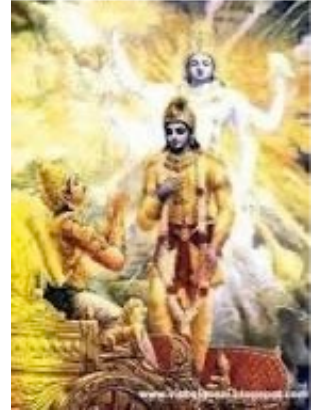


**Bhagavad Gita Chapter 9 online Part 10 dated 15/08/2020 by Swami Dayatmanada (Lecture delivered online from Bangalore, India)**

**Subject: Chapter 9, Verses 19, 22 and 26.**

**Stories and illustrations:** Story of a Soldier from the Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna: Lord Shiva and Bilva leaf: Shiva-Bhakta - Kannappa: Katakana Kindi or Kanaka's Window - Saint Kanaka Dasa: Mahabharata - Shri Krishna and Vidura: Story of Shri Krishna and Sudama: Mahabharata story: Durvasa Muni and cooking pot of Draupadi: Gajendra Moksha: Shri Rama and Shabari: Bhagavatam - The story of King Rantideva: Shri Ramakrishna and a Lady Devotee: Kanakadhara Stotam:



**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 Kansa 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 like cows. The milker is Krishna, the son of Nanda. Partha (Arjun) 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 called Raj-Vidya Raj-Guhya Yoga.

- In our previous classes, we have heard from the Lord Himself, "Mahatmas/Great Souls have spiritual nature; they worship Me in various ways. Some worship Me

as one with themselves - they are called ज्ञानी *Jnanis*. These *Jnanis* are most beloved to Me because they do not know anyone except Me. Some worship Me as separate from them called Bhaktas or *Dvaitins*/Dualists. Others worship Me in the forms of various gods and goddesses, some with animal heads such as Ganesha (with elephant head), Varaha (boar/wild pig head), Harigriva (horse head).

- **The Divine Lord is manifesting in this Jagat/World.** The Lord enumerates thirty forms of His manifestations for us for our easy understanding. 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 mother; I am the father; I am the grand sir; I am the sustainer; I am the creator; I am the generator, and I am everything. Nothing exists other than Me.”
- **All paths lead to The Divine Lord only.** If devotees worship Him in so many different ways then a question may arise. Do these devotees go to separate places? Or, do they go to One Divine Lord? The Lord assures us: I am the only Lord of the universe. Worship performed in any way by any devotee belonging to any place, in any language, of any religion ultimately come to Me, everyone worships Me only. This greatest philosophical truth has been taught by Shri Ramakrishna as - *Jato Mat Tato Path*/as many faiths, so as many paths. All paths lead to The Divine Lord only.
- **Manifestations of the Divine Lord:** The Lord further says, “I am the sacrifice; I am the worship; I am the obligations to the manes; I am the hymn; I am the cereal; I am the melted butter; I am the fire, and I am the offering. It means - **everything** is the Divine Lord. The highest truth is - He is *sadhaka/spiritual aspirant*; He is *sadhana*/spiritual practices; He is the Worshipped Deity in different forms and manifestations.
- The Lord is telling us, (Please refer to the transcripts of C9, class 7 and 8.)

### **Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 9, Verse 19**

तपाम्यहमहं वर्षं निगृह्णाम्युत्सृजामि च ।  
अमृतं चैव मृत्युश्च सदसच्चाहमर्जुन ॥ C9, V19॥

***tapāmyaham ahaṁ varṣhaṁ nigrihṇāmyutsṛijāmi cha  
amṛitaṁ chaiva mṛityuś cha sad asach chāham Arjun***

[**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 Arjun, I am also death. I am both manifested and also un-manifested beings.]

- **Individual and collective Karmaphala:** The Lord creates heat, cold and rain; He does not do it like a dictator. He gives to us according to our receiving capacity, and the receiving capability of a person, a nation, and the world depends upon the individual and collective *karmas*/activities. At the moment, we are going through the current virus Covid, and we believe that it is due to our individual and collective *Karmaphala*/results of our actions. Human beings have forgotten God and are travelling on an evil path. The Divine Mother has

manifested as the Covid pandemic to awaken us. She is warning us, "My children, you are treading on a wrong path; I told you gently, but you paid no heed to Me; now, wake up and if you will not, then I might ramp up the environment temperature, and you may suffer more than what you are suffering at the moment. So, wake up now."

