

Bhagavad Gita Chapter 9 online Part 11 dated 16/08/2020 by Swami Dayatmanada (Lecture delivered online from Bangalore, India)

Subject: Chapter 9, Verses 26 - 31.

Stories and illustrations: Swami Ramakrishnanada at Madras:
Swami Vivekananda's experience at the Kheer-Bhawani temple:
Story of Maha-Rishi Valmiki:

**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।
पार्था वत्सः सुधीर्भाक्ता, दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥

**Sarvopanishado gaavo, dogdha gopala nandanaha|
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.

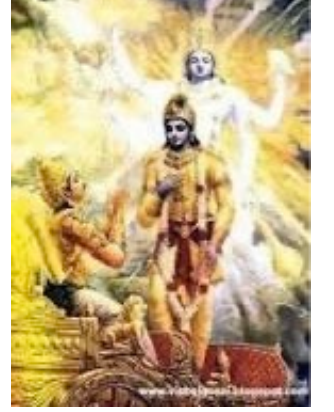
Recollection: (Please refer to the Chapter 9, Part 9 and 10.)

We have been discussing the Ninth Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita called Raj-Vidya Raj-Guhya Yoga. In our yesterday's class, we discussed a beautiful sloka/verse.

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 9, 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**



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.

The Divine Lord does not need anything from us. However, whatever we offer should be offered with intense devotion/ *bhakti*. Bhakti is always associated with *shraddha*/humility and intense faith. When we worship the Divine Lord then we should sincerely believe that He is our father; He is our mother, friend, beloved, child and everything. Could God be our servant? Yes!! He is serving us all the time in the form of the sun, the moon, space, air, fire, water, earth, plants etc. Just as a baby is constantly served by his mother, father and family members. What can a devotee offer to God? Absolutely nothing! Whatever we offer is given to us by God only - *Ganga jale Ganga puja* (Worship of Mother Ganga by Ganga water). As Lord Hanuman has expressed:

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

["Oh Lord, while I identify myself with my body, I am your servant. When I consider myself as Individual Soul, I am Your part. But when I look upon myself as the Spirit, I am one with You.]

Some devotees wish to keep a distance and say, "I am *Jivatma*/Individual soul, and You are *Paramatma*/Universal soul." Some people worship God in the form of mountains, rivers, animals, various gods and goddesses, even as ghosts, as ancestors etc (as we have discussed in our previous classes). "Those who worship ancestors will go to *Pitraloka*/Abode of ancestors; those who worship gods and goddesses go to them; those who worship Me will attain Me. Ultimately, everyone will come to Me. Some devotees worship various gods and goodness because they wish to fulfil their peculiar desires. However, they only worship Me in those forms; I fulfil their desires and strengthen their devotion. Ultimately, they get correct understanding and worship Me as none other than their selves. (They are endowed with *Para-bhakti*). Wherever they go, they purify the place - *tirthi kuru tirthani*. Some great souls have attained this state of *Para-Bhakti*. I would narrate an incident to you:

Swami Ramakrishnanada at Madras:

Once Swami Ramakrishnaanadaji (a direct disciple of Shri Ramakrishna) was posted to Madras. There he lived in a not very good house. However, he used the best room as the shrine room and another room as the resting room/sleeping room for Shri Ramakrishna (as a rule of the mission). One night, it was raining heavily, and water started leaking from the roof. He thought - it is so uncomfortable for me to sleep, I must go and check the bedroom of Shri Ramakrishna. He noticed that water was pouring in Shri Ramakrishna's bedroom. He took an umbrella and sheltered the photograph of Shri Ramkrishna under his umbrella (it is only a photograph for us, but for him, it was like living Shri Ramkrishna). This is called *akanta-bhakti*. The Akanta-bhakta's do not see any difference between them and the Divine Lord. It is the goal of our lives. How to attain it? Is described in verse 27:

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 9, Verse 27

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥ 27॥

*yat karoṣhi yad aśhnāsi yaj juhoṣhi dadāsi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kuruṣhva mad-arpaṇam*

Meaning: O, son of Kunti (Sadhaka), whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as oblation in the sacrifice, whatever charity/*dana* you give away, and whatever austerities you perform, do them as an offering to Me.

