me only. How? **avidhi-pūrvakam**—by improper way. What does it mean? They worship Me improperly - to fulfill small, temporary, and worldly desires. Then what does the Lord do? The Lord is telling us, “I fulfil desires of My devotees, strengthen their faith, and slowly their understanding gets better. Ultimately, they will realise that I am everything and everywhere.” It will come in the following Verse.

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 9, Verse 24

अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च ।

न तु मामभिजानन्ति तत्त्वेनातश्च्यवन्ति ते ॥ 24॥

**aham hi sarva-yajñānām bhoktā cha prabhureva cha
na tu mām abhijānanti tattvenātaśh chyavanti te**

Meaning: I am alone the enjoyer and the Lord of all sacrifices. But, these men do not know Me, as I am in reality, therefore they fall.

It is a beautiful verse, and we will explore it in the right spirit. All these people worship different gods, goddesses even ghosts etc. Whatever we worship, whosoever we worship - the Divine Lord is the receiver of that worship.

aham hi sarva-yajñānām bhoktā cha prabhureva cha ।

aham—I; **hi**—verily; **sarva**—of all; **yajñānām**—sacrifices - All sorts of worships, sacrifices and any activity, if performed invoking in My name, is called an act of worship.

bhoktā—the enjoyer; **cha**—and; **prabhuḥ**— means the Lord, meaning I grant them according to their capacity and merit. **eva**—only; **cha**—and - I am the enjoyer of all worships and all sacrifices. What does it mean?

**Aakaashaath Patitam Toyam Yathaa Gachhati Saagaram
Sarva Deva Namaskaaran Keshavam Prati Gacchathi.**

आकाशात् पतितं तोयं यथा गच्छति सागरम् । सर्वं देव नमस्कारम्: केशवं प्रति गच्छति ॥
[As all rains falling from the sky reach the ocean; so also the prayers to all gods ultimately get to the Lord Keshava.]

If we worship Ganesha or Shiva or Krishna or Ramakrishna or Ganga or Yamuna or Kaveri or Saraswati or any other gods and goddesses, it all goes to Keshava. Even if we worship ghosts/bhuta, it goes to Keshava. Why? Because the Lord alone is manifesting as a ghost. Any idea or concept (such as Indra, Chandra, Surya, Varuna, Ashvanikumara etc.) at all times (present, past and future) is a manifestation of the Divine Lord. He is the only receiver and enjoyer of all these ideas in different forms. **prabhuḥ**— means the Lord, meaning I grant My devotees according to their capacity and merit.

na tu mām abhijānanti tattvenātaśh chyavanti te ॥

na—not; **tu**—but; **mām**—Me; **abhijānanti**—realise; **tattvena**—divine nature. They do not recognise Me and become fanatical. I manifest in the form of Ganesha or Kartikeya or Shiva or Devi, and as all other gods and goddesses.

ataḥ—therefore; **chyavanti**—fall / get destroyed (wander in samsara); **te**—they fall and get destroyed.

However, nobody is going to get destroyed. Eventually, the Lords will give them the correct understanding. What is that understanding? Everyone also worships only my 'Chosen Deity', however, in different forms and different names. So they all progress, and become loving devotees/*Premi Sadhus*.

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 9, Verse 25

यान्ति देवव्रता देवान्पितृ न्यान्ति पितृव्रताः ।
भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या यान्ति मद्याजिनोऽपि माम् ॥25॥
**yānti deva-vratā devān pitṛin yānti pitṛi-vratāḥ
bhūtāni yānti bhūtejyā yānti mad-yājino pi mām**

Meaning: O Arjuna, those who worship different celestial gods - attain celestial gods. Those who worship the manes/ancestors/*pitṛupurusha* - go to the ancestors. Those who worship spirits - go to the spirits. And, those who worship Me - come to Me alone.

We need to understand this verse in the light of Shri Ramakrishna's teachings - as many faiths, so many paths. The Divine Lord is telling us, "If somebody sincerely believes that he has to worship Indra, Chandra, Surya, Varuna,

Ashvanikumara etc. then he will get identified with these celestial gods through *Upasana* and will reach there. Some worship ancestors; they go to *Pitraloka*/abode of ancestors. These *lokas*/worlds are not permanent. Therefore, they enjoy for some time in these *lokas*, take up another body, evolve, progress and ultimately reach the Divine Lord. This is called *Krama-Mukti*. Some worship ghosts (*Bhutas*, *Pishachas* etc.), believing they will get supernatural powers. Eventually, they will also come to Me only. What is the difference? Those who worship Me will reach Me straightaway. Those who worship other gods and goddesses will go around before reaching Me. Everybody is travelling; some are at the frontline; some are at the backline. However, everybody is going through the same rigmarole. The important reassurance is - nobody will be left out.

mad-yājino pi mām - those who understand Me as the Supreme Lord, in other words those who understand that liberation is the only desirable goal in the world. *Shreyas/liberation* is desirable, not the *Preyas/worldly pleasures*. However, some worship *Bhutas/Ghosts* to get supernatural powers. Some desire wealth, success, knowledge, removal of obstacles etc. therefore, worship corresponding gods and goddesses. Eventually, they understand that liberation/ *Mukti/Shreyas* is the only worthy goal to desire for. In other words, these devotees progress from *Tamas* to *Rajas* to *Satva*.

Are there any rules and regulations regarding animal sacrifices?

Some devotees believe that Mother Kali will get pleased if they perform animal sacrifices. It is a wrong and selfish notion. They believe; Mother has created these goats for Her offering, and we should eat the offering as *Prasada*; otherwise, she may get angry. The devotees have a deep desire to enjoy eating meat; that is why they think in this manner and perform these animal sacrifices.