- The Lord is saying, "I grant heavenly pleasures, and I also grant immortality/*Amrita*/bliss." Swami Vivekananda gave this message at the Parliament of Religions in 1893. The Parliament of Religion was like a mighty stream, and through this great stream, the great truth of immortality travelled to every corner of the world by Swamiji.
- **"I am both manifested universe and unmanifested universe,"** the Lord said.
- ***Ananyah Bhaktas*** ([Verse 22, please refer to the transcript of C9, Part 9. ] Bhagwan Krishna spoke very highly of great devotees. These great devotees are endowed with pure *Satvaguna*; they are called *Para-Bhaktas* or *Ananyah Bhaktas* (Verse 22) like Shri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda, Raman Maharishi and many more. These Para-Bhaktas do not know anything else except God.

### Story of a Soldier from the Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna:

There was a soldier who was a great Ram devotee. Once it so happened that he was in the middle of a battlefield fighting with some Muslims. Someone (probably from his own army due to jealousy or hatred) attacked him and cut his throat. Other soldiers ran towards him and he was about to die. They asked, "Who cut your throat? We will punish him." He replied, "The same Ram who sustained me, has killed me also." What does it mean? He saw everything as God.

- The Divine Lord has said in the Verse 22, "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." The Divine Lord looks after these devotees like a mother looking after her baby. I gave you several examples in my previous class.
- Bhagwan Krishna was born again in the Nineteenth Century as Shri Ramakrishna to prove this *sloka*.

#### 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***

- 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 26.

## Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 9, Verse 26

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।

तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥ 26॥

*patraṁ puṣhpaṁ phalaṁ toyaṁ yo me bhaktyā prayachchhati  
tadahaṁ bhaktyupahṛitam aśhnāmi prayatātmanaḥ*

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

There are many enchanting stories. I am going to narrate them now as I promised in my last class. Before we start these stories, let's explore this verse a bit further.

**patram**—a leaf: What type of leaf? Does it need to be a beautiful, fresh, and nice smelling leaf? No, it can be a leaf of any kind; it can be a torn leaf or a dry leaf or a leaf with no fragrance. There are several examples.

- **Lord Shiva and Bilva leaf:** Lord Shiva does not require any elaborate offering, just a Bilva leaf. However, there are no fresh Bilva leaves in the winter season. Therefore, devotees collect them in the summer, dry them and offer them in the winter season with great reverence. Does the Lord accept them? Yes, with great joy! Suppose a devotee has not even got a leaf to offer, then he can just bring some water. Sometimes, a devotee may not have a container to fetch the water - the devotee can bring some water in his mouth and do the *Abhisheka* to Lord Shiva.
- **Mother Lakshmi:** We see Mother Lakshmi is surrounded by two elephants on both Her sides. How are these elephants bathing Mother? Not by pure, clean water, but by water in their trunks.
- **Mother and Baby:** We also see this happening in our lives as well. A mother feeds her baby. The child eats, and lots of food falls from his mouth; he picks up a tiny bit of dropped food and puts it very lovingly in the mother's mouth. The mother smiles and accepts it with great love and affection.
- **In the mother's womb,** we all receive food which has already been eaten, digested, and passed on to us by our mothers through the umbilical cord. I am going to narrate to you a similar story.

### Shiva-Bhakta - Kannappa:

**Kannappa** was a staunch devotee of Shiva and is closely associated with the Srikalahasteeswara Temple. He was a hunter and is believed to have plucked out his eyes to offer to the Srikalahasteeswara linga, the presiding deity of the Srikalahasti Temple. He is also considered to be one of the 63 Nayanars or holy Saivite saints, the staunch devotees



of Shiva. [According to historical chronicles, he was Arjun of the Pandavas in his past life.]

Kannappa Nayanar is a South Indian saint also known as Thinnappan, Dinna, Kannappa, Tinnappan, Dheera, Bhakta Kannappa, Thinnan. He was born in a *vyadha* (hunter) family, in Uduppura (modern Vutukuru) near Sri Kalahasti, in present-day Utukkuru, Rajampet Andhra Pradesh.