We all do this naturally, but we do not think about it.

yat—whatever; **karoṣhi**—you do. We are doing something or the other for twenty-four hours. For example, we are breathing; we are seeing; we are hearing, tasting, touching and smelling. Actions that are performed by the five organs of action (*karmandriyas*) and by the five organs of knowledge (*Jyanandriyas*) plus mind (thinking, planning, desiring etc) should be directed towards the Lord. However, we do not think that we are doing all this to serve the Divine Lord. We do not associate our activities with God in the beginning. But. It will come in time. We have seen the same idea in the Fifth Chapter.

पश्यञ्शृण्वन्स्पृशन्निघ्नन्नश्नान्छ्वपञ्श्वासन् ॥ C5, V8॥
प्रलपन्विसृजन्गृह्णन्निमिषन्निमिषन्नपि । ॥ C5, V9॥

*paśhyañ śhrīṇvan spṛiśhañjighrann aśhnangachchhan svapañśhvasan
pralapan visṛijan grihṇann unmiṣhan nimiṣhann api*

[*paśhyan*—seeing; *śhrīṇvan*—hearing; *spṛiśhan*—touching; *jighran*—smelling; *aśhnan*—eating; *gachchhan*—moving; *svapan*—sleeping; *śhvasan*—breathing; *pralapan*—talking; *visṛijan*—giving up; *grihṇan*—accepting; *unmiṣhan*—opening (the eyes); *nimiṣhan*—closing (the eyes)]

We are seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing in, breathing out, talking, giving up, taking in, opening eyelids, closing eyelids, etc. We think we are doing all these activities for our happiness. However, the real devotee will say, “O Lord, I am your slave; I am your child. Whatever, I do let it be for You.” We need to practice the presence of God for twenty-four hours, even during deep sleep. Is it possible to do it during sleep? Yes! We should think that whatever we are doing in the waking state, dream state, and deep sleep state is for the pleasure of the Divine Lord only. This association is possible; let us start doing it at least in the waking state, and this is known as ‘the practice of the presence of God. This idea is expounded in the 27th Verse and is beautifully depicted in the life of thousands of great saints.

Once a devotee came to visit Shri Ramakrishna. The devotee saw many delicious dishes in front of Shri Ramakrishna; he started criticising Shri Ramakrishna and said, “He is a good man. But he likes to eat delicious food.” What was he trying to say in plain language? We are hypocrites, and we use deceptive

language. What is straightforward language? This man is a glutton. Another example - when we sit for meditation, after a few minutes we stop meditating and get up, say our mind is restless, actually we are bored doing meditation.

What are we trying to discuss? For a saint, only the Divine Lord exists. Shri Ramakrishna often used to say, “*Ami khai dai anada kori, amar Maa sob janey* - I eat, sleep and merry like a child, my Mother knows everything” Another favourite bhajan of Sri Ramakrishna was “*Sakli tomari iksha tomar karm tumi koro Maa, loke boli aami kori* - all is by the will of Divine Mother, You do everything, but people think that I am doing; I am desiring and planning.” No Sir, we have false ‘I’/ false ego; the truth is - it is only the Divine Mother or the Divine Lord.

We have seen in the Third Chapter:

तत्त्ववित्तु महाबाहो गुणकर्मविभागयोः ।
गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त इति मत्वा न सज्जते ॥ C3, V28॥
***tattva-vit tu mahā-bāho guṇa-karma-vibhāgayoḥ
guṇā guṇeṣhu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate***

A wise man knows, *Prakruti* in the form of body and mind is acting and interacting with *Prakruti* itself in the form of the world.

yat—whatever; **aśhnāsi**—you eat. Here, eating does not mean eating through the mouth only. It means taking through all the five sense organs - the ear, nostrils, eyes, skin and mouth.

yat juhoṣhi— Whatever activity we undertake in the name of God is called *juhoshi* or sacrifice or puja in the modern terminology, such as worshipping, going on pilgrimage, doing *japam*, meditating, helping in the Ashrama.