The scriptures understand the psychology of human minds. If the devotees are advised not to perform animal sacrifices - they will neither understand nor follow it. Therefore, let them do it; they might have a guided understanding through their intuitions. Until that time comes, they are going to kill the animals anyway. Therefore, let them associate the animal sacrifices with the Divine Mother and eat as a *Prasada*.

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।
 परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥ C3, V11॥
devān bhāvayatānena te devā bhāvayantu vaḥ
parasparam bhāvayantaḥ śhreyaḥ param avāpsyatha
 इष्टान्भोगान् हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।
 तैर्दत्तान्प्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥ C3, V12॥
iṣṭān bhogān hi vo devā dāsyante yajña-bhāvitāḥ
tair dattān apradāyaibhyo yo bhuṅkte stena eva saḥ

[By your sacrifices, the celestial gods will be pleased, and by cooperation between humans and the celestial gods, great prosperity will reign for all. C3, V11.

The celestial gods, being satisfied by the performance of sacrifice, will grant you all the desired necessities of life. But those who enjoy what is given to them, without making offerings in return, are verily thieves. C3, V12.]

The Divine Mother purifies their minds through Prasada; they come to understand that as we get pain if someone scratches us, similarly these animals must be getting pain when we kill them. These animals are manifestations of the Divine Mother; therefore we must not cause any discomfort to them voluntarily. They get endowed with *Satvaguna*, *stop eating Tamasika food* and start enjoying *Satvika* food.

Next Verse:

God does not require any elaborate offering; a simple offering is more than sufficient. Whatever we can offer; belongs to God anyway. This idea is expressed in the following Verse.

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 9, Verse 26

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।

तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्रामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥ 26॥

***patraṁ puṣhpam phalaṁ toyam yo me bhaktyā prayachchhati
tadahaṁ bhaktyupahṛitam aśhnāmi prayatātmanaḥ***

Meaning: Whosoever offers Me but with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or even water, that I accept delightfully, the pious offering of pure in heart.

So, there are two conditions:

1. The offering should be with devotion.
2. The devotee must be a pure and pious person.

patram—a leaf: Lord Shiva does not require any elaborate offering, just a Bilva leaf.

puṣhpam— a flower: we can offer any type of flower. Such as, Lord Shiva likes the Dhatura flower - which is a very poisonous flower and grows in the crematoriums. However, the Lord is not looking - what we are offering Him, but how we are offering to Him.

phalam— a fruit.

An incident in the life of Swami Adhbhutanandaji - Mother Annapurna:

I recall an incident. Once a devotee went from Calcutta to Varanasi. He met Swami Adhbhutanandaji. Swami was very fond of this particular devotee. The devotee bought some clothes and sweets and expressed a desire to visit the

temple of Mother Annapurna. He wanted to offer the clothes and sweets to Mother Annapurna.

On the way, Swami asked, “Let me see the sari (Indian dress for women) which you have bought for the Divine Mother.” The sari was very small, not even large enough to fit a baby. Swami became very grave and said, “How could you dare to offer this to the Mother of the Universe? The sari would not even cover the Mother gracefully. If you do not have the resources, better not to offer.”

Then Swami looked at the half-rotten fruits and said, “My boy, be a little bit more intelligent. You do not need to buy so many fruits; buy just one good quality fruit with reverence. The Divine Mother does not notice quantity but quality and feelings.” The devotee understood and apologised, “I apologise for my foolish action. I will never do anything like this in the future.”

To summarise:

- The Lord does not require anything from us, and we cannot give Him anything because everything belongs to Him only. This understanding comes only through true devotion.
- We wish to express our devotion by offering a few objects to Him. Just Like a baby who puts a tiny piece of food prepared by his mother in her mouth with love and feels extremely happy while feeding his mother. The baby feels joyful that he can also give something to his mother.
- There is a Bengali phrase -‘*Ganga Jole Ganga Puja*’ - To worship Ganga, we take water from Ganga, and offer it back to Ganga.

patram—a leaf; **puṣhpam**—a flower; **phalam**—a fruit; **toyam**—water; **yaḥ**—who; **me**—to Me; **bhakti**—with devotion; **prayachchhati**—offers - if one offers to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or even water.

tat—that; **aham**—I; **bhakti-upahṛitam**—offered with love/devotion; **aśhnāmi**—I enjoy it whole heartedly; **prayata-ātmanah**—with great love; I accept it and eat it with the greatest joy. The Divine Lord takes whatever a devotee offers to Him. Because the Divine Lord is infinite, He puts everything back to us again.

Once Holy Mother was asked, “Does the Lord eat when we offer things to Him?”

“Yes, my child, He does,” replied Holy Mother.

“Then why do we see the same thing remaining in the puja plate?” devotee asked.

“Because He is *PariPurna*/Infinite. He accepts our offerings but replaces them completely with indescribable purity. And the offerings become Prasada/Sanctified,” replied Holy Mother.

प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानिरस्योपजायते ।
प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते ॥ C2, V65॥
prasāde sarva-duḥkhānām hānir asyopajāyate
prasanna-chetaso hyāśhu buddhiḥ paryavatiṣṭhate

We should worship with ‘Ishawara Arpana Buddhi’ and accept the result as ‘Ishawara Prasada Buddhi’. The Divine Lord receives everything with tremendous love, whatever we offer Him with devotion. This idea has been explained to us by several stories by none other than Shri Ramakrishna. We will discuss them in our next class to understand this point more clearly.

May the Divine Lord grant us the right understanding to grasp these scriptural teachings.

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