Kannapa was a staunch devotee of the *Vayu Linga* of the Srikalahasteeshwara Temple which he found in the forest while hunting. Being a hunter, he did not know how to properly worship Lord Shiva. It is said that he poured water from his mouth on the Shiva lingam which he brought from the nearby river Swarnamukhi. He also offered Lord Shiva whatever animal he hunted, including swine flesh. But Lord Shiva accepted his offerings since Kannapa was pure at heart and his devotion was true. Once, Lord Shiva tested the unshakable devotion of Kannapa. With his divine power, He created a tremor and the roof of the temple began to fall. All the priests ran from the scene except for Kannapa who covered the linga with his body to prevent it from any damage. Hence, he was named thereafter as *Dheera* (valiant one).

One day, Kannapa noticed that one of the eyes of the Shiva linga was oozing blood and tears. Sensing that Lord Shiva's eye had been injured, Kannapa proceeded to pluck out one of his own eyes with one of his arrows and placed it in the spot of the bleeding eye of the Shiva linga. This stopped the bleeding in that eye of the linga. But to complicate matters further, he noticed that the other eye of the linga had also started oozing blood. But Kannapa thought that if he were to pluck out his other eye too, he would become blind to know the spot where he would have to place his own second eye over the bleeding second eye of the lingam! So he placed his great toe on the linga to mark the spot of the bleeding second eye and proceeded to pluck out his other and only eye. Moved by his extreme devotion, Lord Shiva who is *Karuna- Samudra* (Ocean of Compassion) appeared before Kannapa, stopped him from extracting his only eye and restored both his eyes. He made Kannapa the 10th of the 63 Nayanars and he was known as Kannappan or Kannappa Nayanar. Kannappa merged into the linga along with Lord Shiva. [Kannappa, who was Arjun in his past life, got moksha (liberation) at last.]

Such a marvellous story, not only this, an elephant, a snake, and a spider used to worship the same Lord Shiva that is why called 'Srikalahasti' Hasti means elephant, Kala means serpent and Sri means spider. Elephant would go to nearby river, suck water in its trunk, and do *Abhishka/Grand Worship*. Our next story is:

### **Katakana Kindi or Kanaka's Window - Saint Kanaka Dasa:**

**Kanakana Kindi** or Kanaka's Window is a small peephole in the Udupi Shri Krishna temple through which the great Indian saint Kanaka Dasa was given *darshan*/vision by Lord Krishna.



Kanaka Dâsa came to Udupi as a pilgrim to have *darshan* with his devotion to Ishtadeva/chosen deity Lord Shri Krishna. Sri Vâdirâja Tîrtha (priest of the temple) knew about this pious devotee of the Lord and made arrangements for him to stay in a hut on the roadside in front of the temple. Kanaka Dâsa used to play on his tambura and sing devotional songs, but being of a lower caste, by tradition he was forbidden to enter the temple and have *darshan* of Shri Krishna. The wall of the temple stood between the icon and himself and the wall of the shrine was, of course, a barrier to the physical eyes, but who could prevent the vision of his inner eyes? They were fully open and the Shri Krishna was visible to Kanaka Dâsa through his inner eyes.

Some time passed and then one night when Kanakadasa willingness and desire to have *darshan* of Lord Shri Krishna was at its strongest, there was an earthquake and by God's grace and a small crack appeared in the wall of the temple. Then Lord Krishna turned from East to West to give *darshan* to the great saint Sri Kanakadasa (Remember in every Hindu temple God is East faced, Lord Krishna himself turned towards the West to appease Sri Kanakadasa). Through this crack in the wall, Kanaka Dâsa was able to have *darshan* of the icon of Krishna. Sri Vâdirâja Tîrtha became aware of this crack and of the fact that Kanaka Dâsa was using it to have *darshan* of Shri Krishna. Instead of having the crack plastered over, Sri Vâdirâja enlarged it and turned it into a window. To commemorate Lord Krishna's *darshan* to Kanaka Dâsa, the window has been designated as Kanakana Kindi (Kanaka's window).

Indian temples and the idols within the temples usually face East. The Udupi Krishna temple is an exception, visitors enter from the East and go around to get darshan of the idol which faces West.