Recording time 15.45 minutes approx.

dadāsi—give; **yat**—whatever - sometimes we feel compassion/*karuna/daya* and we can not see that people are suffering. Therefore, we happily give money, time, energy, say kind words, donate to charitable organisations etc. Whatever we are doing to help people with the idea of *Shiva jyaney Jiva Seva*/service to the world as the manifestation of God. We are not giving away anything, just sharing whatever the Divine Lord has given us. God is in the form of the giver and receiver both.

yat—whatever; **tapasyasi**—austerities - sometimes, we voluntarily do certain austerities such as *Ekadashi* fast or special fasts for various kinds of worships or taking a bow to observe silence/*mauna* (not speak) or to keep calm when someone shouts at us or not to criticise food (food should never be criticised. Why? Because we are born of food, sustained by food and ultimately we go back to food. Funnily, when a hungry tiger looks at us then the tiger is not looking at us as a man or woman but as food only.) So, whatever austerities we perform - we should associate with God.

kaunteya—Arjun, the son of Kunti (spiritual aspirant); **tat kuruṣhva**— offer them; **mad arpaṇam**—as an offering to Me.

With the understanding:

- The Divine Lord gives us our bodies and minds.
- The rivers, the mountains, lakes, animals, human beings, plants, water, air, fire and everything else are His manifestations.
- We cannot offer anything to Him. However, as a gesture of goodwill and gratitude, we offer certain things to the Divine Lord - O Lord, please kindly accept them.
- The purport is: Convert the entire life into a *Yjana/sacrifice*, the Lord has said in the Fourth Chapter.

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविरब्रह्मणो ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥ C4, V24॥

***brahmārpaṇaṁ brahma havir brahmāṇau brahmaṇā hutam
brahmaiva tena gantavyaṁ brahma-karma-samādhinā***

- See, hear, taste, smell, and touch God everywhere. We are like small waves in an ocean. All waves (big or small) are nothing but water only. There is no difference between the water of waves and the water of the ocean. This is known as Sadhana/spiritual practice to see God in everything.
- What do we achieve? It is beautifully described in the next verse. The aspirant may ask, “If I get rid of my individuality and feel that the Lord is everything then what result do I get? How is it going to help me?” The Lord is reassuring, “Do not worry. You will be completely free from all the worldly bonds. You will be free from your identification with the mortal body and the mind and will get identified with Brahman. पूर्णोहम् परिपूर्णोहम्/ I am perfect; I am the infinite.”

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 9, Verse 28

शुभाशुभफलैरेवं मोक्षयसे कर्मबन्धनैः ।

संन्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा विमुक्तो मामुपैष्यसि ॥ 28॥

***śubhāśhubha-phalair evaṁ mokṣhyase karma-bandhanaiḥ
sannyāsa-yoga-yuktātmā vimukto mām upaiṣhyasi***

Meaning: O, My child, you will be free from the bondage of actions, and all actions bear good and evil results. With your mind firmly set on this yoga of renunciation, you shall become free; you will obtain liberation; you will attain *Mukti* and come to Me. (‘Come to me’ means - you will become Me and I will become you.)

What is the Lord telling us? So long as we think that we are individual souls; we will have desires, and these desires get transformed into actions. Actions are of two types - *Dharmic*/righteous actions and *Adharmic*/unrighteous actions. *Dharmic* actions yield *Punya*/happy results, and *Adharmic* actions yield *Papa*/unhappy

results. *Punya* makes a person happy, and *Papa* makes a person suffer intensely. Both *Punya* and *Papa* produce *samsakaras/impressions*. These *samsakaras* make us born again and again. That is how the *samsara-chakra/world-cycle* gets perpetuated for a long time.