In those days, Hindus created these undesirable social rules and regulations which outcast many people from the temple. There was oppression of the masses and women as well. That is why Lord Shiva incarnated in the form of Swami Vivekananda. This situation of the people made Swami Vivekananda very sad. He exclaimed that the invasion of India by the foreign forces was the collective result of this oppression of the masses. Swamiji restored past glory by preaching equality '*Premarpana Samdarshana*' everyone is equal and should be treated with love. Mahatma Gandhi followed Swami Vivekananda's teaching and called everyone 'Harijans/people of God'.

Another story is from the Mahabharata - it is the well-known story of Vidur, but is worth recollecting.

### **Mahabharata - Shri Krishna and Vidur (or Vidura):**

When both the teams (Pandavas and Kauravas) agreed that they should go to war for the throne of Hastinapur, the kind heart of Yudhishtir melted at once. He felt that an attempt should be made for peace and to avoid bloodshed. (He was right - eighteen thousand people perished in the Mahabharata war, only a few people survived. And as described by Arjun later on in the first chapter of the

Bhagavad Gita: In war, many people die; many women become widows; many children become orphans; widows become victims of the uncultured; values of society fall and many more undesirable consequences occur. These after-effects of war were true in those days and are true even now.) Pandavas thought of making peace with the Kauravas and decided to consider a peace treaty with them. Hence, they consented to send Lord Krishna as the messenger of peace to the Kauravas, and Lord Krishna agreed to visit Duryodhan with a peace proposal.

When Shri Krishna reached near Hastinapur, he saw the grand arrangements that were made by Duryodhan, the eldest of the Kaurava brothers. Duryodhan had made elaborate preparations for the reception of Shri Krishna. As the Lord reached there, He was welcomed grandly by Bhishma, Kaurava brothers and others.

After the initial rituals, Duryodhan requested Lord Krishna to have food with them and rest during the night at their place. Lord Krishna rejected Duryodhan's proposal because He never wanted to take any favours from Duryodhan before the peace talk.

Krishna politely said, "O Duryodhan, I am here as an ambassador of the Pandavas, if I accept your food or any other hospitality from you, then I will be under your obligation, and I might have to compromise My attitude. Therefore, I cannot eat food provided by you or Bhishma or any other Kaurava."

When the Lord refused to dine with him, Duryodhan asked, "Why are you refusing my royal invitation?" (Duryodhan was a very proud person. He was shocked when Krishna refused his invitation. Krishna knew that Duryodhan had a selfish motive behind it.)

The Lord gave the following reply, "Food is to be accepted under two circumstances. The first one is - where there is love, one takes the food with the greatest pleasure, whatever is offered and whatsoever is available in the house. The second one is - when one is starving, then one must fill the stomach with whatever is available regardless of the sentiments with which the food may be served. Both these conditions are absent in the present case. You have no love for Me, and I am not dying of hunger."

Vidur was Shri Krishna's devotee and was also very affectionate to the Pandavas. When Shri Krishna reached Vidur's house, Vidur was not there and so Vidur's wife welcomed Him joyfully. She was also a great devotee of Shri Krishna. When she saw Lord Krishna, she lost her external consciousness. She wanted to serve Krishna and offered Him bananas. However, in her confusion, she threw away the fruit and gave Him the peels of bananas by accident. Krishna moved by her devotion, affectionately accepted the peels, and relished them joyfully. While Krishna was eating banana peels, Vidur came home. He was astonished at what he saw! Lord Krishna stayed at Vidur's house at night and ate with him.

## Story of Shri Krishna and Sudama:

This story is the most moving and is described graphically in the Bhagavatam. Local devotees all over India sing and narrate the story in their local language and go into ecstasy.

Very briefly, Lord Krishna and Sudama were childhood friends. Both gained knowledge from the same Guru and were inseparable during their childhood. After they completed their education, they promised to cherish their bond forever. Years later, Shri Krishna became the King of Dwaraka and married the goddess of prosperity, Rukmini, whereas Sudama became a pandit and married a girl arranged by his parents.

As a Brahmin pandit, Sudama didn't earn much. After some time, it became difficult for him to manage his wife and children's needs. People used to call him 'Kuchela' - one with torn clothes. He had several children, and they all used to cry with hunger. One day Sudama's wife said, "You should meet Shri Krishna for the sake of our children. He is King of Dwaraka; He might help you financially." Although Sudama was very poor, he never thought about it and felt embarrassed to reach out to his childhood friend only to get a favour from him. However, he understood the unselfish request of his wife, which was purely for the welfare of his children. He agreed to go to Dwaraka and meet his beloved Krishna. [He also made it clear to his wife that neither he would bring up his domestic issues with Krishna nor would he ask for a handout. Sudama's wife supported his decision, seeing the sincerity of her husband.]

On the day of his journey, Sudama asked his wife, "What am I going to offer to Krishna? I should not go empty-handed." They had nothing in the house which she could give him. She went to the neighbouring house, procured some flattened rice, and packed it in a small piece of cloth for Krishna.

After days of walking, Sudama arrived in Dwaraka; he was astonished by its beauty and prosperity. The people were happy and prosperous in Dwaraka. Everybody in Dwaraka had tremendous devotion for the Divine Lord. Sudama reached the gorgeous gates of Shri Krishna's palace and slowly approached. To his surprise, no one questioned him when he entered the gates. The gates of Bhagwan's palace were always open for Brahmins, Sages, beggars and anybody else.

The gatekeeper ran to Lord Krishna and informed Him, "Bhagwan, a poor Brahmin has just entered the gates; he told us that he is Your childhood friend; he wishes to meet the Lord and his name is Sudama." At that time, the Lord was with His wife Devi Rukmini swinging on a most beautiful swing. This incident has been described in Hindi most beautifully by a great poet Narottam Das:

सीस पगा न झगा तन में प्रभु, जानै को आहि बसै किस ग्रामा।  
धोति फटी सी लटी दुपटी अरु, पायँ ऊपानह की नहिं सामा।  
द्वार खड्यो द्विज दुर्बल एक, रह्यो चकिसौ वसुधा अभिरामा।



पूछत दीन दयाल को धाम. बतावत आपनो नाम सुदामा।

*"My Lord, a stranger waits at the door:*

*From whence he hails, no one knows.*

*No turban on his head, no proper garments on his person;*

*His loin cloth is torn, the toga poor;*

*No shoes he has to cover his feet.*

*The poor, emancipated Brahmin that he appears to be*

*Came and stood at the gate.*

*Looking at the beauty of the city with wondering eyes.*

*The abode of the destitute, friend he enquires about,*

*And calls himself Sudama."*

(Narottama Das)

Hearing the very name of Sudama, the Lord forgot Himself and got up hurriedly from His seat. He left everything and ran towards the gate to welcome Sudama. When Krishna saw His childhood friend, Krishna's face brightened. He rushed towards Sudama and hugged him with tremendous joy. Tears of love started flowing from Krishna's eyes, the Lord said, "My dear friend, why did you wait so long to come to Me?" Shri Krishna felt tremendous grief to see Sudama's condition. Once again beautifully described in Hindi by Narottama Das:

ऐसे बेहाल बेवाइन सौं पग, कंटक-जाल लगे पुनि जोये।

हाय महादुख पायो सखा तुम, आये इतै न कितै दिन खोये।

देखि सुदामा की दीन दसा, करुना करिके करुनानिधि रोय।

पानी परात को हाथ छुयो नहिं, नैनन के जल से पग धोये।

*"O friend, what a helpless condition you have been reduced to!"*

*Then the Lord noticed the network of thorns sticking at the soles of Sudama's feet.*

*"Alas! Friend, what terrible suffering you have undergone!"*

*At the sight of Sudama's destitution*

*The Ocean of Compassion wept with grief.*

*The water kept for washing the feet of Sudama was not even touched.*

*He washed them with His own profuse tears."*

(by Narottama Das.)

Reading by Swamiji (Wisdom from the Ages: Selections from Hindu Scriptures - Mahesh B. Sharma:

"There was no occasion to touch the water kept in the large bronze vessel for washing the feet of Sudama. Washing them with the tears of His eyes, the Lord held His friend tight to His bosom. Thereafter, He gave him great attention inside His palace and seated him on His own couch. Collecting the articles of worship by His own hands, the Lord duly washed Sudama's feet Himself, and even though His very presence hallowed the three



worlds, He bore that water on His own head. The Lord's principal consort, Devi Rukmini, also expressed her desire to wash the feet of their honoured guest.

After some time, the Lord cast a loving gaze at Sudama, and with a smile on His lips asked him whether he had bought any present for Him. The Lord said, "I hold in high esteem," He added, "The most insignificant thing lovingly offered to Me by a devotee; for I hunger for love. On the other hand, immense treasures when offered by one who does not possess devotion in his heart cannot satisfy Me."