Dharmic actions → *Punya* → Happy results → *Samsakaras* → Rebirth.

Adharmic actions → *Papa* → Intense suffering → *Samsakaras* → Rebirth.

However, if we do spiritual practices and associate our minds, bodies, thoughts, imaginations with the Divine Lord, then we will not incur the results of our actions. Remember! We will be doing everything but without having ego/*ahamkara-buddhi* or doer-ship. The outcome of the *Nishkama-Karmayoga/selfless action* will be the attainment of God.

śhubha aśhubha phalaiḥ—from good and evil results; **evam**—thus; **mokṣhyase**—you shall be freed; **karma**—action; **bandhanaiḥ**—from the bondage. We shall be free from the good and evil results of our actions. These results are called bondages.

sanyāsa-yoga—renunciation of selfishness; **yukta-ātmā**—having the mind attached to Me. What does it mean? Our minds will get united with the Divine Lord. We will have the knowledge that I am not the body and mind; I am divine.

vimuktaḥ—liberated; **mām**—to Me; **upaiśhyasi**—you shall reach. We will be free from the bondage of the transmigration and attain the Lord.

The Divine Lord is Not partial:

We experience in our life that some people are rich; some are poor; some are advancing; some are stagnant; some countries are advanced; some are not. Why is it so? Usually, we like to blame God. However, the Lord is telling us, “I am the body; I am the mind; I am the universe. How can I be partial?” It is not possible at all. We have to correct our wrong understanding. Firstly, God is not partial. Secondly, He cannot be partial even if He wants to be. Why? Because partiality applies only when there are two separate beings. Whether mosquito bites on my left hand or right hand or any other part of the body, we feel pain and do not differentiate between the parts of our body. For example, if we are happy then the entire body would feel happy and vice versa. Similarly, in the winter season if we dip our feet in comfortable warm water then the entire body feels the warmth. Similarly, the Lord is everywhere, He can't be partial. This is described in the next verse.

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 9, Verse 29

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ।
ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥ 29॥
samo haṁ sarva-bhūteṣu na me dveṣhyo stī na priyaḥ
ye bhajanti tu mām bhaktyā mayi te teṣu chāpyaham

This *sloka* can be divided into two parts - first and second line.

First line: *samo haṁ sarva-bhūteṣhu na me dveṣhyo sti na priyaḥ*

What is the Lord telling us in the first line?

samo haṁ sarva-bhūteṣhu - I am same towards all beings. I am every being and every being is Me only. I look upon everyone as My Own-self, therefore, it is impossible for Me to have any partiality.

na me dveṣhyo sti - I cannot hate. There are people such as Hitler, Saddam Husain, and in modern times - people whom we revere as our leaders (President or Prime Ministers) etc. are the cruellest people. They are directly or indirectly killing hundreds of people but behaving and dressing up as the most civilised person. A person who creates misery for others is the most hatable in the world. But, does the Lord hate these types of people? No!! As I have told you many times. Will Holy Mother hate these people? No!! She will love them equally. Why? She is the mother of all. She knows that Hitler is also her child. Why did he become Hitler? Why? (Bengali) *Tomar karmo tumi karo Maa, Tomar ikshaye sab kichu hochey*/O, Divine Mother, it is all your desire. It is all Her divine Lila. Because we are not able to understand it, therefore, we say, "Here is Duryodhana; here are the Pandavas; this is BJP party; this is Congress party; these are great people; these are horrible people and so on." These differences do not exist in the eyes of a true knower of God.

na priyaḥ - No one is especially dearer to Me. Meaning everyone is nearer and dearer to Me.

Second line: *ye bhajanti tu mām bhaktyā mayi te teṣhu chāpyaḥ*

However, we see so much difference in the world. Why? Now, the Lord is telling us, "Some people are wise; practice spiritual discipline; develop dispassion towards the world, and they know that they are children of the divine. These devotees worship Me with tremendous devotion."

"The devotees who worship Me with love and devotion, I am nearer to them, and they are closer to Me. They reside in Me, and I reside in them (not geographically)." Just as there is a roaring fire and the weather is very cold. Wise people who will move nearer to the fire, will get more heat and comfort, but the people who stand far away from the fire will be cold. The source of heat (fire) is the same.

To summarise:

The Lord is saying, "Remember that you are My children, live in the world with this knowledge. It can only be possible through spiritual practice. Through the

spiritual practice, I will manifest more and more in you, and you will feel My presence more and more.”

The recording time is 32 minutes:

Next four Verses 30-34:

In these four Verses, the Lord indicates, “Everyone has an equal right to reach Me and get liberated. However, you need to change your life from a worldly *sadhana* to spiritual *sadhana*.” [*Sadhana* = Practice]

An interesting point that we need to note is this: We all are doing *sadhana* - if we want to earn money, then we need to do ‘money *sadhana*’; if we desire to have name and fame, then we should do ‘name and fame *sadhana*’; if we want to climb up the job ladder, then we need to do ‘job *sadhana*’; if we want to be a musician then, we need to do ‘music *sadhana*’; if we want to become a politician, then we need to do ‘political *sadhana*’ and so on. Nothing is possible without *sadhana*, and we develop quality in proportion to our intensity of *sadhana*. Therefore, it does not matter how long a person is leading a worldly life or neglecting the spiritual life. The Lord is telling us, “You do not know that you are My children, and you are potentially divine. Until you would know; you are My children, you will feel that you are different from Me. But, at one point, you all will turn towards Me because divinity is your true nature.”

The summary is: The Lord is saying -

1. Everyone is My manifestation, and everyone is My child (in devotional language), including animals, they all will evolve and come to Me.
2. No one can resist coming towards Me. Why? Because their potential divine nature will push them towards Me.
3. A person is good or evil, not because of his will, but because of the will of God. However, they all will evolve sooner or later. Every sinner will be a saint in the future, and every saint was a sinner in the past. No one will remain a sinner forever. It is interesting to note - sinful or horrendous acts are done not by our will but by the Will of the Divine Mother. Everything is by the Will of the Divine - *Sakali Tomari Iksha*. As Swami Vivekananda has said, “When the right understanding comes, then there is neither good nor evil. The entire world will stand up as Brahma-Lila, Divine-Sport, Bhagavat-Lila, as Rasa-Lila.” This lesson Swami Vivekananda learned at the temple of Kheer-Bhawani.

[Swami Vivekananda's experience at the Kheer-Bhawani temple:

Kheer Bhawani, Ksheer Bhawani or the Ragnya Devi temple is a Hindu temple situated at a distance of 25 kilometres north-east of Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, India, in the village of Tulmul. Swami Vivekananda visited Kashmir. During this stay, while ritually worshipping Sheer Bhavani, the condition of the temple concerned him. In The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, the goddess tells Vivekananda, "It is My desire that I should

live in a dilapidated temple, otherwise, can I not immediately erect a seven-storied temple of gold here if I like? What can you do? Shall I protect you or shall you protect Me!"]

4. The entire world comes from God, sustained by God and returns to God only.

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 9, Verse 30

अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥ 30॥
*api chet su-durāchāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ samyag vyavasīto hi saḥ*

Meaning: Even the most simple person if he worships Me with unswerving devotion must be regarded as righteous because he has formed the righteous resolution.

su-durāchārah—the worst sinner; *samyak*—right direction; *vyavasitah*—resolve: He (an evil person) resolves it properly. God gives him the correct knowledge and understanding even though he may be the worst and most evil person in the whole world. He suffers due to his evil actions, slowly his heart and his understanding get purified.

The *ananya-bhāk*—one pointed devotion; *bhajate*—worship. He sincerely prays, “O Lord, how long do You want me to suffer?” He think of God only. The Lord grants him the correct knowledge and right understanding. This will be the fate of everybody in this world. A sinner becomes one the greatest saints - called as conversion is Christian theology.

sādhuh—righteous person; *eva*—certainly; *saḥ*—that person; *mantavyah*—is to be considered. He gets the title of a saint/sadhu.