Even after this clear hint from the Lord, Sudama could not part with the bundle of parched rice, he had so fondly bought with him. Seeing the royal grandeur and untold wealth of the Lord, he felt very shy in exhibiting that poor article. The Lord, who knows the inner-most secret of all hearts, had no difficulty in divining the selfless, motiveless devotion and true friendship of Sudama. Having thus resolved and casting a searching glance into the bundle of parched rice held tightly by Sudama under his armpit, the Lord forcibly dislodged it from its secure position. Made of an old tattered cloth, the bundle gave way, scattering the contents on the floor.

Thereupon, in accents of deep love, the Lord said:

"O friend, this loving present brought by you affords Me supreme delight. These parched rice will satisfy Me and (with Me) the entire universe."

As the Lord was about to take a second handful, Devi Rukmini stopped Him and reminded him that Sudama had already got what he wanted and he didn't need more than that. She said very politely "O Lord, one handful which You have eaten will make him more than equal to a thousand Kuberas." [Kubera (Sanskrit: कुबेर) is the god of wealth.]

This is a story illustrating Verse 26, "Whatever a devotee 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.

### **Mahabharata story: Durvasa Muni and cooking pot of Draupadi:**

Once, Durvasa Muni with his disciples visited the palace of Duryodhan. Duryodhan was intelligent enough to satisfy Durvasa Muni by all means, and the great Rishi wanted to give some boon to Duryodhan. Duryodhana said, "O Sage, please go and visit the Pandavas in the forest along with your one hundred disciples. But, visit them only after they and Draupadi have eaten food. Then demand food for yourself and your disciples." (Duryodhan knew that after Draupadi had eaten, it would be impossible for Yudhishtir and the other Pandavas to provide sufficient food for the Rishi and his disciples. As a result, the Rishi would get annoyed and curse Yudhishtir.)

"Yes, I will visit Yudhishtir as you wished," said Durvasa Muni. Later on, he regretted it. He said to himself, "The Pandavas are devotees of Krishna, and I am

also a devotee of Krishna. By granting this boon to Duryodhan, I will create problems for the Pandavas. When a devotee harms another, then that devotee goes to rack and ruin.”

Because he had accepted Duryodhan’s proposal, he approached the Pandavas in exile according to the plan, after the Pandavas and Draupadi had finished their meals. On his arrival at the door, Yudhishtir welcomed him, and politely said, “Revered Sage, please have a bath in the river, finish your noon rituals, and food will be ready in the meantime.” Yudhishtir knew that he was going to be cursed.

Durvasa Muni, along with his disciples, went to take a bath in the river. Mahārāja Yudhishtir was in great anxiety about the guests. (Draupadi had a divine cooking pot that she had received from the Sun-God. The cooking pot could supply food to any number of guests provided Draupadi had not eaten her own meal. But the Rishi, by the plan of Duryodhana, reached the hut only after Draupadi had finished her meal.)

Yudhishtir ran to Draupadi and told her about the sage and his disciples. Draupadi was a great devotee of Bhagwan Krishna. The Lord had saved her when Dushasan tried to disrobe her in the court. So, she started praying, “O Lord, O Deenbandhu, please save me. You alone can rescue me from this calamity. No one else can save me.”



Lord Krishna, the enjoyer of all sacrifices, immediately appeared on the scene and said, “O Draupadi, I am hungry, please give Me something to eat.”

“O Krishna, the divine pot/*Akshaya Patra* which I have received from the sun-god could supply any amount of food if I would not have eaten. But, I have already taken my meals today and cleaned the pot,” she said with great sorrow.

The Lord, however, asked Draupadi to bring the cooking pot and see if there was any particle of foodstuff left. By the grace of Shri Krishna, Draupadi found a tiny food grain stuck in the corner of the pot. The Lord at once picked it up, ate it, belched (sign of satisfaction) and said:

**Yasmin tuṣṭe jagat tuṣṭam:**

[If the Supreme Lord is satisfied, everyone is satisfied.]

**SB 8.3.30.**

Immediately the Rishi and his disciples suddenly felt sumptuously fed, even while they were in the water. They all decided to leave the place. (Belching of the Lord means He is fully satisfied and so consequently everyone is satisfied.) The Lord had also removed the curse of Rishi Durvasa on Yudhishtir. Next story is of Gajendra Moksha.

**Gajendra Moksha:**

There was once an elephant named Gajendra. One day, as usual, he went to the lake nearby to pick lotus flowers to offer prayer to Lord Vishnu. Suddenly, a crocodile living in the lake attacked Gajendra and caught him by the leg. Gajendra tried for a long time to escape from the clutches of the crocodile. All his family members, relatives and friends gathered around him to help, but in vain.

The crocodile would not let go. Gajendra realised that 'death' had come close to him, so Gajendra prayed to Lord Vishnu by holding a lotus up in the air as an offering and said, "O Narayana, please help, You are the only refuge of all distressed people." Immediately, Lord Vishnu came to rescue the elephant, killed the crocodile with His *Sudharshan Chakra/divine disc*, and saved Gajendra. The Lord even blessed the crocodile and gave liberation to him. (Crocodile was a Gandharva/Celestial being in his previous life and was born as a crocodile for his misdeeds.) Our next story is:



### Shri Rama and Shabari:

Shabari was a village woman; her Guru Sage Matanga lived at the foot of Mount Rishyamukha. She served him with great devotion for many years. When Sage Matanga was about to leave his *Ashrama* along with his disciples, he said, "O Shabari, one day your *Ishta-Devata/Chosen-Deity* Shri Rama will come and bless you with His *darshan/vision*. You stay here, wait for Him, and continue your spiritual practices. This birth will be your last birth."

Shabari waited for Shri Rama to arrive as advised by her Guru. Many years passed, she became almost ninety-nine years old. She could not even hear or see properly, but she had tremendous *shraddha/firm faith* in the words of her Guru. Every day, Shabari would go out of her *Ashrama*, collect a few berries, return to the *Ashrama* and eagerly await for Shri Rama to come. She was constantly thinking of Rama and practising the presence of Rama.

On the last day of her life, Rama came to her *Ashrama*. Shabari was very happy to see Shri Rama. She offered Him the berries that she had collected. She wanted to give Him the best and the sweetest fruits, so she tasted a bit of every berry before offering Him and gave Him the best berries. Shri Rama ate the berries with joy. He gave no importance to the fact that Shabari had already tasted them. He blessed her and said, "This is your last birth and last day of your life; you will achieve *Moksha/Nirvana/Liberation*." Shabari humbly replied, "O Lord, I am so fortunate to have your





*darshan*/vision at the last moment of my life.” She looked at Shri Rama meditated upon Him, and her *pranas/vital energy* departed. A light radiated from her body and merged in Shri Rama. She was very fortunate; Shri Rama performed her funeral. (Interesting to note that He could not perform His father’s funeral but did for her.) Our next story is from Bhagavatam.

## **Bhagavatam - The story of King Rantideva:**

### **(Shrimad Bhagavatam IX.xxi.12-13)**

King Rantideva was the son of King Sankrti. He was a powerful ruler and extremely compassionate by nature. Observing the woes and sufferings of the poor, he gave away all his possessions to charity.

On a particular occasion, the King had to go without food and water for a full forty-eight days. Oppressed by hunger and thirst, his limbs began to tremble. Forty-eight days complete fast had rendered the King and his family extremely weak. On the morning of the forty-ninth day, he got some ghee, rice, porridge and water.

When Rantideva was about to partake of this food, a Brahmin who was quite unknown to him appeared on the scene. Out of a crore rupees, it is easy to give away one lakh rupees in charity for the sake of name and fame, but it is most difficult for a starving person to part with his food. The great devotee Rantideva, who saw the presence of God everywhere, gave away a share of his food to the Brahmin with due respect and reverence. Satisfied with the King’s hospitality, the Brahmin went away.

After entertaining the Brahmin, the King was about to share the remaining food with his family. Another stranger belonging to the Sudra class made his appearance. With the thought of Shri Hari foremost in his mind, the King gave away part of his food to the stranger. Meanwhile, a third stranger appeared with several dogs and begged food for himself and his dogs on a plea of hunger.

The devout King received this stranger with due attention and, reverentially placing the whole of the remaining food at the disposal of the newcomer and his dogs, bowed to him.

Now only a small quantity of water was left, barely enough to appease the thirst of a single individual. The King was about to drink it when an outcast appeared before him and made the following submission in a pathetic voice, “O great King! I am extremely tired. Low and impure as I am, please favour me with a little water to drink.”