Story of Maha-Rishi Valmiki:

We can take the example of Rishi Valmiki. Valmiki is not the name of a person but a title. Valmiki means one who has emerged from an ant-hill. His real name was Ratnakar (which means ocean of precious gems although he was a very poor man. Hindus are very good at giving meaningful names to their children.)

Valmiki is known for the great epic of Hindus called “Ramayana”, the life story of Lord Rama. He is also believed to be the author of Yoga Vashistha, a text that elaborates on a range of philosophical issues. It is believed Valmiki existed in *Tetra- Yuga* and envisioned the life of Lord Rama as the events occurred with the blessings from Lord Brahma.

Valmiki is known to be the first poet, in the Sanskrit language thus called Adi Kavi (The first poet). [Ramayana is the very first poem written in Sanskrit, consisting of 24,000 verses and is called Adi Kavya (The first poem).]

When Ratnakar was very young, he went into the forest and got lost. A hunter saw Ratnakara and took him under his care. Under the love and care of his foster parents, Ratnakara forgot his original parents. Under his father's guidance, Ratnakara turned out to be an excellent hunter. When Ratnakar approached marriageable age, he married a beautiful girl from a hunter's family and had few children. As his family grew, he found it next to impossible to feed them. As a result, he took to robbery and began looting people passing from one village to another.

One day, the great sage Narada, while passing through the jungle, was attacked by Ratnakara. As Narada played his Veena and sang praises of the Lord, he saw a transformation coming over Ratnakara. Narada asked Ratnakara, "My child, whether the family for whom you are robbing others, will partake in your sins also?" Ratnakar said, "Why not! I am doing all this only to maintain my family. Surely, they will share the results of all my deeds." Ratnakara went to ask the same question to his family. His mother said, "It is your duty to look after us. If you are doing evil actions then you will suffer, not us." His father, wife and children also gave him the same reply. For the first time, awareness dawned on him. On being refused by all his family members, he went back to sage Narada. Narada taught him the sacred name of 'Rama', but Ratnakar could not even utter Rama, so Sage Narada asked him to chant "Ma Ra".

How did Ratnakar happen to meet Sage Narada? Ratnakar must have done lots of Punya karma/good deeds in his past lives, and that is why Sage Narada came to him to impart spiritual knowledge. (There are a few examples like this. 1) One robber came to Holy Mother and got converted. 2) A robber called Angulimala - killed many people, cut their little fingers, and made a garland of these little fingers that he used to wear around his neck. He came in contact with Lord Buddha and became an enlightened soul. 3) A thief came to Pavahari Baba to robe him and transformed into a great soul - *sranamapi sajan sangati reka, bhavati bhavane tarane nauka*. However, every robber or a wicked person will not get instantaneously transformed, but eventually, they will be.

Ratnakara followed the instructions of his Guru and kept sitting in a meditative posture for years, during which his body got completely covered by an anthill. At last, Narada came to see him and removed all the anthills from his body. Then, he told Ratnakara that his Tapasya (meditation) had paid off. Ratnakara was bestowed with the honour of a Brahmarshi and given the name of Valmiki since he was reborn from the Valmika (the ant-hill). Sage Valmiki founded his ashram on the banks of River Ganga. Narada visited Maharishi Valmiki in his ashram once and narrated the story of Lord Rama. Thereafter he received a vision from Brahma in which the Lord instructed him to write Ramayana in *slokas*, which the sage readily followed.

The First Sanskrit *Sloka*:

One day Valmiki was going to the river Ganges for his daily ablutions. A disciple by the name of Bharadwaja was carrying his clothes. On the way, they came across the Tamasa Stream. Looking at the stream, Valmiki said to his

disciple, "Look, how clear is this water, like the mind of a good man! I will bathe here today." When he was looking for a suitable place to step into the stream, he saw a crane couple mating. Valmiki felt very pleased on seeing the happy birds. Suddenly, when hit by an arrow, the male bird died on the spot. Filled by sorrow, its mate screamed in agony and died of shock. Valmiki's heart melted at this pitiful sight. He looked around to find out who had shot the bird. He saw a hunter with a bow and arrows nearby. As Valmiki melted in compassion, his lips opened, and he cried out a beautiful sloka with the right words and a brilliant Sanskrit *chandus/meter* ,

मा निषाद प्रतिष्ठां त्वमगमः शाश्वतीः समाः।
यत्क्रौञ्चमिथुनादेकमवधीः काममोहितम्॥'

***mā niṣāda pratiṣṭhā tvamagamaḥ śāśvatīḥ samāḥ
yat krauñcamithunādekam avadhīḥ kāmamohitam***

You will find no rest for the long years of Eternity
For you killed a bird in love and unsuspecting

Emerging spontaneously from Valmiki's mouth is considered to be the first *sloka* in Sanskrit literature. Lord Brahma appeared and said, "I granted you this gift. Now, Shri Rama will be reborn, and you have to write a life history of Shri Ram (Ramayana) for the world - the mantra (Rama) whom you have been worshipping and cherishing all these years. You will become immortal, and whosoever will study the Ramayana, will be liberated." Valmiki later composed the entire Ramayana with the blessings of the god Brahma in the same meter that issued forth from him as the first *sloka*. Thus this *sloka* is revered as the first *sloka* in Hindu literature. Valmiki is revered as the first poet or *Adi Kavi* and Ramayana, the first *kavya* (poem).

[One day, Valmiki had the fortuity of receiving Lord Rama, His wife Devi Sita and brother Lakshman at his ashram. At Valmiki's suggestion, Lord Rama built his hut on Chitrakuta hill, near the ashram.]

Moral: God's grace came in the form of a Guru, a mantra, siddhi or perfection and liberation.

The important points of the Valmiki story are:

1. Nobody is going to be condemned forever.
2. Even evil people are the play of the divine only. The Lord chooses some people as evil for some time in His Divine-Lila, and He chooses some people as saints - all is the Will of God.
3. Everybody will transform.

4. Everyone will find a Guru, do spiritual practice/sadhana, become a saintly person, and attain liberation.

By the Grace of God, eventually, an evil person will also become a spiritual person.

Eventually, what will an evil person do? The Lord is telling us, “Eventually, an evil person will worship Me with one-pointed devotion. He will become a saint and understand that He is coming to Me soon.”

Next Verse:

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 9, Verse 31

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।

कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥ 31॥

***kṣhipraṁ bhavati dharmātmā śhaśhvach-chhāntiṁ nigachchhati
kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśhyati***

Meaning: Very soon, as soon as this understanding dawns, he turns over verily; from that moment he becomes a righteous person; he becomes a *dharmatma/great soul*, and he attains eternal peace. Proclaim it boldly, O son of Kunti, My devotee never perishes.

It is one of the great verses. All of us should proclaim - a devotee of God never perishes. He might have to undergo some experiences because of his *prarabdha-karma*. I would say that he would go through these experiences for his good. Every experience and suffering will make him a better spiritual aspirant. The Lord is telling Arjuna and to us, “Proclaim from the four corners of the earth that nobody will perish. Even a most wicked person is also potentially divine. There is no evil person or a sinful person; everyone is My manifestations.” Why? Because each soul is potentially divine. Swami Vivekananda proclaimed this message in the Parliament of Religion:

शृण्वन्तु विश्वे अमृतस्य पुत्रा आ ये धामानि दिव्यानि तस्थुः ॥

***Shrinwantu vishwe amritasya putra
Arya dhamani divyani thasthu***

(This is a verse of [Svetasvatara Upanisad Ch. 2.5])

[“You are children of Immortal Bliss. To call man a sinner is blasphemy! But your divinity is potentially there – life is an opportunity to manifest it”. Swami Vivekananda]

कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥

kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśhyati

My devotees will never perish, the most beautiful sloka. We will continue 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