Hearing this piteous appeal of the pariah, and knowing him to be exhausted, the King was moved to great compassion and uttered the following nectar-like words:



“I crave not from God the highest form of destiny with the eight superhuman faculties, nor freedom from rebirth. My only prayer is that dwelling in the heart of all beings I may undergo their sufferings, so that they may get rid of all sorrows. This man is dying of thirst, and he is piteously seeking water from me to save his life. By offering this life-giving drink to this humble creature who is anxious to live, my hunger, thirst, exhaustion, grief and depression, all have disappeared.”

Swami Akhandanandaji used to repeat the words of King Rantideva again and again with tears in his eyes and used to say, “If I could have just one-millionth of the compassion which Rantideva had of the suffering humanity.”

### Shri Ramakrishna and a Lady Devotee:

Lastly, I would like to recollect a story from the Life of Shri Ramakrishna.

There was a lady who was very poor and she was devoted to Shri Ramakrishna. She used to visit him at the Dakshineswar temple. During her visits, she noticed that devotees offer him various things which he accepted with joy.

One day she developed an intense desire to bring an offering for Shri Ramakrishna. She spent almost all her savings and bought four small *rasogullas* (Indian dessert) from a roadside shop for Shri Ramakrishna. She came to the Dakshineswar temple to meet Shri Ramakrishna. Many devotees came to meet Shri Ramakrishna and bought several delicious food items to offer him. She thought, “Shri Ramakrishna is probably not going to even glance at my offerings as he has so many delicious fruits and food.” She felt sad, went in the Nahabat, sat in a corner and started weeping. Suddenly, in the middle of *sankirtana/devotional singing*, Shri Ramakrishna felt hungry. He was semi-conscious; he went straight to Nahabat and started searching as if looking for somebody. He saw this lady sitting in a corner and weeping. He said, “I am hungry. Can you give me something to eat?” The lady was overwhelmed with joy as Shri Ramakrishna came to her and asked for food. She offered him all the *rasogullas* which he ate, smiled, looked at her and said, “I am satisfied.”

**To Summarise:** We are discussing Verse 26.

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।  
तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥ 26॥  
*patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam yo me bhaktyā prayachchhati  
tadahaṁ bhaktyupahṛitam aśhnāmi prayatātmanaḥ*

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.

- **Devotees offer Dhatura flower to Lord Shiva.** It grows in the crematoriums and is a very poisonous flower. (Interestingly, many hybrids of Dhatura flowers have been made. These flowers are almost twelve inches long, many petalled, in

various colours and with divine fragrance. At Bangalore Ashrama, there is one such plant, and in the evening, the whole place is full of divine fragrance.)

- **Kanakadhara कनकधारा Strotam:** We all know about the story attached to this Strotam. The hymn was written in the 8th century CE by Adi Sankaracharya. Sankaracharya took Sannyasa (renunciation) at the age of eight. One day, as a young boy, he was on *bhiksha* (begging) for alms and happened to be at the doorstep of a poor Brahmin lady. She had nothing edible in her home, so she frantically searched her house and found a single amla (Amalak, gooseberry) fruit. She hesitantly offered the gooseberry to Sankaracharya and said, "My child, please accept it, as it is all I have in my house." Sankaracharya was so moved by the incredible kindness and selflessness of this woman that he burst forth into poetry and sang 22 stanzas in praise of Goddess Lakshmi. Pleased by the beauty and power of the hymn, the Goddess appeared before him and asked him why he had remembered Her. Sankaracharya pleaded with the Goddess to reverse the fortunes of this lady by granting her riches. Goddess Lakshmi was so pleased that she instantly showered her house with gooseberries made of pure gold.
- We have discussed many stories such as Sudama, Elephant Gajendra, Draupadi etc.
- However, we must not misunderstand this sloka. Some people are rich, but miserly and they say, "I don't need to offer any money or any other good thing to God. He is happy with a leaf, a flower, fruit and some tap water." But, the real meaning of this verse is - if a person doesn't have much to offer, then even a small leaf or a flower or a fruit or some water offered with devotion will satisfy the Lord. A true devotee will never withhold any worldly object from his beloved Lord.
- We should try to acquire devotion and surrender our body, mind, and possessions at the lotus feet of the Lord. We will discuss this 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

